

danian and Egyptian regimes have officially welcomed the reconciliation. In reality, their welcome is a facade; the reactionary forces will exert all efforts to foil the reconciliation, to prevent it from being completed and having an impact on the Arab situation. It is therefore our duty to complete this beginning reconciliation, by activating the joint Palestinian—Syrian committees that were formed in view of the Palestinian—Syrian summit. We must commit ourselves to implementing the points agreed upon, such as supporting the uprising, affording it political protection and thwarting the Schultz plan.

The normalization of Palestinian—Syrian relations is not a coincidence. It was a necessity imposed by the Palestinian uprising - a requirement for confronting the US—Israeli schemes that aim at suppressing the uprising.

We must be aware that besides the important issues that were agreed upon, there are points of disagreement. It is our duty to continue the dialogue in order to consolidate this alliance. What was achieved must be followed up by many other steps. The PFLP specified after the last PNC, that our main struggle on the Arab level was to restore the PLO-Syrian alliance. We feel that this step will be the prelude to other tasks on the Arab level, first and foremost restoring the Palestinian - Syrian - Lebanese national alliance, and coordinating among Syria, the PLO and all the nationalist regimes (Libya, Algeria, and Democratic Yemen).

There are still five points of disagreement with Syria. First is the PLO's relations with the Camp David regime in Egypt. Second is the PLO's relations with some Israeli forces (that are not anti-Zionist). Third is disagreement about Lebanon. While there is Palestinian—Syrian agreement on the necessity of Palestinian (armed) presence in Lebanon, this issue is complicated and needs more discussion. Fourth is some of the PLO's tactics in the Arab—Israeli conflict. Fifth is about the reentry into the PLO of the Palestinian organizations that did not participate in the last PNC.

3. THE ARAB SUMMIT

The Arab regimes that have worked to postpone the summit were hoping that the uprising would be over after the month of Ramadan. But, to their

disappointment, the uprising continues to escalate and it will continue until achieving its goals. These regimes will now try to muddle the summit by raising the issue of Egypt's rejoining the Arab League. They will try to prevent the summit from taking clear political decisions concerning the Palestinian people's national goals, such as the establishment of an independent state. They will try to prevent it from passing any resolution that would counter the US administration's arrogance in repeatedly using its veto against the Palestinian people's national rights.

When Algeria's President Ben Jadid proposed an Arab summit to discuss exclusively the uprising and the means for supporting it, he did not specify Algeria as the place for the summit. The Algerian leadership preferred to convene it in Riyadh, as was decided at the last summit in Amman. The Algerians told the Palestinian leadership that their next choice would be Tunis, the headquarters of the Arab League, but that if neither place was possible, they were more than willing to host the summit. The Algerian leadership would not be against convening the summit in Riyadh or Tunis, but on the contrary would welcome this, because they want to talk frankly about the official Arab negligence towards the uprising. There is no doubt that they can better do that if they are not hosting the summit.

4. PLO RELATIONS WITH EGYPT

In our view, the decision taken at the last PNC on the PLO's relations with the Egyptian regime was very clear. The PFLP considers that the contacts with the Egyptian regime that took place after the PNC are deviations from this resolution. Now that the reconciliation with Syria has begun, I have great hopes that this resolution on boycotting relations with the Egyptian regime, unless it abrogates the Camp David accords, will be renewed. I am hopeful for two reasons: First, in the past, the trend that leaned towards relations with Egypt justified this by saying that they must go anywhere the door was open to them, since the door to Syria was closed to them. This excuse is no longer valid. Second, some had illusions about the PLO's relations with Egypt, and about the possibility of the Egyptian regime supporting the Palestinian cause. They said that after implementation of the

part of the Camp David accords concerning Egypt, the Egyptians will not forget about the Palestinian section. They felt that Mubarak could possibly be a force on the Palestinian side concerning the interim program of repatriation, self - determination and an independent Palestinian state.

The uprising has, however, exposed the reality. It has been going on for four months, and still Mubarak did not even dare to dismiss the Israeli ambassador or recall the Egyptian ambassador from Tel Aviv. Mubarak felt that it was a blow to his pride when the PNC decided to boycott relations with his regime. Where is his pride now when he hears about the Israelis using poisonous gas, administrative detention, the policy of breaking bones and deportations against Palestinians. At this stage, I feel that the illusions about the Egyptian regime's support have evaporated.

5. THE SOVIET POSITION

You are all familiar with the attempts of imperialist and Arab reactionary forces to undermine the important results of the PLO delegation's visit to Moscow. I would like to stress one point, and that is the great support of the Soviet leadership to the Palestinian cause. The Soviet leader Gorbachev assured Yasir Arafat that Soviet attendance at an international conference is linked to the attendance of the PLO. In other words, the Soviet Union will not attend an international conference on the Middle East if the PLO does not attend, because the Soviet leadership considers that the Palestinian question is the central issue in the Middle East.

Concerning the talk that the Soviet Union asked the PLO to recognize 'Israel', this has been denied by Farouk Qaddoumi and other members of the Palestinian delegation. Their statements were published in Soviet newspapers.

The Soviet leadership has a new policy which is based on a change in tactics only, while adhering to essential principles. The principled Soviet position is based on the fact that there can be no solution to the Palestinian question without giving the Palestinian people their right to self-determination; that the PLO is the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people; and that only the PLO decides how the Palestinian people want to exercise this right.