

The Misguided Document

«Prospects of a Palestinian—Israeli Settlement»

Beginning at the Arab Summit in Algiers, a document was circulated with the title «PLO View: Prospects of a Palestinian Settlement.» Essentially it proposed that: (1) 'Israel' and the Palestinians share an interest in peace; (2) the Palestinians agree with the Israeli desire for direct negotiations, but demand that they be «conducted under a UN-sponsored international conference;» and (3) an internationally supervised referendum could be held in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, if anyone doubts the PLO's representa-

tion of the Palestinians. This document, signed by Bassam Abu Sharif, advisor to PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat, was later circulated internationally, including to the US State Department.

The document met with the condemnation of almost all Palestinian organizations. Statements against it were issued by the PFLP, DFLP, Palestinian Liberation Front, Popular Struggle Front, PFLP—General Command and the Fatah Provisional Leadership (Abu Musa). It was also

criticized by Palestinians in the occupied territories, and by prominent Palestinian officials, such as Abu Iyad and Farouq Qaddoumi of Fatah's Central Committee.

Though the Palestinian right-wing leadership surely stood behind the airing of this document, they stood silent in the wake of the heavy criticism, well-aware that the views expressed were in flagrant violation of adopted PLO positions, and especially the resolutions of the 18th PNC session in

Not a PLO Document

Comrade Abu Ali Mustafa, deputy general secretary of the PFLP and member of the PLO Executive Committee, made the following statement on July 5th:

During the last ten days, the press has reported on the dangerous political document which was distributed by Bassam Abu Sharif, and the reactions to it from political forces, organizations and personalities. I, as a member of the PLO Executive Committee, wish to assert the following:

First: This document is not linked with any leading Palestinian body or institution; nor did these have knowledge of it.

Second: On June 21st, I sent an immediate letter to brother Yasir Arafat, chairman of the PLO Executive Committee, demanding that he take an explicit position, denying any connection with this document. This was intended to remove the ambiguity which arose, particularly after Bassam Abu Sharif declared that Yasir Arafat knew about the document. However, there has been no response to my demand.

Third: It appears to me, through confirmed information, that the chairman of the Executive Committee is personally behind this document. Moreover, he sent one of his personal

advisors to give this harmful document to one of the Arab rulers, in order that it be given to the US administration in Washington D.C.

Accordingly, I, as a member of the Executive Committee, declare to the Palestinian people, and to all our allies and friends, that the chairman of the Executive Committee is personally responsible for toying with national unity, with our definitive principles and with our sacred cause which is above all. I also urge the convening of an immediate session of the PLO Central Council to take a responsible position against this political game...

We are living in months of dignity... created by the exalted popular uprising and the brave struggle of our people in the occupied homeland. We totally comprehend our responsibilities and urge all Palestinian nationalists to defend the program of national consensus and the resolutions of the Palestinian National Council, and to prevent any blurring of the conflict with the Zionist enemy.

We view these acts of the aides of the

chairman of the Executive Committee, which he supports, as a destructive penetration of the popular uprising and its glorious achievements. We shall not permit any trend or individual, whoever he may be, to disperse the achievements of the uprising or weaken the continuity of its struggling spirit. We shall not accept that the leading Palestinian institutions are bypassed, or that they function according to the desires of illusory, individualistic calculations; nor will we accept attempts to transform these institutions into false witnesses to such organizational and political penetrations which affect the national program and principles.

All the leading bodies of the organizations of the PLO are required to examine these dangerous political practices and make the appropriate decisions against them and against those who are practicing or supporting them. This is required in order to protect our cause, national struggle and the PLO, the leader of our people's struggle and their sole legitimate representative.