

for the elections, if they are from friendly countries, and that East Jerusalem Palestinians could vote, but not in Jerusalem.

US PRESSURES THE PLO

Instead of drawing the obvious conclusions from the Likud decisions, the US administration considered the government decision to reaffirm the Shamir plan as adequate. The US continued in its policy of trying to circumvent an international peace conference and the PLO's peace initiative. It continued to try to pressure the PLO to accept the Shamir plan, ambiguously claiming that it is only the beginning of a process, but without specifying the

situation would leave it without an active policy in the area. The US rushed to salvage the Shamir plan because it is as much a US plan as an Israeli one in terms of its emergence, essence and aims. Now, the US is trying to exploit the events around the Likud Central Committee's decisions to beautify the Shamir plan and have Shamir himself appear as a «moderate» who is besieged by extremists and needs support. The overall aim of these maneuvers is to maintain the US's role and hegemony in the Middle East, by buying time for Israel to terminate the uprising through broad-scale repression; meanwhile, the US works politically to trap the PLO into accepting the Shamir plan, hoping

MUBARAK'S 10 POINTS

1. Israel should accept the election results.
2. The elections should be internationally supervised.
3. Protection would be provided for the Palestinian candidates.
4. The Israeli forces would withdraw from the polling areas.
5. Israel would be obliged to begin talks

- on a final settlement within a three to five-year interim period.
6. Settlement-building would stop.
7. Freedom of expression.
8. No Israel entry into the polling areas.
9. Israel would accept the principle of land for peace as part of a final settlement.
10. Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem would vote.

basis for this process, its stages, the PLO's role or how the Palestinian people's national rights will be addressed. The US administration furthermore tried to take advantage of the Fatah conference's communique, to propagate that the PLO had retracted its moderate line. US insistence on its position led to the failure of the fourth round of the US-PLO dialogue, just as the previous meetings had failed to make any real advances.

This proves that the US does not view Shamir's plan merely as a first step that is subject to amendment, but rather as an expression of US policy in the Middle East, based on the lines of Camp David, where there is no room for the PLO or Palestinian rights. If the US administration was really serious about advancing the peace process, it should have seized the opportunity to pressure Israel, especially after the Likud decisions. Instead, it saw the failure of the Shamir plan as a threat, because not to present a peace project in the current

to isolate the PLO from the uprising or lessen support to this struggle.

The US role in salvaging the Shamir plan was vital to its survival, since the US is almost the only power to have accepted this plan unconditionally. Added to the Palestinians' decisive rejection and the opposition of many Arab governments, Europe seems more inclined towards an international conference for solving the Middle East conflict. In June, both the EEC and the Socialist International, in their respective meetings, called for a UN-sponsored international peace conference; the EEC emphasized the importance of the PLO's participation in this conference. (The Israeli Labor Party boycotted the Socialist International meeting due to the PLO's having been invited as an observer.)

MUBARAK STEPS IN

Taking advantage of Egypt's official reintegration into Arab politics,

Mubarak proposed a plan which serves to back up the US efforts to salvage the Shamir plan. He presented it as a means of finding a middle ground for furthering the peace process - a compromise between the Israeli proposal for elections under occupation, and the PLO's support to elections after Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Though presenting some changes in the means of holding elections, Mubarak's points don't differ in essence from the Shamir plan or Camp David. There is no mention of the PLO as the party to be negotiated with, or of the Palestinian state.

Thus, Mubarak joins the Israeli government and the US administration in retarding the peace process, despite statements to the contrary, for there will be no peace in the area without recognition of the Palestinian people's national rights to repatriation, self-determination and their independent state. The Palestinians are continuing the uprising in an unprecedented manner, having determined that they will not retreat from their goals of freedom and independence, whatever sacrifices this entails. It is not wishful thinking to say that Shamir's plan will inevitably face death, because in the last analysis it aims to create an alternative Palestinian leadership, and such attempts have repeatedly failed. The Palestinian people are united in viewing the PLO as their sole, legitimate representative. Anyone who wants to resolve the conflict must take this into account, and address the PLO.

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