

determination and an independent state, with Jerusalem as its capital. This was consolidated by the determination of a million and a half Palestinians who have shown their unlimited willingness to struggle and sacrifice in order to sweep the occupation out of our homeland. Since the first days of the uprising, they have rallied around the clear-cut slogans: freedom and independence.

Another important achievement realized by the uprising was the Jordanian regime's severance of the legal and administrative ties with the occupied Palestinian West Bank; this signals the retreat of this regime's role in the full sense of the word. Severing these ties dealt a heavy blow to the idea of the Jordanian option, and opened the way for the Palestinian national option to occupy the main frontline position in confronting the Zionist enemy.

The achievements of the uprising also reached the Arab and international levels, revitalizing the Palestinian cause which has become a top priority on the agendas of Arab and international bodies. Official and popular pressure has increased for the realization of Palestinian rights. The best proof of this is the recognition of the State of Palestine by at least 104 countries, and the resolutions adopted in the Security Council (605, 607, 608). These gains would not have been made if not for the persistent struggle waged by the masses of the uprising.

The winds of the uprising have also left their mark on the Zionist enemy, with political, economic and moral effects. A set of phenomena have emerged which, if continued and aggravated, will pressure the racist state. These include the economic losses, international isolation, increased refusal to do military service in the 1967 occupied territories, and the increasing number of Israelis calling for ending the occupation and recognizing the Palestinian state. This trend is still a secondary phenomenon compared to the prevailing extremist, rightist, fascist trend, but a series of positive changes have been brought about by the uprising, and we should monitor them in order to increase them.

The masses of the uprising have made a material gain through establishing the nucleus of popular authority on the ruins of the occupation's authority. It is true that authority was not totally realized, but it has been able to boycott tax payment, Zionist goods for which there is a local substitute, and the customs and traffic departments of the civil administration. It has also liberated some villages, even if temporarily, and formed the popular and specialized committees.

These great achievements spurred the members of the PNC to unanimously declare the independent Palestinian state. This was a historical decision, not an emotion of the moment or an illusion. With the declaration of the State of Palestine, we made great progress towards realizing the aspirations of our people, but the remainder of the way is more difficult and longer; it needs redoubled efforts, struggle and sacrifice. What has occurred so far is the transfer of the slogan of the Palestinian state from the realm of historical possibility into the realm of realistic possibility. Realizing the extent of this change is very important for previously evaluating where we stand and what lies ahead of us.

This was one of the most important gains of the first year of the uprising. The second year of the uprising is distinguished by the crystallization of an official international will supporting the Palestinian people's determination to realize their state.

Based on deep conviction in the historical declaration of the state, the PFLP has repeatedly stressed the great difference between declaring and materially achieving this state. The declaration of the Palestinian state is a project that requires the mobilization of all efforts and resources, for major obstacles remain to its material embodiment. Based on clearly understanding these obstacles, we discount the viewpoint that the state is within immediate reach. This viewpoint is lacking in scientific analysis and leads its advocates to overly hasty diplomatic moves and gratuitous concessions. We are not against diplomacy, but political moves must be based on deep understanding of reality, and the factors which influence it. Otherwise, such moves will bury our people's aspirations.

What are the obstacles delaying the embodiment of the Palestinian state?

1. The Israeli position of stubbornly and categorically rejecting our people's minimal aims. Israel continues to reject the idea of a Palestinian state and the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Israel also rejects the international resolutions which recognize the Palestinian people's national rights.

The Israeli government, parties and leaders still adhere to the expansionist Zionist ideology, which means hanging on to the Palestinian land that Shamir insists on calling «Judea and Samaria» and Jerusalem as «the eternal capital of Israel.» Israel continues to view the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip as a milk cow that has yielded millions of dollars. Israel will not as yet give up this profitable enterprise. The Zionist position reflects the essence of the fascist, racist and expansionist enemy. What, then, can we say about the extremist trend which is fighting Shamir for power? This trend led by Sharon, Levi and Modai is even more racist and fascist, and to the right of Likud there are the parties like Moledat and Tzomet and Tehiya. These forces call for mass expulsion of the Palestinians and more settlements in the occupied territories.

Therefore, it is a problem if some Palestinian leaders are still ignoring the reality of the Zionist enemy which we confront.

2. The US position: In spite of the US administration's decision to open a dialogue with the PLO, its official stand is decisive rejection of the idea of a Palestinian state. The most recent political moves reflect the extent of the US response to the Israeli position. The Bush Administration has given Shamir a guarantee that the US will never pressure Israel to negotiate with the PLO, or accept a Palestinian state. The US Administration is also trying to replace an international conference with bilateral negotiations and a unilateral solution.

These are the main obstacles facing the embodiment of the Palestinian state. Until overcoming these obstacles, the goal of a Palestinian state will remain an ongoing struggle process. What is needed now is reinforcing the struggle by all means and on all levels - Palestinian, Arab and international, to bring about the change in the balance of forces needed to force Israel and the US