



met, and Mubarak seems willing to oblige even if that means colliding with the PLO and pressuring it. The Egyptian regime seems intent on continuing down this one-way street, heading towards a solution, any solution, if only this would ensure its prominent role and justify the policy it adopted almost two decades ago.

To serve these ends, it was required that the military option be dropped from the final communiqué of the summit. It was also required to drop the PLO's call for boycott and economic sanctions, letting the US off the hook for its unconditional support to Israel's aggressive policies. In short, it was required to advance the same old line of decline in the official Arab position.

On the other hand, it must be recorded in favor of the Baghdad Summit that there was another political line represented. Its positions can be characterized by two major aspects:

One: Calling for reserving the right to use force when the logic of reason proves futile, and working to attain the capacity to do so. This attitude was expressed by the Iraqi president in his opening speech and in his comments to the speeches of others. It was also expressed by the president of the State of Palestine, PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat, in his decisive words against the US administration and Israel, in his call for economic sanctions against states which facilitate Jewish immigration to occupied Palestine, and those which support continued Israeli aggression against the Arab nation. In a similar vein, Arafat called for convening the joint Arab defense council; he stressed the military option and signalled that the patience of the Palestinian leadership is running out because neither the US nor Israel have made any appropriate response to the PLO's peace initiative.

Two: The political discourse of those espousing this line was logical and reasonable and in compliance with the concepts of the present stage. For perhaps the first time, the expression of this political line has made the link between the logic of force and the force of logic, and herein lies its strength.

The outcome

After prolonged debate in the assembly hall and behind the scenes, the Baghdad Summit arrived at joint results which to a great extent were in favor of the «hardliners», but without irritating or embarrassing the «moderates» whose weight at the summit was greater. A glance at the balance of gains and losses allows us to assess the summit's results.

Iraq gained from this summit first of all simply because it was held in Baghdad, and a considerable number of the Arab leaders attended. Moreover, this summit took decisions which support Iraq's course on the eastern front in its war and peace with Iran, and in its confrontation of the campaign launched against it by the US, Israel and other parties.

The PLO came out victorious, first of all because the summit was convened in response to its call. Moreover, the summit took decisions that were supportive of the Palestinian peace initiative; it pledged financial aid and promoted Arab solidarity which has not excluded the military option and which stands by the Palestinian people and intifada.

King Hussein got more out of this summit than he expected. It was generally agreed that he succeeded in illuminating the situation in Jordan and why it needs support in the face of external threats.

Egypt and Saudi Arabia came out neither winners nor losers. They lost «the war of words» since the final communiqué condemned the US administration. But each state got something in return. Egypt repossessed the Arab League, and Cairo was again made the site of its permanent headquarters. Saudi Arabia obtained broad support, including from the PLO and Iraq, for its policy vis-a-vis Lebanon and the activities of the tripartite Arab committee in which Riyadh plays a main role.

The biggest winner at the summit was the concept of Arab solidarity based on upholding Arab rights and confronting challenges to the Arab nation. The Arab summit as an institution was a winner, for it regained its importance with this summit. To make a long story short, the Baghdad Sum-

mit put a halt to the line of decline that had characterized the preceding summits. This was expressed by Colonel Qaddafi in the final session when he said that the previous Arab summits came to nothing, while the Baghdad Summit amounted to something.

It is true that the summit was not completely equal to the challenge currently posed to the Palestinian people and the Arab nation as a whole. It failed to adopt many needed decisions, but at least it was an important step in the right direction. A number of factors contributed to the summit's success, especially the following three:

1. All the Arab leaders seemed to be aware that the conditions generated by the new international situation will not be to their interest unless they adapt to the changes and impose their positions as a major independent power bloc.

2. There was also broad awareness of the intensification of the aggressive, expansionist Zionist policy, its oppression of the Palestinian people, and the potential dangers it poses to Jordan, Iraq, Libya and other countries. The shadow of the Rishon Letzion massacre hung over the summit, as did the dangers posed by the unprecedented tide of new immigrants to Israel. Meanwhile, the Bush Administration seems just as close to Israel as were previous administrations, refraining from exerting any real pressure on it as some Arab regimes had expected. These factors weakened the line of surrender, and supported the logic of those who called for defending Palestinian and Arab rights by all means.

3. With the convening of the summit in Baghdad, the Iraqi leadership spared no effort to make it produce outstanding results that would conform to the regional role Iraq seeks to play. In this regard, the prevailing good relations between the PLO and Iraq were quite useful.

Real evaluation of the summit can only come in connection with the implementation of its decisions. This final judgement must wait for a time. In the interim, we are encouraged by the fact that the promised financial aid was extended to the PLO and Jordan only few days after the summit concluded. ●