

reported Kamal Hassan Ali as saying, «The Reagan Administration has responded to certain Egyptian ideas to revive the negotiations concerning the Palestinian issue». (*Al Ahram*, December 22.) He expressed his conviction that «The Palestinian leadership now concentrates on political methods...and if they merely get the hope for a peaceful solution, I believe there will be no need for more terrorism.» He emphasized that «Egypt is permanently in contact with Arafat and King Hussein to encourage them to join the peace process in the area on the basis of the Reagan initiative.» After his meeting with the US envoy Rumsfield, Mubarak declared, «We encourage the Palestinians to cooperate with King Hussein and establish links to push the Reagan plan to determine peace in the Middle East.»

A quick reaction came from the official American side in support of this step, as «an encouraging development in light of Egypt's commitment to the Camp David agreement and its strong support to the Reagan initiative.» In his first press conference after the Arafat-Mubarak meeting, the US President expressed his belief that «what President Mubarak is doing is to talk Mr. Arafat into going back to where he was...to hold contacts with King Hussein and make the peace negotiations, that is, any peace proposal to move to a new point.» He added, «Yet it is not necessary that an overall settlement in the Middle East precedes the settlement in Lebanon.» (as reported in December 23rd newpapers.)

In summary, nothing is new; the US and Egypt are in agreement and committed to the policy of Camp David and the Reagan plan.

Israel - full partner

In the meantime, Schultz had sent a message to the Israeli Prime Minister, trying to appease him by saying, «The meeting encourages Jordan to negotiate in order to reach a peaceful settlement with Israel, similar to what Egypt did before.» Despite the official Israeli protests, which expressed fear that the US role might not coincide with their objectives, «Israel was satisfied to attack Egypt», as was stated by Deputy Prime Minister David Levy. (*3Herald Tribune*, December 30.) Eliah Ben Eliazer, chairman of the Israeli Foreign Affairs and Security Committee and former ambassador to Egypt, declared: «The main fact remains that Arafat went to Mubarak without Mubarak's renouncing the Camp David agreements, and with the flag of Israel raised over the Israeli embassy in Cairo.» (*Al Ittihad*, December 23.) Yitzhak Rabin also stated his opinion: «Perhaps the meeting will prove to be positive if it enables Egypt to convince King Hussein to represent the Palestinians in the peace negotiations.» (*Herald Tribune*, December 25.) Shamir called for renewal of the autonomy talks.

Speaking to *Yediot Aharanot*, Butros Ghali, the Egyptian Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, tried to appease his Israeli allies by saying that he wanted to «clarify to public opinion in Israel that Egypt does not intend to work behind Israel's back

or deceive it. Egypt is working to save the peace talks from the stalemate they are suffering.» (*Al Watan*, December 31.)

With this commitment to the «honor of Camp David», the Egyptian authorities rapidly sent their envoy, Shafi Abdel Hamid, deputy of Foreign Affairs, to Israel to meet David Kimche, the General Director of the Foreign Ministry, and Prime Minister Shamir. After the latter was satisfactorily appeased, the two discussed «issues of mutual interest to achieve common objectives». Shamir told the Egyptian envoy that he «would like to reactivate the autonomy talks for the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza after the period of stagnation.» (*Herald Tribune*, December 30.) According to Zionist logic, this is limited to civil administration for the population without any power over the land.

It is legitimate to ask about the aims of some of Israel's actions in the recent period. For instance, at the time of the prisoner exchange when the battle in Tripoli reached its climax, assurances were given, to Mubarak in particular, of «safe passage» for Arafat and the Palestinian fighters, without blocking their departure from Lebanon. In any case, the shrewdness of the enemy should not be underestimated; Israel takes advantage of every available opportunity to weaken its opponents and push things in a certain direction - in this case, cornering Egypt and Jordan, taking into account all possibilities and options. Since the wise men of international finance capital are the ones who created «the game of nations», it is easy to deduce its principles and conclude the modes of reaction among the national bourgeoisie.

And Jordanian initiatives

In mid-December, King Hussein declared in an interview with BBC that he may find himself forced in the near future to bypass the Arab consensus and be satisfied with an Arab majority, as the means for joining negotiations on the West Bank and Gaza. After the Arafat-Mubarak meeting, the King called to «have as the first point on the agenda of any coming Arab Summit, reconsideration of the Arab League Charter, whereby decisions will be by majority and not by consensus.» (*Al Watan*, January 1.) In response, Khaled Hassan of Fatah's Central Committee stated that desire is mounting to «stop working according to the principle of consensus in the PLO, and rely on the majority in making decisions.»

Contacts between Cairo and Amman became active. Before the Arafat-Mubarak meeting was over, the Minister of Economy carried a message from Mubarak to the Jordanian monarch concerning the settlement. Later, the President of Egypt sent the director of his office for political affairs, Osama al Baz, «to inform him about the current talks that occurred with Arafat».

On January 5th, King Hussein abolished the National Consultative Council and called the Jordanian parliament for an emergency session. This parliament had not met since the occupation of the West Bank in 1967, and was indefinitely sus-