

Memorandum for Resolving the PLO's Crisis

The following is the first collective statement by a large group of significant national leaders and associations in the West Bank on the current crisis in the PLO:

The criminal aggression against Lebanon has failed to achieve its declared and hidden aims. It failed to annihilate the PLO, to impose the May 17th agreement or to strike the Syrian regime. This failure resulted in a serious economic, political and military crisis in 'Israel'. It had negative repercussions on the USA, internally and internationally, causing a failure for its traditional policies that aim to dominate the area and stabilize its advanced base, 'Israel'. This should have meant the decisive failure of the Camp David policy and the Reagan plan, and a positive impetus for the Palestinian, Arab and international struggle, had it not been for the divisions in the Palestinian arena. If these divisions continue, they threaten the very existence of the PLO and the achievements of our people under its leadership on the Palestinian, Arab and international level, in defense of their rights... Concurrent with this were the regretful conflicts and developments vis-a-vis the Syrian regime.

Despite its negative repercussions, the departure of the Palestinian resistance forces from Beirut contained evidence of the failure of the Zionist-imperialist plan and evidence of the continuity of the national struggle and its gains. It was an interim in which to reconstitute the struggle against the enemy plans, and to deal with the negative aspects engendered by the complex conditions of the struggle prior to the war. These negative aspects concerned internal organizational matters and relations within the Palestinian national arena, relations with the Lebanese nationalist forces and Syria, allies which were also targeted by the invasion, and relations with the progressive forces internationally, which were also targeted indirectly, first and foremost the Soviet Union. The aggression on Lebanon coincided with the US invasion of Grenada and the installation of new nuclear missiles in Europe and similar actions which increased tension in the world.

The extensiveness of the negative aspects resulted in the departure of Palestinian legitimacy from Lebanon and Syria, which was a great loss for the PLO and the Palestinian national struggle. This occurred at a time when great victories were achieved in the battlefield. There was a change in the balance of forces in favor of the Palestinian and Arab struggle. This effected a deep change on the struggle in the whole area and internationally; imperialist dominance was no longer total; the targeted forces were able to confront the aggression and surge towards liberation on a solid basis which strongly challenges the imperialist-Zionist aims and their strategic allies.

This was achieved during difficult and complicated circumstances where the Palestinian division and the exit of Palestinian legitimacy from the battlefield had the following dangerous consequences:

1. The Palestinian factions were preoccupied with (internal) contradictions, resulting in the paralysis of their effectiveness on the overall national level.
2. The enemy forces were able to manipulate the Palestinian cause...
3. Lebanon and Syria, the main confrontation arenas, lost the national and human contents and dimensions of the Palestinian struggle. This contributed to weakening these arenas and depriving the Palestinian struggle of its relations on the Arab and international levels. It helped the imperialists to isolate the nationalist and progressive forces, headed by nationalist Lebanon and Syria, in an attempt to revive the US-Zionist strategy and their agents in the area, and to isolate the Palestinian people and cause in order to liquidate them.

The PLO has always succeeded in overcoming difficulties, foiling conspiracies, advancing the Palestinian cause towards its aims and gaining international respect whereby our cause became a focus of international concern. At this time, the PLO, its bodies, forces and masses, bear a historical responsibility to remedy the situation and confront aggression, plots and deviation.

The 16th session of the Palestinian National Council, held in Algiers, adopted historical decisions that constitute the strategic basis for the Palestinian revolution. This disappointed those forces who were betting on the internal contradictions to lead to the liquidation of the PLO and the Palestinian cause. There were many reactions expressing the disappointment of these forces who drew hope from the divisions and began to auction off the PLO's independence without recognizing the PLO or allowing it to be present and work in their territories. To varying degrees, this is the case with the US and most European and Arab countries.

Thus we are faced with the following priorities for our work:

1. The urgent necessity of dealing with the divisions and restoring the PLO's unity, starting with reuniting Fatah; if it is not possible to start within Fatah, we deeply regret the negative repercussions this would incur.
2. Dealing with the negative aspects which affected the strategic relations between the PLO, Syria and the Lebanese