

## Joint Statement Regarding the Fall Meeting

The five undersigned forces held a leadership meeting to deliberate on the on-going preparations for the international meeting devoted to the Middle East conflict called for by U.S. President George W. Bush and planned for November 2007. They discussed their position regarding the meeting and its targets and dangers and arrived at the following conclusions:

First: In light of the futile results produced by the previous negotiation processes, the convening forces see that the efficient format for the arrival at a settlement to the Arab/Palestinian-Israeli conflict is a fully empowered international conference to be held with the participation of all concerned parties on the basis of the resolutions of international legitimacy and with the objective of implementing these resolutions under collective international supervision, within the context of the United Nations and under its auspices.

Second: President Bush's call for the fall meeting does not comply with the requirements of this format, but seeks to continue circumventing and distorting it. This invitation comes in the context of the U.S. venture to mobilize Arab and Palestinian support for its attempt to rescue its influence in the Middle East from the impasse to which its belligerent policies in Iraq, Afghanistan and other countries in the region have led it; and for its scheme to break up the Arab and Muslim worlds into conflicting axes. This call disregards the United Nations resolutions as a reference and seeks to supplant it with a new reference in line with the guarantees pledged by the Bush administration to the Sharon government in its letter of April 14, 2004, and which accedes to the Israeli ambitions to consolidate the settlements, the annexation of Jerusalem and the scrapping of the right of return. The U.S. invitation aims at confirming the two-state option with provisional borders — perhaps under another name — as the basis for negotiations in the proposed international encounter, and to separate the Palestinian track from other Arab tracks and to deepen the internal Palestinian division.

Third: Confronting the objectives behind this American invitation requires close coordination and assiduous Palestinian-Arab joint action in order to secure the conditions needed for any international meeting to be the springboard for a serious political process that will lead to a full Israeli withdrawal from all Arab and Palestinian lands occupied since 1967 and will ensure the national right of the Palestinian people to independence and return. This requires:

- a. That a defined reference be adopted that is based on the relevant UN resolutions, with the objective of implementing them.
- b. That a collective format be adopted for a comprehensive international sponsorship of the negotiations within the framework of the UN as a substitute for U.S. unilateralism.
- c. That the aim be a comprehensive settlement to all the issues of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and at its core the Palestinian question with all its aspects, including Jerusalem, refugees, borders, settlements, security and water, without the consideration of any partial, transitional or provisional solutions.
- d. That the joint Arab initiative be predicated on the upholding by the Arab countries of the resolutions of international legitimacy and the Arab Peace Initiative, and on their rejection of any attempt to divest these resolutions of their substance

through the separation of their tracks or the reprioritization of their clauses in compliance with the U.S.-Israeli attempts to impose the priority of normalization.

- e. That the participation of all the Arab parties that have lands occupied (Palestine, Syria and Lebanon) be assured and that it be based on an agenda that ensures the deliberation of all the issues of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Fourth: The convening forces warn of the dangers of holding the planned international meeting and participating in it as long as the minimum level of the above conditions for enhancing the prospects of the meeting's success in progressing towards a comprehensive and balanced solution and for averting the likelihood of sliding into the spiral of partial settlements are not met.

Fifth: The benchmark for any earnest international efforts aimed at solving the conflict is embodied in prevailing upon Israel to end its belligerent practices against our people and to desist from the unilateral creation of facts on the ground. These include freezing settlement activity; halting the building of the separation wall and dismantling it; ending incursions, assassinations and arrests; removing checkpoints; freeing prisoners; and abolishing the arbitrary resolution to designate the Gaza Strip a "hostile entity" and ending the siege on it.

Sixth: The gathered forces warn of the perils involved in embarking on negotiations against the backdrop of internal Palestinian disunity and on the basis of solidifying this division. The American invitation's design is to deepen this division and transform the conflict into a Palestinian-Palestinian one that obliterates the priority of confronting the occupation and ending it. The forces maintain that the true objective of U.S. and Israeli policy is to capitalize on Palestinian disunity and the consequent weakness to make extortionist demands and to wrest concessions from all parties. In this context, the forces affirm that an effective confrontation of the dangers posed by the American invitation can be achieved not through the deepening of rifts or the fabrication of alternatives to the PLO, but through serious action aimed at ending divisions and restoring cohesion among Palestinian ranks. Consequently, the convened forces renew their call to Hamas to backtrack on its military enterprise and its flouting of democracy, and to end the anomalous separatist situation in the Gaza Strip and to revert to operating under the umbrella of legitimacy. It also calls for the removal of all obstacles to a comprehensive and direct national dialogue that will lead to a democratic and peaceful solution to the internal crisis on the basis of the National Reconciliation Document and the Cairo Declaration.

Seventh: The convened forces assert that averting the risks and pitfalls presented by the current political moves requires the collective supervision of the management of the negotiation process, with the effective participation of all the willing Palestinian forces, and with the Executive Committee of the PLO assuming its leadership role in directing the political action and defining its limits and tactics.

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)  
The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP)  
Palestine People's Party (PPP)  
The National Palestinian Initiative  
The Palestinian Democratic Union (FIDA)

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