

Division for Palestinian Rights

PROPOSALS AND INITIATIVES
ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

(November 1988 - September 1989)

October 1989

Nineteenth session of the Palestine National Council (PNC)
(Algiers, 12-15 November 1988)

The session, called the session of the intifadah, adopted on 15 November two major documents, namely "The Political Communiqué of the Palestine National Council" and "The Declaration of Independence" (doc. A/43/827-S-20278). A decision was also taken to set up a provisional government of Palestine.

"The Political Communiqué" affirmed the PNC's determination to reach a comprehensive political settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the question of Palestine. In order to realize this task, PNC insisted on the implementation of the following principles: (a) the need to convene an effective international conference on the Middle East under United Nations auspices with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and all parties to the conflict in the region, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973); (b) Israel's withdrawal from all the Palestinian and Arab territories which it has occupied since 1967, including Arab Jerusalem; (c) cancellation of all measures of attachment and annexation and removal of the settlements established by Israel since 1967; (d) placement of the occupied territories, including Arab Jerusalem, under United Nations supervision for a limited period; (e) solution of the Palestine refugee problem; (f) assurance of freedom of worship at the holy places in Palestine; and (g) security arrangements by the Security Council for all States in the region, including the Palestinian State.

"The Declaration of Independence" proclaimed the establishment of the State of Palestine.

Forty-third session of the General Assembly.
Agenda item 37 "Question of Palestine"
(Geneva, 13-15 December 1988)

On 13 December, Chairman Arafat addressed the General Assembly (doc. A/43/PV.78). In his capacity as Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO he presented to the General Assembly a three-point plan which provided for: (a) the establishment, under the supervision of the Secretary-General, of a preparatory committee for the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with the initiatives of Presidents Gorbachev and Mitterand; (b) the placement of Palestinian land under temporary United Nations supervision and the deployment of international forces; (c) convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

Chairman Arafat's news conference
(Geneva, 14 December 1988)

In his news conference Chairman Arafat specified the key points he had made in his statement to the General Assembly. He stated that the national independence for Palestinians should be achieved in accordance with General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 and the right of all parties to the conflict in the Middle East, including the State of Palestine, Israel and other neighbouring countries, to live in peace and security based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

He also reiterated his previous renunciation of terrorism, including individual, group or state terrorism.^{1/}

Opening of PLO-United States dialogue.
Statement by President Ronald Reagan
(14 December 1988)

Following Chairman Arafat's news conference, President R. Reagan of the United States issued a statement in which he authorized the State Department to enter into a substantive dialogue with PLO representatives.

The same day, based on the President's statement, Secretary of State Mr. George Schultz designated the United States Ambassador to Tunisia Robert H. Pelletreau, Jr. as the only authorized channel for that dialogue.^{2/}

Proposals by the Soviet Minister for Foreign Affairs Eduard A. Shevardnadze
(Cairo, 23 February 1989)

Speaking in Cairo on 23 February 1989, Mr. Eduard A. Shevardnadze, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, in a statement entitled "The Middle East: a chance of an historic compromise" (doc. A/44/157-S/20498), outlined the Soviet leadership's perspective on the overall context of the conflict in the Middle East and means of resolving it. The possible steps proposed by Mr. E. A. Shevardnadze included, inter alia: (a) informal discussions in the Security Council, through informal consultations among its five permanent members and through a multilateral and bilateral dialogue of the parties concerned with reaching settlement, carried on either directly or through intermediaries with a view to arriving at a definite understanding acceptable to all parties concerning the basic parameters of an international conference on the Middle East. Such work, he said, must have a time limit and be spread over a period of six to nine months; (b) some questions of principle must be settled, namely, the political and legal basis of the conference, and involve the participation of the Palestinians in the conference; (c) the establishment, under the United Nations Secretary-General, of the post of special representative for the Middle East; (d) the formulation by the Security Council of balanced recommendations for organizing the conference; (e) agreement by the Government of Israel to enter into dialogue with the PLO;

(f) the holding of meetings between high-level representatives of Syria, Egypt, Jordan, the PLO and Lebanon in order to hasten the convening of the conference.

Initiative of the Government of Israel of 15 May 1989

Three months later, on 15 May 1989, the Government of Israel formulated its four-point initiative (doc. A/44/282-S/20637), which contained the following principles for a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict: (a) continuation of the political process based on the principles of the Camp David Accords; (b) establishment of peace relations between Israel and those Arab States which still maintain a state of war with it, for the purpose of promoting a comprehensive settlement for the Arab-Israeli conflict, including recognition, direct negotiations, ending the boycott, diplomatic relations, cessation of hostile activity in international institutions or forums and regional and bilateral co-operation; (c) call for an international endeavour to solve the Arab refugee problem. It was stated in this connection that Israel was prepared to be a partner in this endeavour; (d) free and democratic elections among the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza in an atmosphere devoid of violence, threats and terror. The initiative was based on two stages: Stage 'A' - a five-year transitional period for an interim agreement and Stage 'B' - permanent solution.

Remarks by Secretary of State James Baker to the 30th Annual AIPAC Policy Conference (Washington, D.C., 22 May 1989)

On 22 May 1989, in his remarks before the 30th Annual American Israel Public Affairs Committee Policy Conference, the United States Secretary of State Mr. James Baker outlined the following four principles of advancing the peace process in the Middle East, as viewed by the United States: (a) the object of the peace process is a comprehensive settlement achieved through negotiations based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), involving territory for peace, security and recognition for Israel and all the States of the region, and Palestinian political rights; (b) parties to negotiations must deal directly with each other. A properly structured international conference could be useful at an appropriate time, but only if it did not interfere with or in any way replace or be a substitute for direct talks; (c) requirement of a transitional period so as to reach a final settlement; (d) in advance of direct negotiations no party can or will dictate an outcome. Mr. Baker said that this was why the United States did not support annexation or permanent Israeli control of the West Bank and Gaza, nor does it support the creation of independent Palestinian State. He stated that the United States had a formula of self-government for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza in a manner acceptable to Palestinians, Israel and Jordan.

The Secretary of State called upon Israel to lay aside the vision of greater Israel, forswear annexation, stop settlement activity, allow schools to reopen and reach out to the Palestinians as neighbours who deserved political rights.^{3/}

PLO position regarding the Israeli elections plan
(Cairo, 26 July 1989)

On 25 July 1989, speaking in Addis Ababa during a meeting with Middle East News Agency and Egyptian newspaper editors, Chairman Y. Arafat stated, inter alia, that to resolve the Palestine problem, the Namibian example should be followed and these steps taken: (a) a partial Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian territories should be secured; (b) a timetable should be drawn up for the complete withdrawal of Israeli troops in stages over a period of 27 months; (c) elections to be supervised by the United Nations, and refugees and deportees should be enabled to return to the West Bank and Gaza; and (d) a date for independence should be determined.^{4/}

Chairman Y. Arafat added on 27 July 1989 in Cairo, during his talks with the President of Egypt, Mr. Hosni Mubarak, that he was ready to meet with any Israeli official, whether in Egypt or elsewhere, to discuss the situation in the Middle East region.^{5/}

The PLO responded to the Israeli elections plan by a set of conditions which included the following: (a) the residents of Arab East Jerusalem must be allowed to take part in the elections; (b) elections candidates must be assured freedom of speech and given immunity from prosecution; (c) the Israeli Army must be withdrawn from population centres to pre-determined areas on the day of voting; (d) teams of Egyptians and Americans would serve as elections observers; (e) before elections, Israel would agree in principle that it is willing to give up territory.^{6/}

Egypt's 10 conditions to the Israeli elections plan
(Cairo, August 1989)

Continuing its efforts to solve the question of Palestine, the Government of Egypt in September 1989 proposed ten conditions to the Israeli elections plan. These conditions included the following: (a) all Palestinians in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem should be allowed to vote and run for office; (b) candidates should be free to campaign without interference from the Israeli authorities; (c) Israel should allow international supervision of the election process; (d) construction or expansion of Jewish settlements would be frozen during this period; (e) the army would withdraw from the area of polling places on election day; (f) only Israelis who live or work in the occupied territories would be permitted to enter there on election day; (g) preparations for the elections should not take longer than two months. Egypt and the United States could help form the Israeli-Palestinian committee doing that work; (h) the United States and Israel should publicly guarantee Israel's adherence to the plan; (i) Israel should publicly agree in advance to accept the outcome of the elections.^{7/}

Notes

- 1/ The New York Times, The Washington Post, 15 December 1988.
- 2/ See Department of State Bulletin, vol. 89, No. 2143, February 1989, p. 51.
- 3/ See Department of State Bulletin, vol. 89, No. 2148, July 1989, pp. 24-27.
- 4/ Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report: Near East and South Asia, No. FBIS-NES-89-143, 27 July 1989, p. 1.
- 5/ Al-Wafd, 27 July 1989.
- 6/ The New York Times, 27 July 1989.
- 7/ The New York Times, 14 September 1989; Al-Qabas, 9-10 September 1989.

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