

**FIRST MEETING
OF THE AAPSO
ARAB SOLIDARITY COMMITTEES**

January 26 - 27, 1983

Aden, PDRY



Afro-Asian Publications

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THE CURRENT SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

There are more than one reason why the Arab Solidarity Committees within AAPSO, should undertake, with the beginning of 1983, a serious assessment of events in the Arab region over the past year, as well as envisage the events that may occur this year in order to avert any possible dangers by mobilizing the Arab peoples to assume once more their intended role, from which they have been deprived and which has led to grave consequences. The last being the Lebanese crisis.

Having referred to Lebanon, it is imperative that we recall that Israel launched its invasion on June 4, 1982. It was the longest and most vicious war, manifested in the invasion and violation of Lebanese territory and sovereignty as an independent UN member; the destruction and occupation of hundreds of Lebanese cities and villages as well as Palestinian refugee camps; the barbaric siege and occupation of Beirut; the establishment of concentration camps for Lebanese and Palestinian citizens and, finally the barbaric massacre of civilians in Sabra and Shatilla, surpassing all Nazi atrocities.

It has become clear that Israel's objectives, according to Begin and Sharon, were :

- To eliminate the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)
- To liquidate the Palestinian question and establish a stooge political system in Lebanon in order to conclude a peace treaty with Israel as a second phase in the Camp David peace process. In the event of failure to do so, Lebanon would be divided into petty states of opposing or partisan factions that would work towards the realization of Israel's expansionist strategy within Lebanon and throughout the Arab World.
- To force Syria, as a frontline state, to bow down to the Zionist enemy.

This war was launched in implementation of US schemes in the Middle East and the Arab World as a whole, aimed at imposing an American - Israeli peace on all the Arab states.

In fact, all the acts perpetrated by Israel inside Lebanon and against the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples reflect the power policy pursued by the US in the Middle East after the balance of power shifted in favour of Israel, considered an advanced base for the US.

We are all aware of the role assumed by the US as a full partner in the aggressive war on Lebanon in terms of planning and execution as well as providing Israel with financial, military and political support during and after the barbaric operations.

Israel, backed by the US, deployed about 150,000

soldiers and a large part of its airforce and naval fleet in this war. It used phosphorous, fissionable and cluster bombs against civilian targets, villages, refugee camps, hospitals and schools. As a result, tens of thousands were killed and wounded and hundreds of thousands of the Lebanese and Palestinian civilian population were turned homeless.

In the face of this large-scale invasion, the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples provided a wonderful example of resistance and sacrifice, confronting alone the most vicious and longest war in the Middle East for more than 80 days. The Palestinian people, through the fierce battle it led in alliance with the Lebanese National movement, in an unequal war, affirmed to the whole world and to the imperialist circles headed by the US that their cause was just and that they were not merely a group of terrorists as the imperialists and Zionists prefer to describe them.

The military losses incurred by the PLO did not shatter the Palestinian people's hope for a just settlement that would include their right to return, self-determination and the establishment of their independent and sovereign national state.

Despite Israeli military supremacy in the war against Lebanon, power alone cannot achieve the peace imposed by the US against the will of a people as a whole.

No doubt, the political situation in the Middle East has changed and is closely linked to the consequences of the Lebanese war, the most important of which are :

- The exodus of the Palestinian fedayeen and the PLO to more than seven Arab States, weakening the Organization's military backbone .
- Israeli military supremacy and its possession, besides sophisticated weapons, of new ones such as the internationally prohibited, phosphorous and cluster bombs, spreading fear throughout the region.
- The unprecedented increase in disputes and differences among the Arabs as regards the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the inability of most of the Arab states to take a specific position to put an end to the invasion and massacre that continued for more than 80 days against the Lebanese and Palestinian peoples.

It was evident from the beginning that the US and the Reagan Administration aimed at using military force to strengthen its grip over the whole region and, in turn, impose its schemes in conformity with its objectives and vital interests, the most important being the plundering of Arab oil riches. This was tantamount to an effective implementation of the strategic alliance between the US and Israel as regards the whole region, which constitutes part of the US's international policy aimed at increasing confrontation and tension, achieving military supremacy in the balance of power and inciting civil wars in numerous regions in the world.

However much we may speak of the US role in Middle East and its position as regards the Palestinian question, the previous facts, the last being the events in Lebanon, affirm that the US considers Israel an indis-

pensable loyal and strategic ally, a fact well known to the whole world despite certain Arab claims "that a solution could be reached through the US which holds 99% of the cards".

The only astonishing factor is the position adopted by most of the Arab Governments. World public opinion is aware that the aggressive war against Lebanon would not have been possible without the collusion of Arab reactionary forces and the rupture in the internal balance of power resulting from Egypt's link with the Camp David peace process which put a freeze on the most influential Arab front in the Arab-Zionist conflict.

However much we may Ray about the Arab position, we can only describe it as having been weak and crippled, confined to so-called political action. Most of the so-called moderate regimes rushed to America, calling for an American solution after the US had waved its thick stick at them by providing military and political support to Israel in its invasion of Lebanon. The rest were content to voice criticism and disapproval. A few sent volunteers and military and medical equipment to assist the besieged in West Beirut.

Thus, the situation was clearly defined. The slogans stopped and the Arab reactionary forces removed their mask exposing their total involvement with the US scheme in the Arab region. The other regimes adopted a position characterised by extreme negativism at the least. Some adopted an irresponsible position which was not in the interest of the PLO struggle.

The Arab Foreign Ministers meeting, held in Tunis

a few days after the invasion, failed to take any decision to deter the Israeli aggression on Lebanon. The meeting, which was held at the request of the PLO, ended without having taken any decision calling for the convening of an Arab Summit. A Ministerial Committee was formed to pursue Arab efforts aimed at the implementation of UN resolutions on the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon, despite their full awareness of Israel's history as regards UN resolutions, never having implemented any of them.

Thus remained the situation until the first abortive Fez Summit and the recent Fez Summit which produced the first Arab project, later to be known as the Fez project.

Whatever may be the announced objectives of its invasion of Lebanon, Israel's military objectives have been achieved, particularly with regards to the liquidation of Palestinian resistance elements and the creation of a 40-kilometer buffers zone in southern Lebanon. One cannot overlook, however, that Israel has other political, military and economic objectives that have gained more clarity and constitute a greater threat to the situation in the Middle East region.

Former US Ambassador Eden Brown states that Israel's invasion of Lebanon has five objectives :

1. To destroy the PLO
2. To give Syria and the Soviet Union a bloody nose.
3. To deter the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

4. To form a new Lebanese Government loyal to Israel.

5. To drive out the Palestinians from Beirut.

No doubt, the last period has shown that some of these objectives have been achieved by Israel and that the remaining ones are, as it appears, close to being achieved.

If Israel was able to invade Beirut yesterday, it is today threatening other Arab capitals. It is feared that the Arab region may be approaching a stage of division into petty states and Maronite, Druse, Phalangist, Christian and Muslim factions.

This partition policy has begun to take shape in Lebanon

Regretfully, we are reviewing the situation the way Israel, supported by the US, wishes to portray, while the Arab side remains absent from the scene and content that, through legitimate action in the Fez Summit, it endorsed the following principles for a M.E. peace plan.

- 1) The withdrawal of Israeli forces from all the Arab territories occupied in 1967, including Arab Jerusalem.
- 2) The removal of Israeli settlements on the Arab territories occupied since 1967.
- 3) Securing the freedom of worship and religious rites to all religions.

- 4) Affirming the Palestinian peoples right to self-determination and safeguarding their inalienable national rights under the leadership of the PLO, their sole legitimate representative, as well as compensating those who do not wish to return.
- 5) Subjecting the west Bank and the Gaza Strip to a period of transition for a few months under UN supervision.
- 6) The establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Al-Quds as its capital.
- 7) The Security Council should set peace guarantees for all the states in the region, including the independent Palestinian state.
- 8) The Security Council should implement these resolutions.

This is in addition to the formation of a Committee of seven Foreign Ministers whose task would be to inform the five permanent Security Council Members of the plan.

It is clear that, despite their delayed plan which came after the invasion of Lebanon, the massacres, the banishment of hundreds of thousands and the destruction of Beirut, the Arabs are speaking of peace as if it were a dream, without building the force that would protect that peace. A comprehensive and just peace cannot be achieved without a change in the balance of power in the Region. Following the Camp David Accords, Israel

sought to achieve supremacy in arms and equipment while the Arabs failed to do so because "they do not want". Consequently, Israel will never accept an Arab peace plan unless the Arab side is sufficiently strong.

The Arab world today faces the continued threat of an Israeli invasion of another Arab capital. Nothing guarantees the establishment of an equal and just peace except the existence of a force capable of protecting it. As long as Israel remains militarily supreme, it will never accept any Arab or other peace plans and will attempt, as it is currently trying in Lebanon, to impose its own peace.

Therefore, the continuation of the Arab situation in its present condition means the perpetration of the overt and covert Zionist, American scheme and also that the Palestinian issue will be exposed to new crises at the internal and external levels.

At the level of the West Bank and Gaza, Israel attempts to strike at the political and military leadership of the PLO, considered by all Palestinians, to be their sole legitimate representative, in order to shatter the hopes of the Palestinians inside the West Bank and Gaza until they accept autonomy as devised by Israel. Consequently Israel evicted nine mayors and heads of Palestinian Councils and accused them of supporting the PLO.

Faced with such Arab impotence, Israel endeavours to implement its scheme for a final domination of the West Bank, by confiscating land and building settlements at an unprecedented rate.

At the Lebanese level, it has become evident that

Israel due to its control of the situation is attempting to impose its conditions by driving the Palestinians out of Lebanon and distributing them in the Arab countries. Furthermore it seeks the withdrawal of Syrian forces and finally to conclude a peace treaty which would install Israeli influence and impose its conditions over the legitimate authority in Lebanon.

Apart from the political and military objectives achieved by Israel by means of its invasion of Lebanon, one of its most important economic aims for a long time has been to gain control over the waters in Lebanese territory, namely the Litani river.

This objective was discussed in the past in a memorandum presented by the Zionist movement in 1919 in the Peace Convention in Paris. Other documents also bear witness to the Zionist movement's interest in seizing the water in the Arab region including the Litani river whose course Israel has started to divert in order to provide water for irrigating the Negev desert and to draw thousands of Jewish emigrants.

Doubtless that the war in Lebanon was meant to exterminate military and civilian Palestinian presence in the country and to remove all foreigners in order to establish a client Maronite state or small sectarian petty States if possible.

The reasons behind the Arab-Israeli conflict still exist and have become acute due to more Israeli occupation and genocide of the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples. Israel's policy will bring forth new disasters

never witnessed before in the history of the region.

Henceforth, several questions arise: What happens after the Fez Conference ? What happens after the PLO's departure from Beirut ? What happens after Lebanon's occupation by Israel ? What is the official and popular Arab situation in the face of such developments in which Israel and the U.S. take a leading position ?

All these questions require pragmatic answers. The meeting of Arab committees in Aden should attempt to find the answers in order to contribute to the sincere efforts made in the Arab arena in analysing the situation and finding positive solutions.

Undoubtedly, Israeli aggression and the American imperialist onslaught should be confronted at present more than ever, by consolidating the unity of the Arab front, reinforcing the position of national and progressive Arab organizations and forces on the basis of an integrated programme against American imperialism, securing democratic freedom, mobilizing the Arab masses and capabilities and intensifying the alliance with the friendly forces in the world particularly the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

Nevertheless, how could all this be achieved in an age where revolution recedes to open the way for a new stage, namely the age of oil wealth. For according to Dr. Fouad Mursi the age of Arab oil has evolved to the age of counter revolution and then the age of defecting from the Arab revolution.

It has been extinguished, its pockets liquidated, only

the Palestinian revolution remained. He added, "the rulers of the oil age are not the champions of any national issue. They defend their legitimate and illegitimate commissions and wealth, they protect their well-known and secret pilage which is organically linked with foreign monopolies whether for production, marketing, supplying and financing. The U.S. is a full partner of the Arabs starting from petroleum and money to war, plots and peace. Therefore, a settlement with Israel under the American umbrella becomes a natural matter.

Moreover, the Arab region in the shadow of the full partner in economy and politics has gained nothing but dispersion and more decline. Neglected by its friends, it cleared the way for American hegemony and Israeli belligerence in fear of the Arab revolution, vigorously expressed by the Palestinian revolution.

It was clear that some Arab regimes acted as full partners of the US in the Arab region. All forms of assistance such as money, facilities and military bases were extended in order to crush the Arab revolution.

Nevertheless, these regimes were exposed before their people during the invasion of Lebanon and the siege of Beirut and were saved by Reagan's initiative which had brought nothing new except a repetition of an interpretation of the Camp David Agreement which was rejected by the PLO and most Arab Countries and which proved its failure to resolve the Palestinian issue, the core of the Middle East conflict.

Arab oil, which at one time was considered to be

a weapon to defend the Palestinian issue and Arab peoples in their struggle against the imperialist and Zionist forces has become a total incorporation of the Arab will in the international capitalist economy whose revenues are presented in the form of military and economic assistance to Israel.

The time has come to end this dark age so that it may serve Arab peoples instead of rulers since Arab economy has become a part of international capitalism and the Arabs, by squandering their wealth, have become subordinate capitalist parasites devoid of national allegiance. Consequently, relations and strong bonds have been broken and Arab division became acute.

Even the people were affected by the Arab regimes' affliction. Oil penetrated all parts of the Arab countries and petro-money flower into the hands of beneficiaries. The Arabs lost their identity to the extent that the return of American forces to Beirut and their presence in Lebanon was considered an Arab victory over Israel.

It is high time to terminate this dark oil age before dealing with the conflict with Israel because the Arab home has been struck from inside due to this relationship.

Undoubtedly, Arab economy should be liberated and petro-money should be used within the Arab nation for the wider benefit of the Arab masses and their countries and to use oil and its revenues as a powerful weapon in the hands of the Arab nation against America and the Zionist enemy.

It was evident that Arab regimes stood helpless before Israel's aggression and arrogance. It was also clear that the role of the Arab masses was absent. Whatever were the reasons for such absence caused above-all by Arab regimes, the role of the masses cannot be offered on a gold platter but develops through their struggle and rejection of a fait accompli and by bringing pressure to bear upon their governments in a bid to take positive stands on national issues. The earthquake which had struck the Palestinian resistance and the national Lebanese movement could move to other parts in the Arab nation, a possible fact in the light of Israeli superiority and arrogance as well as unlimited American consolidation and support and obvious Arab reactionary collusion.

In the light of these facts, two questions arise :

- What are the options in the Arab-Zionist conflict ?
Is it possible to choose the political and peaceful option ?

In that case which course should be followed particularly that initiatives have been made by many sources. It started by :

- An international conference in Geneva.
- The Camp David Accords.
- The Soviet plan for resolving the Middle East conflict.
- The European initiative.
- The Franco-Egyptian initiative.
- Reagan's initiative.
- The Fez initiative, an Arab plan.

Other new plans or initiative to solve the Palestinian and Middle East conflict cannot be predicted. If the Arab side in general and the Palestinians in particular did choose the peaceful solution to solve their problem with Israel, does the Israeli side truly believe in this option? Reality affirms the negative; therefore the Arab side has to resort to the military option, a fact proved by repeated events. On the other hand the Arab side is incapable, from the practical aspect, to engage in military battles because political decision to wage war with Israel does not exist despite public statements and threats of a military confrontation. Moreover, most Arab governments have strategically defined their stances with US policy which is biased in favor of Israel and has wagered on the American solution despite verified evidence on the American role in the region.

Therefore, the picture appears to be discouraging, neither the military option can be carried out nor is the peaceful one supported by any Arab power.

The proposal made by the AAPSO in its 13th Committee meeting in Aden in March 1981 and the meeting of its Presidium in Kabul and Tashkent still stands and we propose its discussion deeply and continuously in order to find a pragmatic plan to take a decision in this concern.

Undoubtedly, supporting and developing the Arab peoples' struggle is the basis for reaching a solution of the Palestinian issue. Above all the bases and democratic practices of the people in all the Arab Countries should be broadened and secured as well as their popular, unionist and professional organizations so that they may assume a fundamental role in supporting the Palestinian issue.

If a direct military option for solving the Palestinian problem is not envisaged, the consolidation of military power, its development and raising the level of its performance for the benefit of Arab countries should bring the Arab party in the conflict closer to an equal position.

The sacrifice which must be realized in any solution of the problem must first guarantee the rights of the Palestinian people, the objectives of the Arab peoples, as well as securing peace in this vital part of the World.

This could be achieved by holding an international conference with the participation of all the parties concerned primarily the PLO on an equal footing. Such a proposal could win the support of international forces and World public opinion with all its trends, which seek to establish peace in the area.

Undoubtedly, the military option, in the long run, cannot be overlooked. Furthermore, it is not possible to diminish the importance of consolidating the military capability of the Arab side and the necessity of reaching a minimum level of coordination and cooperation in this field. It is also necessary and vital to consider the importance of radical changes in the development of popular liberation movements in the Arab nation, to encourage them, to attain more solidarity and coordination democratically in a bid to unify positions.

In brief, this is the current Arab situation facing the Zionist-American enemy, which demands a serious and frank pause in order to analyse the situation and define its militant tasks at present and in the future.

**SPEECH OF
Mr. NOURI ABDUL RAZZAK
Secretary General — AAPSO**

Brother Ali Nasser Mohamed

Secretary General of the Yemeni Socialist Party Central Committee, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Council and Prime Minister.

Brother and Comrade Yasser Arafat, President of the Palestine Liberation Organisation Executive Committee and Supreme Commander.

Dear Brother, Ali Badheeb, Chairman of Yemeni Council for Peace and Solidarity

It is a great honour for the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organisation that we have this great opportunity to hold the meeting of Arab Solidarity Committees on the occasion of the twelfth anniversary of the Palestinian revolution and during the twentieth anniversary celebration of the victorious October 14th revolution.

This gives the meeting additional importance and increases its decisive impact at the international level. It is a great honour that these celebrations and this meeting are held in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, this strong fortress of Arab national liberation, which from a position of confidence and ability to resist imperialism and reactionarism embraced the Palestinian

revolution, and this in itself, is a challenge to Zionist and imperialist forces in our region.

This is a great credit for a people small in number, but strong in determination and belief. It is a prominent example that should be followed and shows that will, determination and leadership provide the basis for victory. On behalf of AAPSO and its delegation, and on behalf of representatives of Arab Solidarity Committees, I would like to express my deep appreciation for the struggle waged by the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. This is not strange, for the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen was always of the first countries to support all national liberation movements in the Gulf and the entire Arab region. In critical and difficult times faced by the Palestinian Revolution and the Lebanese National movement, at the time of the Israeli invasion supported by the United States, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen exerted all efforts and offered all its potential in support of the Palestinian revolution.

Comrades,

We meet today and this is the first meeting of Arab committees at this level and scope, following the severe crisis that befell the entire Arab nation and the Palestinian and Lebanese liberation movements, in the wake of the fascist Israeli aggression supported by American Imperialism, on Lebanon and its consequences. I say this meeting is important because it must take a frank and courageous stand to understand the lessons and results. There is much that must be frankly and bravely discussed. It is the heroism of the Palestinian people with PLO

leadership along with the Lebanese national movement, when they resisted unequal forces supported by the latest American arms. This resistance led the entire Arab nation to hold its head high.

On the other hand one must say with frankness that we stood before an astonishing Arab silence, which surpassed all our expectations. We stood before Arab stagnation which allowed the aggressor to ignore all international agreements and values, and all resolutions adopted by the United Nations and other international fora, including the Security Council, because it did not expect to find this silence regarding the destinies of the Palestinian People and liberation movement and the Lebanese people and Lebanon. This, in fact, is a lesson to us all, if we wish to emerge, from this crisis and advance towards victory in future. For it is neither right nor honest for the Arab nation and masses that we should continue the same way, using the same slogans and analyses, when we are facing an enemy who is daily growing stronger, and is armed from the World's best arsenal, and is re-inforced by the latest methods of destruction, threatening the Arab nation, the Palestinian people and the Arab liberation movement.

As my brother Ali Badheeb said in his valuable statement, the American Administration is today openly escalating its campaigns in all the World, first, in the Lebanese invasion, in nuclear armament and the Gulf situation second, and third in the escalation in the Indian Ocean, and fourth South Africa, fifth Latin America and the Caribbean Sea and Sixth escalation in the whole World. What happened in Beirut to the PLO and the Arab nation is

part of this international conspiracy led by the United States. Now the United States is establishing the Central Command of the Rapid Deployment Forces as an escalation of openly aggressive forces. This challenge posed by the United States reflects its aggressiveness on the one hand and the strength of the resistance on the other.

I ask where are the days of Suez and the days of resistance against imperialist alliances, when one percent of what happens today in the Arab nation from west to east shook the Arab masses from the Ocean to the Gulf, overturning governments and bringing revolutions. Where are we today after this great massacre of the Palestinian revolution, our vibrant heart and vanguard. Yet, we find this Arab silence, and the absence of the Arab street and organisations. This is a very grave situation, if we are truly loyal to the Palestinian revolution, the liberation movement and the struggle against imperialism. This is what we have discussed in the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organisation and its recent meetings.

If we wish to place our movement and people on the road to victory then the Arab masses and not governments must play the main role. For the masses must achieve victory and must stand in solidarity with the struggle of the Palestinian revolution, the Lebanese movement, and the people of Lebanon against the partition of Lebanon.

Comrades and brothers,

We have come here to study the best and most successful means to continue the World campaign for solidari-

rity with the Palestinian revolution and the Lebanese people to end the Israeli occupation of Lebanon, and to lead World public opinion at the international levels to pressure imperialist and Israeli forces for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon, and to promote the unity and Arab identity of Lebanon in this sensitive part of our Arab nation. We are of the opinion that the Palestinian and Lebanese questions should always continue to be a vital issue in all international forums. We should mobilise the largest international forces, for silence serves the interests of Zionism and imperialism, and encourages the Israeli occupying forces to remain for a long time, to partition Lebanon and conspire against other Arab countries and the Arab liberation movement. We have come here in this spirit, the spirit of unity and solidarity and we should raise the Palestinian and Lebanese questions in all international forums.

I have one last word to say from a position of responsibility in the AAPS and in various parts of the World, during our solidarity campaigns with the Palestinian revolution and the Lebanese people. I wish to tell you, Abu Ammar, that you and your comrades in the legendary resistance during the fierce battles and the darkness that spread over our nation and World, were the light, beacon, and inspiration.

Dear Comrades,

Today, the World and all progressive forces respect and appreciate the Palestine Liberation Organisation and the Palestinian command. A united Palestinian stand is expected to be the basis on which we shall build the

Arab solidarity movement for the Palestinian State and the achievement of the Palestinian people's national rights including the right to self-determination on their land and soil as well as for a united and free Lebanon where the Lebanese people would live freely and independently away from Israeli occupation troops and imperialist conspiracies. We pledge you and all our brothers that the AAPSO, and you well know that it offers all available potential for the victory of the Palestinian and Lebanese causes, will increase its solidarity and will spare nothing to further this just cause in every part of the World with the aim of Arab co-operation.

You are confident that there are large forces and chiefly the socialist forces, the progressive forces in the West, and the national liberation movements in Asia, Africa and Latin America. We pledge you that we shall follow your political decision and support your struggle in all international forums. We are confident that the Arab Solidarity Committees Meeting will have important results for this campaign and for the fulfilment of these objectives.

** transcribed and translated into English from a tape recording.*

**SPEECH OF
Mr. ALI BADHĒEB**

**Chairman of the Yemeni Council
for Peace and Solidarity**

Dear Brother

Ali Nasser Mohamed,
Secretary General of the Yemeni Socialist Party Central
Committee, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme
People's Council, Prime Minister.

Dear Brother Yasser Arafat,

Chairman of PLO Executive Committee and General Com-
mander of the Palestinian Revolution Armed Forces.

Dear Brother Nouri Abdul Razzak

AAPSO Secretary General.

Dear Sisters,

Dear Brothers,

Allow me on behalf of the Yemeni Council for Peace
and Solidarity in the People's Democratic Republic of
Yemen to welcome you at the Opening meeting of the
Arab Solidarity Committees.

This meeting is devoted to mobilise the public opin-
ion forces in the region and the world for the victory
of the just Palestinian cause and its great revolution
under the leadership of Palestine Liberation Organisation,
the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people

and for the Lebanese under the leadership of its national movement.

Comrades and dear friends, it is no coincidence that this meeting should be held at the beginning of this new year, as we are preparing to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the October 14 revolution, which enjoys the support of the masses and the national progressive forces. Also, comrades and dear friends; it is no coincidence that this meeting should come at a time of great celebrations in our country on the occasion of the eighteenth anniversary of the Palestinian revolution. This is fresh evidence of the close cohesion between the struggles of our Yemeni revolution, the Palestinian revolution and the Lebanese national movement in the just and legitimate struggle against imperialism and Zionism and all the forces hostile to aspirations of our Arab Peoples. In fact this is fresh evidence of our solid principles and stable progressive system led by the Yemeni Socialist Party, along the road of investing our national democratic revolution with its socialist principles to double our noble and serious work for our democratic Yemen movement, the consolidation of our Arab revolution for Arab unity and democracy, and consolidation of our comradely and struggling relation with all socialist democratic and progressive liberation forces on the whole world.

Comrades and dear brothers,

We truly realize the great responsibility we have in holding this great and important meeting in our capital. We know that this meeting reflects a response of our national duties, and is an important means to consolidate

and develop our Arab Solidarity movement so that it can fulfil its role and activities to meet the requirements of the present Arab situation, and can confront the barbarous attacks of imperialism and Zionism against our Arab countries and peoples. The best evidence of this is the barbarous attack and the destructive elimination war launched by the Zionist entity fully supported by American colonialist strategy against the Palestinian revolution and the Lebanese national movement, and in consequence against all Arab revolutionary movements and the revolutionary movements of neighbouring peoples.

Comrades and dear brothers,

This meeting is very important as it is the first meeting held on a popular level to unify Arab public opinion against the barbarous attack on the Palestinian revolution and Lebanese people.

We sincerely believe that the time has come for Arab Solidarity movements to develop their role in mobilising and sensitizing Arab public opinion to the surrounding dangers. The time has come to fight despair and surrender, and to bring out the possibilities and potential of confrontation, to revive the will of the masses to defend their national exposé and combat all defeatist projects and conspiracies.

Comrades and dear brothers,

We wish to reaffirm our faith in the importance of continued action and determination to consolidate effective and constant co-ordination and co-operation between Arab solidarity committees. In this phase our need is

great to define common group action against the reactionary Zionist and imperialist offensive.

Comrades and dear brothers,

Zionism with the fully support of World imperialist forces and chiefly American imperialism, has succeeded in occupying all Palestine and continues its expansionist plans to occupy other parts of our Arab nation and impose its occupation of Lebanon. It is no longer content with this but is openly planning to impose US aggressive domination on all Arab peoples.

It has started to go beyond the limits of the biblical promised land, to the African and Asian countries. Hence, comrades and dear brothers, it is clear that the Zionist threat is not only a threat to Arab peoples, but is also a threat to the security of the entire region and World peace and security.

I do not think that we are ignorant of the role played by Zionism with the direct support of World imperialism, and directly as usual, American imperialism, in conspiring against progressive regimes and revolutionary movements in more than one place in the World. Nor, dear friends, can we ignore to mention the gravity of the American imperialist conspiracy.

As we all know, it has recently established the Central Command of the ill-repulsed Rapid Deployment Forces, whose aim is to interfere in the internal affairs of peoples of the region, to threaten national regimes and revolutionary movements and to protect reactionary pillars. The conspiracies of American imperialism and

Zionist forces continue to impose their hegemony on peoples of the region. A few days ago the United States which leads world imperialism, undertook military manoeuvres with governments in certain Arab countries. Those manoeuvres are a threat to peace and security in the region. In spite of all this, these governments and official political circles and co-operating groups do not hesitate to antagonize the Arab revolutionary movement, to conspire against the unity of the Palestinian revolution and to cast doubt on Arab-Soviet friendship relations. Through this, they aim to create a sense of moral failure in our Arab masses, to weaken its revolutionary spirit, and to shake its confidence in its potential and abilities, and to isolate them from their original allies, and chiefly the Soviet Union, but this will not be. To achieve this the Zionist enemy continues its aggressive policy and reactionary forces to fulfil colonialist projects and to attempt the Camp David accords in various ways.

Comrades and dear brothers,

Allow me to express once again on behalf of the Yemeni Council for peace and solidarity and to affirm the policy of our Yemeni Socialist Party, which is responsible for all revolutionary action in the country. Allow me to speak of the policy of the revolutionary government that stands from our constant group action to consolidate the struggle of the heroic Palestinian people and its great revolution to return, to achieve self determination and to establish an independent Palestinian State. We reaffirm our support for the struggle of the Lebanese people against Zionist occupation, and

for the struggle of our Arab peoples against the conspiracies and plans of reactionary Zionist - American colonialist forces.

Comrades and dear friends,

We also have to work with all our strength to ensure and consolidate the unity of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Comrades and dear brothers,

All progressive countries and revolutionary movements in our Arab countries believe firmly in the need to consolidate the unity of our Arab revolutionary movement. We are also called on to consolidate Arab solidarity that is hostile to imperialism and Zionism, and to stand firmly against the Camp David records and defeatist strategic agreement projects which threaten and harm our national interest. We should also oppose projects that ignore the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to return and to build a Palestinian State under the leadership of PLO. To do this, Comrades and dear friends, we are more than any other time, required to help and mobilise public opinion in our countries and in the whole World against the establishment of imperialist military bases and imperialist military manoeuvres which are a serious threat to our peoples, regional security and World peace.

Comrades and dear friends,

Our need is great to consolidate our relations with

peoples and with the Arab revolution. To do this we must double our noble and honourable work to consolidate liberation movements in Asia, Africa and Latin America for independence, democracy and progress and against all forms of racism, fascism and dictatorships. It is also important to consolidate our struggle to defend peace everywhere in the World and to consolidate our work alongside the democratic liberation movement against the aggressive policy of imperialism. And so, comrades and dear friends, our defence of Arab-Soviet friendship will always be an important structure and a sure guarantee of the struggle of our people against imperialism, colonialism and Zionism.

The Soviet Union truly continues to be a main strategic ally of all peoples fighting for liberation, progress, democracy, socialism and peace.

Comrades and dear friends,

Once again I welcome you on behalf of the Yemeni Peace and Solidarity Council. I wish you all success in the meetings of the Arab Solidarity Committees and allow me on behalf of the Yemeni Peace and Solidarity Council to express my great happiness at the participation of our dear brothers Ali Mohamed, Yasser Arafat and Nouri Abdel Razzak as well as representatives from friendly countries, in our opening meeting.

Comrades and dear friends,

Allow me to propose as a first step in directing the meeting of Arab Solidarity Committees, that we elect our dear brother Nouri Abdel Razzak, Chairman of this Council.

SPEECH OF Mr. YASSER ARAFAT*

Chairman of the PLO Executive Committee

It gives me pleasure not to say brother President, but Comrade of the path. Yes allow me to say Comrade of the long path and march, but it is the road to victory, the road to victory, the road to victory.

Brother, and firm and determined fighter Nouri Abdel Razzak, brother fighter Ali Badheeb you who have been known as a symbol of firm Arab strength.

Brothers and Comrades, members of Arab Solidarity Committees, Brothers and sisters we meet today in this fervent land, the land of revolutionaries and free men.

We meet at the invitation of the vanguard movement, Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organisation and its Arab Committees to affirm that this Arab peoples' march is determined to proceed on this path challenging the American conspiracy. It meets and shall meet. Today and tomorrow committees meet and after tomorrow the sweeping masses shall meet to challenge and attack. It will not only challenge for it is not only challenge that is required but constant attack on this American imperialist and Zionist offensive which wishes to subject and dominate this Arab nation and region.

My brother Comrade of the same path. Comrade Ilyas will allow me to thank you not only on behalf of

* transcribed and translated into English from a recording on tape.

the Palestinian revolution, but also the joint Lebanese Palestinian forces. You may remember brothers; and brother Comrade that about a year ago we met in this hall, and the portents have begun to gather around us. I spoke at the time of the portents of genocide, war and accordion war. I remember that some of my brothers asked if Abu Ammar liked music to speak of the accordion war. No one understood the "accordion war" until the pincers closed on us in Beirut. Believe me, and my trench Brother Ilyas, representative of the Lebanese national movement, knows that we shared not the good days but the bad days.

We shared bread soaked in blood and gun powder. This relationship here, and I mean the genuine Palestinian-Israeli Lebanese relationships. I am speaking of the southern part as the Palestinian part. We shared the events in Lebanon. It was not an Israeli military battle but an American military battle, with fully paid mercenaries in the Israeli army. When former U.S. Secretary of State visited the Zionist State, our occupied country Palestine, he revealed the ugly aspect of this conspiracy. For he was one of those who planned this operation for which the mercenaries in the Israeli army were fully paid. He revealed the ugly aspect of American planning, arms and cover. When I say the American cover it is not haphazard, for it was a political, diplomatic, information and financial cover. More than that, you saw how the United States used its veto in the three months or 88 days of the Lebanese war or the Beirut war. And I say the 88 days of the southern Lebanese and Beirut war for the war is not over yet, brothers. It is important that we should know that, I believe yesterday's operation and operations carried out inside enemy lines in our occupied territory prove this.

Philip Habib on behalf of his friend Reagan believed that when they encircle us and cause this tremor, and believed that the presence of Palestinian troops in nine Arab regions was a fourth and fifth migration. But I wish to say that is not a fourth and fifth migration but new revolutionary bases returning from the Southern region to Palestine. I want Reagan to hear those words and I have not forgotten what my Comrade of the path told me when he embraced our people in this southern part with such warmth and tenderness that we had missed, in the siege, from forces which we did not believe were that passive and apathetic. I have not spoken and will not speak of them and I will not speak much on this subject although I had promised to discuss the secrets of what happened in Beirut and South Lebanon, but everything in its own time, Friends, and there shall be a time for everything.

I was saying that when we came here we felt this warmth not only from Comrade Brother President, nor his brothers leaders, but from all the people in Southern Yemen. Believe me I was yesterday telling my brothers in the Executive Committee of the Palestinian Command, that you can feel the warmth of every stone in Southern Yemen, in this southern region. This warmth and tenderness for the Palestinian revolution can only be felt by those who have felt the tragedy, and then they can feel the warmth in these bad Arab times.

I say these bad Arab times which my brother Nouri hinted at. You remember those Arab masses, from the Ocean to the Gulf were by the ship "Cleopatra". There has been a similar attempt by those Arab masses. Those who monopolise or try to monopolise our will do not know these Arab masses. I can not forget that during the

siege two delegations from the Egyptian national movement came to visit me. They broke through the siege and came to visit. They do not know these masses, my brothers. We are like our camels. Don't the Americans say that we are Bedouins and ride camels ? We are like our camels, we are patient and we endure; but when the flood comes it shall sweep away everything before us. I am saying this to all Arab speaking agents of America in the region. I want Reagan to hear me well, for I am saying that dawn will come, dawn will come and so will the volcano. The Volcano that exploded in Beirut will not stop but will continue in the region and will only stop inside the walls of Jerusalem. God willing. In those difficult times they have tried to cast doubt on the Palestinian revolution, the joint Lebanese Palestinian forces and even our friends with whose arms we fight.

Now I ask Brother Ilyas : With whose arms were we fighting under siege ? With the arms of our friends the Soviets. I say this because I want to say that we do not lack arms. I want to refer to statements made by the British Strategic Institute. If we add up arms, our Arab planes are more than their planes. Our tanks are more than their tanks, our numbers are greater than theirs. Something is missing : the political decision; there is no political decision to fight, there is no political decision to advance. And so, Brother Ali Nasser, our destiny is that we, with the masses, have to make the political decision, the decision that will serve the Arab nation, so that we can resist. There is no shortage of weapons and no shortage of technology, I saw them, my brothers, and when I was under siege I wished that the Arab nation would be with me to see the weakness of the enemy.

One day I met the late President Gamal Abdul Nasser. It was at the beginning of the revolution and he said to me : "Abu Ammar, I want you to distract a brigade of the Israeli army. I am not asking the impossible of the Palestinian revolution". And the joint Palestinian — Lebanese troops with their simple weapons succeeded in fighting 8 divisions, not just a brigade.

They fought half the Israeli army and all the air force, that is three quarters of the Israeli army. These Lebanese-Palestinian forces, which Haig thought he could overcome in three days, kept them busy for 88 days. Brothers, imagine with me that we were fighting 3/4 of the Israeli army, that is only 3 divisions were left, without air force and navy, we were fighting eight and a half divisions and only three were left; now if the Arab armies had fought, my brothers, we would have reached Jerusalem. This is why I am saying it, I said this in the Fez Summit. We have lost a historic opportunity to liberate Jerusalem.

On behalf of my brothers, and Ali Nasser; allow me to speak on your behalf on this subject, and on behalf of my brothers in the Lebanese movement I say that the opportunity is not yet lost. They are drowned in the Lebanese quagmire. In the Lebanese mountains and valleys there are operations everywhere.

The Supreme Military Council has decided to escalate military action in the occupied territories. I say this because the opportunity is not yet lost. We can deal a fatal blow to the enemy and I challenge Begin and Sharon to announce their losses. Their losses according to what they declared in the Knesset during the Security, Foreign

Affairs and Defence Session, were 21,561 wounded, 10,123 dead. I am saying this to remind them of their losses 318 tanks, to say nothing of armoured cars, to say nothing of other weapon.

We shot down 23 planes of which we shot 22 through our own primitive means not by trancontinental missiles, which we do not have. You know what we have. The important thing and it is no coincidence is the earthquake which shook the occupied territory. 40.000 anti-war demonstrators went out, which is unprecedented in Zionist history. For 40.000 demonstrators have not gone out before. They did not demonstrate out of a vacuum, but they demonstrated because there were losses. I say with full confidence that they went out in support of the Palestinian revolution. Those progressive democratic forces inside Israel calling for the right of the Palestinian people to establish a State, stand with us, and I hail them. I am speaking of those masses which demonstrated against the war, which was the longest of all the Arab-Israeli wars. This is important because this is why the earthquake occurred. I am not speaking only of the earthquake in the Arab region but in all the Middle East and the Zionist entity; at a time when some people found difficulty in absorbing the facts. Brother Ilyas was with me in the joint command. It was not conceivable that we would leave Beirut to avoid their evil nor under the pressure of Philip Habib. We only evacuated because of the children and women of Beirut.

When they surrounded Beirut they divided it into eleven squares, and every square was hit by land and sea. Bombs were used whose names we don't even know, vacuum bombs, mazut bomb which we do not even know

my brother; but they were 100% hit. The American Defence Secretary made a statement following this battle, and not the war, for the war is not over yet. He praised the Israeli army for having made best use of American weaponry given to them. Our children and women were a field of experiments to try out this new American weaponry. They were a field of experiments so that the World could see this Israeli barbarism; the barbarism of the White House and the American Administration. In the battles we and our Lebanese brothers lost 72,100 dead and wounded, which were the victims not only of Sabra and Shattila. It is true that they are Palestinian camps but there were our allies, the poor Lebanese. And so it was a massacre of Lebanese and Palestinians, even in Sabra and Shattila, the massacres were against both Lebanese and Palestinians. I mean to say that we shared bread together and they shared death with us and our bread soaked in blood and gun powder. When the Lebanese government agrees that Americans, the so-called mediators, should be partners, I ask Who was responsible for the offensive ?

I wish to say something and I wish to reveal certain military secrets. The descent of Israeli armoured cars cannot exceed one battalion or one and half battalions. I wish to ask : At one moment there were two descents one in Sabra and at the same time another descent in Saadiyat, an armoured brigade there, and an armoured brigade of tanks, who landed ? The Israeli navy does not have the capacity, and I say this and I challenge all the American navy to say this is wrong, and we can refer to the dictionaries of the American, British and French strategies.

We can refer to books ... Two landings at the same time north of Sabra and Al Saadiyat. How did they land ? There is another force, other than the Israeli forces. I wish to say that ten to twelve days before the operation the Commander of the American Sixth Fleet announced a visit to Haifa and Askalan, and there they had joint manoeuvres which were later realized in the landing of two brigades ... This is a fact that the whole World must know.

They should know that arms were given not for Israeli use, but they were used by American experts in the South and in Beirut. I say this so that the World, America's friends in the region will know. We were fighting for three months and my friends who were with me in the siege know with whom I was negotiating. I was negotiating with Philip Habib and I used to say to him you are speaking on behalf of the Lebanese and the Israelis and in your own name; in whose name are you speaking ? In the last day when he had finished, a Lebanese officer came to me, whose name I will not mention, I told him tell Philip Habib that we have paid all the Lebanese, American and Israeli bills, and I regret to say certain Arab bills. I told him I have paid the four bills. Is there a new bill for me to sign before I leave ?

There was with me the late hero General Eid Tayyib; I told him : "Aboul Walid, before the general leaves if he wishes me to sign the water bills mentioned by Bashir el Gemayel, sign it with the political and military bills... If you have water and electricity bills sign them before I leave." I say this, my brothers, because I wish to remind the Arab nation of the Uluqamis, in reference to

Abdallah Al Ulquami who conquered Bagdad. There are many Ulquamis who were in Beirut. One is Sarkis who on 7/7 met with a delegation with the national movement, the Prime Minister and one of the ministers. We had an agreement which had been approved by Philip Habib and Sharon. What does it say ? It says that we should withdraw in two stages, the first withdrawal from the city to the camps and it would be the first disengagement, after which the Lebanese army would take over the city; and the second phase would be from the withdraw eight miles.

Now, my brothers, you see the Lebanese government agreed on three phases for withdrawal : the first phase 8 miles, the second phase until south of Sabra or north of Saida according to the agreement and then the full withdrawal.

This was agreed upon by Sarkis and Bashir el Gemayel. Will someone tell me how Beshir el Gemayel agreed, and why did they kill Beshir ? The answer is simple. Why did the conquering hordes kill Abdullah al Ulquami who opened Bagdad for them ? This is the fate of traitors. I say this, my friends, because I remember a line of poetry : "who makes the lion his bait, will be hunted by the lion." However, I wish to say to the Palestinian revolution, to my brothers and allies the Lebanese people who gave so much and to the national movement that we shall share everything, even the loaf of bread. I say this in the midst of turmoil and allow me, brother Nouri, to differ with you. What happened in Lebanon is not a tragedy. We lost but it is not a tragedy at all. There is one important thing we have done. The Israeli army was considered part of the American Rapid

Deployment Forces, with its sophisticated weapons. This is what happened and I can reveal part of my talks with Comrade Andropov on my last visit to the Soviet Union. I was discussing the subject that in global strategy the American plan was that the Israeli army should be the spearhead of the Rapid Deployment Force in the Arab region and the Middle East. But I say here that this great and heroic epic woven by the Lebanese and Palestinian forces and the heroes from north and south Yemen who fought with us, and all the free men of our Arab nation who fought with us...

I say that this epic, brothers, eliminated the position of the Israeli army as a strategic spearhead in the Rapid Deployment Force. Let me put it simply. Today in the Pentagon they must be saying this is the army to which we gave all these arms and cover and all these tactics, the army that could achieve nothing, Sharon stood humiliated 88 and 89 days before the resistance, the determination of the resistance in Beirut. This means that Sharon and all the army, with all it was given, stood powerless before the resistance in Beirut. For 88 days the battle of South Lebanon and Beirut was fought, my brothers. They had planned 48 hours for this operation and said that it would be over in 24 hours. Now in the American Pentagon they say that the Israeli army failed in the test for it was not only a defeat, it was a farce for the Israeli generals. It was a massacre of the Israeli generals. I am saying this and if I am mistaken they can still answer back. I am saying this so that Sharon and Begin can hear me. Yesterday the settlement of Bazrait was shaken by rockets. I defy them that there will be no peace except the peace proposed by our Arab nation. I say this, brothers, because it is no chance incident that

the Israeli army failed in the test. The White House is considering the increase of American soldiers in Lebanon from 6,000 to 35,000 apart from the forces which they call the multi-national forces. Why ? The Israeli army failed in the test, it is not to be relied on in World strategy. Under the pretext of the cover and umbrella that they are setting up in Lebanon, they will bring 35,000 American soldiers and it is known, my brothers, that the Americans want a radar station in the South. They say to the Israelis : Ask for a radar station because we are afraid of raids. I am saying this so that we can understand the implications of 35,000 American soldiers on Arab land in the East Mediterranean.

This is part of the present American manoeuvres, my Brother Ali Nasser. It is a manoeuvre on land instead of a manoeuvre at sea. It is an American attempt to control the region. We should be clear about this and we should understand, my brothers.

Believe me, there is nothing that stand in front of the will of peoples. There is nothing that can stand in front of a nation and people. This, my brothers, is the law of life.

This region was invaded by the Europeans, the Portuguese, the British and the French. And now the Zionists are attempting to control it but this land is Arab and will remain Arab. I say this and this is an occasion for me to make a long address, brother President. But a pledge is a pledge and an oath is an oath, the pledge from men to men and from free men to free men. This beacon, my brother, which it is my honour to light, will remain lit until we reach Jerusalem, God willing, I want

to tell you something, my brothers, which will be heard by the Arab nation : There can be no peace for the weak and feeble, no peace for the weak and feeble.

The revolution is a giant revolution and Begin and Reagan should hear that it is a giant revolution. It is a giant revolution and as Abdul Nasser said it is made to stay. It is made to stay for the sake of all free men.

*SPEECH OF

Dr. FOUAD MURSI

member of the Egyptian Committee
for Afro-Asian Solidarity

Dear brothers,

I thank the people, party and government of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, and I wish them success in consolidating their position in the Arab nation, as an impregnable fortress against increasing and escalating imperialist Zionist attacks.

I also thank everyone who worked for the convening of this meeting, even if the meeting is a little late. Ever since last June the Egyptian Committee has been strongly urging a meeting of the Arab Solidarity Committees to counter the imperialist Zionist Israeli aggression, to draw up a plan of action for confrontation first within the scope of the Arab nation and second in the whole World. This is why, from the very start, I ask the question that is essential to such meetings. Why do we meet? We meet for a set purpose which, to be precise, is to move the Arab street. For the streets in the World, including the Israeli street, have moved while the Arab street remained motionless, with the exception of a few heroic moves in this or that country. But we feel our strong need to move the Arab street. This is why I ask the permission of my brother and comrade Mahdi El Hafedh who has discussed at length international action, to discuss Arab

action. In the last few days we have spoken at length of the silence of Arab regimes. This is the least that can be said, but I say that there are varying degrees of silence.

There is the silence of the collaborating partner, the silence of weakness and the silence of inability. Nonetheless we shall not speak of the Arab masses and their movement. We laid all the blame on the regimes, and what do we expect from those regimes except what they did. Where was the Arab street and where were the Arab masses ? In other words where were national progressive Arab leaderships ?

It is a question of leadership. Where was the national progressive leadership of the Arab street ? In other words we have to discuss the crises of the Arab liberation movement in this new crisis. We have to extract the many bitter lessons, to be able to go beyond. However if we keep up appearances without discussion, then it would be better for this meeting to break up, for the time of everyone here is valuable. This is why I wish to ask your brotherly permission to speak frankly. This is a very deep crisis, and there are two main factors governing this crisis. This crisis goes back to the 67 disaster and its consequences in spite of all revivals and revolutions that took place in this or that country, or in more than one country. The general trend is still that the Arab national liberation movement and the Arab revolution are shrinking not expanding for many old reasons, but there are two new ones.

There are two new factors that we must be keenly aware of. The first factor is the international factor and the second factor is the Arab factor. The international

factor is the economic tension in the capitalist World. It is not only the general crisis of capitalism that we used to discuss formerly; the capitalist system succeeded in renewing its forces following World War II through the scientific and technological revolution, but the outcome of the economic crisis that befell the capitalist economy since the mid seventies towards the end of 1974, is still going on. As a result it leads all capitalist systems in the World to take aggressive stands. Hence we find that the fortress of World capitalism is the most aggressive capitalist circle. It is not a question of temperament or psychology but an economic crisis that has overtaken the capitalist World and economy. No solution has been found from 1974 to the present.

It is a prolonged crisis that has never happened before. It is more acute than the depression of the thirties. The difference and we should admit this, is the ability of capitalism to face this crisis in more than one way. The burden is always thrown on developing countries and Third World peoples. And so world imperialism led by the United States takes aggressive stands to escalate the arms race, seeking war. World war is a real threat and possibility and not just an illusion, or a danger dangling in the sky. The threat of a World War is a real threat and stems from the crisis international capitalism is passing through, as World capitalism steps up the arms race and creates tension dividing the World into regions in preparation for war. This is the global strategy of the United States and World imperialism.

And this is how it enters our region as an indivisible part of this global strategy which our brother Abu Ammar so simply and astonishingly discussed yesterday. Yes the

Arab region is not the Arab region only and the safety of the Arab region is an indivisible part of the strategy adopted by the United States as it leads world imperialism, instead of solving its problems. Bases must be built and the Middle East must become a military region. Who except Israel can undertake this big task? So will the United States exert any possible or conceivable pressure on Israel? Israel is the chief base in the region and the rest are extra. If they come, they come, and if they don't we need not worry, for the main prop is Israel. Israel is the United States in the region. Abu Ammar said it yesterday. The invasion of Lebanon is not Zionist Israel's invasion but an American strategy that is carried out by Israeli mercenaries. This is a clear and accurate statement. This is an American operation carried out by Israeli mercenaries, for a reward.

Of course they have their own special objectives but the main objective is that the whole region be subjected to American hegemony up to the end of the century at least. The oil, people and resources of the region should be controlled by the U.S. to ensure American global strategy. Hence we can understand matters; World capitalism is passing through a terrible protracted and insoluble economic crisis. There are 30 millions unemployed in World capitalism, 12 millions in the United States, 2.5 millions in France under socialist-communist rule and 3 millions in Britain.

They can do nothing except drive for constant war, create tension in the World and increase aggressive trends in the Middle East. Their only friend and protégé is Israel, and they reward it for its actions. Then an Arab comes

and says I am an ally of America and an enemy of Israel! Every Arab who is an ally of America is an indirect ally of Israel. This is the first factor that we must think of and we must not take matters emotionally but rely on realistic solid analysis.

The second factor that places the region in this situation is the oil era. With all its positive aspects such as wealth, greatness and huge economic potential in the Arab nation, it has shameful negative aspects and leads to the draining of the Arab World resources. It also leads the ruling few in every Arab country to enjoy the privileges of the oil era in an animal unhuman way. We have an example. Egypt, for instance, is not an oil country but it has the oil era. The oil era is to be found in every Arab country, whether it produces or does not produce oil. The open door policy is in every Arab country, with the exception of the resistant Yemen. This oil era has weakened the Arabs. Never have the Arabs been richer than they are now, and they have never been weaker and more subjected. In the forties and fifties we were fighting for national liberation, because Egypt was selling its cotton to England, and we said that Egypt was subject to England, that its independence was down-trodden.

What shall we say of the Arab nation now while its economy is an indivisible part of the World capitalist economy? Our banks, our trade, and our projects in every Arab country are in the hands of World capitalism. You take a factory from the Soviet Union? No, we don't take from socialist countries. Take from America, England, France, West Germany and Japan. Oil is in their hands, its administration is in their hands. I won't say its ownership, for unfortunately it is still

exchange.

owner by us, but it is run by them, and so ownership for us only means additional accounts, on paper to be found in European and American capitals and the stock

The Arab economy is an indivisible part of the World capitalist economy. Arab rulers are proud of this and each one boasts that his national economy is part of the economy of Paris, Bonn, Berne, London, Zurich and Washington. We must spell it out, loud and clear, for how can these governments and regimes be with us and with the Palestinian Revolution against Israel, against America and the American operation in Lebanon? How? We must keep our reason and to think like reasonable and educated people. We are not ignorant, we are like them and perhaps more educated. Why do we think mistakenly and why do we remain backward Arabs? We have wealth, force, manpower, and brains. But the rulers are an indivisible part of World capitalism.

They are our enemies in one way or another. How can we solve this? I do not know. Every people should see to its own solution. But we must be frank and not fool ourselves. Someone comes and makes a speech, which we know is not true, and he too knows that it is not true, so why does he speak? We must respect our minds and ourselves. Each one must care for his colleague. Each one has come here on a mission and has sacrificed something, and is setting out on a deep and complicated mission. We must face facts as they are. How can we face them? Not just by making a statement that Palestine is the Revolution that will remain.

We must face Palestine and Lebanon, each in his own country. This is the true mission. Don't run away from it. We must face it in our country and in the Arab nation.

Words which are mere verbiage that are meant to grind the air in the Arab nation, by our enemies and friends, must be faced. We need to take a genuine stand towards World imperialism and especially the United States. Then we must take a series of stands. I myself have tried to prepare a sort of programme of political and struggle action. The political action programme is a bit detailed, the struggle action programme is very concentrated.

I believe that the political action programme must contain certain points, a stressed condemnation of the Camp David plan, which was and still is the most serious event in the aggressive policy of the Zionist imperialist alliance in the Arab region. Reagan's plan must also be rejected for it is only an American interpretation of the Camp David accords.

The unity of the Palestinian movement must be preserved and supported. If the Palestinians are dispersed, then the Arabs are more dispersed, and no one will think of them. So the Palestinians must realize that unity today is not only a life-belt for them, but for all the Arab national movement.

It must be reaffirmed that the PLO is the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people must be reaffirmed and chiefly the right to self-determination and

to establish an independent state. The strategic alliance between Syria and the Palestinian Revolution must be strengthened, as Syria stands on a confrontation line with the Zionist enemy.

The struggle and resistance of the Lebanese national movement must be supported to end the Israeli occupation of Lebanon. The unity, Arab identity and sovereignty of Lebanon must be preserved over all its territory.

The right of the Arab national and progressive movements to self-expression must be affirmed. They must also have freedom of movement and organisation to confront the imperialist Zionist plan. The Arab progressive national forces should be called on to overcome their secondary conflicts; to safeguard their unity and to close their ranks to confront their main enemy: imperialism and Zionism.

The struggle should be focussed to liberate the Arab economy with all its great potential from being subject to World capitalism and chiefly the United States. The role of Arab oil should be revised for the reduction of oil extraction, the use of oil and oil money as a weapon for the Arab nation for real independent economic and social development in the interests of Arab peoples, and the development of oil industries as well as the revival of Arab economic complementarity. This is for the political programme.

For the programme of action, I present a few simple points. Committees should be formed for the support of Palestinian and Lebanese peoples in every

Arab country. Two conditions are necessary for these committees. The first is that movement in support of the Palestinian and Lebanese issues should be a movement of the masses, not office nor paper work. The second condition is that this movement should take all the appropriate forms provided that they are of a broad front nature, for no single political Arab force can be strong enough to undertake this work alone. The second point is that we should insist on freedom of movement for the Palestinian Revolution in all Arab countries.

It should be there and have full free movement to fulfil its objectives without any restrictions from Arab regimes, apart from sovereignty restrictions. It is understood that I am speaking of the Palestinian Revolution as a Revolution.

These are two very short points, but if we succeed in them both we can move the Arab street to support the political programme which I believe is a programme that confronts America and is meant to liberate the economy which is the source of political and cultural subjugation and all forms of subjugation that burden the Arab nation.

* *Transcribed and translated into English from the original in Arabic on a tape recording.*

GENERAL STATEMENT

of the Meeting of the Arab Solidarity Committees

Aden, January 26-27, 1983

The Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Arab Committees held, on January 26th-27th, a special meeting in Aden, the capital of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, to mark the 18th anniversary of the Palestinian Revolution whose commemoration has imparted double political significance to this meeting and given a moral impetus that gave a valuable impetus to our discussions.

Participants in the meeting have expressed their deep thanks to AAPSO's Permanent Secretariat for its initiative of convoking this meeting to consider the new developments in the Arab region and elucidate and work out a joint programme of actions for the coming period.

The meeting expressed its high appreciation and commendations for PDRY's leadership and people led by Comrade Ali Nasser Mohamed, the Secretary General of the Yemeni Socialist Party, Chairman of Presidium of the Supreme Council of People and Prime Minister, for sponsoring this meeting and for the kind hospitality extended to the representatives of the Arab Committees. In this connection the meeting expressed its firm support to the struggle of the brotherly people of the PDRY for more victories and successes on the path of liberation, progress and socio-economic development.

The meeting welcomed with high appreciation the participation of the Palestinian Revolution leadership in inaugurating the meeting, namely brother Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the PLO's Executive Committee and Commander-in-chief of the Palestinian Armed forces who kindly delivered a speech on this important occasion.

The meeting concentrated its discussions on two important points: the political situation developing in the Arab region and ways and means for confronting the Zionist imperialist offensive in the first place, then formulating a programme of concrete actions to support the Palestinian and Arab struggle and bring about a new development to World solidarity campaign in the forthcoming period.

The meeting was characterized by important and fruitful deliberations on the recent developments in the region. Participants gave particular consideration to the new phenomena in the US imperialist strategy, following the Zionist-American invasion of Lebanon, characterised by a grave escalation of aggressivity and a fierce offensive against the Arab liberation movement and the Palestinian struggle. In this connection the meeting vehemently denounced the American aggressive policy in the region which supports the Zionist expansionist designs with the view to safeguarding the imperialist economic and oil interests in particular, to hinder social and economic progress and deal a blow to the Arab-Soviet friendship. Participants drew attention to the grave dangers of U.S.A. resulting from the establishment of the rapid deployment forces, Central Command, which aims at dealing a blow to the national and social liberation movement in the Middle East, the Arab Gulf, the Red Sea and the Indian

Ocean. The meeting called on the peoples of this region to pursue their effective and relentless struggle against such a dangerous and aggressive measure.

AAPSO's Presidium meeting in Tashkent, held in October 1982, had analysed the Arab political situation and defined its future tasks in a detailed and elaborate resolution in support of the struggle of the Lebanese People, the Palestinian Revolution and the Syrian Arab Region against Israeli occupation backed by American imperialism.

The meeting reasserted AAPSO's firm stand and constant and effective endeavours, at the different levels, to secure for the Palestinian People their inalienable national rights, first and foremost their right to return to their homeland and to self-determination and to establish their independent national state under the leadership of the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian People. Participants expressed their strong denunciation and opposition to all projects and solutions contradicting these rights, partially or totally, as well as all attempts to undermine the unity in PLO's representation of the Palestinian People.

The meeting renewed its vibrant support to the struggle of the Lebanese brotherly people and their national progressive forces to liquidate Israeli occupation unconditionally and implement the Security Council, resolutions no. 508,509, to the regaining of the Lebanese people their full sovereignty over their land and securing their unity, Arab identity, safety and democratic freedoms. The participants condemned the Reagan project

Being a US attempt to deny the national inalienable rights of the Palestinian People including their right to return and the establishment of their independent State, ignoring the PLO and liquidating the Arab-Israeli conflict within the framework of imperialist and Zionist interests. The meeting also condemned the dangerous role played by Arab reactionary forces in facilitating the implementation of imperialism and Zionism, and called for full awareness and struggle to foil their sinister plans.

The meeting took note of Israel's attempts to infiltrate, once again, to the African countries to resume diplomatic relations and undermine the Afro-Arab Solidarity. The meeting called on the Arab committees to give due care to this issue and exert every possible effort to promote contacts with the African Peoples to expose, and foil, this sinister design.

The meeting considered, for the great political significance of the issue, the necessary means and ways of dealing with aspects of deficiency and stagnation in the popular movement in the Arab countries, the causes impeding its vital and effective role in confronting the imperialist, Zionist and reactionary challenges. The representatives of the Afro-Asian Arab solidarity committees asserted that the key to amending the deficiency and stagnation, lies, first and foremost, in combatting the dictatorial regimes and the establishment of progressive and democratic ones which safeguard the right of the masses to full freedom, the respect of human rights, the enhancement of popular initiatives, and refraining from all aspects of oppression and police pursuits of the popular movement.

Such are the basic and necessary measures to be adopted for the masses and their political forces to play the role demanded in confronting the imperialist and Zionist enemies, to safeguard the national and progressive gains, and to push forward progress and development.

However, such an approach demands, on the other hand, overcoming the points of weakness in the leadership of the Arab national liberation movement which have been a direct cause of many of the setbacks and failures. This is manifest not only in the insufficiency of some Arab leaderships, but in the methods of their action, their programmes and their deficient concepts.

Therefore, the representatives of the Afro-Asian Arab Solidarity Committees, with full realization of these facts, and with full intention and determination to resume the glorious march of the Arab struggle, rightly consider that in order to fulfil this honourable task, the following prerequisites must be met :

To,

- Adhere to the national Palestinian unity according, and within the framework of the political program of the PLO, promote all its establishments, and strengthen its militant and international status, as well as insisting upon its being the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.
- Support the unity, independence and sovereignty of Lebanon, condemn the imperialist attempts aiming at its fragmentation and the US and Zionist pressures exercised, to impose surrender on Lebanon and force it to sign a treaty with the Israeli enemy under-

mining Lebanon's sovereignty, and call on the United Security Council to shoulder its full responsibility in implementing its two resolutions 508 and 509.

- Support the struggle of the national Lebanese movement and the national, progressive organisations as well as independent persons, in defence of the unity of Lebanon for the withdrawal of the occupation Israeli forces.
- Extend material aid to the Lebanese resistance front, bearing arms and fighting the enemy on all the Lebanese land, to assist it to increase its operations and improve its activities, and help to set free the Lebanese and Palestinian detainees in the "Ansar" and other prisons.
- Act to strengthen the militant alliance between Syria and the national Lebanese forces confronting the Zionist aggression, the liberation of the Golan, the restoration of the national inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, and defeat the Zionist occupation of the Lebanese territories.
- Reject the dictatorial and despotic regimes in the Arab World, underline the right of the Arab national and democratic forces to freedom of expression, movement, organization and popular control.
- Appeal to the Arab national and progressive forces to overcome their side conflicts and contradictions, and adhere to the unity of their ranks to face their principal enemy : imperialism and Zionism.

- Promote ways of support to the struggle of the inhabitants in the occupied territories, and extend moral and material support to them.
- Put an end to Iraq-Iran war on just bases safeguarding the mutual rights, interests and sovereignty of the peoples of the two countries, and serving the aims of their joint struggle against imperialism, reactionary forces and Zionism.
- Develop co-operation and friendship between the Arab nation and the peoples of the USSR and the other socialist countries, the non-alignment countries, and the democratic forces in the capitalist countries and in other parts of the World.
- From another standpoint, the representatives of the Afro-Asian Arab Solidarity Committees consider that a large part of the interest of the Arab forces should be directed towards the economic field to achieve the independence of economy from the imperialist control and monopoly, and to secure an independent and balanced socio-economic development. For this, the participants in the meeting call for :
 - Struggle to free the Arab economy with its enormous potentialities from subservience to international capitalism, particularly U.S. capitalism.
 - Reconsider the role of the Arab oil concerning the reduction of the quantity of oil produced and using it and its financial revenues as a weapon in the hands of the Arab nation for a genuine and independent economic and social development, for the welfare of the

Arab peoples and to develop and coordinate the Arab oil industries at the national level and revive and develop the Arab economic integration.

The meeting of AAPSO Arab Solidarity Committees is giving a lot of concern to the coordination and development of cooperation among the benevolent forces at all the national and Arab levels and advocated that all efforts and attention be centered on a number of activities during the forthcoming period with the view of achieving the following objectives :

- to compose national committees in support of the Palestinian and Lebanese Peoples that could enjoy unconditional and unrestrained popular and political freedom of movement and that would comprise all the patriotic forces and which should have a broad front nature.
- to consecrate a great political and publicity effort to secure free action for the Palestinian Revolution on the various Arab countries without any interference in their internal affairs or impose their tutelage taking into account the right to sovereignty for the Arab States on one side and respect the independence of the Palestinian Revolution on the other.
- to mobilise World public opinion with the view of supporting the International Conference on the Palestinian issue that the UN is organising in Paris next August and to invite the non-governmental organisations in the foreign countries to participate to this conference and contribute in supporting the Palestinian cause.

- to make the necessary preparations for the conference in support of the Palestinian and Lebanese cause that AAPSO's Permanent Secretariat is organising in Athens, Greece, during the month of April 1983.
- to urge the Afro-Asian and Arab Committees to participate in the regional conferences held by the U.N. and on Tanzania, the Arab Emirates (El Charka) and Indonesia as part of the preparations for the international conference due to be held in Paris on the Palestinian cause.
- to support holding the proposed conference on co-operation between the Arab countries and the socialist countries, to be held in Sofia, and to urge the effective participation in it.
- to promote and assist the activity of the fact-finding committees, particularly the international committee, concerned with the Israeli crimes in Lebanon, established last August in Nicosia, and to participate in its second session due to be held next February in collaboration with the Afro-Asian Centre in Geneva.
- to lay down the organizational arrangements necessary to pursue the action and meetings of the Afro-Asian solidarity Arab committees in future to intensify their militant efficacy and promote the role of the popular masses in the struggle against imperialism, Zionism and reaction.

The representatives of the Arab committees of Afro-Asian solidarity, meeting in revolutionary Aden observ-

ing the 18 h anniversary of the Palestinian revolution endorse this Statement and Programme of Action, having great self-confidence in themselves and in the great renewed potentials of the Arab nation to express their firm determination and will to continue the march of struggle however high the sacrifices and however long the struggle may be, to foil the US-Zionist aggression, liquidate all aspects of occupation and aggression on our Arab countries, and build up for our nation and its peoples a democratic, progressive and prosperous future.