

## Annapolis Meeting .... Political optimism or reinforcing the split in the homeland?

Jerusalem Media and Communication Center held a seminar in Ramallah on November 17, 2007 under the title "Annapolis Meeting... Political optimism or reinforcing the split in the homeland?"

Key Speakers:

PLC Member Saeb Erekat, from Fateh Bloc

PLC Member Ayman Daraghmeh from Change and Reform Bloc

PLC Member Khaleda Jarrar, from Abu Ali Mustafa Bloc

PLC Member Bassam al Salhi, from al Badeel Bloc

Moderator – Nasser Adul Jawad, Journalist

Nasser - We have several axes of this political seminar and every speaker here will be given three minutes only and then we will open the room for discussion based on the first axes and then we go to the second axes and so forth.

Of course we have Annapolis meeting and we have several opinions starting with President Abbas who described it as a historical opportunity that we should not waste and it is important for this meeting to succeed and that if Annapolis does not succeed, only God knows what will happen to the region. Then we have the other Palestinian leaders like Mr. Khaled Masha'al or other Palestinian factions like the PFLP who said the meeting is an attempt for the Palestinian to renew their determination on the constant rights.

Of course based on this we start our meeting, we want to see if this meeting is political optimism or success or failure and I would like to start with main negotiator Dr. Saeb Erekat on the success or failure of Annapolis meeting?

**Dr. Saeb Erekat –**

Really, I cannot start talking about either failure or success, I cannot really measure things by failure or optimism or pessimism. We don't own a crystal ball to talk about the future. According to my information we have not received an official invitation, no date has been set officially for the Annapolis meeting, the super power said it will hold a conference; this is its right. Besides, the conference as an idea has been a Palestinian Arab permanent demand. We don't oppose this, but if the question is what the Palestinian side is trying to seek in Annapolis and of course the Arab side also, I think we can divide things into three phases:

Pre-Annapolis which is a phase; we do not seek good will gestures or confidence building measures or sympathy from the Israeli government, there is a Roadmap that was handed to both sides in April 2003, in the first phase there are commitment on the both sides, the Israeli side and the Israeli government should freeze settlement activities, including natural growth, and remove all settlement outposts erected since 2001, and they should open all the Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem and restore things to the status that prevailed in 2000 and stop incursions and release the detainees, these are commitments. We as Palestinians have commitments to organize elections, and appoint interior minister and unify the security apparatuses into three apparatuses, and have one authority, one legitimate authority, one legitimate weapon. Now, in Annapolis we tell them who head of the Quartet Committee that if the matter is dealing with commitments, the problem here is that there are no mechanisms for dealing with implementation. If I,

as a Palestinian, do not implement my commitments, of course Israel has its teeth they can close Jericho and Nablus. They can use their power to stop things and make their point, now if the Israeli side does not implement its commitments, should we continue writing letters to the Quartet Committee and the world, no.

The Palestinian position is clear; we asked for the trilateral Palestinian-Israeli-American Committee to judge who implement and who does not. I want to say something here: in the previous government of Israel, when they talked about settlement activities I believe they have the right to go to Washington and pose their own criteria and talk about natural growth, settlements blocs, Jerusalem but the exact phrase in the Roadmap is that they must freeze all settlements activities, including natural growth, so if the United States wants a meaningful peace process, it should include all settlement activities and anything dealing with one settlement housing unit whether its in the major blocs or Jerusalem. Yesterday we handed as Palestinian side an explanatory memo to the American side explaining to them what the government of Barak and Olmert did, this is the pre-Annapolis phase.

Annapolis phase deals with launching final status negotiations. As Palestinians we want to resume the final status negotiations. The final status negotiations started long time ago and progressed, now the issue does not deal with holding negotiations but taking decisions. Now there is the Arab Initiative, the roadmap, the international legitimacy resolutions, the signed agreements, the common denominator of all these is the aim to end the Israeli occupation that started in 1967. So matters deal when we talk about type of time ceiling. We say it should not exceed eight months to end the treaty, when Israel says negotiations during the term of President Bush there is a difference between using a timetable until ending the treaty because when Israel says this they mean they want to exert pressure during the term of Bush only, now after resuming the negotiations we want to learn from our past mistakes. We need a national follow up, we demand to hold two conferences every three month to review and assess what we reach in the peace process and implement the commitments of the peace negotiations which started between the two sides.

We try to draft a joint document with the Israeli side, we are not talking about a final peace agreement, no, we are talking about a joint document with clear principles, there is a major gap and it is not over terms but over concepts. When the Israeli side comes and says they want a Jewish state: on May 15<sup>th</sup> 1948 this paper was given to President Harry Truman it's a document, it says that this government has been formed a Jewish state as been proclaimed on Palestine and recognition has been requested by the provisional government thereof. The United States recognizes it the government as a de facto authority of the new Jewish state, Harry Truman what did he do, he crossed out the term Jewish state and wrote a state of Israel. this is a document, you can keep this document, it is not an issue, it is not about refugee here, no, they want us to recognize their historical right that they own and that we are refugees on this land. I don't mind, there is the Islamic Republic of Iran. They can go to their Knesset and their Basic Law and discuss in the Israeli society whether they want to call it a Jewish state of Israel or state of Jews in Israel, the roadmap talks about recognizing the state of Israel. This is what I am asked to recognize, this is also related to the commitments related to the settlements, when we say we accept the roadmap according to resolution 1515 but Israel said it accepted the roadmap along with the 14 reservations of Israel at that time, we don't need games, we don't want tricks, we need an important role of

the Quartet Committee, and the ball is in the Quartet Committee court. The Quartet Committee should set up mechanisms and benchmarks and commitments of both sides and every side should know what to do, or we will go into empty circles. The issue is not one final word, its not whether we go or succeed or not. I did not receive and invitation, the United States call for it and we did not receive anything. It's not my problem. We did not receive an invitation, we did not receive an agenda, we did not receive a list of the people who will participate, so our position as Palestinians is a matter based on content and not any formality.  
Thank you.

*Nasser - Now we will move to PLC member Ayman Daraghmeh I want you to explain whether if it is failure or successful and why? And you could build up on what Dr. Saeb said.*

### **PLC Member Ayman Daraghmeh –**

In the name of God, the merciful and passionate,  
I hope that the road will be a chance of optimism, but this conference, as it seems to me and many observers and analysts, carries seeds of failure more than seeds of success. This conference is an American need and interest. Of course there are other interests for Israel to attend the conference. The American side needs to hold the conference even if it doesn't talk about content. We have some political comments from the German Foreign Ministry saying as long as the meeting is held with certain smiles photos it is enough. We as a weak party in this circle in this chain as I see from the speech of Dr. Saeb Erekat is that we don't have any optimism even President Abu Mazen could not elevate this ceiling of optimism.  
Now what is the American need to hold such a conference: we go historically to the days of the declaration of the state of Israel and the colonialist American and Israeli policies; they talked all the time about peace and peace conferences to the point that we really cannot distinguish between one conference and the other, and on the issue of the refugees, for example, and Jerusalem and the wall we cannot see anything and unfortunately there is no international will or power to force Israel to implement any of the items of the conferences, but these remain ink on paper and Israel continues to implement its colonialist policies and invade the Palestinian territories and occupies the lands, they went to Lebanon and Golan Heights and to Sinai and we here as Palestinians and Arabs in every conference in every international conference and all the resolutions coming from conferences achieved no results. We go to the nineties, for example, between the nineties and now, the US policy has been a little bit different through using a new style of mobilization and to talk about direct negotiations and not through the United Nations as international sponsor for this conferences and then we started with Madrid and then Oslo and then Taba and the Roadmap and etc.. but on the real ground the only result was the establishment of the Palestinian Authority. Even the weakest agreement which was the Roadmap, Israel has reservations on it, 14 reservations. We the Palestinians are weak now because of the current split and we don't have any international umbrella or Arab umbrella to support the Palestinian cause and demands and negotiators that how we are going to that conference exposed even the Arabs did not agree on the program of peace initiative, Israel rejected it. Sharon said it is not worth the ink which was used to write it with. So I will be brief and say that I personally and many of the Palestinian people, analysts and

observers don't see any means or reasons or even indicators on the success of such a conference. If we don't want to talk about it, let's talk about indicators, there is not one single indicator on its success, no, Israel still continues with its policy of building the wall, the settlement and arresting Palestinian citizens, arresting PLC members, arresting the second man in the Palestinian Authority Dr. Aziz Dweik speaker of the PLC, and still we meet with them and negotiate with them as if we have no problems with them. If we need achievements, we need to set conditions. We don't just go to set contents and I trust that all who want to go they want to make accomplishments and achieve peace and achieve the Palestinian state with Al Quds as its capital and the return of the refugees but because of the international and American hegemony and polar system we don't see the opportunity right now to achieve this. We are dragged to the conference without conditions, I hope that the Palestinians and the negotiating team will set conditions to go to the conference. To have a document calling for halt of the Israeli measures. How can a Palestinian citizen believe that such a conference would reach concrete results while Israel continues with its assassinations, siege, arrest, building the wall and settlements.

*Nasser – Thank you PLC member Ayman Daraghmeh. Now PLC member Bassam El Salhi, what are the chances of success and failure, they say conference is a US and Israel need why go without conditions, this is a question by Mr. Daraghmeh, if you can tackle this angle?*

#### **PLC Member Bassam El Salhi –**

First I believe the Palestinian internal crisis is at the end of the day a crisis that should be solved internally, we cannot talk to the world and tell them to wait until we solve our internal crises. We should feel the reality and have a Palestinian initiative to solve this crisis. It is not the problem of other parties, this is a principle. But the main issue in Annapolis is summarized in two basic questions:

First, will this conference carry political change in the bilateral negotiations method that we experienced in the past which did not achieve any results or progress in the peace process mean? Can we expect any political gains from the international parties, including the United States, and is there a real capacity to interfere in order to take these negotiations away from the empty circle that went for years and did not succeed in the past 14 years, this is a basic question?

Second, is it really the US policy, in particular regarding the Palestinian issue including the Roadmap and temporary border state, is this US policy towards the Palestinian issue, is it an element capable to overcome the frustration of the past and take the Palestinian cause to real achievement and dealing with ending the occupation and establishment of a Palestinian state.

We believe the answer of these two questions is negative, meaning that bilateral negotiations that might be launched by this conference and we don't need a conference to launch any bilateral negotiations or resumed the negotiations. Let me take our statements sometimes you talk about launching, sometimes you talk about resuming whether it is resuming or launching. Well, this conference, if it allows the launching of negotiations like in the past, we will go back to the same frustration and failure if there is no intervention:

First, the issue we need to end the occupation and this is the basic issue. The Roadmap does not talk about ending the occupation; it might end the occupation; the Roadmap talks about conditions dealing with independence and the final status

issues, political authority and security. The Roadmap is not the prelude; it's not the best way, maybe the best way is the peace initiative which starts with ending the occupation which can lead to peace and security and not the opposite.

This is why I believe the Palestinian side counts a lot on this conference and they said there is a change in the US policy towards the Palestinian question. So far, there is no real motivation in the US foreign policy. We have witnessed in the last two months even the optimism that at some point was high and then went down we see it fluctuating everyday and we want to see to what extent there is optimism.

To end I would say that the Palestinian leadership has to reconsider the feasibility of going to Annapolis if the feeling of no progress continues. The Palestinian negotiating mistake is that they talk about settlements as one issue among other issues mentioned in the Roadmap. No, the settlements issue is not like this, the settlements issue is the mother of all issues, and even if we negotiate for five years, if there is no real guarantee to stop settlements, to stop the new fight on the ground that Israel creates especially that Israel and the United States started to talk about land exchange as part of dealing with the settlements blocs, so the settlement is more dangerous than the past.

*Nasser – Now we move to PLC member Khaleda Jarrar about the meeting and the assessment of failure and success of Annapolis.*

**PLC member Khaleda Jarrar –**

With regards to your direct question success or failure. Of course things are relative, the conference next fall will be a success to the US administration and Israel. The Americans need at this phase international mobilization to support the US interest in the region. This is their interest and if this conference is held with Arab participation, this participation will give some kind of umbrella or coverage for the US policy in the region to reinforce the American interest in the region and continue with the new Middle East scheme. Also it will be a success to the Israeli occupation because what they want at the end of the day Arab normalization with Israel and with the participation of Saudi Arabia in the same meeting of the conference of course for Israel it might be an accomplishment. With regards to the Palestinians, it will be a failure. We talk about a drastic failure under the current conditions, it's not an international meeting to implement international legitimacy resolutions pertaining to the Palestinian cause. This meeting will be held in light of the Palestinian weakness, the current weakness and the Israeli occupation policy right now based on oppression and posing the status quo; this is our fear. It's an opportunity for more concessions with the framework of a ceiling that will be set up by the conference, that's why we call on the Palestinians not to participate in the conference. What's really dangerous about this of course needs a discussion maybe not a discussion here but do we need to cling to the Roadmap as a basic way to the solution, because the Roadmap for people who read it in politics: the Roadmap is security based and it deals with security for all matters even when it talks about the end of independence state and maybe Dr. Saeb Erekat might say it's optional, no, it talks about all phases about state temporary borders and this is dangerous this is the final political ceiling in the Roadmap: a state with temporary borders, and what they say now about the Jewish state is not new. When they talk about Jewish nature state of course the Israelis with all their parties cling to the Zionist idea based on this colonialist Zionist settlement it doesn't only strike the

right of return but it talks about settlements and this is why it is dangerous. The meeting will be a failure for the Palestinians.

*Nasser - Thank you PLC member Khaleda Jarrar, now I will take three or four questions and then have our speakers' answers then we will go to the second title "the internal split"?*

**Participant** - What are the negotiations issues, now, what are you negotiating about right now?

**Participant** - I say that not only the problem that the roadmap based on security but we are really wondering how we are dealing with this even when it relates to security of Israel. The US Administration (Powell and Rice) said then they will take into consideration the Israeli reservations on the roadmap during implementation, so we have to get rid of the roadmap because it does not really exist. It's not because we want to waste a chance. No, it doesn't exist. Now President Abu Mazen said we will not go to the conference at any cost so what is the time ceiling. If it is not there, the Palestinian side would not go to Annapolis, what is the red line that we will abide by because I feel that the Palestinian ceiling is moving down. It is going down since we started talking about declaration of principles, then joint document and now they are putting us into this circulation and discussion of Jewish State or not, so we have to consider the status of negotiations seriously. This is an urgent matter.

**Participant** - I don't find a reason or relation of necessity between political optimism or perpetuating the split. We don't need to talk about this maybe we will remain split there is no correlation. I have two questions one for Dr. Saeb and one for Mr. Ayman, the question for Mr. Ayman Daraghmeh, if the process is for US-Israeli interests and I may agree with you that they may use us for their own goals and intentions but it is a small tactic why make this big fuss about it, I am not convince; it is bigger than this. We will issue a statement and say Annapolis is not really a big issue only they want to use us, so all of the issue is not worth it and then you say they want to eliminate the Palestinian cause either they want to use us or they want to eliminate the Palestinian cause, this is my opinion and we want to know where we are going? This is not clear, I would like really to listen to you, and so if they want to eliminate the Palestinian cause it is not only they want to use us. The Question to Dr. Saeb, we said we want a paragraph about the final status where we reached in this, it seems that we make concessions and our only hope now the time schedule which means at the end of 2008 things will be solved or at least this what I understand so we are making concessions and they have not made any concession.

**Dr. Zakaria al Qaq** – suppose after Annapolis and Annapolis failed what are the options of the Palestinian Authority? We will adopt the project of the Palestinian factions to overcome this crisis and continue or the resignation of Abu Mazen and if he resigns, is this enough? Or will he ask for dissolving the Palestinian Authority or will we accept the Israeli project and make the process lively and active without having a stalemate because a stalemate would lead to chaos and revolution so we will keep the Palestinians occupied with the process, or start evaluating what went wrong and maybe we need to amend the process, what is after Annapolis what are

the teeth that the Palestinian Authority. You said Israel has teeth now what are the teeth of the Palestinian Authority in case of the failure of the Palestinian Authority?

*Nasser – Dr. Saeb because there are several and big questions to Dr. Saeb because he is a negotiator I believe it's appropriate to give him the floor to start, you have two minutes only.*

**Dr. Saeb Erekat** – First to be brief I don't know in history how an agreement is reached if there is no need I always say that the need of negotiations is the mother of negotiations. Countries are slaves to their interests. All countries measure their relations based on their interest. The United States' moves are not because President Bush woke up and his conscious woke up and he wants to solve the case. No, it doesn't work like this, there is a need, interests, now today as a Palestinians maybe you want to start judging, prejudging to say failure, success, optimism or pessimism but as a Palestinian we don't have to time to waste on the format, we need to talk about the content: Jerusalem, borders, water, refugees these are the final status issues. Now whether to go or not, I don't know if there is decision to go or not, I know that the Arab League follow up committee would decide based on the progress whether to go or not. The second point, my information is that the borders of America is not Canada and Mexico, no there is part of Pakistan and Arab Gulf, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan, and they have tens of their people died and injured so they don't need anyone to protect their interests, the functional role of nations proxy is ended. I don't know America is occupying Iraq and Afghanistan I don't think they really need the Palestinian side to cover their interests somewhere here or there, no.

The region will witness changes. As a Palestinian my function is to see where is my interest as a Palestinian people under occupation, I want to assess the damage and the gains, I cannot talk about literature and say whether to go or not, or score some points. I don't want to talk things you like to hear, no, we have a Palestinian cause we have to be there, because Palestine and Jerusalem are more important. The cause of Palestine is above everything. Now Mr. Hani, you are right when I said I talked about the roadmap as embodied in resolution 1515 there is UN Security Council 1515, it sets up the roadmap as it is so we are not praying for the roadmap as it is but we said it defined commitment on the both sides, ending occupation in 1967 and that peace should be in all tracks including the Lebanese and Syrian tracks, and we officially as Palestinian side we support comprehensive peace, and support Israeli withdrawal from all Arab and Palestinian territories. there is a need for comprehensive peace, but to say "as accepted by the parties" this is a trick and that's why we have differences over the concepts with them and I don't want also to have my policy based on exporting fear, no we are talking about measurement of interests, I said we have pre Annapolis to end the settlements activities including natural growth and opening the Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem, the Arab chamber of commerce in East Jerusalem was established in 1936 before 12 years of the establishment of Israel, its not logical to keep them closed. So removing the settlements outposts before 2000, going back to the conditions that prevailed in 2000 and the crossings, I don't want from Israel confidence-building measures, no, I want from Israel to commit to its commitments. Who will force Israel to abide by those commitments? the Quartet Committee have a committee to judge and assess, if the Quartet Committee does not do this, if America cannot stop settlements, they expect us to go to a conference and make

accomplishment, so the minimum ceiling to the Annapolis meeting which I did not receive an invitation yet, I did not receive an agenda, I did not receive anything from them and to start to say go or not to go its not logical, let us wait until we get the invitation and see what is included in the invitation, and see what has been achieved with the Israeli side because the document should include all of these issues of the roadmap and the principles of the six issues of the final status and what will come after Annapolis and the time schedule.

*Nasser - Please answer Dr. Zakaria about the PA teeth if the conference failed, what are the options of President Abu Mazen if he resign or not.*

**Dr. Saeb Erekat –**

Dr. Zakaria you are colleague and I tell you if you want to tell me what is the details of the negotiations, I have big burden on this, we don't have an army, we have a split in Gaza Strip and its affecting us. Despite all of this I want to say Israeli measures will not establish a right or a commitment.

Three options, the options are:

**First Option** – establish of two states Palestinian state independent and East Jerusalem as its capital on 1967 borders

**Second Option** - from river Jordan – where I live Jericho – to the Mediterranean 63 kilometers distance and this will not change, and I personally I think we in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the 22<sup>nd</sup> century we will witness the end of nationality and modern states because now we have merging banks, if they want a state from the river to the sea we have no problem.

**Third Option** – they are enforcing on the lands roads that I can't use as a Palestinian, and the worst scenarios of South Africa have never used such laws, are there any other options that Israel can't use? Now for us we can say if the criteria are defense criteria, tanks, war planes, nuclear weapons, no, but if they talk about security and stability and peace, the moment that Israel feels there is a need they are welcome, if they want to continue with reducing the ceiling of expectations and the progress and the regional pressures. We will not make concessions. I woke up one day in 1967 I saw the Israeli flag, so we seek peace, and the next day for the Palestinians is to enable them to live in dignity, independence, freedom in 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital and solving the other final status issues, other than this we don't have any other solutions.

*Nasser – PLC member Bassam Salhi, one of the questions posed first we talked we want the Palestinian national authority then we wanted the initiatives and then we talked about the time schedules and then they reached to joint document which does not mean anything really.*

**PLC Member Bassam Salhi –**

This is an important question and it should be posed with honesty. Does the Palestinian Leadership even realize that this conference will not meet the expectations? Do they possess a decision to participate or not, I believe this is the question: the Palestinian leadership fears even to pose or think about because of the balance of powers. On the US role, by the way, we should distinguish between two things, that the United States is a hegemonic power and no one can really deny this and we should not under estimate it, but the second thing, is that the US policy with regards to the Palestinian cause is not the policy that we need as

Palestinians, meaning that we differ not only with Israel but also with the US policy in solving the Palestinian cause and one of the considerations of this policy is that when we find that the conditions is not right to go to a conference, that might consolidate the continuation of this policy and trick us in bilateral negotiations and that the US will keep monopolizing the process, I think this is a mistake and the Palestinian leadership has to consider its positions, its not whether Annapolis or not, no, if the US policy is accepting the Israelis conditions and the Palestinian leadership is accepting the US policy in this time more than ever, this raises a big question mark. One of the important things now the Arab Initiative we know that the Arabs might feel courage with us but for sure without us you will not find any Arab even thinking about going to Annapolis, do we have the courage as Arabs and Palestinians as long as this conference will not change what we want then we should reconsider the feasibility of going into a conference in this way. If the decision is taken in this way, I believe that this will lead to a change even in the Arab world positions including the interests. Now the Palestinian Leadership and the current split that we have, would the Palestinian leadership think more about its interests to be linked to the continuation of the US policy in the region this is why I say for Hamas we need immediately and quickly if the they have national sense to retreat from the coup and the Palestinian leadership should not put the priority of internal split over the Palestinian interests.

*Nasser - Now we want to ask PLC member Mr. Daraghmeh Annapolis meeting is a conspiracy or a trick.*

#### **PLC member Ayman Daraghmeh –**

Away from the political terms and political viewpoints, if we can take more than one aspect and dimension: I see two things, regarding the American interests, there are many failures of its foreign policy in particular, the government of Bush, to achieve things in the foreign policy, the other thing, because the Palestinian cause is the center issue of the whole world and Muslims so they want to handle many files in Sudan and Iraq and make the Arab world feel occupied and that there is a horizon regarding the solution of the Palestinian cause. This is not really helping us. If this is not a true analysis maybe they want to address the opportunity to extort the Palestinian side that the solution is the Israeli project, talking about Jewish State, and land exchange and Jerusalem as capital of Israel.

#### **PLC Member Khaleda Jarrar –**

Of course there are no direct questions to me but when you talk about the US Policy whether they need the Palestinians, no they need us, we know that the Palestinian cause is a core issue in the region, and the US project in the region is not moving smoothly. No there are real difficulties in Iraq, in Lebanon, in Afghanistan, meaning the US interests in the region, there is an attempt to reconsider how to consolidate these interests and also the constructive chaos of the US is the same, what's happening in Lebanon, in Iraq, even in Palestine. all these events are not isolated from the whole situation. We are talking here about strategy, at some point when they talked about democracy as a principle to enter our society and they started to claim that democracy will really help the American interests in the region in its democratic process, but now they replaced it with direct military occupation when democracy failed. This is why we as Palestinians have to know what we really need. We are not in the offensive no, we are in a phase we

need to remain steadfast, it is a really difficult phase, the balance of powers in the world does not serve the Palestinian people, it's a difficult phase. The occupation continues to force and impose facts on the ground. And we have the internal split, this really dangerous and it is weakening the Palestinian position.

*Nasser – Now we will enter to this second title which is the geo-political split in Palestine which is the most dangerous phase in the history of Palestine.*

**PLC Member Khaleda Jarrar –**

With regards to the Palestinian split, we know that if they go to the conference or the meeting, the Palestinian side will go very weak, because we are split apart. I remember how Israel dealt with the issue in the past when there were attempts. Hamas was an obstacle and they say at that time Hamas was the obstacle. with President Abbas, now they say he is weak, now the President is weak, there is a split situation and split geography with the strip. Of course, the danger here is this conference which might consolidate the split. For us as Palestinians, what do we need to do? As Palestinians we need to tackle immediately the state of split that we have and we need initiatives very fast and very quick initiatives, we presented an initiative a comprehensive. Hamas has to retreat from the military coup and also the Palestinian leadership has to retreat from all the political measures and decrees and decisions that consolidated the split and we need to form an interim government, national government, temporary one, and of course there is no way but have a comprehensive national dialogue and we have to abide ourselves and move away from steps that endanger dialogue. So, we have the National Reconciliation Document, Cairo Agreement because we are talking about reconstructing the PLO and have legitimate representation inside and in the Diaspora. All of this needs national unity. If this dialogue leads to go to early presidential and Legislative elections, maybe this is one of the democratic solutions instead of other military solution or option.

*Nasser - PLC Member Basam Salhi as a journalist and a citizen going back to military option was used by Hamas in Gaza and I really cannot understand what is meant by going back to the phase before the military option by Hamas, the PFLP and DFLP presented to Hamas and Fateh an initiative going back to the phase, meaning lets us restore the apparatuses security to their headquarters?*

**PLC Member Basam Salhi –**

No, we did not present an initiative to Hamas and Fateh, we do not trust their policies (Fateh and Hamas) in the past years especially in the last year what really happened unfortunately, we need a true solution by going back to the people by going to new elections where the people would hold accountable with everyone Hamas, Fateh and all factions on their positions and to reformulate the Palestinian political system. This is what we need. We reject the principle of using force to solve political differences. Hamas' conduct is that they use military force in deciding a political difference. And if there is anyone in Hamas who says that the act was justified, it could have stayed for several days, but what happened was that they seized the authority by force without any legitimacy. If the situation continues like this, this will consolidate the state of military of power and this will not lead only not calling on Hamas to retreat, the Palestinian people will reject this, on the other hand Fateh movement and I believe the authority and allow me a

minute here it is related to the first question my colleague here said. We need an authority to set the interests of the people as a top priority. The authority in the past years was transformed into authority of people with several interests and now we have new interests governing in Gaza Strip. So we really need to change radically the concept of having a real national authority and not authority of privileges and money of people here and there, so based on this the initiative is we need a new change by going back to the people. We need to solve the crisis and everyone would be held accountable, and this not an initiative we need to mediate between Fateh and Hams, no this our method and we want the forces to help us because we do not trust that Hamas and Fateh are able to take the Palestinian people out from the current crisis.

*Nasser - PLC Member Ayman Daraghmeh in terms of the internal split you have a lot to say.*

**PLC Member Ayman Daraghmeh –**

Away from the split I will answer this, I don't see that the occupation needs justifications not to implement its commitments. In the past the resistance and martyrdom operations were the obstacle and justifications by Israel until we reached a truce by the factions but even after the truce we did not see any change on the Israeli side then Abu Ammar became the obstacle and was under siege and then we Abu Mazen came who signed Oslo at the time was Prime Minister but Israel never paid attention to all of this, Israel really doesn't need any justifications to do what it wants, they have the power and of course the international support. Of course the split is not accepted by any Palestinian but there were certain conditions that were imposed on us. What happened was the result of certain failures. What happened in Gaza is not the result of what happened on June 14, no there were accumulations. Who was responsible for not implementing Cairo Agreement? Was it Hamas? The follow up committee has not met for more than one year. Who is responsible for the security chaos? The fights between Fateh and Hamas continued and everyone could see that the things will lead to what happened and now we have to close the chapter and be honest and true to ourselves and be responsible because what happened is because of the failure of the Palestinian policies and everyone has to bare his responsibilities, I don't see any method but to start dialogue it should be priority not the Israelis but Palestinian dialogue, we go to the Israeli side and we start praising and kissing them in the teams. This is not a Palestinian interest, I call the President and Hamas too to start and take a step forward for the sake of the Palestinian cause and we all should support the system and find some kind of mobility to start the dialogue.

**PLC Member Saeb Erekat –**

I agree with Mr. Ayman on the definition of the occupation, and to be brief any occupation which oppresses the people under occupation and this is the highest form of terrorism, but what is the function of Palestinian National Liberation Movement; it is under occupation according to my information; Gaza Strip is occupied by all sides by air, ground and sea, and I also know that the West Bank and Gaza Strip and Jerusalem are under occupation, so what is my function if the occupation oppresses the Palestinian people, to destroy the Palestinian people? to terrorize the Palestinian people? what is my role as a national liberation movement, the issue that we said from the start that we have an internal crisis that

must be dealt with courage and we said the solution lies in differentiating between political pluralism and multiple authorities, we remained silent, we remained calm we said when we used to talk about resistance, resistance should be modest, resistance should not go to the commercial stores and strike people or shoot people in the streets or occupy security places of others. this is the result of many authorities. We are a nation 70 percent of our Caliphs were killed, when they entered to Ali Abu Taleb and start telling what do we need Caliphs for because we have the holy Quran he said there is a need for a prince because the nation will collapse if they have multiple authorities, what happened in Gaza and what is happening in Nablus today is many authorities. Name things with their names, you have to decide things, at the end of the day the PLO as an idea was built to gather the Palestinian factions to have one decision, to have one central point, to have one prince or one official body. The split, I cannot really understand why they cannot retreat from the coup, I cannot see why we should cancel decrees, I see we go back to the Palestinian Legislative Council and go back to the PLC, the PLC can decide on the government and all of this, when I think if they retreat from the coup and go back to the PLC and Hamas has a majority and we condemned the arrest of our colleagues and Dr. Aziz Dweik and our sister Mariam, but the issue. Mr. Ayman when I speak I don't make you feel we are making you a favor or grant when we are demand the release of PLC member, there is occupation and believe me its not Hamas leadership in Gaza which responsible for the entry of water and food in Gaza Strip, no but there are people who are exerting efforts to facilitate the entry of these items.

I said Israel is not a charitable society, the occupation is a sword on our neck, when they talk about long term truce by Hamas, they say they don't to negotiate but they are ready for a long term truce and if they withdraw from Gaza we will assume control. The ceiling is being made that so the Israeli side is exploiting all of this. So retreating from the coup is a sacred duty and we should go back to legitimacy, the decrees can be canceled by the PLC, government formed by the PLC, we have the majority, so there is a big question mark. When Abu Mazen said let them retreat from the coup and let us return to legitimacy. Not retreating raises a big question mark, especially whether we are tools in the hands of regional powers. We the Palestinian people are against the interference in the affairs of any Arab country, Lebanon or Syria. We want a comprehensive just peace but at the end of the day if we Palestinians don't help ourselves, no one will help us. Israel will not reoccupy Gaza because it will not be solved by bullets. The solution is through retreating from the coup and this if does not happen immediately there are many big question marks, the coup is when a group took the law into their own hands and seized authority by force, what happened is a coup and they should retreat and no one will help us if we don't help each other.