

Letter from Arafat to "the meeting", July 11, 1993

"The special negotiations between us are now reaching a serious stage. At this historical moment, which is exceptional, as much as the characteristics through which we are passing are exceptional, I would like to inform you of some of our concerns. This is because we are concerned about complete frankness and candidness. This is what will serve the success of these negotiations. We deal with this special channel in full seriousness and we think that through the direct and frank style, we will be able to find a temporary and satisfactory interim solution, which will serve our mutual interests.

We have before us a genuine historical chance in the history of our conflict. Both of us are responsible to secure that we will not lose this opportunity.

Our considerations can be summarized as follows:

1. We are concerned that simultaneously with the signature of this agreement, that from your side, you will take a meaningful large step by withdrawing from the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area, creating hereby a real breakthrough for our people on the ground. Our need for this step is apparent to you, whereas also your need to take this step, is clear to us. In such a situation we will be able to convince the general Palestinian public opinion and the relevant institutions and bodies [that a breakthrough has occurred].

If, [instead] we limit ourselves [only] to small steps of a subordinate nature, such as the transfer of some authorities, this will not change much the reality and the situation, and would render the agreement subject to questions and obstacles within the Palestinian general opinion.

2. Our [Arafat's] presence in a Palestinian area, from which an early Israeli withdrawal occurs, will enable us to face any future possibilities, including any activity, which might be taken by extreme parties, in order to block the agreement. In addition to that our [my] presence will provide the psychological and political confidence among the Palestinian public in the Palestinian Occupied Territories and it will create a new atmosphere, which would help the smooth execution of all articles of the agreement. We believe this is in the interest of the two parties. The seriousness of our commitment towards this agreement requires this presence, because [this way] both parties have the ability to sign and the capability to implement.

3. There are major issues, which would remain pending and which should be considered as major issues for each of the parties, and in particular the question of Jerusalem. We are aware of its sensitivity for both parties. This is something we cannot sidestep in the interim period completely and there

are arrangements on the table, concerning the right to participate as voters and candidates in elections and to connect the institutions in Jerusalem with the interim authorities, and other arrangements that represent the minimal position, that will not harm the position of both parties, pending the final status negotiations.

4. We hope that each of us will look at the interest and the position of the other party, whenever he puts forward any compromise solution. We have now arrived at the heart of the negotiating process and this requires putting forward serious compromise solutions. Therefore we expect that issues will be dealt with in such a spirit; such as arbitration, regional questions and the role of the co-sponsors in assisting in the supervision of the implementation of the agreement, and an agreed upon international presence.

5. I can understand your need for guarantees which would ensure our commitment (abiding) to whatever is agreed upon in the agreement and we are ready to discuss with an open mind these guarantees. The complete seriousness in the implementation of the first steps of the agreement will be the practical indications that shall become witness to our commitment. [On] other ideas, which you might put forward, in the field of guarantees, we should reach an understanding through negotiations.

We offer our full readiness to continue serious work through this channel, which has now ^{won} the credibility and will provide for reaching a real peace agreement.

Thank you.

Y.A.