

Anti-Imperialist News Service

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Statement of the Workers Party, U.S.A.

November 14, 2004

The death of Yasser Arafat marks the passing of another martyr for the cause of Palestine. For 40 years, Yasser Arafat was a central figure in the Palestinian struggle against zionism, imperialism and for national liberation. His name was synonymous with the struggle for an independent Palestinian state.

In 1948, when the Palestinians faced the Nakba -- their homeland usurped, their land taken, their families forced into exile, there was no one to speak for them. In fact, for many years they wandered, homes on their back, considered, by the "great powers" as no more than refugees, or perhaps a bargaining chip, but never as a people, a nation.

In the 1960's, it was Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) which played a decisive role in organizing the people so that they could take their destiny into their own hands.

Step by step the Palestinians resurrected their nation, building all their institutions -- their schools, their political organizations, their culture, their army, and declaring that the paramount task was to fight zionist and imperialist aggression and colonialism "from generation to generation until final liberation."

Over the years, through the many twists and turns of the struggle, more than once Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian people have found themselves in an ocean of loneliness. Savagely attacked by the zionists and imperialists, betrayed by so many false friends, including the Soviet imperialists and the reactionary Arab regimes.

It is an outrage today to hear some of these same "world leaders" praise Yasser Arafat, when in his life they killed his people, hunted him like an animal, denied his role as

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The World Mourns the Death of Arafat

After the death of Yasser Arafat was announced on November 11, people throughout the world paid tribute to the Palestinian leader in public rallies, statements, and solemn ceremonies.

Throughout the West Bank, Gaza and Palestinian occupied lands, millions came out to commemorate Arafat and pledge to continue the struggle of Palestinian national liberation.

Shops throughout Palestine were shuttered as the Palestinian Authority declared a 40-day mourning period. In Ramallah, residents filled the streets in grief, and cars plastered with posters of Arafat crawled through the streets. As the helicopter carrying Arafat's coffin landed in Ramallah, thousands swarmed around the vehicle.

In Gaza city, thousands came out into the streets unleashing volleys of automatic rifle gunfire into the air as the Arab people vowed to continue the path of struggle and liberation.

In a symbolic funeral for the dead leader in Jenin, thousands of Palestinians buried a coffin wrapped in the Palestinian flag. Across the West Bank, hundreds of thousands of mourners marched in towns holding pictures of Arafat wearing his trademark black-and-white headdress.

In the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, there was a profound sense of loss. In southern Lebanon, thousands of people rushed into the narrow streets of the Ain el-Hilweh refugee camp, praising their leader and promising to keep up the struggle against Israeli aggression.

Demonstrations, mourning Arafat's death, also took place in Egypt, Bangladesh and China, as well as in other parts of the world. Many world leaders in the Middle East, Asia, Latin America, and Europe issued public statements, expressing their profound sadness for the Palestinian people's loss.

U. S. Attack on Fallujah

On November 7, over 15,000 U.S. troops, backed by fighter warplanes, helicopter gunships, and heavy armor, invaded the town of Fallujah, 40 miles west of Baghdad.

According to eyewitness reports, the U.S. offensive has resulted in widespread destruction and death. Prior to the invasion, the U.S. military sealed off the entire town before unleashing a crushing air and artillery bombardment. Warplanes dropped bombs around the clock and heavy artillery pounded the city every few minutes with high-explosive shells. Large sections of the city have been reduced to rubble by artillery fire and attacks by U.S. AC-130 gunships, and a number of hospitals and mosques have been destroyed. Although residents are without water, electricity, and food, U.S. troops are preventing relief workers and convoys from entering the city.

U. S. commanders are boasting that they have "liberated" the city by killing over 1,200 Iraqis during the past week. They are proclaiming that their military offensive is "complete" and that they now "occupy all of Fallujah."

But despite these claims, Fallujah has become a symbol of Iraqi resistance against the occupation, and the latest military offensive is proving to be a military and political defeat for U.S. imperialism.

Armed resistance against the U.S. occupation has escalated in numerous other Iraqi cities. In Mosul, an uprising occurred against U. S. forces and their puppet Iraqi army, forcing U.S. commanders to divert troops away from Fallujah. In cities such as Ramadi, Samarra, and other towns north of Baghdad, new fighting is breaking out, while U. S. bases in Baghdad and elsewhere are coming under increasing attack.

On November 9, the Association of Muslim Scholars, a group of 3,000 clerics, called for a nationwide election boycott to protest the assault on Fallujah. "The Iraqi clerics place on the government of Ayad Allawi the entire legal and historical responsibility for what Falluja is going through, which is genocide at the hands of the occupiers," said Harith al-Dhari, the association's leader. Other Iraqis have urged a campaign of civil disobedience in protest, and in recent days, four leading clerics and dozens of other Iraqis have been arrested for speaking out against the occupation.

U. S. Practices for Nuclear War Against North Korea

According to a UPI report on November 7, newly declassified U.S. government documents reveal that since 1998 the U.S. had an active contingency plan to drop as many as 30 nuclear warheads on North Korea.

As part of this plan, known as "scenario 5027," 24 F15-E bombers flew simulation missions at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in North Carolina to drop mock nuclear bombs on a firing range in Florida between January and June 1998. AWACS and KC-135 mid-air refueling planes also took part in the drills to prepare pilots for missions against North Korea from air bases in the U.S.

The revelation follows claims by South Korea members of parliament that the U.S. drew up plans to launch preemptive strikes on key targets in North Korea in 1994. Labeled "scenario 5026," it identified 756 targets that could be taken out by U.S. B-2 stealth bombers and F-117 stealth fighters in order to disable Pyongyang, especially its suspected nuclear weapons capabilities.

According to the Japanese Kyodo News Agency study of the newly declassified documents, the U.S. now officially admits that it kept nuclear weaponry in South Korea until at least 1998, despite officially claiming it had withdrawn all nuclear warheads in 1991.

Washington had conducted drills on the use of nuclear weapons in South Korea since 1958 and in one case fired a mock nuclear weapon at Kunsan Air Base along the southwestern coast of South Korea in 1991, the reports said.

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the President of Palestine. In fact, today behind the words of praise for Arafat spoken by the imperialists and their lackeys there are new calls for the Palestinians to renounce their struggle and to submit to occupation.

Perhaps abused by imperialism and reaction more than anyone of his generation, Yasser Arafat stood with dignity because he was associated with the cause of liberation and with his people.

The struggle of the Palestinian people remains one of the defining struggles of our era and a touchstone for everyone who holds the aspirations of humanity dear.

Today again, the attacks of the U.S. imperialists and Israeli zionists as well as all the false friends of Palestine have intensified and are greater than ever. The U.S. and Israeli governments have openly declared the aim of annexing nearly all of the West Bank and preventing the establishment of a genuinely viable, independent Palestinian state and liquidating the Palestinian nation altogether.

But, as they have done so many times in the past the Palestinian people will again turn their mountains of grief into limitless strength and carry through their struggle for national liberation -- for an independent Palestinian state in their historic homeland.

To mourn for Yasser Arafat is to take the vow that the Palestinian people and their friends have taken before: "from generation to generation until final liberation!"