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New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 47th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. DIALLO (Guinea)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 77: ISRAEL'S DECISION TO BUILD A CANAL LINKING THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA TO THE DEAD SEA: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/39/142)

1. Mr. SALAH (Jordan) * said that Israel had proceeded much further with the construction of the canal between the Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea. In February 1984, after an investment of \$24 million, Israel had started to excavate a tunnel 1,400 metres long in the area of the canal project, ostensibly to investigate the resistance of the materials in that area. Those excavations, the specifications for which matched in every respect those for the final stage of the canal project, were undoubtedly part of the project, since it was inconceivable that Israel, given its financial and economic difficulties, should be wasting so much money solely on research.
2. The measures taken by Israel in connection with the construction of the canal were on an alarming scale: Israel was disregarding General Assembly resolutions 36/150, 37/122 and 38/85; it was rejecting the principle of international law regarding the use of rivers and common waters confirmed by the Helsinki and Madrid instruments of 1911, and was proceeding as though it had not been occupying Palestinian and Arab territories, in contravention of the provisions of the Geneva Conventions on the rights of the occupying Power.
3. The canal project would have serious and irreparable ecological and economic consequences for Jordanian interests in the Dead Sea area. The negative consequences were expected to include the flooding of cultivable land, damage to tourist sites and to the roadway to the east of the Red Sea, and the inundation of the installations of the Jordanian Arab Potash Company. The international community should take steps to dissuade Israel from its aggressive policy, based on its political philosophy of military occupation, annexation by force and the imposition of a fait accompli.
4. The canal project was part of the war started by Israel in 1954 against the Arab States aimed at controlling all the underground and surface water resources of the neighbouring countries and occupied Territories, in particular the West Bank, in order to deprive the Palestinians of water and force them to abandon their lands to the advantage of the Jewish settlements. Similarly, Israeli designs on the waters of southern Lebanon had aroused justified fears on that country's part.
5. The contradictions in the Israeli position regarding the presumed advantages of the canal project offered a glimpse of Israel's undeclared political and strategic goals, such as the creation of new political circumstances and realities in the region, with a view to consolidating the Israeli occupation and presence, and the establishment of multi-purpose nuclear reactors in the canal zone with a view to increasing the nuclear capacity of Israel, a country which had not signed

* A full transcription of this statement will be issued in document A/SPC/39/PV.47.

(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and which aspired to be the region's only nuclear Power. Furthermore, the Israeli plan to construct a dam to the north of Lake Tiberias unveiled at the United Nations Conference on New and Renewable Sources of Energy, held at Nairobi in 1981, was a new plan of Israeli aggression which deprived Jordan of its legitimate rights to the waters of the Jordan river, damaged the Dead Sea and attacked the sanctity of a river that Christians regarded as holy.

6. His delegation requested that steps should be taken to dissuade Israel from continuing with its aggressive plan and that the Secretary-General should continue to monitor developments and to report on them. It also requested that the question should be included in the agenda of the General Assembly at its fortieth session and urged all States, international organizations and bodies to refrain from providing assistance for the financing or construction of the canal project.

7. Mr. SHEHATA (Egypt) requested a transcription of the statement made by the representative of Jordan.

8. The CHAIRMAN recalled that the General Assembly had approved the General Committee's recommendation that during the current session the Special Political Committee should again be authorized to receive, on specific request, transcription of the debates of some of its meetings, or portions thereof. Those transcriptions did not entail any additional budgetary expenses as they were prepared by verbatim reporters and typists from the tapes when the staff concerned were not otherwise occupied in servicing meetings normally provided with verbatim records. Consequently, they might appear at a later stage than the summary records which, as the official records, were complete records of the Committee's work. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee acceded to the request.

9. It was so decided.

10. Mr. MANSOUR (Palestine Liberation Organization)* said that although the Secretary-General's report (A/39/142) contained sufficient proof of the illegality of the construction of the canal between the Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea and its negative economic repercussions, it did not include an evaluation of its adverse political effects on the occupied Territories and Jordan. Furthermore, paragraph 3 of the report made no mention of the PLO in connection with the provision of information relevant to General Assembly resolution 38/85. The PLO should be regularly consulted since it was one of the interested parties.

11. Given the scope of the canal project, which would cross the Gaza Strip, it was obvious that Israel had no intention of withdrawing from that Territory or from the West Bank. The project also represented a danger to thousands of Palestinian farmers in the valley of the river Jordan, should Israel divert its waters.

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(Mr. Mansour, PLO)

12. The construction of the canal would have devastating economic, social and political effects on the Palestinians living under Israeli military occupation. For them, the option of permanently leaving the occupied territories would appear very attractive in the circumstances. That would bring about the realization of the Zionist dream, namely, a massive increase in the number of Zionist settlements and the conversion of all Palestine into a purely Jewish State. The construction of the canal would also have serious economic and political effects in Jordan and in the neighbouring Arab States, which would feel threatened by Israeli expansionism. Israel's attempts to dominate and control the entire region represented a real threat to the peace and security of the whole Middle East and of the world.

13. The Palestinians would continue to use all means, including armed struggle, to eliminate the main source of their problems, namely, the brutal occupation of their homeland by the Israeli invader. The PLO was confident that its struggle, together with the efforts of the international community, would eventually force Israel and its principal ally, United States imperialism, to withdraw from occupied Palestinian and Arab territories and that the formation of an independent Palestinian State would finally be achieved.

14. It was the duty of the United Nations, and in particular of the Security Council to take adequate and meaningful steps to force Israel and United States imperialism to comply with the many United Nations resolutions concerning the situation in the Middle East in general and the question of Palestine in particular. The United Nations and Member States must also take practical measures against Israel so as to ensure that it did not continue with impunity its total disregard for all the United Nations decisions and resolutions.

15. Mr. AL-ANSARI (Bahrain) observed that the report of the Secretary-General (A/39/142) drew attention to the adverse industrial, agricultural, juridical, political and demographic effects of Israel's decision to build a canal between the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea. Therefore, it was not surprising that Israel had refused to receive the team of experts. The canal project reflected Israel's strategic goal of imposing its hegemony in the occupied Arab territories as part of its design to control the area between the two greatest rivers of the Arab world, the Nile and the Euphrates.

16. Throughout history, the Zionist entity had rejected any initiative directed towards solving the Middle East conflict and had obstructed the efforts made by the United Nations to promote peace and security in the region. He stressed that the construction of the canal was dictated by the political and strategic objectives of usurping the Arab territories, expelling their population, modifying the demographic and geographic character of the region and preparing to build new settlements in order to attract Jewish settlers. Those objectives impeded efforts to find a just solution to the question of Palestine, which was the central element of the Middle East problem.

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(Mr. Al-Ansari, Bahrain)

17. In the early days of Zionism in the nineteenth century, the water resources of Palestine had already been studied as a prelude to bringing Jews to live in the area. After the 1967 acts of aggression, feasibility studies had been undertaken and, in 1977, the nuclear physicist Yuval Ne'eman had been asked to conduct research into the physical and geological aspects of the project.

18. Israel's decision had many adverse effects for the Arab world. The Secretary-General's report described the damage the canal would cause to Jordan. In addition, the canal constituted an obstacle to the exercise by the Palestinians of their right to self-determination and their right to establish their own independent State. The project ran counter to articles 52 and 53 of the 1907 Convention of The Hague. As the General Assembly had indicated in many resolutions, in particular resolutions 38/85, the construction of a canal linking the Mediterranean Sea with the Dead Sea constituted a violation of international law. The international community should oblige Israel to abandon its project.

AGENDA ITEM 72: INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE
(continued) (A/SPC/39/L.33)

19. Mr. HOHENFELLNER (Austria), speaking on behalf of the Working Group on International Co-operation in the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, introduced draft resolution A/SPC/39/L.33 and expressed the hope that it would be adopted by consensus. After arduous negotiations, the Working Group had succeeded in preparing a text which was acceptable to all delegations and which defined the mandate of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

20. Currently, at a time when space science and technology offered vast potential for economic and social progress, it was necessary to ensure that all States shared those benefits. COPUOS could play a very important role in promoting international co-operation in that regard. In the negotiations being conducted on the complex questions under consideration, positive results could be achieved only if the interests of all States, both the great Powers and the smallest nations, were taken into account.

21. The CHAIRMAN announced that the Committee would take a decision on draft resolution A/SPC/39/L.33 at its meeting on Thursday, 6 December.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.