



# SECURITY COUNCIL OFFICIAL RECORDS

TWENTY-SECOND YEAR

**1344<sup>th</sup>** MEETING: 30 MAY 1967

NEW YORK

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## NOTE

*Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.*

Documents of the Security Council (symbol S/. . .) are normally published in quarterly *Supplements of the Official Records of the Security Council*. The date of the document indicates the supplement in which it appears or in which information about it is given.

The resolutions of the Security Council, numbered in accordance with a system adopted in 1964, are published in yearly volumes of *Resolutions and Decisions of the Security Council*. The new system, which has been applied retroactively to resolutions adopted before 1 January 1965, became fully operative on that date.

## THIRTEEN HUNDRED AND FORTY-FOURTH MEETING

Held in New York on Tuesday, 30 May 1967, at 3 p.m.

*President:* Mr. LIU Chieh (China).

*Present:* The representatives of the following States: Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Denmark, Ethiopia, France, India, Japan, Mali, Nigeria, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America.

### Provisional agenda (S/Agenda/1344)

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Letter dated 23 May 1967 from the Permanent Representatives of Canada and Denmark addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/7902).
3. Complaint of the representative of the United Arab Republic in a letter to the President of the Security Council dated 27 May 1967 entitled: "Israel aggressive policy, its repeated aggression threatening peace and security in the Middle East and endangering international peace and security" (S/7907).
4. Letter dated 29 May 1967 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/7910).

### Adoption of the agenda

*The agenda was adopted.*

**Letter dated 23 May 1967 from the Permanent Representatives of Canada and Denmark addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/7902)**

**Complaint of the representative of the United Arab Republic in a letter to the President of the Security Council dated 27 May 1967 entitled: "Israel aggressive policy, its repeated aggression threatening peace and security in the Middle East and endangering international peace and security" (S/7907)**

**Letter dated 29 May 1967 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/7910)**

1. The PRESIDENT: In connexion with inviting representatives to participate in the discussion, I wish to draw attention to the fact that there are insufficient places at the Council table for accommodating more than four non-

members. In these circumstances, and in accordance with the established practice, representatives who are invited to participate, without vote, in the discussion are requested to take the places reserved for them at the side of the Council chamber, on the usual understanding that when it is time for any invited representative to speak, he will be called to take a place at the Council table.

*At the invitation of the President, Mr. G. Rafael (Israel), Mr. M. A. El Kony (United Arab Republic), Mr. M. H. El-Farra (Jordan) and Mr. G. J. Tomeh (Syria) took the places reserved for them.*

2. The PRESIDENT: A letter dated 29 May 1967 [S/7911] has been received from the Chargé d'affaires of Lebanon requesting that his Government be permitted to participate in the Council's discussion. Accordingly, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite the representative of Lebanon to take the place reserved for him at the side of the Council chamber in order to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote.

*At the invitation of the President, Mr. G. Hakim (Lebanon) took the place reserved for him.*

3. The PRESIDENT: The Council will now continue its discussion of the item on its agenda.

4. Mr. IYALLA (Nigeria): The report of the Secretary-General of 26 May 1967 which is before the Council in document S/7906 is a source of gratification for my delegation; reading it has confirmed the view which we expressed at the 1342nd meeting of the Council that the work of the Council in considering the grave situation in the Middle East would be very much assisted and would be more meaningful if we had the results of the Secretary-General's delicate mission in Cairo. Several speakers before me have so eloquently thanked the Secretary-General for his courage and his unfailing services to the United Nations and to the cause of world peace that it is sufficient for me to say that the Nigerian delegation entirely supports the Secretary-General's position and whole-heartedly thanks him for his efforts.

5. The report itself has been repeatedly quoted by many delegations in their statements before the Council. My delegation does not see any need to further burden the Council by repeating the process.

6. The matter before the Council is most grave. The situation in the Middle East has become very explosive, and the background to this situation involves several intricate

and complicated factors, including legal considerations, remote or more recent historical events, and deeply held beliefs and passions. It is necessary that these matters be given careful and urgent consideration by the Council. Nevertheless, it is our view that while these far-reaching issues are being considered and tackled, it is the pressing and immediate duty of the Council to lend its weight and support to any step that would prevent a further deterioration of the existing situation and would help to reinforce the uneasy and brittle peace in the area. It is fitting, and indeed essential, that one such step should be an immediate appeal to all parties in the conflict for restraint, so that the existing delicate situation does not erupt into a terrible and tragic conflict. The Nigerian delegation would therefore join in such an appeal, or any resolution in appropriate and satisfactory terms containing such an appeal, to the parties concerned. This appeal should, in our view, not prevent the Council from continuing its consideration of the more fundamental and substantial aspects of the disputes and complaints before it.

7. We should like to emphasize, however, that nothing in our position should be taken to imply any form of interference with the exercise by a country of its sovereign jurisdiction and the complete control of its territory.

8. I am instructed to make it clear that the Nigerian polity will not support any action that tends to impair or encroach upon the right of a legal Government of any country to maintain the integrity of its territory and waters, and to order its affairs according to its own light.

9. Nevertheless, while recognizing the right of each State over its own affairs and its own territory, and while emphasizing that no action should be taken to jeopardize those sovereign rights, we—who maintain diplomatic relations with all the States in the area and have maintained an uninterrupted record of close and friendly relations with most of them—specially appeal to them in this moment of great danger to consider the wider interests of peace in all their actions.

10. Specifically, we would join in an appeal to all parties to maintain the commendable restraint of the last few days, through which the actual outbreak of hostilities and violence has been avoided and to maintain this peace while other means are being explored—both here in the United Nations and through other channels—and while the substantive disputes are being seriously and urgently pursued.

11. My delegation believes that the Secretary-General's report provides us with much that can form the basis of action both by this Council and by all concerned in the Middle East. As a first step, we think the Council should issue an appeal for restraint. Secondly, the Council should seriously take up the suggestions of the Secretary-General, for instance to reactivate the Mixed Armistice Commissions. Thirdly, we feel that the Secretary-General should be encouraged to continue his most useful contacts with the principal parties in the Middle East and with the other interests involved. We note that, in paragraph 18 of his report, he has stated that he was able to indicate to both the United Arab Republic and to Israel some possible steps which could be taken by mutual consent and would thereby reduce tension.

12. We reserve our right to intervene again on the substantive issues in this discussion.

13. The PRESIDENT: I now call on the Foreign Minister of Lebanon.

14. Mr. HAKIM (Lebanon): Mr. President, I should like to thank you and the members of the Security Council for giving me the opportunity to participate in the debates of the Council on the item on the agenda. I have been sent by the Government of Lebanon to address the Council on the grave situation which exists in the Middle East today.

15. In his report of 19 May 1967, the Secretary-General has described the situation as "more disturbing" and "more menacing, than at any time since the fall of 1956" [S/7896, para. 19]. After returning from his visit to Cairo, he said in his report of 26 May 1967 that he could "only reiterate this assessment" [S/7906, para. 1]. Not only do I agree with his assessment, but I also believe the danger of war is even greater. Will there be war or peace in the Middle East? That is the question. But if there is war tomorrow, it will be much more dangerous than the Suez war.

16. I am in a position to know the facts of the present situation. The facts are very grim. The facts are stubborn things that cannot be brushed aside. Those who think they know the facts and have calculated the risks would do better to review the situation, determine the real facts, and recalculate the risks. If there were war tomorrow, it would be because Israel had struck the first blow.

17. In his latest report, the Secretary-General said: "President Nasser and Foreign Minister Riad assured me that the United Arab Republic would not"—I repeat, "would not"—"initiate offensive action against Israel" [ibid., para. 9]. On the other hand, he said: "The Government of Israel has further declared that Israel will regard the closing of the Strait of Tiran to Israel flagships and any restriction on cargoes of ships of other flags proceeding to Israel as a *casus belli*" [ibid., para. 10].

18. We all know that the United Arab Republic has affirmed that it will exercise its sovereign rights over the Strait of Tiran, which falls well within its territorial waters. Lebanon supports this exercise by the United Arab Republic of its sovereign rights over the entrance to the Gulf of Aqaba. We will stand by the United Arab Republic in its defence of those rights.

19. If Israel commits aggression as a result, the responsibility for starting the war will fall fully and squarely on Israel. This time it must be clear to everybody that it would be a total war. The Government and people of Lebanon would fulfil their commitments under the charter of the League of Arab States and the Arab Treaty of Mutual Defence. A unanimous declaration reaffirming these commitments was adopted by the Lebanese Parliament on 23 May 1967—a week ago.

20. All the Arab States would be involved as they all have the same commitments. A few days ago, the Council of the Arab League reaffirmed that an attack on any Arab country would be considered an attack on all. Fighting which

started in one area would quickly expand. The war would escalate. Who can be certain it would not become, to borrow an idea from Secretary-General U Thant, the first phase of the third world war?

21. Look at your maps, gentlemen; examine them carefully. The Arab world extends from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean. It occupies a vast territory with immense oil resources. Its strategic location is well known. It is inhabited by one hundred million people. Countless more millions support them. In a total war the Arabs will use all means to defeat their enemy, for they are convinced of the justice of their cause. They are fully united in the defence of the rights of the Arab people of Palestine, who have been expelled from their homeland. In such a war, the Arabs would distinguish their friends from their enemies. The interests in the Arab world of those who would become their enemies would be completely eliminated. It would be a long war, with no cease-fire until final victory. No one can foresee the consequences, no one can foresee the dangers to world peace.

22. I am speaking to you dispassionately, with all the reason and objectivity at my command. I am speaking to you so frankly because of my country's abhorrence of war and attachment to peace. Lebanon appeals to you, as responsible members of the Security Council, to preserve the peace.

23. What could possibly justify the incalculable risks and immense dangers to which I have referred? Free navigation for Israel in the Gulf of Aqaba? Is it to ensure a so-called right for Israel ships and strategic materials to go through the Strait of Tiran that the whole world must undergo such terrible sacrifices and losses? It is inconceivable that some great and responsible Powers could think and act so irrationally.

24. Let us see what has happened during the last three weeks. The crisis started with Israel leaders making threats of aggression against Syria. They threatened to invade Syria, occupy Damascus and overthrow the Syrian Arab socialist régime. Such reckless and arrogant threats had never been known before. They were an insult to Arab national dignity and a challenge to Arab national honour.

25. The United Arab Republic was in duty bound to take all necessary steps to fulfil its obligations to defend Syria against Israel aggression. To be able to do so, the United Arab Republic requested the Secretary-General to withdraw the United Nations Emergency Force. I have heard no greater absurdity than the suggestion that the Secretary-General should have refused to comply with that request. The United Nations Emergency Force is not an occupying force stationed on the territory of a Member State against its sovereign will. It was in Sinai and Gaza on the basis of an agreement between the Secretary-General and the President of Egypt. It was on the territory of the United Arab Republic with that country's consent. When that consent was withdrawn, the Emergency Force had to be withdrawn. I commend our Secretary-General for his decision; it was the only possible decision for him to make, and a sound and honourable one.

26. When the armed forces of the United Arab Republic took over the positions formerly occupied by the Emergency Force, the United Arab Republic resumed the exercise of its sovereign rights over its territorial waters in the Strait of Tiran, the entrance to the Gulf of Aqaba. It had never given up those rights. It is not bound by any international agreement to allow freedom of navigation in its territorial waters to the ships of Israel, a country with which the United Arab Republic is in a state of war.

27. I shall not deal with the legal aspects of the question of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba, as my friend, the United Arab Republic representative, Mr. El Kony, has already done so. I should only like to say that the United Arab Republic simply re-established the situation existing before Israel's aggression against Egypt in 1956. It went back to the *status quo ante*.

28. The world had lived with that situation before November 1956; it can live with it now. Instead of punishing Israel for its aggression in 1956, some are suggesting that it should continue to reap the fruit of that aggression. They would thus encourage the aggressor, Israel, and would prove to the whole world that aggression pays.

29. In fact, that is the history of Israel ever since its creation in 1948, a history of unpunished aggression; one could say rewarded and profitable aggression. For the question of the alleged Israel right of freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba is only a part, indeed a small part, of the question of Palestine. This Israel State, which was created on the basis of a great injustice done to the Arab people of Palestine, has never ceased to commit aggression ever since its creation. The Zionists expelled by force and terror the rightful inhabitants of the country, and they have continued to deny them the right to return to their homeland in spite of numerous United Nations resolutions affirming that right.

30. Israel occupied by force more territory, about 23 per cent more, than was allotted to the Jewish State by the partition resolution of the General Assembly [181 (II)]. It defied the United Nations by refusing to implement the General Assembly resolution on the internationalization of Jerusalem [303 (IV)], which decided to make the Holy City a *corpus separatum* under United Nations administration.

31. Finally, Israel committed a series of aggressions, some of which were listed by the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Republic in his letter of 27 May 1967 [S/7907] to the President of the Security Council. There were several other acts of aggression, many of which were condemned in resolutions of the Security Council. The last two of these large-scale armed Israel attacks were the brutal attack on As Samu in Jordan in November 1966, and the aerial attack on Syria which took place one month ago, on 7 April 1967. Israel was born of aggression and has continued to live by aggression with impunity.

32. I would like to draw your attention, Mr. President, and that of the members of the Security Council to these simple facts. Regular Israel armed land and air forces crossed the armistice demarcation lines more than twelve

times, committing acts of aggression on the territory of the neighbouring Arab countries. Not once—I repeat, not once—did the armed forces of any Arab country cross the armistice lines into Israel territory.

33. What has the United Nations done to make Israel behave and keep the peace, to stop Israel's aggressive policies and to give justice to the Arabs of Palestine? Nothing—except to pass dozens of resolutions which are gathering dust in the archives of the United Nations.

34. The Arab countries, which have a responsibility to their peoples and to the world for the maintenance of peace in their region, will not—I repeat, will not—tolerate any longer Israel's aggressive policies. The Arab peoples are united and determined to put a stop to Israel aggression. Let no one make the mistake of doubting this Arab unity and determination. Whatever the suffering and the sacrifices, the Arab peoples will defend their independence, their sovereignty and their national security. They will pursue their aim of undoing the great injustice inflicted on the Arabs of Palestine and of restoring their rights to their usurped homeland. The Arab countries want peace, but peace based on justice. They are faithful to the United Nations as an instrument for the attainment of a just peace.

35. The Government of Lebanon believes that the Security Council has the primary responsibility for preventing war and maintaining international peace. But Member States, under Article 51 of the Charter, have the inherent right of individual and collective self-defence. The Security Council has the duty to prevent aggression before it takes place and thus preserve the peace. It must not fail in its task.

36. The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of Syria.

37. Mr. TOMEH (Syria): The Middle East crisis upsetting our area and constituting a threat to world peace and security is, in the chronology and chain of events of the last two months, the direct outcome of the unprovoked, massive attack by regular Israel forces against the Syrian people and Syrian territory which took place on 7 April 1967. In its wider and deeper context, it is but a manifestation of the Palestine question, which still exists and which has been on the agenda of the Security Council since 1948.

38. I shall deal first with the tragic events of that memorable day—that is to say, 7 April—since it was the point of escalation of the present crisis. For on that day the Zionist Israel régime in Palestine, carrying out the will of its masters and manipulators, unleashed once more its infernal forces of destruction and annihilation against Syria. Both we and the Israelis have given our versions of the story in three letters submitted to the President of the Security Council and circulated as Council documents.<sup>1</sup> But what is it that in fact happened? The following version of the

events of that day is based solely on the investigation carried out by the Israel-Syrian Mixed Armistice Commission, the results of which were transmitted to the Syrian delegation on that Commission on 28 April 1967. It consists of a covering letter from the Chairman of the Israel-Syrian Mixed Armistice Commission to the Syrian delegation to the Commission on the investigation carried out, the maps of the area, a statement on where the cultivation took place which led to the conflict, and the death certificates of the people who were killed, as will be seen later in my intervention.

39. The Israel aggression on Syrian territory which took place on 7 April 1967 is a classic example of the ruthless implementation of the Israel expansionist, bloodthirsty policy.

40. First, the piece of land cultivated is a disputed portion in the village of Samra that was destroyed previously by Israel forces and whose Arab owners were expelled by force. That was clearly confirmed in the investigation of the Mixed Armistice Commission. That is the aspect of transgression of Arab land and rights, which Israel has engaged in since 1948.

41. Secondly, this cultivation was carried out by armed bulldozers, thus adding violation of the Armistice Agreement to violation of Arab rights and property.

42. Thirdly, the warning shots, as the report of the Mixed Armistice Commission indicates, fired into the air by the Syrian soldier Hassan Hammadih to withdraw the tractor from the field was answered by a barrage of Israel fire coming from three directions: Israel military positions along the Ein Gev road; mortars situated north of Haon and Israel tanks situated both near Samra in the demilitarized zone and on the northern slope of Tel Qatsir.

43. Thereafter, seventy-two air sorties undertook bombing and strafing not only against military positions, as the Israel representative and his Prime Minister want world opinion to believe, but also against five other villages which have no military posts or equipment whatsoever, as was confirmed by the investigation of the Mixed Armistice Commission. The villages of Sqoufiye, Nerane, Jalabina South, Nassariya and Amaret Aaz Ed Dine were subjected to destruction and mass killings by Israel aircraft, without their having committed any wrong or having been engaged in the battle. In Sqoufiye alone, there were sixteen dead, of whom four were women and one a child. This is in addition to the scores of wounded visited in Kuneitra hospital by personnel from the Mixed Armistice Commission.

44. It is sufficient here to cite the physical evidence observed by the Commission's personnel on the spot. They said:

“In the centre of the village of Sqoufiye the investigating United Nations military observers inspected a damaged area approximately 100 metres by 250 metres. Within this, an area of completely demolished dwellings of approximately 70 metres wide by approximately 175 metres long was observed. Damage beyond this area ranged from severe to very slight at the outer limits.

<sup>1</sup> See *Official Records of the Security Council, Twenty-second Year, Supplement for April, May and June 1967*, documents S/7843, S/7845, S/7849, S/7853, S/7863 and S/7880.

"Within the area of total destruction five bomb craters were seen and examined by the investigating United Nations military observers. Shrapnel pieces with thicknesses ranging from 4 millimetres to 2.5 centimetres were recovered from the craters. Pieces of bomb tail fins, 22 centimetres by 47 centimetres, and other ordnance debris were also recovered.

"In a village cemetery sixteen new graves, two of them still open, were viewed.

"United Nations military observers, in passing completely through the village, did not observe"—as they state in their investigation—"any military installations or equipment within the village.

"The estimated number of destroyed dwellings was placed at approximately forty as the extensive destruction in the area of the bomb pattern completely obliterated any evidence of outlines of the dwellings which had received the direct hits. Approximately fifty additional dwellings showed from severe to minor damage."

45. Let it be known that I am referring only to Sqoufiye, among the villages that I mentioned, because I do not want to take up the time of the Council by citing the casualties and the destruction perpetrated in the other villages.

46. The representative of Israel conveniently passed over all this in silence. And his Prime Minister had assembled his soldiers and pilots to praise them, according to the 4 May 1967 issue of *News from Israel*, for having "fulfilled the order to attack only military targets and not civilian settlements in Syria".

47. By this manoeuvre Israel authorities thought that they could go on deceiving world opinion by their distortion of the truth through their hold on mass media. It is up to the Council to choose whom to believe: the international observers or the peaceful, innocent and harmless statements of Mr. Eshkol.

48. In this connexion, as a party to the dispute, we respectfully submit that the Secretary-General, if possible, should circulate to the Security Council a factual report about this clash and attack.

49. In my letter to the President of the Security Council on 28 April 1967 [S/7863], I mentioned the acts of aggression committed by Israel on 7 April, as follows:

"(a) The extension of cultivation and encroachments by the Israelis of Arab lands in the southern demilitarized zone never before cultivated;

"(b) The introduction of and resorting to armed forces to carry out cultivation in areas forbidden by the General Armistice Agreement;

"(c) The ignoring of the repeated appeals made by the Chief of Staff of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization in Palestine to stop cultivation of disputed lands pending final settlement."

This was at a time when the Syrian side had accepted the appeal of the Chief of Staff and stopped cultivation.

"(d) The use of an armoured tractor which constitutes an act of violation of the General Armistice Agreement;

"(e) The ignoring of the warning to withdraw the armoured tractor;

"(f) The refusal of the cease-fire proposed by the Chairman of the Mixed Armistice Commission which Syria accepted to be effective at 1015 hours; Israel offered 1130 hours for the cease-fire but reneged, and resumed its brutal air bombardment of Syrian positions"—and villages—"across the armistice demarcation line and inside Syrian territory after 1130 hours."

That attack resulted in the deaths which I have mentioned.

50. All these facts, the sequence of which is accurately given here and which can be ascertained through the United Nations machinery in the area, prove beyond any doubt that Israel had prepared for that attack and provoked Syria, which, in what followed, acted in legitimate self-defence.

51. All these facts have now been substantiated by the report of the Israel-Syrian Mixed Armistice Commission, enclosed with the letter addressed to the senior Syrian delegate by the Chairman of the Commission on 28 April 1967. But the very striking addition is the extent of destruction by bombs, napalm and rockets, of the lives of innocent Arab people and their property, not excluding villages and places of worship, in such a brutal and deliberate manner.

52. Here I wish to cite the following paragraphs of the letter from the Chairman of the Commission addressed to the senior Syrian delegate:

"Damascus, 28 April 1967

"...

"1. Enclosed please find two copies of the above-referenced investigation reports relating to the intensive exchange of fire which occurred on 7 April 1967. . . .

"2. A study of these investigation reports substantiates the complaints in so far as:

"(a) Cultivation of a portion of Block 15198 of the Samra lands (Haon fields) by Israel did take place on 7 April 1967; part of this cultivation was carried out by armoured bulldozers; and this cultivation was opposed by Syrian fire.

"(b) Israel military forces located inside the southern sector of the demilitarized zone directed heavy machine-gun, mortar and tank fire towards Syrian positions, villages and territory during the morning and afternoon of 7 April 1967.

"(c) Israel aircraft bombed and/or strafed the Syrian villages and/or settlements of Sqoufiye, Nerane, Jalabina

South, Nassariya and Amaret Aaz Ed Dine, as well as Syrian military positions.”

I place these reports at the disposal of any member of the Security Council who may wish to study them.

53. The extraordinary thing is that the Israel authorities, not satisfied with the crimes they have thus committed, have since engaged in statements which would sound to any impartial observer as though the Israelis were about to launch large-scale hostilities against Syria. However, since I dealt with those statements in my intervention yesterday, it is not necessary for me to do so again. I merely wish to bring to the attention of the members of the Security Council paragraph 8 of the Secretary-General's report [S/7896], which is sufficient.

54. The two reports which the Secretary-General has addressed to the Security Council [S/7896 and S/7906] deal with tension along the armistice demarcation lines between Syria and Israel. A number of members of the Security Council have referred in their statements to the tense situation between Syria and Israel. In fact, the representative of the United States, Mr. Goldberg, in his statement yesterday [1343rd meeting] also referred to this situation as one of the four highly sensitive problems which he enumerated. I must, therefore, turn to this particular aspect, and in doing so I am especially addressing myself to points 6 and 7 listed in document S/7907, namely the Israel aggression against the water projects in Syria utilizing the Israel Air Force, and the repeated Israel aggression against the demilitarized zones specified in the Israel-Syrian General Armistice Agreement—points which have been used as illustrations of the complaint which was put forward by the representative of the United Arab Republic in document S/7907 and which was accepted as an item of the agenda.

55. Let me say that the cultivation of disputed portions of land might appear, at first, to be a trifling matter, one that would not warrant lengthy consideration. That is exactly what the Israel propaganda machine would like world opinion to believe. The real fact is that behind this apparently simple, naive and innocent matter lie the most aggressive intentions and planning. Any impartial observer following the trend of events over the last twenty years would ascertain the existence of this established Israel policy in the field of cultivation. Israel wants to obtain several advantages, no matter to what extent its process is contrary to international law and United Nations resolutions. It intends first to carry out the gradual expansion that Israel has been bent upon since its inception. The chronological facts since 1948 indicate a constant Israel line of conduct in this implementation of its expansionist plans. Secondly, it wants to break any restrictions on its conduct provided for by international law, public and private, and by the Armistice Agreements, in order to ensure for ever the primacy of the rule of force over the rule of law. Thirdly, it uses cultivation as an instrument to provoke Syrian reaction. If that reaction is strong, it aims at crushing it ruthlessly, so as to eliminate another obstacle in the way of achieving its further expansion and to make Syria weary in the long run of useless resistance. But events are proving that peoples stand firmly for their rights.

56. The representative of the United Arab Republic explained yesterday [1343rd meeting] the occupation by Israel forces of the demilitarized zone of El Auja along the armistice demarcation lines.

57. The Israelis have repeated that strategy of piecemeal invasion in the demilitarized zones on the Israel-Syrian demarcation lines. Israel has always coveted those zones, especially between Syria and Israel. The northern demilitarized zone, commanding the Jordan River for about 20 kilometres until it empties into Lake Tiberias, has been the site of the Israel project to divert the Jordan River waters, a project which was begun in 1953. The southern demilitarized zone between Israel and Syria stretches south-east to cover the El Hamma region. Control of this last-mentioned area is necessary if a party is desirous of diverting the Yarmouk River, which emanates from Syria and Jordan and flows into the Jordan south of Lake Tiberias.

58. No sooner had those two demilitarized zones been established by the Israel-Syrian General Armistice Agreement than Israel forces started their gradual occupation. On 27 March 1951, United Nations military observers encountered Israel armed forces in the southern demilitarized zone. General de Ridder, Acting Chief of Staff of UNTSO, addressed a message to the Chief of Staff of the Israel Defence Forces declaring that he considered this “a flagrant violation” of the General Armistice Agreement, and requesting him to order his forces “to withdraw outside the demilitarized zone”.

59. On the night of 30-31 March 1951, the Israel Army answered this request by expelling 785 Arab civilians from the central sector of the zone. UNTSO requested an interview with the Arabs to ascertain if they had, as Israel alleged, left of their own accord. To preclude this investigation, the senior Israel representative at the Israel-Syrian Mixed Armistice Commission, on 4 April 1951, charged the Commission Chairman with partiality, declared that he “would not sit at the same meeting with him”, and promptly walked out of the Mixed Armistice Commission, terminating any Israel affiliation with the Commission.

60. The next day, on 5 April 1951, the Israel Air Force carried out an unprovoked aerial bombardment of the Syrian village of El Hamma at the southern tip of the demilitarized zone. Syria complained to the Security Council, which, at the end of its debate, on 18 May 1951, adopted resolution 93 (1951) condemning Israel's attack as a violation of the cease-fire, the Armistice Agreement, and Israel's obligations under the United Nations Charter. In that same resolution the Council condemned the Israel authorities for expelling the 785 Arab inhabitants of the zone in March 1951, and stipulated their return forthwith; it condemned the Israel authorities for refusing to allow an investigation by the Truce Supervision Organization, and for terminating Israel's affiliation with the Mixed Armistice Commission. The resolution noted the Council's concern over Israel's repeated restriction of the freedom of movement of United Nations observers in the demilitarized zone, and called upon Israel to reactivate its participation in procedures of the Mixed Armistice Commission and to comply with orders of the Truce Supervision Organization.



61. In the meantime, Israel armed forces had carried out two further attacks against Syrian civilians in the northern demilitarized zone. The conflicts in this northern demilitarized zone centred around Israel's attempted diversion of the Jordan River, the mainsprings of which are in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. Lieutenant-General Burns, former Chief of Staff of the Truce Supervision Organization, sets out the case concerning the politico-military strategy used by Israel in the northern demilitarized zone between Israel and Syria as follows:

"Briefly, and stripped so far as possible of technicalities, the question at issue may be put thus. The Israelis claimed sovereignty over the territory covered by the DZ, subject only to the specific restrictions against military forces therein. . . . They then proceeded, as opportunity offered, to encroach on the specific restrictions, and so eventually to free themselves, on various pretexts, from all of them. It was essentially the same process as they adopted in the El Auja demilitarized zone"<sup>2</sup>—on the armistice demarcation line with Egypt.

62. Concerning the southern demilitarized zone between Syria and Israel, the Israelis continued to expel Arab inhabitants after the air offensive against El Hamma on 5 April 1951. Two hundred more Arabs were expelled.

63. It would take me quite a long time to enumerate the history of this long, tragic sequence of events and the various attacks that have been perpetrated by Israel against Syria; but let me quote Major-General von Horn, who, in a report dated 16 February 1960, reported as follows on the fortifications in violation of the General Armistice Agreements inside the demilitarized zone:

"The foundation ten years ago . . . of the kibbutz of Beit Qatsir . . . and the development of cultivation by the Israel settlers using the waters of Lake Tiberias . . . rapidly resulted in depriving Arab farmers in the demilitarized zone of all access to the lake and of any land between the kibbutz and the lake. Moreover, like other Israel border settlements, in or out of the demilitarized zone, the new kibbutz became a fortified position."  
[S/4270, para. 2.]

64. With reference to these various attacks, the Security Council adopted three resolutions concerning the demilitarized zones. The first one, resolution 93 (1951) of 18 May 1951, to which I have already referred states, *inter alia*, that the Security Council:

"Decides that Arab civilians who have been removed from the demilitarized zone by the Government of Israel should be permitted to return forthwith to their homes and that the Mixed Armistice Commission should supervise their return and rehabilitation in a manner to be determined by the Commission."

65. The second one, resolution 111 (1956) of 19 January 1956, condemns Israel for its attack in the Lake Tiberias area, describing the attack as a "flagrant violation of the

cease-fire provisions of its resolution 54 (1948), of the terms of the General Armistice Agreement". Paragraphs 4 and 5 of that resolution state that the Security Council:

"Expresses its grave concern at the failure of the Government of Israel to comply with its obligations;

"Calls upon the Government of Israel to do so in the future, in default of which the Council will have to consider what further measures under the Charter are required to maintain or restore the peace."

66. The third one, resolution 171 (1962), of 9 April 1962, also condemning Israel for attacking Syrian territory, states that the Security Council:

"Calls for strict observance of article V of the General Armistice Agreement, which provides for the exclusion of armed forces from the demilitarized zone, and annex IV of that Agreement, which sets limits on forces in the defensive area."

67. But we are now in 1967, and these are solemn resolutions adopted by the Security Council. The people who spoke yesterday about the rule of law and respect for law had better put to Israel and the Israel representatives their questions about what has been implemented of all these resolutions. Is it mere coincidence that after the attack of 7 April 1967, to which I alluded, when we knew that civilian targets were bombarded and that civilians were killed, we did not come to the Security Council? The reason is to be found in another sad experience. Some of the members of the Security Council will remember that on 25 July 1966 I complained to the Security Council [1288th meeting] about an attack perpetrated in the same area on 14 July 1966, when a development project along the rivers in Syria was completely destroyed and when those who committed the crime confessed to it, saying, "We went and bombarded Syria". The Security Council failed to take any action.

68. This is a very grave situation because, as I said at that meeting, a small country like Syria can do nothing except to invoke the rule of law; yet when we invoked the rule of law, the law was completely disregarded.

69. To give the Council an idea about this aggressive spirit of Israel, at least 300 soldiers and civilians were killed in these various attacks—killed and massacred in a dastardly fashion. *The Jerusalem Post*, after describing the attack on Lake Tiberias in 1962, had this to say on 18 March 1962:

"Water is the prime condition for life in this country. The Arabs know this as well as we do, and will make every effort to prevent the development of the water resources here. Israel cannot afford to lose a drop of water. . . . We shall have to be prepared to defend our water rights as much as our territory."

But defence, in the terminology of Israel, always means an aggression.

70. As I said, it would take me a very long time to enumerate all the facts, and I have skipped at least twelve

<sup>2</sup> Lieutenant-General E. L. M. Burns, *Between Arab and Israeli* (Toronto, Clarke, Irwin and Co., Ltd., 1962), p. 113.

pages of my written statement. But during the last series of debates on this matter in the Security Council, the Secretary-General was requested to submit reports on the demilitarized zones. In fact, that request was first made in the Council by the representative of Morocco in 1963, in connexion with a complaint that was submitted then by Syria against Israel. During the meetings of the Council that I am referring to, the Secretary-General submitted a report dated 2 November 1966 [S/7573] entitled "Report of the Secretary-General on the present status of the demilitarized zone set up by the General Armistice Agreement between Israel and Syria". Significantly enough, this report is called "part A". We are still waiting for part B, which has not been issued so far.

71. But when the issue of mobilization is raised, when Syria complains that there is mobilization on the borders of Syria, one must not listen only to the affirmations and statements given by the Israel representative to the Secretary-General, to be transmitted to the representatives of the United Arab Republic and Syria. The above-mentioned report shows clearly that military fortifications have been built; that they constitute a continuous threat to, and a continuous mobilization on the borders of Syria; and that the various United Nations Chiefs of Staff have requested that these fortifications be demolished. Yet up to now, in 1967, those requests, made as long ago as 1955, 1957, 1960 and 1962, have not been implemented or respected in the least.

72. But let me read one of the paragraphs of this report:

"The part of the central sector of the demilitarized zone which is on the eastern bank of the Jordan River is a narrow strip of land, generally controlled by Syria, while the western bank, generally controlled by Israel, is a large area. On the western bank Arab villages have been demolished, their inhabitants evacuated. The inhabitants of the villages of Baqqara and Ghanname returned following Security Council resolution 93 (1951) of 18 May 1951. They were later, on 30 October 1956, forced to cross into Syria where they are still living. Their lands on the western bank of the river, and Khoury Farm in the same area, are cultivated by Israel nationals." [S/7573, para. 16.]

This is law as conceived by Israel and by its representative, who yesterday invoked the rule of law against Syria in an attempt to gain sympathy.

73. I come now to the concluding remarks of my statement. The grave situation which we are facing and discussing has been described as a "crisis". Now, "crisis" is one of the most pregnant words that could exist in any language anywhere. A genuine crisis put us always, so to speak, in the midstream of history. We are, in a way, pierced by time. The past, the present, and the future confront us with all the gravity they contain and the responsibility they impose upon us. Many want to shun those deeper aspects, want to stick to the present and the immediate, and to come up with a quick resolution from the Security Council. History, they claim, is old, monotonous, boring. But we are in the midst of history, and we

are witnessing the unfolding of historical events. It is one of the basic duties of a statesman to discern the historical sense of events. Failing to do that, we will always be dealing with palliatives—and that is one of the reasons why the United Nations for the last twenty years has been unable to do anything about the Palestine problem.

74. And here we wish to congratulate the Secretary-General for the remark he makes in one of his reports, that underlying all these manifestations is the age-old Arab-Israel conflicts.

75. Our quarrel is with Zionism. But has Zionism changed, or have the ambitions of Zionist-Israel leaders been satisfied? In spite of everything that has happened, let us hear the answer from one of them. On 12 January 1967 *The Jerusalem Post* published this statement:

"Mr. Shragai, head of the Jewish Agency Immigration Department, told the Zionist leaders yesterday morning that 'the great tragedy of our generation and of Zionism is that, despite the fact that "part" of the Land of Israel has been returned to the Jewish people as a sovereign State, we have not yet succeeded in bringing the people back to the State'."

And I call attention to the statement that what they have taken is only "part of the Land of Israel". And this is not old history, this is the year in which we are living. Secondly, I call attention to the statement that they "have not yet succeeded in bringing the people back to the State". Thus, to us, Zionism, having found its fulfilment in the Israel State, is, in view of what I have just quoted, a continuous act of aggression, and, by confiscating and occupying Arab Palestine, by killing, ousting and deporting the people of Palestine, has to account for crimes of genocide and for crimes of war.

76. The basic cause of the tragedy that we are dealing with is the fact that the Arab people of Palestine—the party directly involved and concerned in this issue—have been completely and deliberately forgotten and disregarded; and unless this fact is fully and completely taken into consideration, and the situation is remedied, the problem will continue to live with us. This has consistently been the stand of the Syrian delegation.

77. In this connexion, I beg to quote here my statement in the Security Council, on 14 October 1966, during debates in the Council:

"... whenever we are discussing the problems of Israel and the neighbouring Arab States, one thing is lost sight of, which is absolutely necessary, and that is that besides, beyond, outside and above either the Syrians, the Egyptians, the Lebanese or the Jordanians, or the Israelis, there is an Arab people of Palestine. The whole wretched story that we hear time and again here is due to the fact that these Arabs of Palestine have been forgotten. ... There is an Arab people of Palestine, and these Arabs of Palestine are not different from any other people in their determination, will, attachment and loyalty to their homeland." [1307th meeting, para. 68.]

78. To deprive a people of its national identity by force, whether military or otherwise, is in itself a grave violation of the Charter. This is clearly stated in General Assembly resolution 2160 (XXI) of 30 November 1966 which, in sub-paragraph (b) of operative paragraph 1, states:

"Any forcible action, direct or indirect, which deprives peoples under foreign domination of their right to self-determination and freedom and independence and of their right to determine freely their political status and pursue their economic, social and cultural development constitutes a violation of the Charter of the United Nations. . . ."

79. The plight of the Arab people of Palestine is not in any way different from the plight of the people of South West Africa or Southern Rhodesia, for in both cases, a racist minority, a rebel régime of transplanted aliens, established an illegal régime and deprived the majority of the population of their right to self-determination. Using force, they deprived the people of their national identity. Where is the Arab people of Palestine? Has it evaporated? And in both cases Great Britain was and is responsible for the problem—the only difference being that, whereas the indigenous people of South West Africa and of Southern Rhodesia remained and are still on their land, the Arab people of Palestine have been ousted from their homeland by brutal force and sheer, ugly terrorism.

80. I listened carefully yesterday to the statement of the representative of the United Kingdom pleading for freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba. Surely, Lord Caradon, who is so very well acquainted with the history of the Arab world, knows the particular history of the occupation of Aqaba by Arab forces during the First World War. They gave it as a prize to the Allies. It was the Arabs who took Aqaba. And what was the reward? During the First World War, especially among the population of Syria, amounting to no more than 5 million persons at that time, 300,000 Arabs died of hunger. We have been amply rewarded by Great Britain.

81. The account which I gave today of the unprovoked attack on Syria by Israel has established the fact that, contrary to the claims by Israel leaders and spokesmen, not only military targets were the object of their attack, but innocent civilians and property where no military targets existed whatsoever—according to the investigation of the United Nations military observers. I need not quote the Charter of the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg. War crimes and crimes against humanity have been very clearly defined. They are: any act of aggression; acts committed to destroy a national, ethnical, racial or religious group; inhuman acts against any civilian population, such as murder, deportation, persecution; plunder or looting of public or private property and wanton destruction of cities, towns and villages.

82. As a result of Israel's continued aggression against neighbouring States—not to speak of the whole Arab patrimony in Palestine that has now been expropriated by the Israelis, which in itself is a war crime—the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization determined that, between 1949 and 1956, the ratio of Arabs to Israelis

killed—killed by aggression and retaliatory actions by Israel—was six to one. General Burns, who was at one time Chief of Staff—and I quote him again—commenting on the number of people killed as the result of Israel's retaliations, had this to say: "Israel's retaliatory policy had piled up an impressive balance of corpses in her favour."

83. Israel must sooner or later account for war crimes and crimes against humanity, against the Arab people of Palestine and against the neighbouring Arab States. It is deplorable to us that for the last twenty years Israel has not only not been punished, but has been encouraged to pursue this policy, primarily and basically by the Government of the United States.

84. I listened very carefully yesterday to the statement delivered here by the representative of the United States. I read and re-read the statement. But I failed to find any constructive approach. He said that we should preserve the *status quo*, which to us means: keep injustice as it is; keep the criminal enjoying the freedom of the international community. And then the representative of the United States said: we want to treat both parties equally and justly. But surely when we take into consideration that for the last seventeen or eighteen years during which we have been fighting within the United Nations just to withdraw the income from the property of the Arab refugees from Palestine, to enable them to live decently as human beings, the one and only delegation that has been fighting us—the delegation that has been fighting us most of all—has been the United States delegation.

85. This can very easily be explained. As an example of this official support of the United States Government, I shall quote the following words of Vice-President Humphrey—for when the President does not speak, the Vice-President speaks: "Israel does not need a written alliance with the United States; that alliance is there in spirit." The Vice-President said that on 8 May 1967, at a dinner in the Washington Hilton hotel, when the Vice-President was presented the 1967 Histadrut Humanitarian Award of the National Committee for Labor Israel and the American Trade Union Council for Histadrut. Thus, there is an *a priori* spiritual alliance between the United States and Israel; no written alliance is needed.

86. We very much regret the fact that the American public has been and continues to be deceived by the Israel Zionist mass media machine, because no people can have anything against any other people.

87. But what we would say is that there is a limit to how much error human nature can accept; after that there is revolt. One of the aspects of the crisis we are now facing is that for the last twenty years the Arabs have been humiliated and unjustly treated, and those who have imposed the humiliation have been able to get away with their crimes. But this year, unlike any preceding year, the Arabs stand united, and will continue to do so.

88. The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of the United Arab Republic.

89. Mr. EL KONY (United Arab Republic): In the course of my submission yesterday, to which the members of the

Council listened with patience, for which I am grateful, I endeavoured to underline, in as much detail as time would allow, the political factors which have affected and still affect the situation in the Middle East and which have led to the present boiling point. In that respect I have not failed to explain thoroughly the acts and actions performed by the Israelis and their associates in changing the conditions in the area—not for the better, but most definitely for the worse, by creating a state of turmoil and unrest.

90. I also endeavoured to put before the Council the irrefutable legal thesis upon which my Government bases itself. This has been the consistent position of my Government since 1948, and as may be observed from the records of the United Nations, we have never failed to substantiate our stand with legal arguments and authoritative opinion and to rest our case on the soundest juridical foundations.

91. In presenting the legal basis of the case, we have spoken about the Charter of the United Nations. We have referred to the decisions of the Security Council. We have invoked the resolutions of the United Nations. We have quoted the provisions of the General Armistice Agreement. We have cited principles of international law. We have done so because we believe in the rule of law and in the principle embodied in the Charter that the function of the United Nations is to maintain peace and security in conformity with the principles of justice and international law.

92. During the debate yesterday, we listened with care and attention to the interventions of the members of the Council. We have noted that interest in the legal aspects was lacking, for none of our arguments have been commented upon, and that the sense of political expediency was prevalent. At this juncture, I wish to submit to the Council that the solution to any problem cannot be found unless it is based on law and justice, and to emphasize anew that disregard of the norms and rules of law, of the terms of agreements, of the Charter of the United Nations and, in particular, of the principle of the sovereignty of States will not lead the Council to a fruitful outcome.

93. The policies of *fait accompli* have never been ours but are those of others, those who blatantly disregard law, those who have created a wedge in the midst of our region, those who have implanted a bunch of aliens at the expense of the original inhabitants of the area for the sake of promoting the selfish ends of colonialism.

94. I wish to say that, in the whole of his intervention yesterday [1343rd meeting], Mr. Goldberg, the representative of the United States, stressed one legal argument only, and I feel it my duty, for the sake of his own peace of mind, to say that the contention raised by him that the United Arab Republic's decision to ban Israel shipping runs in contravention with article 16, paragraph 4, of the Geneva Convention on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone is unfounded.

95. This argument is categorically refuted by the absence of any reference in the Convention to the consequences of armed conflict. Thus the said article is irrelevant and has no application to our case. This view is substantiated beyond any doubt by the fact that the International Law Commis-

sion, which drafted the articles of the Convention, made this clear in its report to the General Assembly covering the work of its eighth session, and I quote paragraph 32 of the report:

“The Commission also wishes to make two other observations which apply to the whole draft:

“1. The draft regulates the law of the sea in time of peace only.”<sup>3</sup>

96. Having referred to the debate of the Council yesterday, I cannot but register my regret that the level of decorum in the Council was lowered by a small voice coming from nowhere, intervening in the discussion, using indecent language and slanderous expressions. In doing so, this voice was in fact expressing its masters' policies. I certainly shall not permit myself to sink to such a level. I leave it to the Council to judge for itself.

97. To conclude, allow me to reiterate the position of my Government. We have acted within the limits of our sovereign rights. We do not contemplate any offensive action. But we hasten to add that we would not hesitate a moment, in the exercise of our inherent right of self-defence, to repel any aggression committed against us. As you all know, in exercising our right of sovereignty, we have initiated measures in our territorial waters. This we shall continue to exercise: there has been no change in this position.

98. My Government is committed to the cause of justice and stands firm by the principle of the total respect of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian Arab people. My Government shall continue to do so, consistent with its obligations to the people of Palestine in particular, and to the Arab nations as a whole.

99. Mr. TABOR (Denmark): Since I last had the honour to address this Council on the question of the crisis in the Middle East, the Secretary-General has returned. We are happy to welcome him back. My Government has full confidence in U Thant, and fully supports his endeavours to prevent an aggravation of the situation in the Middle East.

100. The Secretary-General's report [S/7906] leaves no doubt in our minds that the situation is extremely serious. Fortunately, there has been no outbreak of open hostilities; but if the situation is allowed to linger on, I fear that the outcome is bound to be disastrous—a fear that has only been increased by listening to the speeches delivered by the parties directly concerned.

101. The report of the Secretary-General clearly shows how many dangerous elements there are in the present situation, and the conclusions of the Secretary-General are twofold. In the first place, he states that a peaceful outcome to the present crisis depends upon a breathing spell which will allow tension to subside from its present explosive level. In the second place, the Secretary-General

<sup>3</sup> See *Yearbook of the International Law Commission, 1956*, vol. II (United Nations publication, Sales No.: 56.V.3, Vol. II), p. 256.

believes that the Security Council, with the co-operation of all parties concerned, must continue to seek, and eventually to find, reasonable, peaceful and just solutions to the problems behind the present crisis.

102. My Government is in full agreement with that assessment by the Secretary-General. Denmark firmly supports any *bona fide* effort from any quarter to relieve the situation. I believe, however, that any country which believes in the United Nations would also accept that the primary responsibility should rest with the Security Council in which the great Powers are represented, which in its very composition reflects the entire spectrum of the world community and in which the parties to a conflict may be heard.

103. Our discussions seem to me to indicate that there is among our members very broad agreement in principle that the Council, in response to the Secretary-General's call for a breathing spell, ought to launch an appeal to the parties for restraint. We agree that such an appeal should be made. However, only if it were adopted with the greatest possible majority, and preferably unanimously, would it appear as a true expression of the collective will of our Organization. My delegation, therefore, is prepared to co-operate with all members of the Council in the wording of such an appeal, which should be impartial, objective and urgent. We find that in this respect most useful guidance is to be found in the Secretary-General's report.

104. The appeal, however, would only be the first step on the road. The Council would still have to try to tackle the problems of substance which underlie the present crisis and find a solution based on law and justice. I would hesitate to go into these problems today. I do not think that the time is ripe for that. Let me merely remind the Council that the Secretary-General in his report specifies the most dangerous elements in the present situation—the problems in connexion with the passage to the Gulf of Aqaba, the recent tension along the border between Israel and the United Arab Republic and sabotage and terrorist activities and rights of cultivation in disputed areas in the demilitarized zone between Israel and Syria. Those are some of the problems which the Council, hopefully, could take up once the immediate threat to the peace in the area has been averted.

105. We all know that there will be no easy solutions. This is only another reason why we should already give thought at this stage to the approach to follow in dealing with these problems. To this end, it will probably be both appropriate and necessary to resume the usual consultations among all members of the Council.

106. I feel convinced of one thing. If we do not here and now show the courage to deal with the problems confronting us with dedication, efficiency and urgency, we shall indeed fail to fulfil the aspirations, the fervent hope of mankind that this Organization can be an efficient instrument for the maintenance of peace. The result of such a failure would also be a very serious crisis for the United Nations itself, most serious indeed, in particular, for all the smaller nations that are most dependent on an international organization.

107. Let us never forget that the problem confronting mankind today is, in the words of a Danish poet, "coexistence or no existence, that's the question". Let us therefore work together to prevent arms from giving the answer to this crucial question.

108. Mr. GOLDBERG (United States of America): I shall speak very briefly in exercise of my right to reply, and I shall do so in terms of what I conceive the main function of the Council to be at the present time—that is, not to say anything that might exacerbate a situation which is by common recognition very tense, very grave, very serious and menacing to the cause of world peace and security.

109. Our colleague, Mr. Tomeh, made reference to the position throughout the past, as he put it, of the United States in relation to the question of the regrettably long-standing differences between Israel and the Arab States. The import of his remarks was that the United States in this matter has taken a one-sided position, has not been impartial and has lined itself up invariably on the side of Israel regardless of the merits of the particular dispute. I say to Mr. Tomeh that the record does not bear out that assertion. Indeed, we do not even have to refer to the very ancient past; all we have to do is refer to the very recent past, the recollection of which is very fresh in the minds of all of us. The very last action taken by the Security Council in reference to the problems in the Near East was taken on the complaint of Jordan against Israel, and the expressions of the United States and the vote of the United States on that occasion were against Israel on that particular matter.

110. If I were to refer to the very distant past, I could recall to the members of the Council what I scarcely need recall, that on 29 October 1956, an historic day in the history of the United Nations, it was the United States, standing against old friends and allies, that brought the matter of the Suez crisis to the United Nations. I shall leave it to the judgement of the United Nations what the position of the United States was in that area.

111. I am not going to burden the record of the Council with a long history of the position of the United States in this matter. I have it before me. Should the occasion arise, I would have no hesitancy in referring to it. I have the record of every resolution that has been discussed and voted upon in the Council in relation to this troublesome area, and the record of those resolutions amply demonstrates the consistent attitude of the United States to let the chips fall where they may and to take the position which I asserted yesterday in defence of the political and the territorial integrity of every country in the Middle East.

112. It would be very illuminating to look at the record of the past and see where my country has stood in relation to the many, many problems which have arisen in that area. It is a record of even-handed conduct between the parties. It is a one-sided record in the cause of peace in the area and in defence of the Charter. I readily concede that we have that type of partisanship. We are partisan in the interest of peace; we are partisan in the interest of pacifying the situation in the area; we are partisan in the interest of protecting the territorial integrity and the political independence of all Member States of the United Nations,

which have been received in this body and which are entitled to equal respect from all of us.

113. I do not apologize for the statements of Vice-President Humphrey or of any other American official who professes friendship for any Member of the United Nations—because our country professes friendship for all Members of the United Nations. In exercising the right of reply, I shall not encumber the record with the long-standing position of the United States, which is sustained in the records of both the Security Council and the General Assembly. This is in the interests of the impartial consideration of this particular problem.

114. I should now like to say a few words about what the able representative of the United Arab Republic said in his remarks. I did not enter into a long legal discussion yesterday about the problem of free and innocent passage in the Strait of Tiran specifically because—and I made this point—I thought that we had a short-range problem and a long-range problem. I said that the short-range problem was restoration of the *status quo ante* in the Strait of Tiran—the status which has existed for eleven years—so that the Council, enjoying the breathing spell, the cooling-off period that the Secretary-General has suggested, could consider the underlying problems and arrive at a fair, just and honourable solution of these problems. Therefore, I said, as the members of the Council will recall, that the problem of the Gulf of Aqaba and of free and innocent passage in the Strait of Tiran was a long-range problem and that it deserved and required the attention of the Council. In my view, and I maintain that view, we should unanimously support the Secretary-General's appeal for a cooling-off period. And may I again remind members of the Council that the Secretary-General included in that appeal the avoidance of acts of belligerence. I said yesterday that I thought that we ought to honour the ideas of the Secretary-General, who has just come back from the area, as to what course of action is indicated at this time, so that we could proceed more deliberately to deal with the long-range problem.

115. But my professional pride was somewhat touched by the reference made by my friend, Mr. El Kony, to the legal question involved. I am not going to take the time of the Council to discuss it, but shall say something very simple about it. What I shall cite is not my views but the views which the Security Council has held on this subject of the assertion made by the representative of the United Arab Republic on behalf of his country regarding belligerent rights with respect to free and innocent passage in the Strait of Tiran and in the Gulf of Aqaba.

116. The Security Council expressed itself as long ago as 1951 on the subject of whether belligerent rights could be asserted in light of the Armistice Agreements, which this Council has always endorsed, between the parties to the dispute, Israel and the Arab States. Resolution 95 (1951) contained the following passage:

“Considering that since the armistice régime, which has been in existence for nearly two and half years, is of a permanent character, neither party can reasonably assert that it is actively a belligerent . . .”.

That is a fundamental principle which, when we address ourselves to the substance, I think we will have to talk about. For I also notice in the Secretary-General's report, a report which concerns his visit to Cairo, a statement about a desire on the part of the United Arab Republic to reaffirm the validity of the General Armistice Agreement. Here too it must be remembered we are equal-handed, because I should like also to recall in fairness that the State of Israel has not always recognized the complete validity of the Armistice Agreement, saying for its part that the other side does not recognize the validity of the Armistice Agreement as a whole. I think that that is something we should discuss.

117. But I can state the position of my own Government. The position of my own Government has consistently been and remains today that since there is an Armistice Agreement which this Organization has endorsed, and of which this Organization was the principal architect, neither side therefore has the right to exercise belligerent rights. That is the legal position that I assert.

118. I again apologize to this Council. As I said, my professional pride was slightly touched. I did not intend to enter upon a substantive argument at this point. I think that we will have to consider that matter when we embark upon the necessary task of rebuilding the framework of the General Armistice Agreements. When we do, we obviously will have to come to grips with the fundamental question, and that question, which may be basic to the whole question in the area, is: how does anybody assert rights of conducting war against anybody else if there is an armistice? How does anybody assert belligerent rights if there is an armistice? That is the question. We will have a chance to talk about it, and I am sure that Mr. El Kony will wish to say something more on that subject, which is a complicated legal one. It could not be adequately explored in the brief statement I made. I did not want to make a legal argument yesterday. I was simply trying to say: let us do first things first; let us have a cooling-off period; let us restore the *status quo ante*; and let us then proceed to the solemn task of rebuilding and revitalizing and reaffirming the Armistice Agreements.

119. The PRESIDENT: Since no other member of the Council wishes to speak at this time, I should like to make a statement in my capacity as the representative of CHINA.

120. Within the space of a few days we have seen the withdrawal of the United Nations Emergency Force from the Gaza Strip, the massing of troops along the armistice lines between Israel, Syria, and the United Arab Republic and the heightening of tension in the entire Middle East area. It seems that the world teeters on the brink of catastrophe.

121. There is also a moment of grave crisis for the United Nations. This, therefore, is no time for intemperat rhetoric. In the midst of passions, it is the time when the Security Council must remain calm. Above all, nothing we say or do here should further aggravate the situation. The people of the whole world look to the United Nations for urgent and constructive action in this hour of peril. What the Security Council may do in the present case wi

determine whether the hopes which the people of the world have for the United Nations are justified or whether the Organization is capable of doing the job for which it was founded.

122. The Secretary-General has described the Middle East situation as "more disturbing, indeed . . . more menacing, than at any time since the fall of 1956". But he does not believe that "we can allow ourselves to despair". He thinks that "in spite of the extreme difficulties of the situation", the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, "must continue to seek, and eventually to find, reasonable, peaceful and just solutions". My delegation cannot agree with him more in this respect. And we are encouraged by the Secretary-General's determination "to make all possible efforts to contribute to a solution of the present crisis".

123. My delegation is aware of the fact that the present crisis has its origin in Middle East history. The issues involved are as complex as they are deep-rooted. There can, of course, be no lasting peace in the area without serious efforts being made to remove some of the basic causes of conflict. These long-range problems, however, cannot be resolved overnight. The immediate task of the Council is how to prevent the heavily equipped military units of the contending countries, which have been glowering at each other across the borders, from embarking on actual hostilities. My delegation, along with other delegations, endorses the Secretary-General's appeal for restraint and moderation. We do not believe that the parties concerned really want to involve themselves in a war in which there can be no victors. But there is always the danger of

miscalculation. That is what the Council must exert itself to prevent. That is why a cooling-off period or, to use the Secretary-General's phrase, a "breathing spell", is so necessary to allow tension to subside from its present explosive level. The Council, of course, must see to it that the time thus gained will be used for the reduction of tension and not for the purpose of making military preparations for a showdown.

124. The United Nations has for over ten years played a vital role in the maintenance of peace in the Middle East. There is no reason to believe that it cannot again exert a moderating influence. Indeed, a limited form of United Nations presence remains in the area. If the existing machinery can be reactivated and strengthened as envisaged in the Secretary-General's report, it will be a forward step toward keeping the peace for the future.

125. Speaking now as PRESIDENT, I should like to inform the Council that three representatives have signified their desire to speak tomorrow afternoon. I have informally consulted members of the Council concerning the holding of a meeting tomorrow. Eleven members favour holding a meeting tomorrow, and four members prefer to hold a meeting on Thursday. In the circumstances, because of the preponderance of members who favour holding a meeting tomorrow, if there is no further objection, I shall call the next meeting of the Security Council for tomorrow, 31 May 1967, at 3 p.m.

*The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.*

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