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President: Mr. DE PINIÉS (Spain)
later: Mr. FAREED (Vice-President) (Pakistan)

- The situation in the Middle East: reports of the Secretary-General [38]

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The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 38

THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/40/168, A/40/668 and Add. 1, A/40/779 and Corr.1)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I propose that the list of speakers in the debate on this item be closed this afternoon at 5 o'clock. If I hear no objection it will be so decided.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): May I request representatives wishing to participate in the debate to add their names to the list of speakers as soon as possible.

Mr. NETANYAHU (Israel): I should like to start with a question. Why do we have two debates this week? After all, the same points are going to be repeated by Arab speakers and their supporters in both debates and here is what they will say: "The Palestinian problem is at the root of all the turmoil in the Middle East." They will accuse Israel of causing this problem and then they will demand that Israel comply with their ideas for a solution, which range from Israel's political dismemberment to voluntary suicide. I do not think I am going out on a limb if I make a forecast - and it is generally difficult to make forecasts on the Middle East, but I will make one none the less. I think that in this second debate we shall hear exactly the same points that those speakers have already made in the debate on the question of Palestine. The question therefore is, why have two debates? If the same claims and arguments are going to be made twice, why not save everyone the time, the trouble and the money and have just one discussion? And since we are speaking of money, let me point out that each hour of a General Assembly debate costs \$8325. That is a lot of hours and a lot of money. Why not save it?

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

The only possible justification for a second, different debate is to discuss the real subject of this debate, namely, the situation in the Middle East. That is precisely what I propose to do. I plan to talk about the major conflicts that currently besiege the region and warrant the attention of the General Assembly. The General Assembly, after all, is ostensibly a body dedicated to helping resolve these conflicts.

I do not think that is an unfair or an unreasonable proposal. After all, the Arab-Israel conflict - or as it is called here the "Question of Palestine" - already receives a great deal of attention: in fact, it seems so far to have dominated the agenda of all the plenary meetings this week. It has been discussed in the Special Political Committee; it has been discussed in the Second Committee; it has been discussed in a host of other special committees, conferences, reports, letters, documents. In fact I do not think there is any other item that consumes so much of the General Assembly's - or for that matter the United Nations - time and attention. But this General Assembly that finds all that time to discuss this subject cannot find the time to discuss, say, a conflict - not a minor conflict, a major conflict - like the Iran-Iraq war, which has so far devoured over a million lives, or Libya's occupation of Chad, or the Syrian slaughter in Lebanon, or the spate of hijackings, kidnappings, assassinations and other acts of violence inspired and ordered by leaders of Middle East countries.

I should like to set the record straight. I should like to delve into each and every case and give it, and give also the human suffering that each of these conflicts generates, the attention it deserves. But I cannot. I am not going to because that would take too much time and, as I have said, too much of our resources. But I do have a suggestion. The Assembly has before it a list compiled from the Foreign Broadcasting Information Service. It is a calendar of Middle Eastern violence for 1985 to date, or almost to date. This list is by no means

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

exhaustive, it gives only press reports of various incidents, mostly from Arab sources. It does not include incidents relating to Israel, for the reason I have just given; that is not even discussed adequately. Given that it is widely agreed that we are dealing, at least in terms of violence, with what is generally considered to be a non-eventful year, this is a remarkable compendium. I should like the Assembly to turn the pages. I will have this distributed as an official document of the United Nations under the relevant resolutions, but I should like to read just a smattering of the most recent events, say from October. These are: 8 October, bombs explode in Libyan consulate in Athens; 9 October, Achille Lauro hijack; 10 October, one passenger on Achille Lauro killed; 15 October, assassination attempt on Saddam Hussein; 21 October, Saudi authorities execute two princes for attempted coup in September; 29 October, two Japanese diplomats kidnapped in Beirut; 7 November, Iraq bombs Kharg Island; 8 November, Syria explodes bombs in Nicosia; 11 November, Egypt uncovers Libyan assassination plot; 12 November, assassination attempt on Lebanese diplomat; 23 November, Palestinians hijack Egyptian plane, 57 dead.

There have been more incidents since.

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

That is a catalogue of bombings, kidnappings, assassinations, executions, coups, hijackings and border incursions, not to mention outright war. The targets are diplomats, journalists, embassies, airline officials - you name it. The victims, and for that matter the perpetrators, are Iraqis, Moroccans, Sudanese, Lybians - basically, people holding every passport in the Arab world. When it comes to victims, the list expands; it includes Americans, British, French, Italian, Swiss, Dutch, Soviets, Japanese and many others.

I defy anyone here to produce such a list for any other region in the world. The Middle East, in fact, is the most violent and turbulent area of the globe. None of these conflicts, none of this violence, has anything whatsoever to do with Israel or, as it is called here, the question of Palestine. None of these conflicts and none of this violence was found suitable for discussion in the General Assembly, not even the use of poison gas in the Persian Gulf, the bombing of open cities by both Iran and Iraq, their attacks on neutral shipping, or their torture and murder of each other's prisoners of war. None of those monstrous violations of the most basic international principles was found fit for discussion in this body, which is ostensibly the guardian of those principles.

I should like to ask one or two other questions. Why has not the General Assembly found even a brief moment to discuss the international thuggery of Colonel Qaddafi? What has he done in the past year? It is not fully itemized here, but I should like to take the Assembly on a brief tour, counter-clockwise, starting with Libya's immediate neighbour to the West, Tunisia. In the past year Qaddafi has supported an insurgency against Tunisia and massed his troupes on Tunisia's border. That, by the way, prompted Algeria, another neighbour to the west, to concentrate its armies on Libya's border. There was a period then of great tension.

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

What else has Qaddafi done? Let us turn to Morocco. At the beginning of the year he supported the POLISARIO rebels against the Moroccan régime, and then he struck a deal with Morocco in which, among other things, he received an exiled political dissident, Omar Muhaishi, whom his goons promptly murdered.

We move on to Niger, where Qaddafi fomented an insurgency, as he does in Chad, where he occupies one half of the country and to which he sent a suitcase full of explosives in an attempt to destroy Hissein Habré's cabinet. He financed several abortive plots in the Sudan - I am now moving eastward - and he also trained anti-Government rebels in the south of that country. He is also active in Somalia, where he is bankrolling the insurgent Somali Salvation Front.

I now skip across to Iran, where Qaddafi has sent SCUD missiles to bomb Iraqi cities and has supported subversion within Iraq itself. And, of course, in recent days he has come close to a full-scale military confrontation with Egypt, which, incidentally also foiled his last assassination attempt in Cairo.

We have almost closed the circle and I will close it now. We went from west to south to east; now let us go north. North is the Mediterranean. There is a little island there - Malta. Qaddafi has been supporting the various anti-Egyptian front groups that have staged many of the recent attacks, including the hijacking of the Egyptian aircraft to Valletta. Apparently, those groups carried out that action on his behalf, probably led by Abu Nidal, who - not coincidentally - now resides in Tripoli.

That brings us to Qaddafi's well-known support of terrorism world-wide, from Latin American groups to the Irish Republic Army (IRA) in Ireland and the Red Army in Japan. One would be hard pressed to find a region or a country which Qaddafi has not meddled in or committed aggression against. Yet the General Assembly has

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

not devoted a moment to this man or his régime, which poses these risks to international peace and security.

I wish now to give one other example from the Middle East that I think drives the point home: Syria. I should like to review its activities in the past year, too, again going counter-clockwise, starting with Jordan. Syria began the year by assassinating Jordanian diplomats abroad, setting off bombs in various facilities, buildings and institutions in Amman and even dispatching hit teams into Jordan itself to dispose of rival PLO leaders - that is, rivals of the Syrian subsidiary of the PLO.

What about Syria's policy towards Iraq? We are now moving east. Aside from supporting Iraq's rival, Iran, militarily, Syria regularly launches into Iraq assassination teams whose predilection is the Syrian speciality, car bombs - car bombs á la Syrie. They really go at it. Here is how a press release from the Iraqi Mission to the United Nations described the latest of those attempts a few days ago:

"Four terrorists admitted on Baghdad Television last night that they had helped Iranian agents carry out bomb attacks in Baghdad over the last three years in which many people were killed or wounded. The terrorists said they were based in Syria and worked with Syrian intelligence."

Then that detailed press release, of which I am sure all representatives have a copy, describes, among other things, how those terrorists had taken a truck loaded with 3 tons of explosives to carry out a Syrian mission, to cross into Iraq and detonate those 3 tons of explosives. I do not know whether representatives know what 3 tons of explosives can do: 3 tons of explosives could destroy this entire building - everything. It is a much more powerful amount than was exploded in the

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

barracks in Beirut. The truck, apparently, was so heavy with explosives that it got stuck in the sand and did not make it.

Moving north, we come to Turkey, where the Syrians are supporting subversive groups, providing them with training and money and helping them infiltrate the country.

Next, and last, we come to Syria's real playground of horrors Lebanon. What have the Syrians not done in Lebanon in the past year? A few months ago they bombed and destroyed a good chunk of Tripoli. They killed 400 and wounded thousands and then installed Alawite bosses - faithful to Syria, of course - in the city. In the Bekaa Valley Syrian officers are busy collaborating and profiteering to the extent of hundreds of millions in the international drug trade, which crosses through the Bekaa to international drug routes.

In Beirut, Syria ordered the Amal militia to assault the refugee camps, and this too resulted in hundreds dead and assorted atrocities - taking people out of hospitals, murdering people - the lot. Representatives have read about these things, I am sure. Syrian intelligence agents set off car bombs in east and west Beirut, again resulting in hundreds dead. This is very much in line with Syria's policy of divide and conquer. It sets one faction against another; it sets the Druse against the Shiite Amal, the Shiite Amal against the Sunnis and, of course, all the Moslems against the Christians.

Syria is not exactly bashful about resorting to international terrorism of terrorism against its immediate neighbours. It has a long record of using its intelligence services, embassies, front groups like the Eagles of the Revolution to spread terrorism throughout the Middle East and Western Europe.

Has the General Assembly devoted any time to this menace to international peace and security? It has not devoted a second to it.

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

Why not? What prevents it from doing so? The answer is simple and I think everybody here knows it. The discussions in the General Assembly have become a farce. They are used by the many to wage political war against the few. If enough like-minded countries decide to gang up on one country, they will do so. As we all know, the Arabs have the numbers; they determine the agenda. They decide that the question of Palestine will dominate the Assembly's time, and it does. They decide that issues that deserve discussion should be swept under the rug, and they are - although I must say that by now the pile of refuse under the rug is beginning to bulge, and everyone can see it.

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

No fairminded person can accept the preposterous pretence that the turbulent conflicts raging everywhere in the Middle East - I have just touched on a few - can be forced into the so-called Palestinian straitjacket. If the General Assembly was seriously interested in discussing the situation in the Middle East, it would consider resolutions very different from the ones that are presented during this debate. I have a proposal for such a resolution. It would read something like this:

"The General Assembly,

"Gravely concerned at the continuing wars and armed conflicts that ravage the Middle East,

"Noting that the United Nations is determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war,

"Recalling that all Members of the United Nations shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State,

"Noting recognized rules of international laws relating to armed conflict, and

"Recalling further the Declaration on Principles and International Law Concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, and the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security,

"1. Calls for the immediate termination of the use of warfare forbidden and outlawed by international law;

"2. Calls upon all States in the Middle East to take tangible, immediate, and effective steps to restore regional peace and stability;

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

"3. Invites all countries in the region to recognize that genuine peace can only be based on an effective dialogue between all States in the Middle East, based on mutual recognition and respect for the principle of sovereignty."

We all know that such a simple, straightforward and truthful resolution does not stand a chance here. Until it does, this debate is meaningless.

Mr. KASRAWI (Jordan) (interpretation from Arabic): When the General Assembly discusses the item on the situation in the Middle East, it reviews a very well-defined item. Its framework was structured at the special emergency session held in 1967 and the discussions that took place during the 18 years that followed, whether in the General Assembly or in the Security Council.

Those discussions have affirmed a basic fact that cannot be doubted. The fact is that the core of the problem of the Middle East or the Arab-Israeli conflict is the problem of Palestine and the continued Israeli occupation of Arab territories since 1967. It has become clear to all that this conflict cannot be ended except through a comprehensive settlement based on right and justice.

The Palestinian question has been with the United Nations since its inception, and the United Nations assumed a special responsibility towards this problem when it decided to partition Palestine in 1947. Its Members have been anxious to find a just solution for that problem, beginning with a commitment to return to the Palestinian refugees their homes and territory.

The Arab-Israeli conflicts arose because of the lack of a just solution to the Palestinian problem. It led to five wars, causing havoc, destruction and human losses. Today, the General Assembly embarks once again, and for the eighteenth time, on a discussion of this item, only to find that the much sought after settlement still eludes us and that the situation in the area is fraught with tension, violence and instability, and is creating a feeling among the peoples and countries of the region that they lack real security and tranquillity.

(Mr. Kasrawi, Jordan)

The question which suggests itself is: for how long will this area remain prey to tension and instability? For how long will this vicious circle remain? For how long will we remain bogged down in discussions and analyses without taking effective concrete measures in order to break this vicious circle and without putting an end to the cycle of violence and turmoil, and establishing peace and justice and the restoration of usurped rights to their legitimate owners?

During the last four decades, the discussions in the United Nations, especially after the war of 1967, produced declarations and resolutions, here and in the Security Council, concerning the Arab-Israeli conflicts and the question of Palestine. These resolutions emphasized the need for speedy action to achieve a comprehensive settlement based on durable, honourable and just peace, a peace that can be accepted by the present generation, a peace that can be recommended for future generations to maintain and to develop. Parallel to these resolutions are the peaceful ideas and initiatives proposed by nations within and outside this Organization, all of which emphasized the need to put an end to the tremendous sufferings of the inhabitants of the region and on the need to create a climate of peace and stability for all, through compliance with the basic principles which command almost universal support.

The most important of these principles, which have been emphasized more than once in the successive debates on this item and in the various relevant resolutions, which formulated the framework for the much sought after settlement, might perhaps be recalled. In doing this, I should like to emphasize that what we need, first and foremost, is serious and earnest action in order to translate these principles into action, away from sterilized debates or from any attempt to empty these resolutions of their real content.

(Mr. Kasrawi, Jordan)

Among those important principles are the following: first, that a just and durable peace cannot be brought about except on the basis of the principles of international law and of the Charter. Foremost among these principles is the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and, consequently, the need for Israel to withdraw from the Arab territories occupied in 1967, including Jerusalem, on the basis of Security Council resolution 242 (1967), based on the principle of "land for peace". Secondly, there would be the recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to self-determination in its own land and national soil.

(Mr. Kasrawi, Jordan)

Thirdly, the right of all States and peoples in the region to live in peace and security within internationally recognized borders. Fourthly, no action likely to alter the demographic or geographic character of the occupied Arab territory should be taken.

Israel should therefore abide by the principles of international law regarding the duties and responsibilities of the occupying State, especially those relating to the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

It is no accident that the General Assembly hastened to adopt resolutions 2253 (ES-V) and 2254 (ES-V) of July 1967, by which it refused to recognize the measures taken by Israel regarding the annexation of Arab Jerusalem, because it realized the dangerous precedent created by such Israeli measures in the occupied Arab territories.

This reflected the concern of the international community about Israel's intentions as regards the acquisition of Arab territory. These intentions do not serve peace but, to the contrary, render peace efforts more difficult and complicated.

We in Jordan took the initiative in the Security Council and drew attention to the seriousness of these Israeli measures, especially those regarding the annexation of Arab Jerusalem, the creation of settlements in the occupied Arab territories and the repressive measures taken against the Arab inhabitants living under occupation.

We wish to record our thanks to the States which responded to our efforts. However, I should like to draw attention to the fact that the Security Council has emphasized in a number of resolutions its condemnation of the Israeli measures regarding annexation of Arab Jerusalem; some of those resolutions were adopted unanimously, including Security Council resolution 267 (1969).

(Mr. Kasrawi, Jordan)

Moreover, the Council previously rejected the policy of establishing settlements which it considers illegal and an obstacle to peace efforts and a comprehensive solution. In addition, the Security Council rejected the annexation of the occupied Syrian Golan Heights.

I repeat these facts only to show how obstacles were placed in the way of a peaceful solution, and to point out what was intended by those who say that the road to a peaceful settlement is complex and difficult. The complications and the creation of obstacles are due not to us but to Israel.

We wish to record with deep regret the fact that the international community was somewhat complacent regarding Israel, and especially about those States which assist and support Israel, thereby encouraging it to intensify its activities which are at variance with the principles underlying a peaceful solution and which enable it to counter any attempt to force it to refrain from such activities, thus giving it the impression that it can continue its policy of holding on to the Arab territories while expressing its desire for peace.

We in Jordan were the first to draw attention to the danger of this development and its negative impact on prospects for peace in the region. This was made quite obvious when His Majesty King Hussein emphasized clearly and forcefully on more than one occasion that the option for Israel is either to keep the land or to have peace, because it cannot have both at the same time.

We in Jordan and the Arab world want peace and the restoration of rights, and have geared our foreign policy to this objective. Moreover, we have responded to all serious peace efforts to find a comprehensive and just solution on the basis of the principles recognized by the international community.

We have tried since 1967 to implement Security Council resolution 242 (1967) in its entirety because we are convinced of the importance of a just peace, because we are directly involved in the Arab-Israeli territorial dispute, and because of

(Mr. Kasrawi, Jordan)

our close historic ties with the Palestinian problem and the fact that we share the tragedy of the Palestinian people which is unprecedented in history. Since the beginning of this tragedy, Jordan has sympathized with the Palestinians and believed in our common destiny. We took action to defend them and their rights. We have joined them in a display of historic unity which reflects the common will of the Palestinian and Jordanian peoples. Jordan has shared with its Palestinian brothers all its potential, including sources of livelihood. We and the rest of the world have, for the past 18 years, come to know the sufferings of the Palestinian population on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip which were caused by the repressive actions of the occupation authorities and the terrorism of the settlers. However, we have not heard protests against or any condemnation of the violations of human rights in the occupied Arab territories such as we hear through the mass media when people are arrested somewhere else, as if the human rights of the Palestinians - unlike others - can be violated with impunity as long as the violations are committed by Israeli soldiers or settlers.

The fact which the international community should bear in mind is that Israel has used the time factor during the past 18 years to establish settlements on the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights. The amount of land confiscated on the West Bank now represents almost one-half the total area of the West Bank, quite apart from the settlement drive in the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights. Israeli policy tries to deny Palestinians the right to live in the remaining 20 per cent of the original land of Palestine, and our fear is that Israel will transform this people into nomads who can be driven completely from their homeland. This Israeli policy demonstrates that Israel prefers to keep the land and obstruct any progress towards peace in this area.

(Mr. Kasrawi, Jordan)

And yet efforts to achieve peace constitute the basis of Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, as well as all other international efforts and initiatives designed to reach a comprehensive and just solution.

Aware of the dangerous situation in the occupied Arab territories, and of the dangers of the time factor by which Israel tries to promote its expansionist policies to the detriment of the Arabs and Palestinians, Jordan, together with our Palestinian brothers, embarked on attempts to reach a just and peaceful solution based on the restoration of the occupied Arab lands and the rights of the inhabitants to their legitimate owners.

On this basis, we adopted a clear and objective position regarding the situation inside the occupied Arab territories, since we feel it is important to save the people and the land from occupation and to break the deadlock over the Palestinian question and the Arab-Israeli conflict that is a result of the state of no war and no peace.

The common movement with our Palestinian brothers culminated in the Jordanian-Palestinian Agreement of 11 February 1985 between His Majesty King Hussein, and Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which emphasized the desire of the Palestinians themselves to reach a just peace.

(Mr. Kasrawi, Jordan)

That agreement emphasized the desire of the Palestinians to reach a just peace and was intended to break the deadlock in the peace process and give an impetus to the efforts made within a practical and positive framework to reach a solution based on the principle of "land against peace" and the various international resolutions on the question of Palestine. The agreement called for a negotiated settlement through an international conference, to be convened under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council, as well as all the parties concerned in the conflict.

We feel that effective and speedy action should be taken through the convening of an international conference to achieve a negotiated settlement that will guarantee justice, peace and dignity for all. We emphasize that we should not let this opportunity slip by and urge all countries to work for the convening of the conference. After four decades of the Palestinian problem and the Arab-Israeli conflict, it is high time to achieve a just and lasting peace and create a better future, through constructive action, not force and the imposition of faits accomplis.

In this connection, I should like to pay a tribute to the Secretary-General for his report of 22 October 1985, in which he states:

"we face today a world of almost infinite promise which is also a world of potentially terminal danger'. In an age when technology threatens to run ahead of our capacity to restrain the use of increasingly destructive weapons, no regional conflicts confront the United Nations with a choice between those alternatives more urgently than the Middle East problem." (A/40/779 and Corr.1, para. 42)

(Mr. Kasrawi, Jordan)

That is the option that faces the region, the option of peace and justice, a peace that can be accepted by present generations and passed on to future generations, or the continuance of the conflict and violence that now prevail in the region as a result of reliance on military force and the continuing use of that force by Israel, which inevitably lead to counter-action. The present generations have suffered enough. They have a right to look forward to building a future based on security and stability and to conditions of a just and honourable peace in which they can fulfil their aspirations and enjoy their rights.

The United Nations has a great responsibility in this area and it is invited to shoulder it effectively and firmly.

Mr. FAKHOURY (Lebanon) (interpretation from Arabic): Once again we are discussing the question of the Middle East, a region that is greatly troubled and suffers from instability, insecurity and the absence of peace.

The question of Palestine remains the essence of the problem whose consequences Lebanon has had to bear for 10 years, experiencing suffering that no other country has known. Lebanon is a country with a problem that must be solved with the support of this Organization, its Members, its Secretariat and its machinery.

The Secretary-General's report to this session on the matter is clear and frank and deserves our appreciation and attention.

It is only natural and logical that the Palestinian people should continue to strive to regain its land usurped by Israel, after the failure of the United Nations to enable that people to exercise its legitimate right of return to its homeland, self-determination and the establishment of a State on its national soil.

Lebanon, which has embraced hundreds of thousands of our Palestinian brothers evicted from their land since 1947, has for years been subjected to Israeli acts of aggression and occupation in the south and in the Bekaa. The most recent of these

(Mr. Fakhoury, Lebanon)

was the act of aggression in 1982 in which Israeli forces entered the Lebanese capital of Beirut. Israel's justification for that act of aggression was the need to protect its northern border by eliminating Palestinian resistance and liquidating the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

Israel has deliberately not mentioned the most important of the objectives of those acts of aggression, that is, the elimination of Lebanese democracy, which is a challenge to the régime and the philosophy of the Zionist State. Israeli occupation of Lebanese territory lasted more than two years, and had it not been for the Lebanese national resistance - which is legitimate under international law and norm - and the damage suffered by Israeli military forces it would not have withdrawn from most of the regions in the south and the Bekaa.

That withdrawal was in no sense implementation of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. It came about as a result of the strikes against Israel by the Lebanese resistance. Proof of that is the fact that Israel still refuses to implement those United Nations resolutions, still refuses to withdraw completely from Lebanon and still insists on maintaining a security cordon on Lebanese territory, where it maintains some units of its regular army in addition to illegal surrogate forces, such as the Lebanese army of the south or the so-called Lahad army. Israel still prevents the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) from carrying out its mandate and stationing men on the common frontiers to assist the Lebanese State in exercising its sovereignty throughout its territory to its internationally recognized borders and making the south a region of security and peace.

As long as Israel continues to reject those resolutions, Lebanon will need UNIFIL to fulfil its mission and demonstrate the effectiveness of the United Nations and its machinery in implementing its resolutions.

(Mr. Fakhoury, Lebanon)

It is worthy of note here that those international forces, which have limited potential, are carrying out their work in very difficult circumstances and are frequently subjected to harassment, violations and aggression by the Israeli army and its agents, as is mentioned in the Secretary-General's report on the Force.

We should like to express the thanks and appreciation of Lebanon and its people to the international Force, its leadership, soldiers and personnel.

In addition to its continued occupation of some Lebanese territory, Israel maintains a right it has given itself: the right to re-enter areas it has already left, blockading cities and villages and bombing them, kidnapping the young people of those cities and villages, intimidating the elderly, the women and the children there, violating the airspace and territorial waters of Lebanon with its military, naval and air forces, and bombing civilian targets.

Today Lebanon has submitted to the Security Council and the Secretary-General a complaint against Israeli practices against Lebanon. That complaint will be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

Though Lebanon has previously submitted many complaints concerning such practices to the Security Council, calling for the adoption of purely humanitarian resolutions seeking to end the Israeli practices and to protect civilians under the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, the Security Council has regrettably been unable to arrive at a unanimous resolution on the subject.

We have issued repeated warnings that the Council's inability to adopt such a resolution will lead Israel to believe that it has no obligations as a Member of this Organization and that it can persist in its practices and its aggression with impunity. As a matter of fact, the day before yesterday Israel launched an aggressive attack deep inside Lebanese territory, when a military force of 250

(Mr. Fakhoury, Lebanon)

soldiers supported by tanks and personnel carriers raided the region of Rashayya, north of the so-called security zone. That raid lasted for 12 hours and claimed the lives of more than 15 people, including an officer of the Lebanese army, while three members of the local security forces are wounded or missing.

The Israeli Defence Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, has confirmed that raid, describing it as part of Israel's general strategy to combat terrorism and protect Galilee. To what terrorism is Mr. Rabin referring? Was not that raid itself an act of terrorism by the Israeli State against the civilian population and villages in the south, in the Western Bekaa and in the Rashayya district in Lebanon? The Security Council's mandate gives it a direct and immediate responsibility for the maintenance of security and the prevention of aggression. That is a heavily responsibility, for the verdict of the people is harsh, and the judgement of history is harsher. The responsibility of the Security Council is not confined to adopting resolutions; it extends beyond that, to implementing them, to demonstrate its real will to fulfil its mandate to maintain international peace and security, and preserve the credibility of the United Nations.

It is a duty of all the Members of this Organization, particularly the members, both permanent and non-permanent, of the Security Council, to support the efforts of the Secretary-General and his assistants. The solution of the Lebanese problem depends on a solution of the problem in the south; until that is achieved, the continued crisis must not prevent the search for solutions. Lebanon has a right to receive assistance from the international community, and it has a right to seek such assistance from this Organization.

According to Lebanese law, all Lebanese have equal rights and duties. All who reside in Lebanon are subject to Lebanese authority by reason of national sovereignty, which is indivisible. Lebanon will never renounce any part, no

(Mr. Fakhoury, Lebanon)

matter how small, of its sovereignty over its territories or its responsibility towards those who reside in Lebanon. No such sacrifices as Lebanon has made, and no such tragedies as the Lebanese people have endured for the sake of the Palestinian cause and our brothers the Palestinian people have been suffered by any other country. That is recognized by the Palestinian leaders themselves. Lebanon's commitment to the Palestinian cause is firm, but Lebanon will not allow any part of its territory to remain beyond national Lebanese sovereignty. It will oppose any discussion by any regional or international bodies or organizations of any question its considers to be an internal matter.

The General Assembly usually adopts a resolution to provide economic assistance for Lebanon, and we call upon it to adopt a similar resolution at this session. We appeal to friendly and sister countries to contribute to that effort. There is no need to determine which has priority, détente or security, before States contribute; what is most important is that as soon as possible the State should receive the means to build up Lebanon's socio-economic infrastructure. The estimated cost of reconstruction and development runs into tens of billions of dollars, a cost which could not be borne by any single country.

We have great confidence in Lebanon's future. Our faith in a unified Lebanese people is firm, and efforts are continuing to achieve national reconciliation. What is necessary now is that the international community and this Organization and its Members should have a real understanding of our problem and provide material support for our rights, moral support for our efforts, and material support for our potential, so that Lebanon can again become what the Assembly knows it to be and we know it to be: the messenger of good, of love and of giving, for its own society, its region and the whole world.

Mr. ABULHASAN (Kuwait) (interpretation from Arabic): As we all know, the area of the Middle East was the cradle of the revealed religions, which advocate love, kindness, compassion and brotherhood. However, instead of this characteristic turning the heart of this area, namely Palestine or the Holy Land, into an area of peace, security and tranquillity in congruence with its name, it has subjected it through the ages to foreign invasions, perpetrated in the name of religion, the latest of which was the Zionist invasion which, in most of its aspects, reminds us of the Crusades in the Middle Ages.

Like the Crusades, which turned this peaceful area into an inferno for centuries and which ended with the defeat of the foreign usurpers, the Zionist invasion has once again turned this area into a field of war and turmoil in a way that threatens not only the peace and security of the area but also the peace and security of the entire world in successive and continuing periods.

This Zionist invasion, thanks to the varied and massive Western support and assistance it receives, has crystallized into an entity enjoying a gigantic military capability out of all proportion to its size and seeking to impose the will of these extraneous elements not only on the area itself but also on the international community which, unfortunately, had played, through this world Organization, an important role in the creation of that entity, which has brought to the area nothing but war, tragedy, disaster and suffering.

The Arab countries warned those Powers which were supporting the plans of World Zionism that their positions, which contravened the essence of justice, equity and the right of peoples to self-determination, were bound to have grave consequences in that sensitive area of the world. Those Powers, however, continued to support those plans until World Zionism was able to achieve its imperialist goals at the expense of the peace and security of the Middle East as well as of the peace of mind and serenity of its peoples.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

Today, as we remind those Powers which helped to create the Zionist entity of what they have done, it is not our intention to point the finger of accusation or blame once more at these countries, but rather to remind them that, by continuing to extend help and support to the aggressive party in the Middle East, they are taking the same path that had led earlier to the Middle East area being pushed to the edge of the abyss.

The Middle East has been the scene of turmoil since the early days of the Mandate imposed over Palestine by the British for a quarter of a century, a period characterized by a series of upheavals and uprisings by the Palestinian people against the Mandatory Power and the opening of Palestine to illegal Jewish immigration.

Then came the end of the Mandate in the manner familiar to all of us, coupled with a bloody war which ended in the creation of a Zionist entity by brute force on part of Arab Palestine. That entity, unfortunately, gained the blessing of the world Organization as a result of well-known international pressures, despite the fact that such an act was in flagrant violation of the principles of the Charter which provide for the inadmissibility of the acquisition of land by force.

Then came the 1967 war, which ended with the occupation by the Zionist entity of the remaining part of Arab Palestine, as well as the Syrian Golan Heights and the Egyptian Sinai.

The period of consolidation of the aggression which followed was characterized by three basic aspects.

First, Israel decided unilaterally to annex Arab Jerusalem, despite the fact that it is an integral part of the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since June 1967. It also declared the whole of Jerusalem as its capital in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and is still applying those policies and refusing to comply with the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

Council, which demand that all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, which have altered or purport to alter the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem and, in particular, the basic law on Jerusalem are null and void and must be rescinded forthwith.

Secondly, the declaration by Israel of its decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the occupied Syrian Golan Heights and the continuation of this situation until today, in spite of the fact that Security Council resolution 497 (1981) considers this act null and void and having no effect in international law demand that Israel should rescind forthwith its decision and determine that all the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, continue to apply to Syrian territory occupied by Israel since June 1967.

Thirdly, the continued application of repressive and expansionist policies and practices in the occupied lands of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, notably the illegal expropriation of Arab land and the continued establishment of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories, is in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, as are also other practices annually condemned by the world Organization on the basis of the reports of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories.

Together with these efforts to consolidate the Zionist aggression, the ultimate aim of which is to impose successive faits accomplis, there is yet another sinister attempt to impose Zionist military dominance over the whole area through a series of aggressive acts against neighbouring and other Arab countries.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

The ugliest manifestation of this policy was the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. The whole world witnessed the barbarity, brutality and inhumanity of that invasion. Today, three and one half years after the invasion - dealt with in Security Council resolution 509 (1982), which demands that Israel withdraw all its military forces forthwith and unconditionally to the internationally recognized boundaries of Lebanon - we find the Israeli forces still occupying a southern strip of Lebanon, with the support of some mercenaries who Israel hopes will help it impose its will on the struggling people of Lebanon. We also find Israel still violating all the United Nations Charter principles and Security Council resolutions concerning the non-violation of Lebanon's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, by continuing to perpetrate one act of aggression after the other against villages and other locations inside Lebanese territory. In doing that, it seems to believe that it has the right to strike anywhere inside Lebanese territory under the pretext of security - a pretext which, as everybody knows, is so flimsy that it cannot fool anyone and which it has become repugnant and revolting to hear mentioned.

However, the effects of the policy of Zionist military domination are no longer confined to the neighbouring Arab lands, parts of which are still occupied - like the Syrian Golan Heights and southern Lebanon. In fact, those effects have now spread to Arab lands that are hundreds, if not thousands, of miles away.

On 7 June 1981, Israeli war planes committed an armed attack on the Iraqi peaceful nuclear installations. The Security Council strongly condemned that Israeli armed attack on Iraqi territory as an act threatening world peace and security and reminded the aggressors that all Member States should refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State. Nevertheless, we find that such

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

resolutions adopted by the international community do not move the aggressors. In fact, they perpetrated another, similar crime when they sent their war planes thousands of miles away to strike at Tunisian territory on 1 October 1985. Once again, in its resolution 573 (1985), the Security Council strongly condemned this armed attack, which violates the United Nations Charter as well as international law and conduct. That resolution viewed this act as threatening the peace and security of the Mediterranean as well as the chances for a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

However, these repeated condemnations by the Security Council of the non-stop series of Israeli acts of aggression fall on the deaf ears of the Zionists, who have only total contempt for the Charter's principles and international law and conduct.

The United Nations, which undoubtedly compounded the problem by its interference in the 1940s, now has an increased realization of the real dimensions of the Middle East crisis, particularly since scores of newly independent States have become Members of the United Nations, thus helping the international Organization to become more representative of the desires and will of the international community. This new realization of the dimensions of the problem has taken the form of a continuous series of resolutions which reflect the facts of the situation in the Middle East and set forth the right way to reach a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement of the problems of the area.

Putting aside all the many other United Nations resolutions on the Middle East, we find that one resolution - namely, General Assembly resolution 39/146 A of 14 December 1984 - in itself identifies the five basic elements necessary for any conscious, serious move to solve the problem of the Middle East. They are the following.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

First, the problem of Palestine is the core of the conflict in the Middle East and no comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region will be achieved without the full exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable national rights and the unconditional, complete and general withdrawal of Israel from all the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories.

Secondly, a just and comprehensive settlement of the situation in the Middle East cannot be achieved without the equal participation of all concerned parties, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people.*

Thirdly, peace in the Middle East is indivisible and must be based on a just, comprehensive and lasting solution of the Middle East problem, under the auspices of the United Nations and on the basis of the relevant United Nation resolutions.

Fourthly, the Arab peace plan adopted unanimously at the Twelfth Summit Conference, in Fez, is an important contribution towards the achievement of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Fifthly, an International Peace Conference on the Middle East should be convened - as specified in paragraph 5 of the Geneva Declaration on Palestine, which emanated from the International Conference on the Question of Palestine.

It is very painful and sad to note that this conscious realization on the part of the international Organization of the dimensions of the Middle East problem and the methods to solve it has not been matched, on the one hand, by a similar realization on the part of some States which participated in the creation of this problem and, on the other, by the availability of the international political will to translate this realization into action.

*Mr. Fareed (Pakistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

What makes this even more painful is that various obstacles are still being placed in the way of a solution based on this conscious and just perception of the Middle East crisis. At the forefront of those obstacles are: first, giving priority of attention to the "security" of the aggressive party, instead of to the elimination of the injustices suffered by the victims of aggression; secondly, providing military and financial assistance to the aggressive party in a manner that encourages it to continue its aggression, its contempt for international law and its disregard for the will of the international community; thirdly, supporting the aggressive party by blocking any attempt on the part of the Security Council to impose sanctions on the aggressive party or condemn it for its continuous aggression; and, fourthly, limiting the demand for the observance of human rights to certain people exclusively and not making the demand of others, thereby totally ignoring the human rights of the population of the Palestinian and Arab territories occupied by Israel - which is tantamount to discrimination, favoritism and the use of double standards.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

These obvious transgressions will undoubtedly have the expected effect of increasing the aggressive appetite of the Zionist entity, since they provide it with the necessary immunity to continue its aggressive expansionist policies, to some of which we have referred previously.

On the other hand, these transgressions have, as everybody knows, had the effect on numerous occasions of preventing the Security Council from fulfilling its commitments with respect to the peace and security of the Middle East because of the use of the veto in a way that does not serve the cause of peace.

The world's hope for peace in the Middle East is now crystallized in one aim: the convening of an international peace conference, under the auspices of the United Nations, in which all the parties concerned would participate, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, as well as the permanent members of the Security Council, by virtue of their responsibility for international peace and security. At that conference all the problems relating to the Middle East crisis would be submitted for discussion, problems on which the United Nations has adopted numerous resolutions, and the first of which is the question of Palestine, declared in those resolutions to be the core of the Middle East problem.

My delegation agrees with the following statement by the Secretary-General in his report of 22 October 1985:

"I strongly feel that, despite the existing difficulties, a new and determined effort should be made to explore and to use the various possibilities of the United Nations machinery appropriately to promote progress in the peace process in the Middle East." (A/40/779 and Corr.1, para. 41)

In this connection, we appeal to the Secretary-General to redouble his present efforts, in consultation with the Security Council, to ensure the convening of this

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

conference, on which the fulfilment of the international community's hope for the restoration of peace and stability in the Middle East depends.

Mr. AL-SHAALI (United Arab Emirates) (interpretation from Arabic): I should like to begin my statement by expressing my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report to the General Assembly on all aspects of development in the Middle East. The Secretary-General has summed up his evaluation of these events as follows:

"The search for a peaceful settlement of the Middle East problem remains elusive and the situation in the Middle East continues to be unstable."

(A/40/779 and Corr.1, para. 33)

This state of affairs is caused by Israel's persistence in a policy of expansion and aggression in our Arab region and its defiance of international law as embodied in the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and the many relevant United Nations resolutions, which provide for the exercise by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights, reaffirm the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and call for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from occupied Palestinian and Arab lands and the cessation by Israel of its acts of aggression against the Palestinian people and Arab countries.

Briefly, the problem of the Middle East is a reflection of the natural development of an abnormal situation. It is the result of the inability of the international community to resolve the question of Palestine, because of the position taken by Israel, which rejects any solution and rejects peace, as we stated during the debate on the question of Palestine. The problem is also caused by the aggression, the military occupation, the expulsion of populations, the bombing of Arab towns -all attempts to eliminate the Palestinian people and sabotage the economic and social potential of the Arab countries.

(Mr. Al-Shaali, United Arab
Emirates)

All this is clearly shown by Israel's aggression against Syria and in the legislative measures and provisions imposed in the annexed Golan Heights, in flagrant defiance of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, and of the Geneva Conventions. It is shown equally clearly by the Israeli aggression in Lebanon, from which that country is still suffering and through which a part of its territory is still occupied. Had it not been for the great sacrifices made by the Lebanese people in order to expel the occupation forces, Lebanon would today have been completely occupied, notwithstanding all the relevant Security Council resolutions. Nor must we forget the Israeli raid on the Iraqi nuclear reactor, designed for peaceful purposes, which clearly showed Israel's intention to destroy the economic and technical development potential of any Arab country.

The culmination of Israeli aggression was its recent raid on Tunis, and there is news every day of Israeli threats to Jordan and Yemen. All this confirms the nature and the aggressive intentions of Israel. That military base was created to strike at the potential for economic development and social progress in the Arab homeland.

As we have frequently stated, we are convinced that Israel, in the present international circumstances, and backed by the political, moral and military support that it receives from those in certain international circles, has no intention of participating in the peace process. Therefore, once again we call on the international community to take account of this. We also call on all the countries of the world to take a firm stand internationally based on the determination that henceforth their relations with Israel will depend on its attitude to the peace process and on its ceasing its acts of violence and aggression against the Palestinian people and the Arab countries. If this is not done, we shall be in the same position next year, and meanwhile the situation in the Middle East will have worsened.

Mr. AL-SABAGH (Bahrain) (interpretation from Arabic): The Assembly is again discussing the crisis in the Middle East and reviewing developments in our important and sensitive region of the world, whose deteriorating conditions have reached the point of instability and explosion. There is no doubt that continuation of this situation will affect the security of the region as well as the vital interests of many States. It will also lead to more conflicts, international polarization and strategic rivalry between the great Powers.

The basic cause is the escalation of Israeli aggression against the Palestinian and Arab peoples. Israel's aggressive arm extends hundreds of miles from the central point of the conflict, thereby revealing its plans to create a "Greater Israel".

I should like for the record to refer to the history of Israel's aggression and expansion since its creation in 1948. It has expelled unarmed Palestinians and annexed many parts of Palestinian territory. In 1956 it declared war on Egypt in the context of the vicious tripartite aggression. In 1967 it occupied the remaining parts of Palestine, the West Bank and Gaza, which are suffering from the worst form of Zionist-racist colonialism, paralleled only by the atrocities of Nazi and Fascist colonialism. It occupied Egyptian and Syrian territory. In 1982 it launched a brutal war against Lebanon to protect what it called its security interests, whereas its real intention was to strike at the Palestinian and Lebanese people; however, the national liberation forces of Lebanon were able to defeat Israel. It continues to occupy parts of southern Lebanon, and that occupation, which is opposed by the valiant national resistance, is contrary to Security Council resolutions 508 (1982) and 509 (1982).

We would like to draw the attention of the international community to the need to restore stability in the Middle East, because that would help to strengthen international peace and security.

(Mr. Al-Sabagh, Bahrain)

The extension of the area of violence is due to international failure to find a solution to the question of Palestine, which is the crux of the Middle Eastern problem. The solution of that complex problem requires, first of all, recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, the establishment of an independent State on their national soil, the return of refugees to their lands and the restoration of their property. Moreover, the international community should ensure that Palestinian refugees living in camps enjoy decent living conditions, of which they have been deprived for the past four years. It should also help to alleviate their daily sufferings due to Israeli intransigence and oppression.

We yearn for the achievement of a real and just peace in the area, and our desire explains the call for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East. In this connection I would refer to General Assembly resolutions 38/58 C and 39/49 D, in which the Assembly supported the idea of convening an international conference on the basis of the recommendations of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held in Geneva in 1983. I would add that the Assembly invited the Security Council to facilitate the organization of the conference.

Moreover, the United Nations has a legal responsibility towards this area, which has remained under its authority, in addition to a political responsibility, because the continuation of the present situation in the Middle Eastern area is a threat to international peace and security. The convening of that conference, with the participation of all parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, would be a positive step towards the establishment of a just peace and stability in this important area of the world. The continuation of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East poses a serious threat to international peace and security.

(Mr. Al-Sabagh, Bahrain)

Israel did not confine itself to occupying the Syrian Golan Heights, but has embarked on a process of annexation. It is continuing its efforts to Judaize the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and is building dozens of settlements, bringing in Zionists from all parts of the world. In accordance with its strategic plan, it intends to settle 100,000 Israelis in those settlements.

Israel's acts of aggression and its expansionist policies were possible thanks to its military might and the assistance it receives in its efforts to achieve supremacy over the Arab States. In this way it was able to tighten its grip on the Palestinian and Arab territories and extend its influence on the pretext of security considerations. It was on that pretext that it attacked the PLO headquarters in Tunisia. Before that, it had destroyed the Iraqi nuclear reactor, which was devoted to peaceful purposes, on the pretext of self-defence. Today, moreover, Israel refuses to accept any peaceful solution because of its superiority and its desire to present neighbouring Arab countries with a fait accompli.

The question of the Middle East requires the international community to move quickly to prevent a further deterioration of the situation. We have a unique opportunity, and we must therefore see to it that the international conference is convened very soon, in accordance with the basic principles of the United Nations.

The aggression against the headquarters of the PLO in Tunisia was an act of piracy and part of organized terrorism conducted by a State Member of this Organization. There is no doubt that this will strengthen the determination and resistance of the Palestinian people and their will to defend their inalienable rights, for Israel cannot justify its existence by denying the rights of the Palestinian people. Israel, through its repeated acts of aggression, aims at frustrating positive peace initiatives aimed at putting an end to the present tragedy. A just solution to this problem can be found only through the collective will of the international community and on the basis of international understanding.

(Mr. Al-Sabagh, Bahrain)

On the other hand, we should compel Israel to comply with the relevant United Nations resolutions concerning the Middle East and to abide by the basic principles of the Charter and international laws and norms.

Since its adoption of the historic resolution 3236 (XXIX), of 22 November 1974, the General Assembly has emphasized the rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to return, their right to self-determination, independence and sovereignty and their right to participate in any peace effort in the Middle East. In 1982 the Arab States produced the Fez peace plan, an initiative which reflected the sincere desire of the Arab States to find a peaceful, just solution to the Middle East crisis. Israel rejected that initiative, just as it rejected President Reagan's peace initiative. Whenever the area moves towards a just peace and the chances of a settlement increase, Israel steps up its intransigence and rejects all peace efforts.

We are all aware that peace is the primary concern of all. Therefore, all international efforts should be concentrated on translating basic principles into genuine political action. We can thus pave the way to a peaceful solution, acceptable to all the countries of the region, which have suffered a great deal from the wars of the past. Such a settlement would enable us to break the cycle of violence, fear and lack of trust. It is the political, moral and historic responsibility of the United Nations to find that great humanitarian solution.

Mr. OTT (German Democratic Republic): Only a few weeks ago we jointly commemorated the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. The bitter lessons learned from the bloodiest of all wars induced nations to establish this Organization, whose objective is to maintain international peace and security through collective efforts. This year the overwhelming majority of States reaffirmed the unchanged validity of the purposes and principles of the Charter.

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

It is the basic principle of the Socialist German State to make that binding code of conduct the yardstick worldwide against which to measure any political action. This would include settling conflicts exclusively by peaceful means, in line with international law. Whoever, in contrast, resorts to pressure and force in our nuclear and cosmic age, is literally playing with fire, risking triggering off an all-consuming world conflagration. Therefore, it is only logical that demands are made ever more resolutely to bring about a comprehensive, just and thus lasting settlement of the Middle East conflict, whose core is the question of Palestine, a conflict which has been the most dangerous and longstanding flashpoint of tension.

Anyone who objectively follows developments in the Middle East, including the most recent ones, can clearly see who bears the responsibility for the persistence of the conflict. It is those forces that permanently back Israel's policy of aggression and oppression, and attempt, through an arms build-up and confrontation, to achieve military superiority as well as to realize their ambitions for predominance at the expense of other peoples. The dangerous "star wars" plans, for instance, are part of that concept, just as is the fomentation of conflicts and tensions in southern Africa, Central America and other regions of the world.

In the Middle East imperialism's policy is aimed at subordinating this strategically important and raw-material-rich region to its global power interests. Israel is fully integrated in that course as a so-called strategic ally. The ruling circles of that State, established by decisions of the United Nations, flagrantly defy the world Organization's resolutions and world-wide protests in continuing its policy of aggression and occupation.

The acts to destabilize Governments and the violation of the territorial sovereignty of States, acts which have been condemned throughout the world, are the latest expression of this dangerous policy, which flouts international law.

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

The criminal israeli air raid on Tunis was another act of State terrorism against peace and security in the region.

Resistance to the aggressive course of action taken by Israel and its allies has been growing in the region. Imperialism's policy of intervention has suffered defeat in Lebanon and the forced partial withdrawal of Israel from Lebanese territory, which has illustrated that the margin for imperialist adventures in the Middle East is not unlimited.

The German Democratic Republic expresses its solidarity with all anti-imperialist and patriotic forces in the Middle East which stand up against violence and the imperialist quest for domination. My country invariably advocates the elimination of that dangerous flashpoint of tension through a comprehensive, just and therefore lasting solution. So-called separate deals merely serve imperialist big-Power interests and entail new tensions, as history proves.

The same is true of attempts to single out individual elements of the conflict at the expense of a just, overall solution. Therefore, collective efforts become ever more imperative, so that a lasting peace shall, at long last, prevail in the Middle East, and the sufferings now endured by the second and third generation of the Palestinian people shall end.

The continuing dangerous situation in the Middle East prompts the German Democratic Republic to reaffirm its resolute support for convening an international Middle East peace conference, with the participation of all interested parties, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Such a conference is the only suitable means to pave the way to the achievement of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. Along those lines, the German Democratic Republic supports the USSR's Middle East proposals of July 1984, which are in harmony with the peace plan adopted in Fez.

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

In the Sofia Declaration of October this year the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty voiced their firm conviction that:

"a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Middle East problem can be achieved only through the collective efforts of all the parties concerned on the basis of a complete withdrawal of the Israeli troops from all Arab territories occupied since 1967, implementation of the legitimate rights of the Arab people of Palestine, including its right to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent State of its own, and guarantees for the right of all States in that region to independent existence and development.

(Mr. Ott, German
Democratic Republic)

"An international conference on the Middle East under United Nations auspices and with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, would be a practical course to follow. The strengthening of the unity of the Arab countries and the Palestinian movement would be conducive to a settlement of the Middle East problems."

(A/C.1/40/7, pp. 9-10)

Furthermore, it is underlined in this Declaration that the settlement of Lebanon's internal problems, based on national concord among the Lebanese themselves, on the preservation of the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of that country, the speediest possible termination of the war between Iran and Iraq, and the stabilization of the situation in the area of the Gulf region, would correspond to the interests of peace in that part of the world.

Mr. ALHODAR (Oman) (interpretation from Arabic): The discussion we are embarking upon today concerning the situation in the Middle East, after having reviewed the question of Palestine yesterday, confirms that the question of Palestine constitutes the essence of the Arab-Israeli conflict. For this reason, practical consideration of those two questions must, in our view, concentrate on finding a just and honourable solution to the question of the people of Palestine, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

A solution of the question of the Israeli occupation of Arab territories, such as the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights, Taba and other territories, which were occupied after the 1967 war, requires a commitment to international norms and principles. It also requires greater efforts to bring about a comprehensive peace and to remove the spectre of war by the endorsement and the implementation of the resolutions adopted by this international Organization on this question, and in particular Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

(Mr. Alhodar, Oman)

Everyone now understands that the achievement of this noble objective will not be possible unless Israel renounces its expansionist dreams, and returns the occupied Arab territories to their rightful owners and Jerusalem to the sovereignty of the Arabs, who maintained it as a Holy city of revealed religion, without discrimination, since time immemorial.

The speedy convening of the international conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the permanent members of the Security Council, will increase possibilities of achieving peace in the Middle East and give hope of strengthening international peace and security throughout the world.

We condemn Israel's repeated acts of aggression against the sovereignty and security of fraternal Lebanon. We find that 40 years of destructive wars and deep political differences have caused too many tragedies.

If we are to prevent the recurrence of such tragedies we must build up a certain amount of confidence, and those parties which have an immediate interest in achieving the collective aim of living in security, peace and justice will have to make sacrifices. By that I mean that Israel and its friends, its usual friends, must seriously consider today, more than ever before, accepting the peace initiative.

The Arabs have had to cope with conflicting Israeli positions and the delaying tactics of some of Israel's allies. This continued regression of the international situation will not contribute to a solution of the problem. The peace initiatives of the Arabs and the international community contain much that is acceptable to all; what remains to be done is to crystallize the positions of the parties concerned and to hold this international conference in Geneva in order to reach practical solutions, under international guarantees, that are acceptable to

(Mr. Alhodar, Oman)

the region. As is known, we in Oman have always fully supported realistic and genuine peace efforts in the Middle East. We also support an objective approach to all initiatives likely to promote national and Arab interests. Our position concerning the successful efforts made by Egypt is based on our deep conviction about the correctness of the Egyptian-Arab approach which can overcome any doubts. Today, we stand staunchly beside our brothers who supported the joint machinery of the Palestinian-Jordanian Agreement reached in Oman on 11 February of this year. We have great confidence in the wisdom and sincerity of His Majesty King Hussein and Mr. Arafat, and we hope that their efforts will bear fruit.

In conclusion, we hope that the adoption of the draft resolutions before us on the situation of the Middle East will help to advance the cause of peace and to satisfy the aspirations of the region and its people. We thank the Secretary-General for his efforts and for his report, contained in document A/40/779 of 22 October 1985.

Mr. KHALIL (Egypt) (interpretation from Arabic): The spreading of tension and violence in the Middle East to the entire Mediterranean basin is doubtless a threat to that vital region of the world. It reminds us of the close relationship between these two regions and the urgent need not to spare any effort to restore peace and stability in the Middle East and to eliminate the threats to peace and security in this sensitive region.

It is unanimously agreed that the restoration of peace and security in the Middle East requires a just and equitable settlement of the Palestinian question, which is the crux of the conflict and the true cause of the tension and threats to which this region is exposed. The President of the Security Council reaffirmed this a few days ago in his statement celebrating the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November 1985 when he said:

"The annual observance of this Day is not only a measure of the international community's deep concern for the Palestinian people but also a reflection of its recognition that a just solution to the Palestinian problem is of overriding importance in the striving for a lasting settlement to the Middle East question.

"As we are aware, the situation in the Middle East is a very serious one. It not only vitally affects the stability of the region but could have potential consequences beyond the region."

My country, Egypt, has been the party most affected by the conflict in the Middle East. Consequently, we firmly believe in the need for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of all aspects of the problem, in order to provide stability for the people of the area, so as to enable them to concentrate their efforts on developing their potential for the good of all.

That was the starting point of the peace initiative which had been mooted much earlier and had continued for over two decades. I refer to Egypt's acceptance of Security Council resolution 242 (1967). Within the framework of that peace

(Mr. Khalil, Egypt)

initiative and of its efforts to strengthen peace, Egypt believed that a comprehensive peace, to be lasting, must be just so that all the parties can be for it and seek to preserve it.

Notwithstanding the recent Israeli aggression against Tunis, Egypt continues to believe that the situation in the Middle East offers an opportunity for serious action to bring about a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement. This is an opportunity that we should all take on the basis of an accurate assessment of the historical background and profound influences of the positions of the parties concerned with, or directly involved in, the conflict.

Among these events there is the Jordanian-Palestinian Agreement of 11 February 1985 which led to intensification of the peace efforts and to a strengthening of confidence among the Palestinians. The latter believe that the future holds out hope and that their resistance to foreign occupation forces will eventually be successful.

Moreover, repeated statements by a number of the international parties primarily concerned in the conflict regarding the need to begin an active phase of negotiations have had the effect of strengthening Egypt's view of the importance of giving a boost to efforts to bring about a settlement. Egypt therefore encouraged a dialogue by the Palestinians and the Jordanians with the international parties concerned in the conflict. President Mubarak took the initiative of writing to the President of the United States and the General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party before their recent meeting in Geneva asking them to consider the situation in the Middle East and to take the necessary action to overcome the obstacles to an international conference on peace in the Middle East.

Egypt continued its contacts and recently had high-level ones with the European parties. We hope that this will cause them to increase their contribution to the peace process at the European Community's summit meeting to be held on 6 December.

(Mr. Khalil, Egypt)

The comprehensive, just and lasting settlement in which we believe must be based, in our view on the following: first, Israel's withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem, the Golan Heights, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; secondly, the exercise by the Palestinian people of their legitimate rights, and in particular, their right to self-determination and the right to a homeland on their national soil; thirdly, the right of all countries and peoples in the Middle East to live in peace and security in a spirit of good-neighbourliness. These are the elements which should be included in a settlement of the Middle East problem.

Since the Arab world has over the past few months and years acted by presenting peace proposals, Israel, the other party to the conflict, should act with the objectivity and courage required by the situation.

Israel today must sincerely question its position in the Middle East and its relations with its Arab neighbours. It must refrain from forcefully annexing territory.

Israel must renounce its policy of settlement and expansion.

Israel must accept the participation of the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), in negotiations to be held during the proposed international conference on peace in the Middle East, where all the parties concerned will be in attendance.

In the Cairo Declaration of 7 November 1985 the PLO reaffirmed its attachment to the right of all peoples in the area to live in peace within internationally recognized boundaries and condemned all acts of terrorism. The Cairo Declaration gave preference to peace efforts within the framework of an international peace conference. The ideas and concept in that Declaration are clear and should be to everyone, especially in so far as they relate to the elements of settlement as contained in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

(Mr. Khalil, Egypt)

The President of the Security Council, in his statement on 29 November during the celebration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, said:

"Guided by its responsibilities under the Charter the Security Council will continue its efforts to seek a just and lasting peace in the Middle East for the benefit of all parties concerned, including the Palestinian people."

In his statement at the historic commemorative meeting of the Security Council at the ministerial level held on 26 September 1985, my Foreign Minister said:

"... the Council's resolutions on the Middle East and the Palestinian question still lack the practical and executive mandatory measures ... foremost amongst which is Security Council resolution 242 (1967)". (S/PV.2608, pp. 87-88)

(Mr. Khalil, Egypt)

As representatives know, a number of Foreign Ministers spoke, including the Secretary of State of the United States, who said:

"We have seen that creative Council actions can provide a basis for resolving some of the most difficult issues of our time.

Resolution 242 (1967), for instance, provided the essential political and legal framework for Middle East peace-making." (S/PV.2608, p. 117)

We note that the countries of the Middle East are prepared to engage in serious efforts to bring about a peaceful settlement. All who believe in the inevitability of peace, whether members of the Council or other international parties concerned, should act effectively and seize this opportunity to expand the basis for peace in the Middle East. Today, everyone must listen to the voice of reason and take a forward-looking view of the situation in the Middle East. We must all show courage in our choice of positions and in maintaining them. Everyone should refrain from acts of provocation or anything that would obstruct the peace process through an international conference. My delegation spoke at length on this point in its statement in the Assembly on the question of Palestine.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.