



General Assembly

PROVISIONAL

A/40/PV.105
9 December 1985

ENGLISH

Fortieth session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 5 December 1985, at 3 p.m.

<u>President:</u>	Mr. DE PINIÉS	(Spain)
later:	Mr. MOUSHOUTAS (Vice-President)	(Cyprus)
later:	Mr. DE PINIÉS (President)	(Spain)
later:	Mr. SARRE (Vice-President)	(Senegal)
later:	Mr. AGIUS (Vice-President)	(Malta)

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

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the Official Records of the General Assembly.

Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, within one week, to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Department of Conference Services, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 38 (continued)

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 should like to remind representatives that, in accordance with the decision taken at this morning's plenary meeting, the list of speakers in the debate on this item will be closed at 5 p.m. today.

Mr. FERM (Sweden): The conflict in the Middle East which we are now discussing is perhaps the most complicated regional conflict of today. It is a long and bitter one, with old and deep roots. The conflict directly involves Israel, the Palestinian people and the Arab States of the region. In order to achieve that peaceful and lasting settlement of this conflict for which we all hope a compromise must be found - a compromise which satisfies and has the consent and backing of all these parties.

To put it simply, we are discussing the claims of two peoples to the same piece of land. General Assembly resolution 181 (II), adopted in 1947, recognized the national rights of the two peoples concerned and provided the legal foundation for two sovereign States in mandated Palestine - the State of Israel and an Arab Palestinian State. This basic concept was, and continues to be, one of the cornerstones for a fair and peaceful solution. It is our firm belief that, in order to achieve a lasting peace, the legitimate demands of the Palestinian people for self-determination on their national soil must be satisfied.

(Mr. Fern, Sweden)

The well-known Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) provide the essential elements for a solution. They provide an adequate basis for negotiations for a comprehensive settlement. My Government's understanding of the essential thrust of these two resolutions is that as a result of negotiations Israel would withdraw from the territories occupied in 1967. Resolution 242 (1967) firmly establishes that the acquisition of territory by force cannot be accepted. On their side, Israel's neighbours would give full recognition of Israel's right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries.

A just solution of the conflict in the Middle East cannot be based on violence or military superiority. It must be a negotiated solution. It is therefore essential that all the parties concerned take part in negotiations leading to a comprehensive settlement. None of the primary parties to the conflict should be excluded, since no negotiated solution can last without their participation and support. Those parties are Israel, the Palestinians and the neighbouring Arab States. The arguments raised in some quarters for the exclusion of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) from these negotiations are not convincing. It continues to be our view that any attempt to reach an agreement over the heads of the Palestinian people would only create new problems and prolong the conflict. It is essential that the Palestinians themselves be given the right to determine their form of representation in the negotiations. The Palestinian representatives should be acceptable first of all to the Palestinian people itself. If they are not, the negotiated settlement will not be supported by that people.

The United States and the Soviet Union have been and continue to be heavily involved in the conflict. The strategic realities call for participation in the peace process by the major Powers also. It is encouraging that there now seems to be a greater understanding of this concept in Israel as well. Direct negotiations between the parties within the framework of an international peace conference under United Nations auspices might be a workable arrangement.

(Mr. Ferm, Sweden)

Since 1967 Israel has occupied territories in the area. International law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention, clearly defines the rights and obligations of an occupying Power. A people under occupation also has certain rights under that Convention, in addition of course to the right to self-determination, which belongs to all peoples. These principles of international law must be adhered to scrupulously. On many occasions, Sweden has criticized Israel's policies on the occupied territories. Israel continues to violate international law. The Israeli settlements in the territories are evident examples of such violations, and so are the deportations of Palestinians to Jordan. Not only are these policies illegal; their continuation constitutes a serious obstacle to peace.

It is also disturbing that Israel should exploit every pretext to take extremely harsh and disproportionate retaliatory measures, in violation of international law and often at the cost of heavy civilian losses. The recent air strike against the PLO headquarters in Tunis is but one example of this kind of act. The raid was rightly condemned by the Security Council and a majority of the Governments of the world, my own included. It cannot be defended under article 51 of the United Nations Charter. Undermining respect for and universal application of the United Nations Charter not only runs counter to Israel's own long-term security interests, but also sets a very dangerous precedent for the world at large. No country will benefit if the law of the jungle is legitimized.

In this connection I should like to repeat that the PLO, too, must live up to the expectations that we have of that Organization. Several heinous incidents during the last few months show strong evidence of involvement in terrorist acts by members of the PLO. Even though some or all of these acts may have been committed without the knowledge or the approval of the leadership of the organization, that leadership cannot escape the political and moral responsibility.

(Mr. Fern, Sweden)

During the last four decades, wars and violence have claimed a heavy toll among the civilian population in the Middle East. Many innocent lives have been lost in terrorist acts, which again today are rampant in the region and have spread to other parts of the world as well. The effect has often been - and perhaps that was the intention at times - to thwart ongoing efforts for peace. In this context, I wish to recall that in 1948 the United Nations Mediator, Count Folke Bernadotte of Sweden, was murdered in a terrorist attack. The tragic spiral of violence in the Middle East continues to this day. That trend must be reversed. It is absolutely necessary to combat terrorism in all its forms.

No country in this region has been more ravaged by war and violence than Lebanon. The consequences of the unsolved question of Palestine have spilled over into that country. Outside interference has torn Lebanon's already delicate social fabric into shreds. Large segments of the population, and not least the Palestinian refugees, find themselves in an increasingly precarious situation. The sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon must be respected. The various groups in that country must be supported in their efforts to work out their differences and to rebuild their country in peace.

The United Nations has a special responsibility in the search for a solution of the conflict in the Middle East, not only for historical reasons, but also because this question touches upon fundamental aspects of peace and security and of international law. Countless efforts have been made within this Organization during the past decades in the pursuit of a settlement of the conflict.

Efforts to find a comprehensive solution have so far not been successful. This failure, which is a tragedy, cannot however be attributed to the United Nations as such. The reasons should be sought elsewhere, outside the Organization. Over the years the United Nations has played a useful and honourable

(Mr. Fern, Sweden)

role. Diplomatic activity, the peace-keeping operations and the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), all bear witness to a constructive and patient effort by the United Nations, often in very difficult circumstances.

It is also here at the United Nations that the basic principles for a solution have been defined; and here that the parties to the conflict have stated their opinions. The United Nations has provided a unique international forum for an exchange of views and dialogue on the conflict.

(Mr. Ferm, Sweden)

A comprehensive solution to the conflict may still be remote, but the prospects for making headway towards a settlement do not seem entirely bleak. There have been signs that the wish for peace is growing among the various parties to the conflict.

Let me end by saying that the United Nations must continue to insist on the principles of international law and on such basic tenets of a solution as I have outlined earlier. In addition, the Organization should try to facilitate the peace process by offering a framework conducive to bringing the parties together in direct negotiations. A United Nations conference could serve as such a framework and we believe that this potential of the United Nations should be fully used by the parties.

Mr. SHARFI (Sudan) (interpretation from Arabic): My delegation need not elaborate on the extreme importance of the deliberations of this Assembly on the situation in the Middle East, not only because of the continued challenge which this question constitutes to the effectiveness and credibility of the United Nations but also because of the threat it constitutes to stability and security in that strategic region and in the world as a whole.

The situation in the Middle East has become a perennial item on the agenda of the General Assembly. It has aroused interest commensurate with the importance of the question of Palestine - the crux and essence of this dispute in the Middle East - for the entire international community ever since the Palestinian people were doomed to displacement and the beginning of the Zionist onslaught on a region which has played a prominent role in the spiritual and cultural development of mankind and is still making vital contributions in various fields. The sanguinary developments that have occurred in that region during past decades have emphasized that world peace, security and economic stability are organically linked to the

(Mr. Sharfi, Sudan)

achievement of peace and a just and comprehensive settlement of the dispute in the Middle East.

The numerous wars, the most recent of which was the conflict in Lebanon, have confirmed that the logic of brute force, no matter how vicious and barbaric, is unable to suppress the national spirit of the militant Palestinian people or cause them to give up their legitimate national rights. All these bitter experiences have demonstrated the failure of policies of force and the fact that the solution of the dispute in the Middle East lies in a political solution based on justice and inspired by the will of the international community and its resolutions, which declare that the question of Palestine is the crux of the Arab-Israeli dispute.

The continued deterioration of the situation in the Middle East and the failure of all initiatives designed to lead to a comprehensive peace have increased international concern at the possible consequences of what is happening, especially in view of the continued Israeli recalcitrance and intransigence and Israel's refusal to recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

The persistence of the current situation presages new explosions - of which the invasion of Lebanon will not be the last - massacres of the innocent, repeated acts of aggression against the States of the region and other barbaric practices that have become the declared policy of the rulers of Tel Aviv. By such practices and policies Israel has proved that it is not a peace-loving State. At its ninth emergency special session the international community declared its conviction of that fact, which had been affirmed in earlier resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council, resolutions which were rejected by the Zionist entity. The continued rebellion by that régime against the will of the international community will bring the region to the brink of explosion and lead to a further intensification of the strife in all its sad and tragic dimensions.

(Mr. Sharfi, Jordan)

Israel must realize that its attitude with regard to the situation in the Middle East is futile and no longer convinces anyone, that its insistence on diverting attention from the crux of the dispute by speaking of other problems no longer deceives anyone. Israel has been and still is the cause of all the tension in the Middle East.

The international community has emphasized on numerous occasions that there can be no just and lasting peace in the Middle East without the full and unconditional withdrawal of Israel from all the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, including Holy Jerusalem, and until the Palestinian people are able to exercise their right to self-determination and to establish their own independent sovereign State on their national soil, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), their sole legitimate representative.

The international community reiterated those principles at the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, which acknowledged in the Geneva Declaration the importance of convening an international conference on peace in the Middle East as an international effort to bring about a just and lasting settlement of the strife in that important region. We are still hopeful that the call for the convening of the international conference will meet with the necessary response so that the region may enjoy the stability which it has lacked for long decades. Israel's negative reply to the proposal for the convening of that conference was in keeping with its negative attitude to any sincere appeal for a peaceful settlement of the conflict in the Middle East. It has already rejected all peace initiatives, including the Arab peace plan endorsed by the Fez Summit Conference in 1982 and reaffirmed by the Arab Summit Conference in Casablanca.

Israel's permanent option has been resort to force of arms, ignoring the fact that peace imposed by force of arms cannot last. That is confirmed by events in the region and most recently by the heroic resistance of the Lebanese people.

(Mr. Sharfi, Sudan)

The tragic reality of the situation in the Middle East faces the international community with a serious test and the need to devise means of compelling Israel to comply with the resolutions of the international community through the imposition of the sanctions provided for in the Charter in case any State rejects the norms and values unanimously recognized by the international community.

We should also like to emphasize the grave implications of the Pretoria-Tel Aviv axis for the struggle of the African and Arab peoples. That unholy alliance confronts the peoples of Africa and the Arab world with new challenges, especially since its conspiratorial nature and the fact that it is directed against the rights of those peoples have become evident. The international community condemned that axis in 1975, when it declared that zionism was a form of abominable racial discrimination.

The constructive positions of the Arab countries and the PLO on the various initiatives aimed at achieving a just and lasting settlement of the dispute in the Middle East reveal the intransigent position of the rulers of the Zionist entity, which persists in its violation of resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. Furthermore, it persists in its systematic violation of all the human rights of the Palestinians, both within and outside the occupied territories.

(Mr. Sharfi, Sudan)

In that context, the Special Political Committee a few days ago concluded its discussion of the report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories (A/40/702). My delegation simply refers the Assembly to that report, which alerts the world to practices that are no different from those of the Inquisition and nazism and fascism.

The representative of the Zionist entity, before accusing civilized societies of ignorance and stupidity and the PLO of terrorism, should carefully read that report, which was prepared by a neutral international Committee. During the Committee's deliberations the Zionist entity declared its complete rejection of the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 1949, to the population of the occupied territories, and persisted in refusing to allow members of the Committee into the occupied Arab territories to examine the inhuman conditions which the Arab population has to endure.

The Secretary-General's important report (A/40/779 and Corr.1) reflects the various aspects of the situation in the Middle East, including the military aspects and the peace-keeping operations, reviews the situation in the occupied Arab territories and the humanitarian and political aspects of the problem, and concludes with an assessment of all the peace initiatives aimed at achieving a peaceful settlement of that conflict. My country has expressed its support for all those initiatives and commended all measures taken in that connection, the most important of which was the Jordanian-Palestinian agreement, signed in Amman last February, which, we emphasize, represents an important step towards peace in the Middle East.

My delegation shares the Secretary-General's regret, expressed in paragraph 35 of his report, at the differences of opinion within the Security Council regarding

(Mr. Sharfi, Sudan)

a peaceful settlement in the Middle East. We share his belief that the question of the Middle East, with all its complex dimensions, can be solved through a comprehensive settlement negotiated under United Nations auspices, with the participation of all the parties concerned and the major Powers, especially the super-Powers.

In conclusion, the people of the Sudan, which, through its glorious revolution of last April, has demonstrated that it stands firmly by the Palestinian people in its struggle for national liberation and the restoration of its usurped rights, once more calls upon the international community to fulfil its historic responsibilities and duties assigned to it and seek promptly and seriously, before it is too late, the restoration of the rights of those who have a legitimate claim to them.

Mr. TORNUDD (Finland): The situation in the Middle East continues to pose the most persistent threat to international peace and security. The continuation of violence and suffering in the Middle East area is of concern not only to the immediate parties but to the international community as a whole.

There is a vicious circle. While a peaceful solution evades us, frustration grows, and that leads to more violence. During recent months we have witnessed a number of tragic incidents which have resulted in many innocent civilian victims. We strongly deplore all violence, and urge all the parties and individuals concerned to abide strictly by the rules of international law and to give a negotiated settlement a chance.

The Government of Finland has studied with great interest the proposals and initiatives that have been put forward aiming at a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East through negotiation. We hope that these initiatives will speed up the peaceful process so sorely needed in the area.

(Mr. Tornudd, Finland)

Only negotiations can bring peace to the Middle East. The basis for the solution was defined long ago in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and is universally recognized. Israel must withdraw from Arab territories occupied since 1967. Acquisition of territories by force is inadmissible. The right of Israel and all other States in the area to exist within secure and recognized boundaries must be guaranteed.

The core of the conflict in the Middle East remains the question of Palestine. As long as this problem is unsolved there can be no lasting solution to the Middle East question. Provision must be made for the legitimate rights of the Palestinians, including their right to national self-determination. This presupposes their right to participate in negotiations on their own future within the framework of a comprehensive solution in the Middle East. In this context, Finland considers the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) the most significant representative of Palestinian national aspirations.

The search for a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East has continuously encountered insurmountable obstacles. A major impediment has been caused by the illegal acts of Israel.

Israel has continued its settlement policies in the territories occupied by it and has extended its jurisdiction to the Golan Heights. It has also taken action designed to change the status of Jerusalem. All these acts have been rejected by the Security Council. Israel's policy in the occupied territories has increased the tension and despair in the occupied West Bank and in Gaza, resulting in acts of violence and suffering for the civilian population, indigenous as well as Palestinian refugees.

Violence and tension have, tragically, spread in the whole region, affecting in particular Lebanon, which has become a hapless victim of all the different

(Mr. Tornudd, Finland)

disputes and conflicts resulting from the unsolved basic problems in the Middle East. This greatly distresses the Government of Finland. The unique opportunity presented by the withdrawal of Israeli forces did not bring about a credible cease-fire between the internal parties in southern Lebanon, nor did it restore the authority of the Lebanese Government in that region. On the contrary, there is fierce fighting all over Lebanon. We believe that agreement between the warring factions is the only way to save Lebanon's independence and sovereignty. The territorial integrity of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries must be strictly respected.

Finland, which maintains good relations with all the nations concerned, including the most immediate parties to the conflict, has endeavoured to make a constructive contribution to the handling of the controversial issues in the Middle East. It is our firm intention to continue this policy, which has enabled us to render peaceful services to all concerned, as required. A tangible expression of our policy is the participation of Finland in all United Nations peace-keeping activities in the area. At the moment Finland maintains a battalion in both the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), and has a contingent in the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization in Palestine (UNTSO).

(Mr. Tornudd, Finland)

Peace-keeping operations have played a vital role, as an essential part of United Nations services, in supporting the efforts that aim at a peaceful, political solution to the problems in the area. We are convinced that these services continue to be of great importance as long as the negotiated settlement eludes us. Nevertheless, the United Nations can be of service only if it has the support of the parties involved as well as of the major Powers. Now that some positive signs can be sensed in the international climate in general, we very much hope that the encouraging spirit of dialogue will also be reflected in efforts to find a peaceful and comprehensive settlement to the complex issues of the situation in the Middle East.

Mr. SHAH NAWAZ (Pakistan): The current debate in the General Assembly on the situation in the Middle East alerts us, once again, to the danger which the unresolved Middle East conflict poses to international peace and security. We are also reminded of the imperative need to fulfil the indispensable conditions for its resolution which the series of infructuous peace initiatives, in recent years, have failed, so far, to achieve.

The quintessential position regarding the Middle East conflict is stated in the Secretary-General's report in the following words:

"The efforts made within the United Nations framework in the past have produced some important achievements which should not be allowed to be wasted. While the positions of the various parties to the Middle East conflict remain far apart, there is general acceptance of Security Council resolution 242 (1967) which spelled out two important principles for a settlement in the Middle East, namely, the withdrawal of the Israeli forces from occupied territories and, secondly, respect and acknowledgment of the

sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognised boundaries. In addition to these two principles, there is also a wide measure of agreement that in any settlement there must be a satisfactory resolution of the Palestine problem based on the recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including self-determination." (A/40/779, para. 37)

Arab willingness to accept the conditions for a just and lasting settlement, outlined in the Secretary-General's report, and Arab readiness to negotiate on the basis of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, substantiate their genuine desire for peace. Addressing the fortieth session of the General Assembly, His Majesty King Hussein of Jordan reiterated the Arab position with great clarity. He had the following to say about the Palestinian question which lies at the heart of the Middle East conflict:

"The fact is that the Palestinian issue and the United Nations are twins, born out of war, twins which emerged, grew and suffered together.

No one should assume that we are comfortable with that commonality of destiny. On the contrary, it is our hope that it will soon come to an end through the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian problem and related issues. This should be done in accordance with the United Nations Charter and through the implementation of the resolutions of the Organization, particularly the four that constitute the balanced foundation for any just and peaceful settlement. These are General Assembly resolutions 181 (II) of 1947, which stipulated the partition of Palestine, and 194 (III) of 1948 pertaining to the solution of the problem of the Palestinian refugees, Security Council resolution 242 (1967) of 1967, which calls on Israel to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories and reaffirms the right of every State to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries, and Security Council resolution 338 (1973) of 1973,

(Mr. Shah Nawaz, Pakistan)

which calls for negotiations among the parties to the conflict ..."

(A/40/PV.12, p. 11)

In recent years, several initiatives, aimed at achieving a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict, have been launched, both within the United Nations and outside it.

These include the offer made by the Arab leaders at Fez in September 1982, the proposals made by President Reagan, and those offered by the Soviet Union, during the same month, the idea of an international peace conference on the Middle East, endorsed by the General Assembly in 1983, and the latest peace initiative by King Hussein, which is based on an agreement concluded last February between him and Chairman Yasser Arafat, the leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

There is no dearth of genuine initiatives nor a lack of desire on the part of the Arab States to achieve a lasting peace in the Middle East. The Arab States are ready to enter immediately into negotiations which would protect the legitimate interests of all the parties involved in the conflict.

The real obstacle to peace is Israel's refusal to withdraw from the occupied territories and to recognize the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. It is this intransigence on the part of Israel which has thwarted every peace initiative in the Middle East so far.

During the past four decades, Israel has systematically extended its territorial hold in the area. Israel's policies of repression against the Palestinian people and frequent use of force against its Arab neighbours, are the product of its expansionist policy. The resulting cycle of violence has kept the entire Middle East in a continuing state of turmoil and turbulence.

The Israeli concept of secure boundaries excludes withdrawal from the occupied West Bank, Gaza and the Golan Heights. Israel perceives a conflict between its assumed security interest in maintaining its illegal control over the occupied territories, and the Security Council resolutions which uphold the principle of the

(Mr. Shah Nawaz, Pakistan)

inadmissibility of acquisition of territories by force and make that principle the basis of a just and lasting settlement. It is this distorted vision of its place and role in the region that drives Israel to pursue a policy of uninhibited expansion and permanent annexation of the occupied territories, including the Holy City of Jerusalem.

The report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories (A/40/702) concludes that Israeli policy is based on the concept that the territories occupied in 1967 constitute a part of the State of Israel". The report further states:

"... measures continue to be taken to establish settlements, to expropriate property and to encourage directly or indirectly the indigenous Palestinian population to leave the territory ... Such a policy reflects the clear intention of the Government of Israel to annex the territories occupied by it in 1967 and is in violation of the international obligations undertaken by Israel as a State Party to the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Civilian Persons in Time of War." (A/40/702, para. 321)

According to reliable estimates, Israel has seized more than half of the total area of the West Bank, and continues creating new settlements, while confiscating additional Arab lands. The Israeli policy of establishing and constantly expanding settlements, taken together with measures to harass the Palestinian population, calculated denial to them of access to the resources of the land and increasing control over economic activities, provide irrefutable evidence of an Israeli plan to alter the demographic and historical character of the occupied territories.

(Mr. Shah Nawaz, Pakistan)

The Israeli campaign to remove every symbol of Palestinian nationalism and to suppress every manifestation of the Palestinian will to regain self-determination and independence is not confined to the occupied territories. The 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the subsequent massacre of the Palestinians in Sabra and Shatila, Israel's continuing incursions into southern Lebanon, its murderous attack on the Palestine Liberation Organization premises in Tunis in October 1985, and the incessant campaign to malign the Palestine Liberation Organization reflect Israel's compulsive refusal to live with Palestinian nationalism, with which it will have to come to terms for the sake of its own security and peace in the region.

Israel has a choice between peace based on the recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and respect for international law and an elusive security enforced by military means, forcible possession of the occupied territories and permanent hostility towards its Arab neighbours. Indeed, it is Israel's besieged mentality and its disposition to resort to aggressive acts which inflame the entire Middle East and pose a grave threat to the security of every State in the region. A continuation of that intolerable situation will further isolate Israel and increase its dependence on its allies, which would have to bear the increasing political cost of continued conflict and violence in the Middle East.

The prospects of a just and lasting settlement in the Middle East still exist and can be revived through a willingness to negotiate on the basis of the proposal for an international peace conference on the Middle East and the recent initiative of King Hussein.

The international conference is a realistic and effective modality for working out a settlement which addresses the legitimate concerns of all the parties. The convening of the conference is predicated on the participation of all the parties to the conflict and of the five permanent members of the Council, without prejudice

(Mr. Shah Nawaz, Pakistan)

to their respective positions. It is, therefore, regrettable that Israel should object to the holding of the conference and, indeed, to any involvement of the United Nations in a settlement of the Middle East conflict.

A problem as complicated as that of the Middle East cannot be resolved by a piecemeal approach which excludes one party or the other. To be fruitful, the negotiations must engage all the parties concerned as well as the great Powers, which have been vested by the Charter with a special responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The recent summit meeting in Geneva between the leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union ought to improve the atmosphere of East-West relations, which we hope would pave the way for the early convening of the proposed international conference on the Middle East.

The conflict in the Middle East is too serious a matter to permit of passivity and despondency on the part of the international community. The United Nations, which has been closely involved with the Palestinian issue since its very beginning, must fulfil its obligation towards the Palestinian people by exercising its moral and political authority to ensure the restitution of their inalienable national rights. The United Nations must further mobilize its resources to mitigate the hardship of the Palestinians living under Israeli occupation and also provide assistance to those living in exile in refugee camps.

The commitment of the people of Pakistan to the Palestinian cause goes back to the time when we were struggling for our own freedom four decades ago. In 1940 our leaders adopted the decision to launch the movement for Pakistan simultaneously with a declaration of solidarity with the people of Palestine. Ever since then the conflict in the Middle East, the occupation of the Palestinian territories and of the Holy City of Jerusalem and the sufferings of the people of Palestine have stirred deep emotions among the people of Pakistan. We firmly believe in the

(Mr. Shah Nawaz, Pakistan)

justice of the Palestinian cause and take this opportunity of renewing our pledge of solidarity with the Palestinian people in their struggle to regain their right to self-determination and independence and with the Arab States in their efforts to resolve the Middle East conflict and to strengthen peace and stability in their region.

MR. BUI XUAN NHAT (Viet Nam): The question of the Middle East has been inscribed on the agenda of the General Assembly for decades now and has remained a vexed and burning issue in international political life. Over the last few years, however, there have been some dramatic developments in the situation in that region which deserve our close attention.

Tensions in the Middle East have been aggravated, with additional complications, owing directly to Israel's policy of aggression and territorial expansion, in collusion with its imperialist strategic ally.

The last 40 years have witnessed six major wars and numerous armed conflicts in that part of the world. The 1948 war unleashed by Israel trampled under foot General Assembly resolution 181 A and B (II), of 1947, which led to the denial of the right to existence of the Palestinian State and to the exodus of millions of its people into the neighbouring Arab States. The wars that ensued were in essence wars of aggression and annexation by the Israeli authorities in an attempt to achieve the ambition of a greater Jewish State. The Sinai, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights and other areas thus fell into Israel's hands; they have become either the buffer zones or the dumping ground where Israel flexes its military muscle against the Arab countries. The policy and acts of aggression and territorial annexation by Israel, encouraged and supported by imperialist forces constitute a direct threat to the security of all Arab States and to the peace and stability of the region and of the world. Israel has, therefore, been denounced

(Mr. Bui Xuan Nhat, Viet Nam)

here in this forum as the source of regional tension and condemned as not a peace-loving nation.

The last 40 years have also witnessed the marriage of Israel with imperialist forces. The latter have nurtured Zionism and fed its war machine annually with billions of dollars, thereby turning it into a terrorist State and the regional gendarmerie. They have catered to its military craving with literally everything, including state-of-the-art weapons, nuclear technology and licences for arms production. This has helped Israel to become a major arms-exporting country which is at the present time taking part in the modernization of the armed forces of a major Asian country that also practises expansionism and hegemonism. Israel's co-operation and collusion with its Asian friend and with the racist régime of South Africa are a cause of grave concern for all peoples throughout the world.

(Mr. Bui Xuan Nhat, Viet Nam)

At this forum, and at other international forums, the imperialist forces have, by hook or by crook, protected Israel from sanctions under the United Nations Charter and from the pressure and condemnation of world public opinion. At the Security Council, the veto power has time and again been misused to nullify draft resolutions, even those of a purely humanitarian nature that condemned Israel's acts and practices. We can mention the veto vote by the United States against the resolution on Lebanon earlier this year as one example. It should be recalled that Israel and the United States are both held responsible for the destruction of Beirut and part of Lebanon for the purpose of annihilating the Palestinian resistance forces and the Lebanese patriotic forces. But even the participation of the United States marines could not save this manoeuvre from failure and Israel had to pay dearly for its aggression against Lebanon.

The Palestinian people and the Arab community have enjoyed the sympathy and support of all progressive mankind in their just cause. The peoples of Palestine and Arab countries have a common enemy. In the course of the last 40 years the Arab countries have shared the anguish of the displaced Palestinians, giving them shelter and actively assisting them in their resistance to Israel's occupation, because they understand that that resistance is also a direct and positive contribution to safeguarding the security of their countries. Once Israel manages to annihilate this resistance, it will have a free hand to carry out wars of aggression against these States. This is why the strengthening of the Palestinians' capabilities of resistance in all fields has become so urgent and increasingly significant.

(Mr. Bui Xuan Nhat, Viet Nam)

It is the legitimate aspiration of the peoples of the Middle East and the international community that the problems in this region be settled promptly and peacefully on the basis of ensuring the legitimate interests of all parties concerned. It is a well-established fact that this can be done by means of a satisfactory solution to the question of Palestine that lies at the heart of all other regional issues. So long as the United States does not renounce its manoeuvres with regard to this region and keeps encouraging and supporting the territorial ambitions of the Israeli authorities there cannot be peace and stability in the region. Peace and security cannot be established by territorial annexation and denial of the existence of an independent Palestinian State; they must be achieved through a comprehensive settlement of the regional issues which guarantees the legitimate interests of all parties concerned, first and foremost those of the people of Palestine. Such a solution will be arrived at through an international conference on the Middle East with the participation on an equal footing of all parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Almost all of the United Nations membership voiced their support for such a conference. It is regrettable that thus far the United States and Israel have opposed it, thus blocking the process.

The delegation of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam considers an international conference on the Middle East as the only appropriate means to settle the questions of the region. We therefore fully support such a conference under the auspices of the United Nations, as proposed in the 29 July 1984 initiative of the Soviet Union. It is our opinion that this conference should be convened as soon as possible.

(Mr. Bui Xuan Nhat, Viet Nam)

We pledge our unreserved support for the just cause of the Palestinian people under the leadership of the PLO, for their national inalienable rights, including the right to return to their homeland, and the right to self-determination, including the establishment of an independent Palestinian State in Palestine. We support Arab unity and the efforts by the Arab community to co-ordinate action against Israel's expansionism. We are confident that Arab unity, and the effective support and assistance of both the Arab community and the international community are making a significant contribution to the just cause of the Palestinian people.

We strongly condemn the acts of aggression and State terrorism by Tel Aviv against the Palestinians and other Arab peoples in the Middle East. We demand that Israel put an immediate end to these acts and withdraw from all the Arab territories it occupies. We denounce the manoeuvre of settling Middle East issues separately. Realities have testified that Camp David is a failure and that this diplomatic pattern can only lead to deadlocks. We demand that the United States and Israel give up such attempts and respond positively to the proposal to convene the international conference on the Middle East that is so earnestly desired by the international community.

After hundreds of relevant resolutions by the United Nations, the situation in the Middle East remains a shambles. The present deadlock continues the anguish and suffering of the Palestinian people. This paradox should not be allowed to last a minute longer. The United Nations should adopt effective and active measures so as to contribute further to the settlement of the Middle East issues, thereby meeting the demand of the international community.

Mr. SHIHABI (Saudi Arabia) (interpretation from Arabic): The problem of the Middle East is the serious extension of the Zionist crime in Palestine and the wider scheme of Zionist designs that originated on the shores of Palestine and began to expand from there. It is the question of the absence of peace and security in our region, because of Israel.

The question of the Middle East is an ugly picture reflecting Zionist crimes perpetrated on Arab land: the question of Palestine, Syrian Golan, Lebanon; the criminal attack on the Iraqi nuclear reactor; the criminal attack on the heart of the Tunisian capital; and now the attacks on Arab-American centres and personalities in the United States of America. That is an astonishing series in the history of international terrorism. The Zionists recently extended the arm of terrorism to Washington, against Arab-Americans - Washington that feeds the terrorists, nurtures them, and provides them with money and arms with which to commit their crimes against Middle Eastern countries, and now also against the security of the United States itself and its citizens, as an extension of their crimes against Arab countries and peoples, and even against all that the United Nations stands for.

We have before us the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Middle East which reveals that part of Israel's burden is being borne by the world. There is the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in Syria, comprising 1,300 soldiers; the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), comprising 7,000 soldiers; the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization in Palestine (UNTSO) has two groups of observers: one for Beirut and another for Egypt. All the borders involved are insecure and all have been subjected to continuous Zionist-Israeli aggression.

Then there are the millions of refugees both inside and outside Palestine - one of the dimensions of Israeli crimes in the Middle East. At least 2 million of

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

them, according to the report of the Commissioner of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), live on relief assistance from the Agency. We ought to realize the state of dependency and grave situation of despair in which they live, men, women and children being exposed to killing, torture and humiliation in their own homeland. Those who say that acts of violence must be opposed in the world should study the motives behind such acts if they wish to treat the problem seriously, because man's injustice to man is one of the most abhorrent of crimes, the consequences of which go beyond police procedures and gaolers' whips.

The millions of Palestinians whose rights have been denied, lands usurped and homes destroyed, and who have been deprived of justice in their homeland, subjected to Zionist attempts to destroy their existence as a people of dignity, constitute a tremendous human power that will resist injustice by every possible act and stand up against the oppressor with every means of resistance that is legitimized by the right to remove injustice and dispel darkness.

Then we have United Nations resolutions - General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, the resolutions of the specialized agencies and other organizations, resolutions of committees and bodies affiliated with or attached to the United Nations concerning the Palestinian people and other Arab peoples. None of them have been implemented by Israel; all of them have been violated by the Israeli authorities, and through all of them Israel challenges the international community and the credibility of the United Nations. Even resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, which gave Israel a legitimacy that is basically spurious, has not been implemented by Israel.*

* Mr. Moushoutas (Cyprus), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

There are United Nations emissaries, mediators and investigating bodies. The Zionist authorities have slammed the door on them all, hampered their work and rejected their mandates.

There are the wars of aggression waged by Israel against the Arab world which have transformed the region into one of the arenas of international conflict for the longest period in the region's history. It hardly finishes one act of aggression before it embarks upon another. It is ready to kill the peace of the region whenever it thinks conditions are propitious for a new invasion.

This is the picture of the situation in the Middle East. It is the problem of Zionist aggression that started in Palestine and began moving into Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Tunisia, posing a threat to all the countries of the region - and it is not over yet. It is this climate of terror that the Zionist aggression has created around peoples and countries of the region. The core of the problem is the continuous aggression against peoples and countries committed by Israel, the outlaw and fugitive from justice, the perpetrator of all violations, the encroacher upon everything sacred, the violator of every international convention, the falsifier of history, the perpetrator of massacres of the elderly, women and children, and the usurper of the rights of the Arab people inside and outside the Middle East. We can see no just solution on the horizon which Israel would accept and against which it would not create all kinds of obstacles.

The Zionist authorities do not want peace. They are afraid of peace just as a thief is afraid of the rule of law and as a murderer fears justice. At the Arab Summit Conference at Fez, the Arabs proposed a peace plan in which they assumed great sacrifices. Israel has rejected it in toto and always finds reasons to thwart it.

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

The Fez Summit Peace Plan is an opportunity for Israel to gain by peace what it will never achieve by war. Israel's ability to achieve that victory over the Arab and Moslem nations is a superfluous myth. War and peace are two unequal choices. Zionism refuses peace, which is the path to live, and prepares for war, which is the path to failure and destruction - and that remains the path from which it will not deviate, no matter how much the means and phases of production change.

We in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, being part of the Middle East region, stand with the international community insisting upon a just peace and rejecting oppression and aggression. We condemn Israel the terror, the Zionist aggression, aggressor of sacred places and properties.

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

It is Israel that has been the cause of the problem since the day it was established. It is the source of instability and the nurturer of terror of all types, forms and methods. We condemn all it stands for in its crimes against countries and peoples.

We stand with our brethren in Palestine and the other occupied Arab countries in their insistence upon exercise of their full rights. The conscience of the Arab and Islamic world, as well as the conscience of the whole free world, condemns what Zionism and its aggressions represent and demands that it be stopped.

The situation in the Middle East, which is the subject of this discussion, has many dimensions and aspects; they are as numerous as the dimensions of the Zionist design itself. If it wishes to be sincere, it is the duty of the international community, and first and foremost of the States that support Israel and back its falsehoods, to adopt a firm stand on its aggression and on the problems it has created for the peoples and countries of the region.

We in the United Nations must face the problem, and the General Assembly and the Member States will have to rise to their responsibilities. The Charter's provisions for sanctions should be applied against Israel. The acts that the Zionist authorities are committing every day in violation of the Charter weaken this Organization and all its Member States, because the Charter's strength is the Assembly's strength, and taking it lightly jeopardizes the collective strength of the membership. A Member State that violates the Charter automatically deprives itself of protection under the Charter, and the sanctions provided for by the Charter should be applied against it. Is the Assembly going to implement the Charter? Are we going to respect our commitment to the Charter? Are we going to play our role in restraining Zionist tyranny as a first step towards peace and stability? I certainly hope so.

Mr. PAPAJORGJI (Albania): The events that have taken place in the Middle East region since the last session of the General Assembly provide more evidence that that area is one of the hottest zones of acute tensions fraught with the danger of local conflicts turning into clashes on a wider scale. There have been new developments in the Arab-Israeli conflict, with grave consequences from the Arab peoples, and the Palestinian people in particular. It has already become one of the most pressing regional problems, with serious repercussions for the whole international situation.

The People's Socialist Republic of Albania has constantly pointed out, and time has proved it true, that the root cause of the tense and dangerous situation in the Middle East is the rivalry between the imperialist super-Powers, the United States of America and the Soviet Union, which have resorted to all kinds of manoeuvres, tactics and political and diplomatic machinations to elbow each other out and to gain superior positions in the region. They have overtly declared the Middle East to be a so-called zone of their national interests.

Behind the inter-imperialist rivalry in the Middle East are the oil and the very important strategic-military position of the region. For years on end now the super-Powers have been clashing, making plans and hatching overt and covert plots to sow discord among the Arab countries and peoples in order to secure dominating positions in those countries, to lay hands on the Arab oil, to dominate the land, sea and air routes that pass through the region, connecting three continents. They hope thus to realize their hegemonistic plans to extend their influence over the vast territories of Asia and Africa, over the Indian and Pacific Oceans and elsewhere.

The policy pursued by American imperialism in the Middle East is part of its global strategy for world domination. It has been and will always remain anti-Arab. All the plans and agreements that have been contrived - from the

(Mr. Papajorgji, Albania)

Kissinger plan up to the Reagan plan, from the Camp David agreement up to the present endeavours to reach a second Camp David - have served this strategy in accordance with changing circumstances. They have served the aims of Washington to extend its influence over the area as well as the Zionist ambitions of Israel.

The all-round support given to Israel, its military and political strengthening, its constant expansion at the expense of the Arab countries through repeated aggressions, the instigation of the anti-Palestinian and anti-Arab chauvinism of that puppet State in the hands of American imperialism - all these comply with the aims of the international monopolistic bourgeoisie, which plays the strings of Zionism as its strategic interests demand.

Zionist arrogance continues unrestrained, irrespective of the fact that plans for withdrawal from Lebanon have been proclaimed. New threats are made, Arab lands are grapped and kept occupied, the Arab population is expelled from its own soil, and unprecedented genocide is being carried out against the Palestinian people.

Agreements with Israel have given it vast military and political superiority, enabling it to strengthen its domination over the occupied Arab territories - the West Bank, Gaza, the Golan, the border area of southern Lebanon, Jerusalem and so on. Israel possesses an army of about 600,000 soldiers, not to mention reserve troops, which according to some estimates amount to 328,000 soldiers. It has 4,000 tanks and 555 military aircraft, all supplied by American imperialism.

Under these circumstances, when Israel has been armed to the teeth, the United States of America is at present trying its best, with top-ranking delegations and envoys shuttling to and from the Arab world, to reach a second Camp David, thus time under a new cover. Washington's main target is implementation of the anti-Palestinian plan for the creation of a Jordan-Palestinian federation, which would lead to negation of the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to regain their stolen homeland. This would once and for all put an end to their

(Mr. Papaïorgji, Albania)

independence and would put them under the domination of others. The Israelis' so-called opposition thus far to entering into negotiations with the Jordan-Palestinian delegation according to the scenario approved in Washington is only a tactic to make the American pro-Zionist policy of "peace through negotiations" more convincing in the eyes of the Arab peoples. American diplomacy aims at gaining as many concessions as possible from the Arab countries as a reward for the pressure it is allegedly bringing to bear on Israel to persuade it to sit at the negotiation table with the joint Jordan-Palestinian delegation headed by Jordan and approved beforehand by the United States.

The American plan to "resolve" the Middle East problem is entirely permeated by the aim of defending imperialist and Zionist interests. It seeks to stifle the heroic struggle of the Palestinian people with new diplomatic and political manoeuvres and once and for all to bury their inalienable right to regain their occupied homeland. That plan is aimed at establishing other more secure boundaries for great Israel without releasing an inch of the usurped territories.

The other super-Power, the Soviet Union, is still making a fuss about alleged support for "Arab friends" and also its alleged "fiery desire" to make its own contribution to the solution of the Middle East crisis. The Soviet social imperialists have long since been pursuing a political course that would secure for them long-term military-strategic positions in the Middle East. This course is part of their global strategy for world domination and hegemony in their rivalry with American imperialism. They are resorting to all means to deploy their military presence in the area without hesitating to run every risk, even that of betraying the interests of the Palestinian people and the other Arab peoples.

(Mr. Papajorgji, Albania)

They pose as fighters for unity between the Palestinian people and their legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), although they themselves torpedoed the unity of this people, as they did with the Lebanese and other Arab peoples. The so-called Soviet "support" for the Palestinian question has always been governed by the strategic interests of Moscow. The plan for an international conference to solve the Middle East question, which Moscow is advertising as the only way to resolve the crisis, is in fact also an attempt to ensure Soviet participation in the bargaining of the imperialist Powers in the Middle East and to offset United States efforts to keep the Soviet social imperialists out of the plots and intrigues they hatch with the Zionist Israelis.

The People's Socialist Republic of Albania once more reiterates from this forum what the unforgettable leader of the Albanian people, Comrade Enver Hoxha, pointed out:

"The Middle East crisis cannot be resolved through the 'package political plan' or the 'mediation and aid' of the two super-Powers. On the contrary, they are trying to prolong this crisis as much as possible because only in this way can they realize their plans to sabotage and undermine the movements for national and social liberation of the Arab peoples, continue to ensure colossal profits from trafficking in arms and maintain their control of the extraction and processing of Arab oil, which entails the enslavement, oppression and exploitation of the Arab peoples."

We support the resolute and heroic struggle of the Palestinian people, and are firmly convinced that they will win because they fight for a just cause, for regaining their homeland, usurped by the Israeli aggressors. The Middle East crisis will be solved only when the political, economic and military influence of the super-Powers and the other imperialist Powers has been brought to an end, when the Palestinians regain their homeland and when the Arab peoples strengthen genuine

(Mr. Papajorgji, Albania)

unity among themselves in order to resist and overcome the traps and the misleading and disruptive plots of the super-Powers and Zionism. Only a resolute, uncompromising struggle based on genuine Arab unity will lead the Arab peoples to victory.

Our country follows with great attention and deep concern the events in the Middle East, and is profoundly interested in finding proper solutions for the problems of this region so that the tragedy of the Palestinian people is brought to an end and that the Israeli invaders are driven out of the occupied Arab lands. Every further development of this crisis means the advance of the strategic plans of the Americans, Soviets and Zionists in this region and the further exacerbation of the political situation in other regions. That is precisely the consequence of this crisis in the Mediterranean, where Middle East events have been exploited by the United States and the Soviet Union to increase and strengthen their naval presence in this area. This is demonstrated by the increase of their military potential in Europe, which is full of new land and air bases and a great number of long-range and medium-range nuclear missiles. It is also demonstrated by the instigation of discord in the Balkans and the escalation of interference in Africa.

Mr. TSVETKOV (Bulgaria) (interpretation from French): For 40 years the situation in the Middle East has been a constant concern of the international community. After having solemnly commemorated the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, we must unfortunately observe that throughout this period the Middle East has remained a centre of the most explosive tensions. Despite countless resolutions and decisions of the Organization designed to bring about a peaceful and a just settlement of the crisis in this part of the world, the vicious circle of tragic events in the Middle East continues. Each day the delay in taking decisive measures that could bring about a solution to the conflict further

(Mr. Tsvetkov, Bulgaria)

complicates the situation with unforeseeable results and the knot of contradictions becomes more and more difficult to undo.

It is unquestionably the aggressive and expansionist policy of Israel which lies at the root of this situation. It is inspired and actively supported by well-known imperialist forces seeking to establish complete control over this region which is rich in natural resources and vitally important from a strategic point of view. That policy is the cause of the endless sufferings of the Arab peoples; it is the cause of the lasting crisis situation that can deteriorate into world conflict.

As is well known, the question of Palestine is the core of all the complex problems of the Middle East. Using "mailed fist" tactics, the Israeli occupier has been wreaking havoc in the occupied Arab territories. Annexation and colonization continue in these territories. Israel openly declares its intention to annex the West Bank of the Jordan and the Gaza Strip. Attempts to partition the sovereign and independent Lebanese Republic continue, bringing further bloodshed in their wake. The wave of terrorism unfurling over the entire Middle East is the bitter fruit of the destabilization of the region.

The air raid on the territory of Tunisia - one of the latest military actions of Tel Aviv - is a typical example of State terrorism against entire countries. Those who pursue this policy bear the responsibility for having made of the Middle East a field of battle and of violence and for having condemned its inhabitants to poverty, death and ruin.

It is our deep conviction that this responsibility is equally shared by those circles which, for global, imperialist interests, support Israel, provide it with the most modern weapons and hatch hegemonist plots with respect to this region of the world. These plots have led to the imposition as a fait accompli of the "strategic commitment" between Israel and the United States, which has been

(Mr. Tsvetkov, Bulgaria)

transformed into a political and military alliance directed against the independence and sovereignty of the peoples of this part of the world.

Attempts to impose separate agreements and deals aimed at blocking a just and comprehensive settlement of the situation in the Middle East are contrary to the interests of the Arab peoples. These efforts are part of the strategy of the imperialist alliance aimed at dismantling the national liberation movement of Palestine in order to remove the question of Palestine from the agenda and virtually to dictate to the Arab States their capitulation. But it is clear to everyone that this approach has no future and is extremely dangerous. The tragic events that followed the Camp David deals provided irrefutable proof of this. It is equally certain that new deals of this kind will have even more disastrous results.

The international community has reason for alarm. The situation in the Middle East is extremely serious. The vital interests of the peoples of the region, just like the interests of world peace and security, require that all States Members of the United Nations make every effort to eliminate this inexhaustible source of the dangers of war.*

* The President returned to the Chair.

(Mr. Tsvetkov, Bulgaria)

There is only one way to the settlement of this complex, difficult international problem, with its many interlocking and interdependent aspects - that is, the deployment of the collective efforts of all the concerned parties to ensure a comprehensive political settlement of the situation in the Middle East, on a realistic and just basis. The overwhelming majority of the States Members of the United Nations has declared itself in favour of such an approach. The very broad international consensus on this problem is reflected in the many resolutions and decisions that the international Organization has adopted on the question - and I shall refer only to resolution 38/58 C. There is also a consensus on the decisions of the meeting of Arab leaders held at Fez in September 1982 and on the decisions adopted by the non-aligned countries in the Luanda Political Declaration of September 1985, as well as on the position of the Warsaw Treaty countries as expressed in the Sofia Declaration of October last.

The international community greeted the Soviet proposals of July 1984 with great interest and particular attention. Like many other countries, the People's Republic of Bulgaria has stated that it is in favour of those proposals. We view in them as a realistic and balanced programme for a comprehensive settlement of the conflict in the Middle East.

In our opinion, any solution to the Middle East problem must be based on the generally recognized principle of the inadmissibility of the annexation of foreign territory through aggression. That means that Israel must withdraw its troops from all the Arab territories occupied since 1967, particularly the Golan Heights, the West Bank of the Jordan - including East Jerusalem - the Gaza Strip and the Lebanese territory in southern Lebanon, and that the settlements established there must be dismantled.

A genuine guarantee of the right of all States, including Israel, to exist in security and independence and in conditions of strict reciprocity is an

(Mr. Tsvetkov, Bulgaria)

important condition for the peaceful settlement of the conflict. The drawing up and adoption of international guarantees relating to a peaceful settlement is a very important element in this regard. The most appropriate instrument for making it possible to achieve these conditions and put these principles into concrete form is the International Conference, convened under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The participation of the Soviet Union and the United States, which because of historical circumstances play an important role in Middle East questions, could make a considerable contribution to the success of that Conference.

It seems appropriate to state here that it is high time to oblige Israel, in keeping with Article 25 of the Charter, to implement the Security Council decisions for which, for well-known reasons, it has so far shown contempt. Clearly, this state of affairs has become intolerable, because it undermines the very foundations of the international Organization. It is the duty of the States Members of the United Nations and of the Security Council - the body principally responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security - to work actively to ensure that the bloodshed in the Middle East stops.

The People's Republic of Bulgaria, geographically situated in the neighbourhood of the Middle East, is particularly concerned about the problems of that region. To the extent of its means, it has exerted every effort to help to ensure a peaceful and equitable solution to them. I assure all the delegations of all the States Members of the Organization that my country will in the future continue to lend its co-operation to those working for the establishment of a lasting peace in the Middle East, a peace that the peoples of the region have dreamed of for so long now.

Mr. DJOUDI (Algeria) (interpretation from French): There is a continuing crisis in the Middle East, and its tragic manifestations and development are a matter of constant concern to the international community in general and this Assembly in particular. At present there is a mounting wave of violence and escalation of tension in that part of the world, endangering international peace and security. Formerly a land of tolerance, of good-neighbourliness and civilized dialogue, the Middle East today is, above all, the theatre of a conflict which, by its very nature and that of the chief protagonist, has no geographical limits. It features a régime which, by its systematic recourse to terror, its methodical practice of violence and its pursuit of a sophisticated plan for annexation, has elevated aggression to an institutionalized policy, the only policy on which that régime bases its relations with the States of the region.

In the Middle East, the Palestinian people have been suffering for four decades now from the horrors of occupation and exile, and today their very existence is threatened. In their land, a methodical policy of expropriation and colonization continues to be practised and developed, a policy which, through the implantation of new settlements, the transfer of further settlers to the confiscated Arab lands and the intimidation of the Palestinian owners of that land, is designed to empty the Arab lands of their legitimate inhabitants, to Zionize them and ultimately to annex them.

That policy, in open violation of the Geneva Conventions and the rules of war, is carried out by means of an actual genocidal exercise against the Palestinian people, which, however, go on resisting faits accomplis and terror and wage, within the occupied territories themselves, a struggle whose determination and magnitude constantly surprise the aggressor.

The Palestinian people has expressed its determination to fight to regain the national rights of which it has been robbed and to return to its land and build

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

its own independent State there. Thus, that people is opposing the fulfilment of the Israeli leaders' designs of domination and quest for power.

The armed Zionist aggression against Tunisia, which the Security Council energetically condemned and which forms part of the proclaimed policy of the Zionist leaders to extend their threats and aggression throughout the Mediterranean region, demonstrates once again that the Israeli régime is prepared, in order to attain its objectives, to trample under foot the rules of international law and the principles underlying our Organization.

That raid against Maghreb territory constitutes further escalation of provocation and a dangerous expansion of the radius of Israeli aggression, and this has particularly serious consequences for international peace and security. Indeed, the whole Mediterranean region is now the target of a new and dangerous dimension of the Israeli policy of aggression.

That same determination to eliminate the Palestinian people and dominate the peoples of the region led, just three years ago, to the invasion of a sovereign State Member of this Organization, Lebanon, the encirclement and destruction of Beirut, the occupation of a large part of its territory and horrible massacres of Palestinians and Lebanese.

Even today, after the heroic, exemplary resistance of the Lebanese forced the occupying troops to withdraw hurriedly and in humiliation, part of Lebanese territory remains under Israeli occupation. This has quite rightly aroused the concern of the whole international community.

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

In the Golan Heights, which the Zionist régime sought to annex through an act of juridical piracy repudiated by the General Assembly and the Security Council, the Syrian Arab population is harassed each day by new provocation and arbitrary measures designed to undermine their identity and values and to compel them to give up their citizenship.

The policy of violence and Israeli adventurism knows no geographical limits. It is hardly necessary to recall the destruction of the Tammuz nuclear reactor, which incidentally had been placed under the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the threats against Lebanon, Jordan and Syria, the violation of the territorial integrity of neighbouring Arab States, and the decision to annex Jerusalem - they are all part of this adventurist and intimidating strategy that is entirely consistent with the overall Zionist policy of eliminating all Palestinian or Arab resistance extending its domination throughout the region.

For more than a decade now, the General Assembly has been able to identify the essential cause of the Middle East problem and has proposed the elements of a solution.

This Assembly has solemnly recognized and reaffirmed regularly over the years that the question of Palestine is the central element of the Middle East conflict and that re-establishment of peace in the area is dependent upon the restoration to the Palestinian people of their national inalienable rights and upon the complete and unconditional withdrawal by Israel from all the occupied Arab territories.

In 1983, a new milestone was reached on the road to peace by the Assembly's adoption of a resolution calling for an international peace conference on the Middle East in which all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) would participate on an equal footing.

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

The Zionist leaders responded to this new initiative, as indeed to all previous peace proposals, by further acts of aggression against Arab States, by increased aggression against the peoples of the Arab occupied territories and by the unbridled pursuit of their policy of the Zionization of these territories.

Confronted by this deterioration in the Middle East situation and by the determination of the Israeli leaders to extend their aggression and threats to other parts of the Arab world, with the risk of bringing about the much-feared general conflagration, the international community must further intensify and redouble its efforts to end the occupation of the Arab territories and to enable the Palestinian people to exercise to the full their legitimate national rights, including their right to self-determination and their right to return to their land and to create an independent State in Palestine.

We hope that at this fortieth anniversary session, when all nations have reaffirmed so positively their unswerving attachment to the principles of freedom and justice, that this Organization, and particularly the Security Council, will live up to their responsibilities and finally do justice to the Palestinian people in its struggle for the restoration of its inalienable national rights.

Mr. MADAR (Somalia) (interpretation from Arabic): One of the aspects of the challenge facing our commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations is the continuous inscription in the General Assembly's agenda of a number of unresolved issues which have continuously claimed international attention throughout the lifetime of the United Nations. Among those issues, naturally, we find the Middle East question. During the past four decades, the problems of the region have provoked persistent tension and violence, as well as four major wars. Since violence is still rampant and continues to jeopardize international peace and security, we must ask ourselves what lessons we can draw from the

(Mr. Madar, Somalia)

experience of the 40 years that have gone by. How can we apply these lessons to the new efforts which will resolve that perilous situation?

Certainly historic crimes perpetrated against the Palestinian people must be eradicated; we must fulfil the national demands of the Palestinians. The Palestinian people have proved that they will never accept a denial of their existence or of their inalienable right to set up their own State. What is more, there is widespread recognition that their struggle is legitimate. Clearly a just and lasting peace can never be achieved without the full and equal participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in any negotiations to resolve the Middle East question.

It has become clear that peace and security cannot be achieved through expansionist policies, policies of annexation, occupation and aggression which are pursued by Israel against the Palestinian people and the Arab countries. The overwhelming majority of Member States realize that fact. Furthermore, their understanding and concern are reflected in numerous General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

Unfortunately, there is a lack of political will to implement those decisions. Furthermore, there are no significant international repercussions to Israel's breaches of international law and of the objectives and principles of the international Organization. Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) both reinforce the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force. Both call for the restoration of the occupied Arab territories. As we know, Israel's position is reflected in the declaration of total annexation of Holy Jerusalem as well as the Syrian Golan Heights and the attempts gradually to annex

(Mr. Madar, Somalia)

the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. There is strong and widespread condemnation of such practices, which take the form of expanding Israeli settlements and attempts to institutionalize demographic changes and policies of repressive occupation based on intimidation. There is no doubt that all such policies lead to flagrant violations of human rights and the principles of the United Nations Charter and the Fourth Geneva Convention, to which Israel is a party.

(Mr. Madar, Somalia)

There could be no clearer international consensus than that on the fact that the denial of Palestinian rights is the core of the Middle East conflict. In spite of that, Israel's persistence in denying those rights and, indeed, the very existence of the Palestinian people continues to be the main obstacle to peace in the Middle East. The international community no longer harbours any doubts about the motives behind Israel's brutal and unprovoked invasion of Lebanon or its continuing occupation of Lebanese territory. Such acts of aggression have had tragic consequences for peace and security in Lebanon. The aim of that invasion is to obliterate Palestinian nationalism and eliminate the Palestinian people as a national entity.

The arrogance manifest in Israel's disregard of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon was reaffirmed once again in the recent terrorist attack by Israel against Tunisia. The Member States of the United Nation must view with serious concern all attempts aimed at neutralizing United Nations resolutions on Palestinian rights and the violations of international law inherent in such operations.

My country is convinced that terrorism in all its forms, whether committed by individuals or by States, is deplorable and futile. We call on all the parties concerned to put an end to the chain of terror, the victims of which are often innocent bystanders. Nevertheless, it is the responsibility of Israel above all to break the spiral of violence and pave the road to peace.

The framework for a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East has been spelled out in the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, the proposals of the non-aligned countries and the Arab peace plan adopted at Fez. My Government believes that justice and peace in the Middle East could be achieved only on the basis of translating into reality the inalienable

(Mr. Madar, Somalia)

rights of the Palestinian people: the right to return to their homes and properties, with compensation for those who do not wish to return; the right of self-determination; the right to establish their own State in Palestine; and the right to have the Palestine Liberation Organization, their sole, legitimate representative, participate on an equal footing in any negotiations on the solution of the Middle East question.

Israel must withdraw from all the occupied Arab territories, including the Holy City of Jerusalem, which is as sacred to Islam and Christianity as it is to Judaism. We must guarantee the right of all the countries of the region to live within secure and recognized boundaries.

We believe that there is an acute need for the Security Council to exert its responsibility for the maintenance of peace in the Middle East by adopting the necessary measures to implement its decisions on this question. We also urge the Council to formulate specific provisions relating to the national rights of the Palestinians, in accordance with the recommendations of the General Assembly.

My delegation welcomes the mounting support for the convening of an international conference on peace in the Middle East under United Nations auspices. The time has come for such a conference and we hope it will take place as soon as possible. Time does not favour peace in the Middle East. Elements of confrontation, persistent conflict and escalation are nurtured by the atmosphere of bitterness and despair felt and experienced by a new generation of Palestinians inside the occupied territories or born in exile. Such elements are also seen in Israeli obduracy, hatred and intolerance towards the Palestinian people. The search for a peaceful settlement in the Middle East must be undertaken by all the parties concerned with renewed determination and a firm conviction of the futility of incessant violence, as well as a clear understanding of the benefits of peace.

Mr. ERDENECHULUUN (Mongolia): In his report to the General Assembly of 22 October 1985 the Secretary-General noted that

"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)

The reasons for such a state of affairs are well known. They are to be found in the Israeli policy of aggression and expansion against the Arab peoples. The fact remains that, in defiance of numerous resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, Israel continues to occupy Arab lands and is taking further steps to annex them, which leads to a change in the demographic and economic character of those territories. The fact also remains that owing to the inhuman policy of Israel the Palestinians and other Arab people in the occupied territories are deprived of juridical and other protection and become victims of repressive legislation, involving mass arrests, torture, the destruction of houses and the expulsion of people from their homes - acts which constitute gross violations of elementary human rights. Furthermore, the expansion of illegal Israeli settlements has become a daily practice of the occupying forces. The Arab people of Palestine continue to be refugees in their homeland.

Being confident of its impunity, Israel is bent on a policy of terror and violence, as was manifest in the recent barbarous bombing of the headquarters of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in the suburbs of Tunis. That criminal act demonstrated once again that the reckless actions of those in the ruling circles of Israel are fraught with the danger of spreading the conflict to other areas.

Such defiant behaviour by Israel can in no way be divorced from the unlimited support and enormous military and financial assistance which it receives from the United States. It was no accident, therefore, that the General Assembly at its last session rightly pointed out that

(Mr. Erdenechuluun, Mongolia)

"the agreements on strategic co-operation between the United States of America and Israel signed on 30 November 1981, together with the recent accords concluded in that context, would encourage Israel to pursue its aggressive and expansionist policies and practices". (resolution 39/146 A, para. 10)

One may add here that the American-Israeli "strategic co-operation" should also be seen in the wider context of the United States "vital interests" in that part of the world.

It is my Government's firm belief that a just and lasting solution to the Middle East problem can and must be achieved by peaceful means, taking due account of the interests of all the countries of the region, and that those means must be comprehensive in nature. The Middle East process has convincingly demonstrated that the policy of separate deals or unilateral settlements would not succeed.

(Mr. Erdenechuluun, Mongolia)

It is becoming increasingly urgent for all States to act in unison, according to United Nations resolutions, and put effective pressure on Israel in order not to allow it any longer to defy the demands of the world community. My country is guided by the spirit and letter of the relevant United Nations resolutions and does not maintain diplomatic, military or economic ties with Israel.

My delegation reaffirms its unfaltering position that a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East problem should be based on the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from all the Arab territories occupied by it since 1967, including eastern Jerusalem, and the guaranteeing of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to establish a State of their own, and the right of all States of the region to secure an independent existence and development.

We hold the view that a proper setting for a comprehensive settlement would be an international conference on the Middle East, with the participation of all the parties to the conflict, including the PLO, the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing.

There is no doubt that the United Nations, which has been involved in this issue since the early days of its existence, has an important role to play in the search for a lasting solution to the problem.

Mr. A. K. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh): The United Nations has since its inception devoted more time and energy to the problem of the Middle East than to any other international issue. No other issue in contemporary history has been discussed so intensively and deliberated upon so comprehensively. Yet, as the Secretary-General observes in his current report,

"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)

(Mr. A. K. Chowdhury, Bangladesh)

The absence of peace in the region must of necessity be taken to be a grave threat to international peace and security, for it has given rise in the recent past to five destructive and inconclusive wars. Accordingly, we are once again called upon to pronounce ourselves on the agenda item entitled "The situation in the Middle East", because without such consideration a sense of urgency in seeking a peaceful settlement could very well be lost, causing the persistent deadlock in the initiation of a peace process to culminate in yet another violent conflagration. It is therefore imperative that the Assembly remain alive to the developments in the region, in an effort to continue its endeavours to seek an enduring resolution of the problem.

The Middle East problem is a direct consequence of the historic injustice of implanting the State of Israel in the territory of Palestine, which is situated at the heart of the Arab world. While the creation of Israel caused some alien people to return from a so-called diaspora, it sparked off another kind of diaspora for the Palestinian people, who were ruthlessly uprooted from their homeland where they had lived for centuries. What we are faced with today is an utterly unjust situation, created by the unabated policy of aggression, occupation and expansionism perpetrated by Israel. Israel has committed aggression against all its neighbours; its policies have been demonstrated to be expansionist; and it persists in the illegal occupation of Arab and Palestinian territories. People in the occupied territories have been subjected to the worst form of persecution and repression.

Despite repeated calls by the General Assembly and the Security Council, Israel has refused to vacate the occupied territories. All efforts to restore justice to the suffering Palestinian people have been rejected by Israel, in open defiance of a series of condemnations by the international community. In the face of an ever-growing consensus in favour of the Arab and Palestinian cause, Israel has recently intensified its policy of aggression, illegal settlement and even

(Mr. A. K. Chowdhury, Bangladesh)

annexation. It has sought to change the status of occupied territories, particularly the Holy City of Jerusalem. Israel thrives in its arrogance of power, backed by its allies and accomplices, and feels secure in defying the international will.

It has been universally recognized that the question of Palestine remains the core of the problem in the Middle East. Consequently, it is not plausible to envisage a settlement without the restoration to the Palestinian people of their inalienable right to nationhood - a cause that has received absolutely universal support. But Israel's intransigence in refusing to accept that reality persists. On the contrary, it continues to pursue a ruthless design to liquidate the Palestinian people and, in particular, their sole and legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

Israel's barbarity and repression in the occupied territories targeted against the Palestinians can serve only as glaring instances of State terrorism. It should be blatantly obvious to Israel, and it defies comprehension why, apparently, it has not been, that no amount of brute force can match the heroic spirit of freedom of the Palestinian people and that the PLO, with its wide recognition on the international plane, cannot possibly be silenced. Therefore, the sooner such realization dawns on Israel, the better is the prospect for peace in the Middle East. My delegation dwelt at length a few days ago on the question of Palestine in order to emphasize that any comprehensive solution would have to take full account of the cause of the Palestinians.

A number of proposals aimed at solving the Middle East problem have been put forward in recent years by individual countries or groups of countries, the most prominent one being the Arab peace plan, adopted by the 12th Arab Summit Conference at Fez on 9 September 1982. My delegation supports the validity of the proposal as a sound basis for the restoration of peace in the region. While the Arab peace plan received the Assembly's endorsement as

(Mr. A. K. Chowdhury, Bangladesh)

"an important contribution towards the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace" (resolution 39/146 A, para. 4), the other proposals put forward by the two super-Powers failed to get off the ground, as they were, by definition, restrictive, in the sense that they could not go beyond the dictates of the strategic national interests of those Powers.

However, we share the perception of the Secretary-General that

"Although those proposals for various reasons are so far unacceptable to one or another of the parties concerned, they all contain important elements that could contribute to the formulation of a common approach." (A/40/779 and Corr.1, para. 38)*

*Mr. Sarré (Senegal), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. A. K. Chowdhury, Bangladesh)

In this connection, we would like to note that the recent peace initiative of King Hussein of Jordan, which is based on an agreement between him and the PLO Chairman, assumes particular significance in that it emanates from the parties directly involved in the conflict.

Bangladesh has always reiterated its firm conviction that any meaningful effort to bring peace to the region must be based on a comprehensive solution of the problem. Peace being indivisible, it cannot be achieved through the perpetuation of an injustice. What is imperative is to harmonize the interests and rights of all parties through an impartial and rational approach. We believe such an approach could best be pursued in the context of the proposed international peace conference on the Middle East. We support in this connection the view expressed by the Secretary-General in his report that the role of the United Nations, and particularly of the Security Council, needs to be revitalized. There are substantive reasons for such a move.

Firstly, recent developments demonstrate the sterility of the half-hearted peace efforts of the major Powers. Such efforts are further vitiated by the lack of a comprehensive approach. Secondly, the United Nations has a long standing peace-keeping record in the Middle East. The United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) and the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization in Palestine (UNTSO) are playing indispensable roles. The work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) continues to be invaluable. The critical nature of United Nations involvement in the Middle East could hardly be questioned. Thirdly, the United Nations provides a readily available forum where a negotiation process could be set in motion, if necessary, through interlocutors at an initial stage.

(Mr. A. K. Chowdhury, Bangladesh)

For more than three decades, the international community has been witnessing the sufferings of millions in the Middle East, in particular of the Palestinians, a nation dispossessed, whose cause remains unquestionably the core issue. The international community has also identified the recalcitrant party and repeatedly condemned its dastardly acts. The broad modalities of a peace process have also been identified. Yet there is no real progress towards peace in the Middle East, which seems to evoke a deep sense of dismay and frustration, particularly on this auspicious occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations when we are engaged in a renewed quest for the relevance of this world body in the cause of peace. A positive move towards a genuine process of negotiation is urgently required, and to this end we must strive. Our decisive action would have to go beyond the ritualistic pronouncements that we have made umpteen times over the years so that the much-needed peace process could be set in motion in the Middle East.

Mr. NOWORYTA (Poland): It is with ever-growing concern that we have to state once again today that the Middle East conflict, with the Palestinian problem at its heart, remains one of the most dangerous and persistent sources of tension in the world, not only destabilizing the situation in the region but also endangering international peace and security. Consequently, the solution of this conflict is vital to all the parties directly concerned and, therefore, in the interest of all nations.

Poland's position concerning the settlement of the Middle East conflict, expressed on numerous occasions in various forums, including, of course, the General Assembly, boils down to our deep conviction that an effective solution must meet three basic criteria, namely, universality, justice and durability. Experience has shown that any solutions failing to take fully into consideration those criteria fully into consideration are doomed to failure.

(Mr. Noworyta, Poland)

The correctness of this assessment has been best borne out by the statement of the Secretary-General at the inauguration of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held in 1983 in Geneva, in which he said inter alia:

"The continuing and persistent efforts of the Organization have, over the years, produced at least a consensus on the fundamental elements required for a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East problem. In order to reconcile the aspirations and vital interests of all the parties concerned, such a settlement must meet the following conditions: the withdrawal of Israeli forces from occupied territories; respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force; and finally, a just settlement of the Palestinian problem based on the recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including self-determination." (A/CONF.114/42, annex I, para. 7)

It is our considered opinion that the main obstacle to the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East is the continuing occupation by Israel of Arab lands seized during the hostilities of 1967 and its prevention of the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

The annexation of East Jerusalem, the extension of Israeli legislation, jurisdiction and administration to the Syrian Golan Heights, the invasion of Lebanon and subsequent constant interference in its internal affairs, have been hard evidence of the reprehensible and counter-productive Israeli policy of expansionism and violence, based upon its own military might and seemingly invulnerable behind the shield of Israel's strategic alliance with the United States.

(Mr. Noworyta, Poland)

Needless to say, this policy has been conducted in complete disdain for the principles of international law and the numerous relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

It suffices to recall the brutal and totally unjustifiable bombing of the headquarters of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) at Borj Cedria, in the suburbs of Tunis, on 1 October, and the aerial incident over the territory of Syria on 19 November, to make one realize that this disdain has been extended also to General Assembly resolution 39/146, despite the fact that it expresses the position of the overwhelming majority of the world community and points out a just basis for a peaceful settlement of the Middle East conflict taking into account the interests of all the parties concerned.

Inconsistent with both the letter and spirit of this resolution were the specific attempts made during the past year to impose partial solutions or unilateral settlements. In the situation prevailing in the Middle East such solutions cannot be just and lasting. Similarly, any attempts to regulate the problem from a position of strength are bound to fail, as the fiasco - so costly in terms of human losses and material destruction - of Israel's invasion of Lebanon has eloquently demonstrated.

(Mr. Noworyta, Poland)

Unfortunately this lesson seems to have taught Israel nothing, as it stubbornly persists in its old reliance on violence, dangerous as it is for everybody, including Israel itself.

Even more dangerous are the attempts of an outside Power to use the situation in the Middle East, which it was actually instrumental in bringing about by its uncompromising, unconditional support for Israel, in order to subordinate the region to its own selfish strategic interests, comprehensively to reinforce its position in the Arab world, including through its enhanced military presence, and to secure for itself the controlling share in any negotiating process relating to the Middle East conflict with a view to being able to direct it in accordance with its own interests and those of Israel.

Efforts to paint a bleak picture of chances for a comprehensive solution on the international plane and under the auspices of the United Nations are equally aimed at paving the way for separatist formulae, deepening inter-Arab divergencies and sowing discord within the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

Yet, such a comprehensive peaceful settlement, just and durable, is within reach. All its necessary premises are there: numerous resolutions of the United Nations and of other international bodies, including the International Conference on the Question of Palestine and the Arab Summit Conference at Fez, and a number of specific proposals on the principles and modalities of the peace-making process, including in particular the important Soviet proposal of 29 July 1984. The most practical way indeed of reaching such a settlement would be, in our opinion, an international conference on the Middle East with the participation of all parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. That we certainly are not isolated in

(Mr. Noworyta, Poland)

in our thinking can best be seen from the letter of the President of the Security Council of 26 February 1985 to the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly resolution 39/49 D, stating inter alia that it was clear from the consultations held by the President with all members of the Council:

"that almost all members are in favour of the principle of holding such a conference." (A/40/168-S/17014, p. 3)

and that:

"Many of these members feel that it should be convened as early as possible;" (ibid).

With regard to substance, we believe the following questions to be of fundamental importance, although the list is not necessarily exhaustive: return of all the Arab territories occupied by Israel, including the eastern part of Jerusalem, in accordance with the principle of the inadmissibility of acquisition of territory through aggression; full and speedy exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and to the establishment of their own independent State; and respect for the right of all States of the region, including the State of Israel, to a safe and peaceful existence within recognized international borders. Of great importance in efforts to reach a peaceful negotiated solution would also be Soviet-United States co-operation.

It would be really redundant to reaffirm here time and again that the whole issue of the settlement of the Middle East conflict hinges on the question of Palestine. Palestine was at the root of the conflict when it broke out in 1948, and 37 years later it is still of key importance for the whole peace effort. Unfortunately, while there seems to be virtually universal - with probably just two exceptions - recognition of this fact, at the same time the sombre assessment of the situation by the Secretary-General two years ago when he said that:

(Mr. Noworyta, Poland)

"36 years after the United Nations first addressed this problem, I regret to say that we are no nearer to a solution than we were then"

has lost none of its depressing validity.

The obvious political and strategic complexities of this issue are being almost routinely compounded by Israel's iron-fisted rule in the occupied territories, by creeping annexation through the steady expansion of illegal Israeli settlements, by a policy of faits accomplis, by attempts to portray this question of crucial importance as a mere demographical problem.

Both in bilateral contacts and in the international arena, Poland consistently supports the legitimate struggle of the Arab nation of Palestine for the restoration of its inalienable national rights. We similarly recognize the leading representative role of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Consequently, its representation in Poland enjoys full diplomatic status. We do not recognize any legislative or administrative measures of the Israeli authorities in the occupied territories, and consider them null and void ab initio.

We wish to stress the urgent nature of the question of Palestine not only because of its awesome political complexity and direct impact on the notoriously volatile and explosive situation in the Middle East but also because of its tragic human dimension. Similarly, numerous demographical and economic changes which are difficult to reverse are being forcibly induced in the occupied territories, making a solution even harder to find.

We are deeply convinced that the only rational and effective way of bringing a just and durable peace to the long-suffering region of the Middle East is through a collective effort by all the parties concerned, with the assistance of the world at large under the auspices of the United Nations. Any attempts in a different

(Mr. Noworyta, Poland)

direction would be just an exercise in futility, a waste of precious time, a case of political and moral dishonesty. Advocating consistently as we do that such a collective effort must be made, we are, in the meantime, contributing tangibly to the maintenance of peace, precarious as it may be, in the area by our participation in the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, and have done so ever since its inception in 1974.

Mr. DIATTA (Niger) (interpretation from French): In establishing the United Nations, whose fortieth anniversary we have celebrated at this session, the international community had as one of its objectives not only to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war but also to introduce morality into inter-State relations, making the inadmissibility of the use or threat of force against the territorial integrity or independence of any State a hallowed principle.

The Middle East, a region that through the ages has so greatly contributed to the flowering of universal philosophical, cultural and religious values, has unfortunately become the theatre in which that principle has been blatantly and overtly flouted by a State - and herein lies the full irony - that is a pure product of the United Nations. I am referring to the State of Israel. If the Middle East has become the zone of instability and the hotbed of tensions and confrontations that it is today, we must admit and recognise that it is because of Israel's policy of aggression and expansion, the chief aim of which is to impede the realization of the basic and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the denial of which is a root cause of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

By its repeated acts of aggression against the peoples of the region Israel has managed to occupy illegally all of Palestine, the Syrian Golan Heights and southern Lebanon. It has also annexed the Holy City of Jerusalem and made it into its capital, contrary to the will of the international community.

Not content with having committed those acts of aggression and expansionism, Israel, with the most calculated cynicism, has implemented a Machiavellian policy designed to terrorize the indigenous populations and to impose its laws and jurisdiction within the occupied territories. The reports of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and of the Commission on Human Rights have kept us exhaustively and regularly informed on all Israel's illicit practices in the occupied territories. My delegation wishes to reiterate

(Mr. Diatta, Niger)

its most firm and vigorous condemnation of those deliberate violations of human rights.

In his statement in the general debate at this session, my country's Minister for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation stated:

"The situation in the Middle East is, like the problem of Namibia, another example of a challenge that we must face in order to restore our Organization's authority and credibility." (A/40/PV.28, p. 66)

Indeed, since its earliest years the United Nations has been addressing the situation prevailing in the Middle East. It has had to establish peace-keeping operations to moderate the climate of hostility and dispatch various missions of mediation in the search for a peaceful settlement of the problem. All those initiatives have been duly appreciated; nevertheless we must observe that the situation is still unstable, not to say explosive. If no peace process has so far emerged, it is because of Israel's intransigence and its arrogance towards our Organization in refusing to respect the relevant resolutions. It is this Israeli attitude that constitutes the challenge and it is for our Organization, which certainly has a great responsibility concerning the maintenance of peace and stability in the region, to take up the challenge and to meet it, lest it finds itself confronted with a situation fraught with incalculable dangers not only for the region but for international peace and security.

Israel has chosen to place itself above international law on the pretext of safeguarding its own security, whereas its real objective is to do all it can to prevent the Palestinians from recovering their national rights. The destruction a few weeks ago of the headquarters of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), in violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Tunisia, a friendly country whose wise and constructive policy and proved dedication to the ideals of

(Mr. Diatta, Niger)

the United Nations are well known, was the latest example of Israel's sinister designs against the Palestinian people and its stubborn rejection of the commonly accepted international rules governing relations among States.

My delegation has read with great care the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Middle East. In this connection we wish to thank him and to pay him a well-deserved tribute for all the efforts he has made, together with the parties to the Middle East conflict and other interested parties, in seeking a peaceful settlement of the conflict, including the convening of an international conference, in accordance with the recommendation of the General Assembly. We also agree with the analysis in his report when he says that the conflict can ultimately be fully resolved only by a comprehensive settlement covering all its aspects and involving all the parties concerned, and that no lasting settlement in the area is possible without the support of the major Powers.

Indeed, my country, which has always been of the view that the question of Palestine is the core of the Israeli-Arab conflict, believes that any settlement that does not take into account Palestinian realities and the Palestinian people's legitimate aspirations cannot be comprehensive, just and lasting. It is for that reason that we appeal to the great Powers to show the realism and political will necessary to bring Israel to understand that no peace process can succeed in the region until it recognizes the right of the Palestinian people to return to their homeland, their right to self-determination and their right to establish an independent, national State. It is also important that they exert all the pressure they can upon Israel to make it stop its policy of aggression and withdraw all its troops unconditionally from the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, including Jerusalem.

(Mr. Diatta, Niger)

My delegation wishes to reaffirm my country's firm support for the just cause of the Arab and Palestinian peoples, first because we condemn expansionism and hegemonism whatever their origin, secondly because we have made respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of every State the cornerstone of our foreign policy, and lastly because we believe that the many links of friendship and co-operation we maintain with all the Arab countries and with the Palestinian people make it our duty to stand side by side with them when they fall victim to the criminal actions of a State that has distinguished itself by a policy totally geared to the violation of the principles of international law and the rules governing inter-State relations.

We know that their populations, which have suffered so much from Israel's misdeeds, aspire only to peace, and we venture to hope that that the international conference on the Middle East to which we so keenly look forward will enable them to enjoy a new era of stability and that the Palestinian people will at last receive justice.

Mr. RACZ (Hungary): In his statement in the General Assembly earlier in this session my Minister for Foreign Affairs had the following to say with regard to the Middle East:

"With the continuing Israeli occupation of territories of several Arab countries, the denial of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the lack of any solution to the problem of Lebanon and the long-drawn-out Iraqi-Iranian war, the Middle East continues to be a most explosive region of the world, fraught with the gravest danger of conflict. That situation poses a threat not only to the peoples living in the region but also to the cause of universal peace." (A/40/PV.16, p. 46)

(Mr. Racz, Hungary)

Because of the serious threat to international peace and security which the unsolved problems of the Middle East represent, the General Assembly is yet again assessing developments to review the situation and identify the obstacles to a solution.

I should like to begin my remarks with a review of the obstacles. In our view, the main obstacle to the solution of the Middle East problems continues to be the Israeli policy of refusal - refusal to withdraw from the occupied territories and refusal to engage in the search for a comprehensive solution.

(Mr. Racz, Hungary)

As regards the continued occupation, that is the single most important source of tension. It flies in the face of well-established norms of international law, especially the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, sets countries in the region against one another and makes the oppressed people fight a just struggle against the occupying forces. And how do the occupiers react to this just fight against them? With "administrative detention", deportation of persons considered a "threat to security", the imposition of curfews and the strengthening of censorship - in short, with repressive measures against the civilian population, often in contravention of the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 1949. In addition to the repressive measures, the economic policy of the Israelis makes life difficult for the Palestinians in the occupied territories, so that ever more of them are obliged to seek work in Israel.

While there are strong and continuous attempts by both administrative and economic means to get rid of the Palestinians, the establishment of illegal Jewish settlements continues, thereby slowly changing the demographic composition of the occupied territories.

Those illegal measures must be stopped, not only because they are contrary to international law but also because they contribute to violence and tension.

Lebanon's full sovereignty over its entire territory has still not been restored and there are recurring Israeli intrusions into Lebanon to "search and destroy" so-called terrorists.

The continued tension in and occupation of Arab lands make it necessary for the United Nations to maintain, at great cost, three peace-keeping operations in the area: the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the United Nations Truce Supervision

(Mr. Racz, Hungary)

Organization in Palestine (UNTSO). While we give credit to the troop contributors and especially to the soldiers, who are serving under difficult and sometimes dangerous conditions, we regret the fact that so long after their introduction into the area it is still necessary for the United Nations to maintain those peace-keeping forces.

Another element which is a cause of concern is the situation of the Palestine refugees.

All these unsolved problems cry out for a settlement, not only in the interest of the peoples of the region but in the interest of peace in general. In spite of all the difficulties encountered, we still believe that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the problems in the Middle East can be found. We continue to maintain that the best way of arriving at a solution is through the convening of an international conference on the Middle East, with the participation on an equal footing of all the interested parties, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

We recognize that some still oppose the idea of such a conference or attach many pre-conditions to it. Regardless of those difficulties we must not give up the idea of an international conference, because in our view it offers the only viable road to peace. Since there are many parties to the conflict and it involves complex and interrelated issues, unilateral or one-sided approaches cannot work. If a solution is to be found it must take into account the legitimate interests of all the parties involved.

There are elements which are supported by the international community and could serve as a basis for an eventual agreement. These are: the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied territories, including Jerusalem; respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political

(Mr. Racz, Hungary)

independence of all the States in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries; and a satisfactory solution of the Palestinian problem, based on recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and the right to establish their own independent State.

Naturally, there are different views and interpretations as to what precisely those elements and principles mean and how they should be achieved. But this would be precisely the goal of the talks and negotiations between the parties - to clarify points in order to arrive at a common understanding.

We realize that we are still far from such an advanced stage in the diplomatic process, but there are some hopeful signs. Support for an international conference is growing and there have been indications of flexibility as regards the negotiating process. There is a growing sense of urgency and recognition of the dangers that a further delay could entail for the region and beyond. This should make it possible, as it is certainly necessary, for a new and determined effort to be made, despite the existing difficulties, to create the necessary conditions for a comprehensive, just and lasting solution.

Mr. MARDOVICH (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): For several decades this agenda item on the situation in the Middle East has been in the forefront of the most burning issues discussed in the United Nations. A number of important and significant documents have been adopted stating the causes of the conflict and suggesting possible solutions. However, the embers of tension in the Middle East are still glowing, the political and social situation in the region is still becoming increasingly cataclysmic, the knot of the Middle East problem is being tied even tighter, and there are new barriers arising on the path to normalization of the situation in the region.

(Mr. Mardovich, Byelorussian SSR)

Today one thing is clearer than ever before. The party that is mainly responsible for the tragedy in the Middle East is Israel, with its policy of aggression and expansionism directed against the Arab States, and its broad-ranging campaign of terror and repression against the Arab population in the occupied Arab territories.

The Arabs have been deprived of part of the lands that belong to them, where a network of Israeli paramilitary settlements has been set up with the aim of consolidating the results of aggression. Moreover, as is noted in the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People submitted to this session of the General Assembly,

"the continuing momentum towards settlement of the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories was accompanied by measures designed to stifle all forms of political, cultural, social and economic expression of the Palestinian people, as well as violence, harassment and provocation of Palestinians by armed Israeli settlers, in an apparent effort to drive the Palestinians out of their land and facilitate its eventual annexation by Israel." (A/40/35, para. 20)

Tel Aviv has not abandoned the Golan Heights or its claims to Lebanese territory. Under cover of the so-called security zone in southern Lebanon, Israel continues to keep for itself a bridgehead so that it can encroach on the sovereignty and independence of the Lebanese State. It is quite clear that on its own Israel would not have dared, and indeed would have been physically unable, to engage in such expansionism, pitting itself against virtually the entire region.

And yet Israel lacks none of the resources needed for its military adventures or political cover in the United Nations. They are provided gratis in an unending stream by Washington. As has been noted by The Financial Times,

(Mr. Mardovich, Byelorussian SSR)

"In the area of defence, the United States itself gets a greater return from each dollar invested in Israel than from any other investment, and, moreover, it is not risking the life of a single American".

It could not be put more plainly than that, as they say.

This all shows that in the past few years there has been an intensification of the imperialist policy of aggression and hegemonism in the Arab world. The goal is to establish imperialist domination in the region, to include it in aggressive strategic plans and to impose military and political diktat on the Arabs, to strike a blow against progressive Arab régimes, to block the attainment of a comprehensive, just and lasting Middle East settlement, and to drag the Arabs into separatist deals with the aggressor that are advantageous to imperialism but dangerous and demeaning for them.

Israel, relying on foreign support, is intensifying its policy of State terrorism against Arab States and peoples, flagrantly flouting the norms of international law, and disregarding the decisions of the Security Council.

The correctness of the description of Israel's aggressive expansionist policy given in resolution 39/146 is confirmed by Israel's recent air strike and bombing of the headquarters of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in Tunis, which led to the loss of a large number of lives. By this barbarous attack on the territorial integrity of a sovereign State, Israel has shown once again that, as was emphasized in that General Assembly resolution, it is not a peace-loving State and that it continues to violate its commitments under the United Nations Charter.

Events in the Middle East show that the path of separatist deals leads not to a real settlement of the Middle East problem but to further complications and barriers to the establishment of peace in that region. The aim of this policy is to help Israel keep the fruits of aggression, to force the Arabs to enter into

(Mr. Marčovich, Byelorussian SSR)

direct negotiations with Tel Aviv, and to agree to one-sided conditions and to deprive the Palestinians of their legal right to statehood.

The only real alternative, the only possible alternative to such a policy is a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East, which can be achieved only through the joint efforts of all interested parties, including the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The forum for such efforts should be the International Conference on the Middle East, the convening of which has been proposed by the Soviet Union. That idea has been broadly endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly and other international forums.

The just cause of the Arab peoples is consistently supported by the international community, as can be seen from the activities of the United Nations and other international organizations.

As for the Soviet Union and other States of the socialist community, they have consistently and unwaveringly pursued a policy of putting an end to Israeli aggression, satisfying the just demands and rights of the Arabs while at the same time, of course, ensuring the security of all the States of the region.

The proposals of the Soviet Union on a Middle East settlement of 29 July 1984 summarize the initiatives of the USSR at various stages in the evolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. They outline the principles of and the paths to the attainment of a Middle East settlement. The constructive position of the socialist countries on a Middle East settlement was confirmed by them once again at the recent top-level meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty, held in Sofia. The joint Declaration of the participants in that meeting emphasized once again that a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement in the Middle East can be achieved only through the collective efforts of all interested parties on the basis of the complete withdrawal of Israeli troops from all Arab

(Mr. Harčovich, Byelorussian SSR)

territories occupied since 1967, the implementation of the legal rights of the Arab people of Palestine, including their right to self-determination and the establishment of their own independent State, and guarantees the right of all the peoples of the region to independent existence and development. Participants in that meeting urged that an international conference on the Middle East with the participation of all interested parties, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, should be convened under United Nations auspices.

The solution of the Middle East problem would be promoted by the strengthening of the unity of the Arab countries and the Palestinian movement.

We believe that, at this session, the General Assembly should confirm its position of principle and its approach to the solution of the Middle East crisis, and strongly and specifically condemn those preventing a settlement and outline additional measures to reduce tension in that explosive situation. We therefore once again call on all parties to the conflict to proceed by soberly taking account of the legitimate interests and rights of one another, and we would ask all other States not to prevent a solution but to help establish a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Mr. PHILIPPE (Luxembourg) (interpretation from French): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 10 States members of the European Community, Spain and Portugal.

The situation in the Middle East continues to be of great concern. The various conflicts which rage in the region have a tendency to persist, that is very dangerous for international peace and security and places a heavy burden on the suffering people. Each year that passes without any tangible progress being made further complicates the situation. In fact, acts of violence and terrorism tend to escalate, thus further exacerbating feelings of hostility.

The time has come for that trend to be reversed and for significant progress to be made in the Israeli-Arab conflict, in the conflict between Iran and Iraq and in the situation of tension and violence which continues to disrupt Lebanon.

The clashes in Lebanon which, since 1975, have resulted in severe hardships for the population of that country, are still taking place, as for instance, shown by the fighting in Beirut during the past few days. Despite the appeals made recently by the Security Council and by the Secretary-General for an end to the violence affecting the civilian population, acts of violence and terrorism have continued.

We are greatly concerned by these developments and we appeal to all the parties concerned, both inside and outside Lebanon, to ensure that national reconciliation and the establishment of a lasting, balanced situation, including protection of Lebanon's sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity and independence, can take place.

We also feel that, in keeping with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, there should be a complete withdrawal of the Israeli forces, as well as all other forces not in that country at the request of the Lebanese Government. Furthermore, the United Nations peace-keeping and observation operations in Lebanon,

(Mr. Philippe, Luxembourg)

which reflect in the field the international community's commitment to Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity, deserve to be fully respected by all. In any event, they receive the continuing support of the countries members of the European Community and Spain and Portugal. We wish to remind the Assembly of the importance we attach to full application of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). We call on all parties to give every possible assistance to these United Nations contingents and we hope that conditions will obtain before long which will allow the Force fully to carry out its duties and to play a more effective role, especially by deploying as far as the international border.

We continue to be deeply concerned over the humanitarian situation in Lebanon and once again we insist on the need for generally recognized humanitarian principles to be strictly respected. We contribute to humanitarian assistance operations and we should like to reiterate our wish that competent international organizations and non-governmental organizations should be allowed to give aid to the victimized populations without hindrance, as stressed in Security Council resolution 564 (1985).

We keenly appreciate the relief work done by different international agencies in Lebanon in extremely difficult conditions. We ask all parties to co-operate with these agencies, as well as with UNIFIL, which has been asked by the Security Council to undertake, on an interim basis additional important tasks in the humanitarian and administrative areas. We wish to pay a tribute to UNIFIL which strives to maintain, in especially dangerous circumstances, acceptable living conditions for the civilian population in the zone of operations.

Lastly, we would like to take this opportunity to appeal for the unconditional release as rapidly as possible of all persons held hostage in Lebanon.

(Mr. Philippe, Luxembourg)

A few days ago, from this rostrum, we stated our views on the question of Palestine, which is at the heart of the Israeli-Arab conflict and the solution of which is an essential element of any comprehensive settlement. Without wishing to go into all the details, may I be permitted once again to insist on the fact that in our view any settlement of this complex question must be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and include the right to exist and the right to security of all States of the region, including Israel, justice for all the peoples of the region and the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people with all that that implies. These principles apply to all the parties concerned, therefore also to the Palestinian people and the PLO, which should participate in the negotiation.

A process of negotiation presupposes mutual recognition of the existence and rights of the parties to the conflict.

Moreover, any satisfactory solution requires that the principles of the non-use of force and the non-acquisition of territories by force should be respected by all.

Pursuant to Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), Israel must end its territorial occupation maintained since 1967. In the meantime, the provisions of the 1907 Hague Convention and the Fourth Geneva Convention are clearly applicable to those territories.

Israel's policy in the eastern part of Jerusalem and on the Golan Heights is contrary to international law and the decisions taken in the context of that policy should therefore be deemed null and void.

Further, we believe that acts of violence and terrorism only compound the cycle of violence and hinder current efforts to arrive at a peaceful settlement of the problems of the region.

(Mr. Philippe, Luxembourg)

Full implementation by all parties of resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as well as respect for the principles which we have just mentioned, are in our view essential to a satisfactory solution of the Israeli-Arab conflict and we hope that every effort will be made to enable the action taken by the King of Jordan and the Jordan-Palestinian agreement of 11 February, as well as any other encouraging developments, to bear fruit.

Lastly, we wish to reaffirm our deep concern over the sufferings of Palestinian civilians as well as our wish that the competent international organizations may lend them support without hindrance.

Unfortunately, another conflict, which is now entering its sixth year and is probably the most costly in human lives and material destruction, is causing turmoil in the Middle East. The escalation of military activity against populations and civilian targets and the serious consequences of the conflict between Iran and Iraq on regional stability and the economy of both countries cannot be tolerated and makes a negotiated solution more necessary and urgent than ever.

The resumption of military operations against civilian targets is a serious development. We wish to appeal to the parties to abide by the commitment to refrain from bombing civilian targets entered into in June 1984 under the auspices of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

(Mr. Philippe, Luxembourg)

We are especially concerned over the conclusions set forth in the report of the medical expert designated by the Secretary-General, that chemical weapons were used in March 1985 against Iranian soldiers during the hostilities between the two countries. We categorically condemn the use of chemical weapons, and we hope that they will not be used again in that conflict or in any other. We call on the two parties to abide strictly by the 1925 Geneva Protocol, which prohibits the use of chemical weapons in warfare, and to abide strictly, in general, by the principles and provisions of international humanitarian law applicable to armed conflicts, particularly in the treatment of prisoners of war. In this context, we take note of the report of the mission dispatched by the Secretary-General to the two countries.

We also emphasize that we attach importance to freedom of navigation and commerce in international waters. We believe it our duty to insist on respect for international conventions and other rules of international law in this sphere, particularly those pertaining to the security of civil aviation and maritime routes.

Given the enormous loss of life among civilians and the wide damage to the economy of the two countries, we appeal once again to Iran and Iraq to agree on an immediate cease-fire and to undertake without delay negotiations to seek a solution, in keeping with United Nations decisions, that will be honourable for both parties. A number of intermediaries have offered their good offices to that end. We hope that these efforts will continue.

In particular, we express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for the constant efforts he has made to ensure the restoration of peace, and we are ready to lend him our support.

(Mr. Philippe, Luxembourg)

In keeping with our consistent attitude of support for all efforts to end this conflict, we welcome the recent efforts of the countries members of the Gulf Co-operation Council, and we hope that the parties concerned will show the openmindedness necessary to stop the hostilities and thereby improve the lot of these sorely tried peoples.

We are aware that the problems of the Middle East are so complex that they do not lend themselves to quick or easy solutions. Nevertheless, we remain convinced that these problems can and should be overcome without the need to resort to force. Now, more than ever before, we must spare no effort, we must take every opportunity, to come closer to our goal: peace in the Middle East. We remain ready to make our contribution to that end.

Mr. ZAKARIYYA (Maldives): Peace in the Middle East has eluded us, and eluded us for a long time. With the spill-over of the problem during the years, peace in the region appears perhaps more elusive than ever before. Yet the international community has continued, and still continues, with ever more determination, to explore and exploit all possible avenues to peace. But all its efforts have been foiled and frustrated by Israel. The United Nations has repeatedly condemned Israel for its wanton acts of aggression against its neighbours, for sabotaging peace initiatives, for its flagrant violations of human rights and for its continued expansionist policy. Nevertheless, Israel persists in its abominable aggressive policy, with impunity and intransigence, rejecting all blueprints for a just and lasting peace in the region.

The Palestinians and other Arabs have repeatedly proclaimed their willingness to resolve the problem on a just and equitable basis. But not the Israelis. Justice, it seems to my delegation, is what the aggressor does not like in the peace proposals. Justice is what the stronger evades in the peace plans, because it is intent on establishing negative peace in the region. Negative peace is the

(Mr. Zakariyya, Maldives)

absence of tension and conflict - which, in fact, is superficial peace. It also lacks durability since it does not embody the element of justice. Israel does not advocate positive peace, or, rather, is afraid to favour positive peace because justice is fundamental to such peace. But should justice be in the interest of the stronger? And could the stronger achieve peace devoid of justice?

We, the international community, need not toil to seek answers to those questions. The pages of history teem with express incidents which demonstrate that no peaceful settlement could ever be achieved under such false perspectives. Israel clearly is the aggressor. It is inclined to thrive on force, defying the norms and rules of international behaviour. It has no regard for such standards because they are based on the principles of fair play and justice. It rejects all these peace plans which revolve around moral principles. Its rejections doubtless hide cowardice behind a facade of obduracy and obstinacy.

The Arabs, especially the Palestinians, have suffered enough, and long enough. Israel has inflicted on them unspeakable and untold destruction and devastation. It is most frustrating to note that it is allowed to commit those barbaric and brutal crimes against the Palestinians and other Arabs in its neighbourhood and beyond. It is equally frustrating to note that those acts are condoned to such an extent that Israel takes pride in them. Moreover, it is unnecessary to state that those who share the pride should bear the responsibility for those acts. The international community seems to be helpless to prevent the aggressor from perpetrating debilitating and devastating blows against its neighbours. The reasons are clear. None the less, the people of the region deserve an opportunity to decide their own fate. Let us all give them this opportunity in good heart. Let us all give them what they have awaited for so long. To do them justice, they deserve it - just as every one of us expects justice from others.

(Mr. Zakariyya, Maldives)

My delegation does not wish to recount the Israeli crimes committed against the Palestinians and other, neighbouring Arabs. Such an exercise does not teach Israel a lesson, as it does not realize that every such crime entangles it more in the problem of its own security. Thus, Israel is like a burned child that does not learn to dread fire.

(Mr. Zakariyya, Maldives)

At this juncture, I would ask: why did Israel mount a "Peace for Galilee" operation? Why did Israel invade Lebanon? And why does Israel continue to annex and occupy by force the lands of its neighbours in violation of international law? Have those acts brought any peace to the region? Have they removed those factors which Israel claimed constituted a threat to its security? Can there be a peace that is in the interest of the stronger? Is a just solution possible which favours Israel and benefits only the Israelis? No - there is an inherent contradiction in any such solution; a contradiction that negates the principles of international conduct and the very principles this Organization stands for.

United Nations General Assembly resolutions have asserted that the crux of the Middle East problem is the Palestine issue and that there can be no peace in the region unless the plight of the Palestinians is attended to. An increasing number of resolutions have been passed by this Organization condemning Israel and calling for negotiations for peace. The Maldives, which has reiterated its firm commitment to the noble principles enshrined in the Charter of this Organization, gives its unequivocal support to these resolutions. We urge all parties concerned to enter into negotiation with a genuine desire for lasting and durable peace.

We recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians. We support the proposal to convene an international conference on the Middle East. We are ready to extend our support to all initiatives to restore to the Palestinians their inalienable right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty, and to return to their homes. We are also ready to contribute to all moves that would restore peace to the weary and war-torn region.

It is our fervent hope that during this fortieth anniversary of the United Nations its efforts to resolve the Middle East issue will bear more palatable fruit. The United Nations has been grappling with the issue for over three

(Mr. Zakariyya, Maldives)

decades, and it is only right that a good proportion of its time has been devoted to matters related to the issue, either directly or indirectly. Indeed, much has been done; yet more remains to be done. Much has been accomplished; yet more remains to be accomplished. The region is still smouldering, threatening to explode into a huge conflagration that could endanger world peace. The region itself yearns for peace and stability, but unfortunately the real power to resolve the problem and restore peace appears to reside outside the region. Therein lies the tragic truth, and it signifies outside strategic interest.

It is our sincere hope that Israel will respond positively and come to terms with a reality that corresponds to the actual situation in the region. It is time that Israel realized where the challenge lies and refrained from mounting massive slaughter raids against the Palestinians and other Arab neighbours, and seizing their land and property. We urge Israel to face the real challenge of establishing peace, a peace that is not in the interest of the stronger, but a peace that is in the interest of all parties to the conflict, be they small or large, weak or strong.

Mr. KABANDA (Rwanda) (interpretation from French): It is difficult to introduce any original ideas into this debate on the Middle East, just as it is difficult to deal with the problems of this region without dwelling particularly on the problem of Palestine, which is at the heart of the Middle East conflict. I shall not go back over the historical circumstances that led to the United Nations giving land belonging to the Palestinian people to another people. I would only say that since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1947, the world has consistently called for justice for the Palestinian people. Thus our Organization will remain under a heavy obligation as long as the rights of all the people in the region are being violated or ignored, in particular the rights of the Palestinian people.

(Mr. Kabanda, Rwanda)

In this connection, I should like to say something personally to you, Sir, in your capacity as Chairman of the Special Committee on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Your last report on this subject shows very clearly that we still are far from restoring their strictly legitimate rights to the Palestinian people.

We have nothing new to say in this debate, because there has been no favourable development in this situation for some years now, although the international community has been calling continuously for the restoration of the rights of the Palestinian people, until there is a real change in the situation in that region, all we can do is to reaffirm our position on the Middle East, particularly on the question of Palestine, which remains unchanged. Our position was summed up on 9 October 1985 by Rwanda's Foreign Minister, who said:

"the Republic of Rwanda remains convinced that a just and lasting settlement of the Middle East question requires first the recognition of and respect for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, to be freely exercised under the aegis of its genuine and legitimate representatives as gathered within the Palestine Organization (PLO), as well as by the unconditional withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied by force by Israel since 1967. The quest for such a settlement must also be guided by justice and must take into account the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people based on international legality." (A/40/PV.29, p. 48)

His Majesty King Hussein of Jordan who, like all sovereigns and Heads of Arab States, is concerned about the problem of the Middle East, stated on 27 September 1985 that:

"peace would not be achieved in the Middle East unless it is coupled with justice." (A/40/PV.12, p. 8)

(Mr. Kabanda, Rwanda)

There must be justice for the Palestinian people, who must regain their legitimate rights: the right to self-determination, the right to their own homeland, the right to choose their own institutions and alliances. There must be justice for all countries in the region, which are entitled to their own existence within secure and recognized boundaries, to use the words of Security Council resolution 242 (1967).

In this connection, I should like to reiterate the concern that I expressed in this Assembly on 10 December 1984. Resolution 242 (1967) is a framework for a settlement established by the Security Council. This framework is perhaps not ideal but it is a serious approach to settling the problems of the Middle East. If at the first the international community gave a favourable welcome to resolution 242 (1967), that was because it hoped that Israel would abide by a resolution adopted unanimously by the Security Council and given wide support and that it would therefore restore the occupied Arab territories. But resolution 242 (1967) was not implemented, not because it did not explicitly mention the restoration of the rights of the Palestinian people but rather because of Israel's systematic refusal to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories.

The justice that we demand for the Palestinian people and all countries in the region could be achieved within the context of an international conference involving the parties concerned - all the parties concerned. The purpose of such a conference, organized under the auspices of the United Nations, would be to consider the modalities for the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). Unfortunately, the idea of such a conference, already endorsed by the General Assembly, seems to be unacceptable to Israel, a country which claims to consider negotiations between the parties to be essential.

A number of proposals have been made for the settlement of the situation in the Middle East, all called settlement plans. There has been the Fez plan, the

(Mr. Kabanda, Rwanda)

Reagan plan, the Brezhnev plan and more recently, the Jordanian-Palestinian peace initiative, as well as what might be called the Peres plan. I have no doubt that those plans were inspired by good intentions, but we must nevertheless recognize that the ambiguities of some and the inadequacies in others have elicited from one or other of the interested parties either reluctance or a negative response. I do not intend to dwell on those plans but I should like to comment on the most recent proposals.

We welcomed the Fez plan as a new proposal that could provide an acceptable basis for negotiations on an overall settlement of the situation in the Middle East. We still believe that to be so, and we also think that that plan, harmonized with the Jordanian-Palestinian peace initiative, would make it possible to find some way out of the present impasse.

We were encouraged by the statement made here by King Hussein of Jordan on 27 September, when he said:

"We are prepared to negotiate, under appropriate auspices, with the Government of Israel, promptly and directly, under the basic tenets of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). These negotiations must result in the implementation of Security Council resolution 242 (1967) and resolve all aspects of the Palestinian problem." (A/40/PV.12, p. 17)

The Israeli Prime Minister, Mr. Peres, said to this Assembly last October in connection with the commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations that he would be available and willing to negotiate a peace treaty between Israel and the Arab States and also to resolve the Palestinian problem. He went on to say that for these negotiations

"neither party may impose pre-conditions ... negotiations are to be based on United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) ..."

(A/40/PV.42, p. 59)

(Mr. Kabanda, Rwanda)

Our interest in the Peres plan relates to the elements I have mentioned, because its other elements show that Israel's fundamental attitude is unchanged, at least as far as the Palestinian people are concerned. It provides, after all, that "negotiations are to be conducted directly, between States" (p. 59). That means the Arab States concerned. Now, we know that Israel denies the right of the Palestinian people to establish their own State on their own land. Furthermore, the most that Israel is prepared to concede to the Palestinian people is considerable autonomy in Judea-Samaria, and perhaps also in Gaza. But it is not autonomy that we are talking about here; it is the exercise by the Palestinian people of their right to self-determination and their right to a homeland.

Israel refuses to regard the Palestinians as a valid negotiating party, whereas the Palestinians are in fact a principal party in any negotiations and any attempt to reach a settlement.

While the Peres plan does not accept in principle an international conference on peace in the Middle East, it recognizes that the Security Council can play an important role, particularly by supporting bilateral negotiations. But there is a contradiction here, because the Prime Minister says:

"The permanent members of the Security Council may be invited to support the initiation of these negotiations" -

bilateral ones, no doubt. And then there is an important restriction. He says:

"It is our position that those who confine their diplomatic relations to one side of the conflict exclude themselves from such a role." (p. 60)

This is another element in the Peres plan that limits the chances of success of any mediation by the Security Council.

(Mr. Kabanda, Rwanda)

While it is true that the crisis in the Middle East cannot be resolved without the direct and active participation of the Palestinian people, through their representative, the PLO, it is true also that this problem, like any other problem involving international peace and security, cannot be solved without the active support of all the permanent members of the Security Council, in particular those that have economic, strategic or other interests in the region. It would be an enormous undertaking to try to prove the opposite. It is clear, therefore, that such a plan would not work.

(Mr. Kabanda, Rwanda)

I should not like to conclude without quickly referring to Lebanon, which, formerly the pearl of the region, is now devastated by destructive, murderous conflicts. Recently - yesterday, perhaps - the Israeli army once again attacked a camp sheltering the rest of the Palestinians in that country.

We who believed that Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon would put an end to that kind of aggression, and who believed that Israel was withdrawing its troops in response to the unanimous wishes of the international community, must recognize that we were mistaken about Israel's true intentions. We pray to God to allow Lebanon and the whole of the Middle East to find peace again, the peace that is issued as a greeting throughout the day in the region, from north to south and east to west, when people say "Salaam" or "Shalom". I hope that, in their daily life, all the peoples of that region will be able to enjoy peace which, in the final analysis, justifies the very existence of our Organization.

Mr. MOUSHOUTAS (Cyprus): In the course of this week we have had the opportunity to consider here two most important and closely related international problems: the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East. They share many common characteristics, grave international concern being only one of them. Because of their nature and the sensitive geopolitical areas involved they are considered a serious threat to international peace and security. The fact that they contribute to the polarization so characteristic of international relations today only adds to the grave concern of the international community.

The situation in the Middle East has deteriorated over the last few years, with armed conflict spreading to Lebanon as a result of the Israeli invasion. Moreover, there is no indication whatsoever of any peace moves which may bring all the parties to the conflict together for a comprehensive and lasting solution of the problem.

(Mr. Moushoutas, Cyprus)

The Middle East problem presents one of the most serious challenges which the United Nations has faced over the years. It involves principles on which this Organization has adopted unambiguous positions. Those principles have been trampled upon repeatedly and with impunity. What we have witnessed happening in the Middle East is exactly what we are condemning, and what we are trying to avoid. We have witnessed the use of force, claimed to be an instrument of peace. We have witnessed - and condemned, to no effect - the acquisition and annexation of territories by force, the uprooting of people, illegal settlements and gross violations of the human rights of the Palestinian and Arab population in the occupied territories.

Instead of moving closer to peace, we witness actions which lead further away from it. The fact that the Security Council has been convened more than once during the year to deal with dangerous developments in the region is indicative of the situation.

Cyprus, a country close to the region, facing these problems and with traditional bonds of friendship with the peoples and countries involved, cannot but share the grave concerns of the international community. We have at every opportunity added our voice to that of others in calling for a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict through negotiations and in accordance with the Charter and the relevant resolutions and decisions of the United Nations.

We have clearly stated our position that, for any solution to be just and lasting, it must entail the withdrawal of Israeli troops from all Arab territories occupied since 1967, including the old city of Jerusalem. We have also joined the international community in calling upon Israel to rescind its illegal and unilateral decision with regard to the Golan Heights, which we consider an inseparable part of Syria.

(Mr. Moushoutas, Cyprus)

Along with the non-aligned countries, Cyprus has stood by the position that in any peace negotiations, the participation on an equal footing of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, is indispensable, because no solution to the Middle East problem can be envisaged which does not take fully into account the national aspirations of the Palestinian people.

The core of the Middle East problem is the question of Palestine. We therefore firmly believe that only when the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, independence and national sovereignty are realized will there be peace in the region. We fervently hope that all the parties concerned will dedicate their efforts to the achievement of a just and lasting solution to the problem without further delay. Time has shown that the prolongation of the problem only brings about more violence and suffering. We believe the time has come for a concerted endeavour to solve this major problem. Any further delay entails grave dangers, both for the region and internationally.

Mr. DIACONU (Romania) (interpretation from French): As the representatives of Romania have already said during this fortieth session, the prolongation of certain conflicts in present international circumstances and the appearance of new ones represent a serious threat to the independence and security of all peoples and States and to world peace and security.

The Middle East conflict, which is almost as old as our Organization, is more than ever one of the main sources of threats to international peace and security and co-operation because of the many questions it has raised, which have still not been settled, its political and economic ramifications and its implications for many peoples and countries throughout the world.

(Mr. Diaconu, Romania)

The state of confrontation that persists in the Middle East, marked by acts of aggression and flare-ups of violence, and the whole evolution of the Israeli-Arab conflict, confirm the historical truth that peace and security cannot be achieved and guaranteed by the use of force and the threat of its use or by denying the right of other peoples to a free existence and independence.

(Mr. Diaconu, Romania)

On the basis of its conviction that action must be taken immediately to find a solution to existing conflicts in various regions of the world, Romania believes that resolute measures and initiatives are necessary to end conflicts and settle contentious problems through talks and other peaceful means.

The General Assembly has just adopted, on a proposal by Romania, the solemn appeal addressed to States in conflict immediately to cease armed action and begin a settlement of their differences through negotiation and other peaceful means. The General Assembly further appeals to all States fully to respect, without fail, their obligations not to resort to force or the threat of force, nor to intervene in the internal affairs of other States and to settle conflicts and disputes through peaceful means. The appeal also envisages more sustained and effective action on the part of the competent organs of the United Nations to put an end to and settle conflicts.

Resolute and immediate action is obviously needed to solve all aspects of the Middle East conflict. It is high time that all Member States assume their political and moral responsibility so that the United Nations, whose primary function is the maintenance of international peace and security, can act more firmly with a view to reaching a global, just and lasting solution to this conflict, which has gone on for too long, bringing indescribable suffering to the peoples of the region and seriously endangering the peace of the world.

Romania and its President, Nicolae Ceausescu, have always stated that they are firmly in favour of a political solution in the Middle East that guarantees global peace in that region, the solution of the problem of the Palestinian people, based on its right to self-determination, including its right to create an independent Palestinian State, as well as the right to independence and sovereignty of all States of the region.

(Mr. Diaconu, Romania)

On the basis of that position of principle, according to which the occupation of foreign territories, as well as their acquisition by force, is inadmissible, Romania has, from the outset, affirmed that a peaceful solution in the Middle East, to be just and lasting, implies, first and foremost, the withdrawal of Israel from the Arab territories occupied after the 1967 war, including the Arab part of Jerusalem. Such a demand was moreover clearly formulated in the resolutions of all United Nations bodies which have considered the situation in the Middle East. As is well known, we are resolutely opposed to any action by Israel to annex the Syrian Golan Heights.

Romania has always been in favour of guaranteeing the unity, independence and territorial integrity of Lebanon, and opposes Israeli military action in Lebanon, and is also in favour of a broad reconciliation of Lebanese political forces. The Romanian Government recently condemned Israel's air attack of September over Tunisian territory as an act of aggression and a serious violation of the norms and principles which must govern relations between States.

The way in which the situation in the Middle East has evolved and the absence of progress towards a comprehensive solution has made it increasingly clear that a global, just and lasting peace cannot be achieved without the solution of the Palestinian problem. Such a solution includes, as an essential element, recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including the right to create its own State, as well as recognition of the right to participate, through its legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), in the negotiations of a Middle East peace. At the same time, we consider that any solution in conformity with the interests and legitimate aspirations of the States and peoples of the Middle East must be based on guarantees of the right to exist and of the sovereignty of every State of the region, its independence and territorial integrity; this would permit the

(Mr. Diaconu, Romania)

establishment of relations of co-operation, trust and mutual respect between all States and peoples of the region. Like other countries, Romania has always maintained that appropriate and responsible political and diplomatic efforts are necessary to find solutions to all the complex problems of the region.

To that end, our country has stated, and it states so again, that it supports the organization of an international conference under United Nations auspices with the participation of all interested parties, including the PLO, as well as the permanent members of the Security Council and other States which can make a constructive contribution to the restoration of peace in that area.

This idea has been embodied in successive resolutions of the General Assembly, with the support of a very large number of States, the most recent being resolution A/39/49 D of 11 December 1984, of which the Romanian delegation was a sponsor. Romania feels that this initiative is still most opportune and that greater efforts must be made by all States and the international community in order to convene such a conference as soon as possible. The interested countries, and all the political forces of the region in particular, should act resolutely to bring about the organization of that conference under United Nations auspices. Since it is a matter of a complex situation and a global question, it seems illusory to seek partial or limited solutions.

At the same time, we feel that it would be especially important to associate the Secretary-General more closely with efforts to achieve a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, and to increase his role in the convening of such a conference. The United Nations can and should, as we have said before, play a more active part in efforts aimed at finding a solution to the Middle East conflict, and can provide the framework within which negotiations can be undertaken with a view to bringing about a just and lasting peace in that troubled region of the world; that would be fully in accordance with the hopes and the expectations of the

(Mr. Diaconu, Romania)

peoples of the region and all the peoples of the world. As for Romania, it is prepared to continue making every effort to contribute to a global and lasting solution of the Middle East problem, to the establishment of a just peace in the region, and to the consolidation of international peace, security and co-operation.

Mr. KORNEENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): The situation in the Middle East, which for almost 40 years has been smouldering and potentially explosive, constitutes a serious threat to international peace and security and is a matter of serious concern not only for the States and peoples of the region but also for all those who are seriously concerned about the future of the world. This explains the attention that has been devoted - and is being devoted at this session - to the consideration of all aspects of the Middle East conflict in the United Nations.*

As is rightly noted in the most recent report of the Secretary-General on this item, the United Nations has been dealing with this conflict since the very first years of its existence and has "devoted to this issue more time and more attention than to any other international problem". (A/40/779, para. 34)

It is well known that the reason for the outbreak and continuation of this conflict is the aggression and expansion of the imperialist and hegemonistic forces against the Arab peoples whose continuing policy of seizing and annexing Arab lands has turned the region into a permanent source of military threats. From the very outset of Israel's existence its leaders chose the path of military adventurism and territorial expansionism in respect of its Arab neighbours. As a result, five wars, involving much bloodshed and innumerable victims and suffering for peoples of the region, have broken out in the region, and the aggressor occupied large tracts of Arab territory.

*Mr. Agius (Malta), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Korneenko, Ukrainian SSR)

The continuing Israeli occupation of the Palestinian West Bank, Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem, the Syrian Golan Heights and the southern part of Lebanon, and Israel's constant attacks on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon, its flouting of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people - those are the fundamental elements in the aggressive policy of the Israeli leadership vis-à-vis its neighbouring Arab States.

Israel, having created this dangerous hotbed of tension in the region, is broadening its scope, and now other Arab countries are subjected to its unprovoked attacks. During this debate frequent reference has been made about Israel's attack on the Iraqi civilian nuclear facilities. Very recently, on 1 October this year, Israel raided the capital of Tunisia, a sovereign Arab country which is more than 2,000 kilometres from Israel's frontiers. During the meetings of the Security Council on that matter, Israel's attack, presented as an act of State terrorism, was strongly condemned.

A dangerous situation has continued to prevail this past year in southern Lebanon. The aggression against the country unleashed three and a half years ago ended in a political and military defeat for those that initiated it. Under pressure from the national and patriotic forces of Lebanon, the aggressor was forced to withdraw from most of the land seized. At the same time, a matter of serious concern is the fact that Israel continues to make efforts virtually to preserve its control over a significant amount of the territory of Lebanon, under the pretext of establishing in southern Lebanon the so-called security zone. But essentially what it is, is a bridgehead for further aggressive actions. Whipping up those that act on its behalf, Tel Aviv is also trying to prevent any further political settlement of the Lebanese crisis.

(Mr. Korneenko, Ukrainian SSR)

In condemning those acts of aggression, the Ukrainian SSR has supported and continues to support, inter alia, within the Security Council, the just demands of the Lebanese people and of its Government for immediate, full and unconditional withdrawal of Israeli troops from all Lebanese territory. Security Council resolutions 508 (1982) and 509 (1982) must be fully implemented, and intervention in the internal affairs of Lebanon must be halted.

Also noteworthy is the fact that, as many speakers have noted, responsibility for the adventuristic actions of Israel, does lie fully with the United States, which not only supports and encourages the aggressive policy of Tel Aviv but also tries to place the Middle East region under its own military and political control. To that end, efforts are made to impose on the Arab countries separate deals, disregarding the legitimate rights of the Arab peoples. A basic element of that policy is the American-Israeli strategic alliance, the so-called rapid deployment forces and Camp David type agreements.

Carrying out its geopolitical designs in the Middle East, those partners are trying to split up the Arab world and to force the Arab countries into separate deals along the Camp David lines, the goal being to remove the Palestinian problem from the agenda completely and to enable Israel to continue enjoying the fruits of its aggression. However, it is perfectly clear that those surrogates of the Middle East settlement have nothing in common with the task of establishing a just and lasting peace in that region.

The experience of history shows quite clearly the futility and the danger of trying to resolve the Middle East problem by imposing on the Arabs separate deals with Israel. The only alternative to that policy of separate deals - in other words the policy of encouraging Israeli expansionism, which has nothing to do with establishing a lasting peace in the region - is a comprehensive settlement by way of convening an international conference with the participation of all interested parties, including the Palestine Liberation Organization.

(Mr. Korneenko, Ukrainian SSR)

Against the background of that deadlock as a result of Israel's efforts, the significance of the Soviet Union's proposals on a Middle East settlement, dated 29 July 1984, becomes even clearer. Those proposals are realistic because they are in accordance with the idea of establishing a truly just and lasting peace in the region. They are consonant with the principles for a settlement set forward and proposed by the Arab countries in Fez; they are based on principles that are of paramount significance, namely, the inadmissibility of the acquisition of other people's land by aggression, ensuring the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of their own independent State, and ensuring the right of all States and peoples in the region to a secure and independent existence and development.

This constructive policy was confirmed in the statement by the parties to the Warsaw Treaty of October this year in Sofia. The statement also notes that a solution to the problems of the Middle East would be promoted by a consolidation of the unity of Arab countries and the Palestinian movement. The interests of consolidating peace in that part of the world would be promoted by a settlement of the Lebanese problems on the basis of national agreement along the Lebanese themselves and the preservation and sovereignty of the territorial integrity of Lebanon, a swift halt to the war between Iran and Iraq, and the stabilization of the situation in the region of the Persian Gulf.

As we have already emphasized, attaining a real Middle East settlement is possible only within the context of an international conference in the Middle East, because this is really the only reasonable and effective means of putting an end to the long war in the Middle East and establishing there a lasting peace. Moreover, this must be achieved without any further bloodshed, without any intrigues and secret deals, taking duly into account the legitimate interests of all parties concerned, without exception.

(Mr. Korneenko, Ukrainian SSR)

As we see it, the efforts of the General Assembly should be directed towards mobilizing support for that idea. There are only two States that oppose such a realistic approach. The General Assembly should call on the United States and Israel to stop creating obstacles on the path to the convening of such a conference. It would seem to be time for them to recognize that the Middle East is not anybody's private preserve, isolated from the outside world.

The future of the world, the interests and security of other peoples are closely intertwined with that very region. It is for that very reason that in the approach to a Middle East conflict it is essential to act, taking soberly and reasonably into account the legitimate rights and interests of all parties to it. All other States should not interfere with, but should rather promote the search for such a settlement.

The Ukrainian delegation would express the hope that the Assembly will approve the recommendations designed to establish a lasting and just peace in the region. Our delegation is ready to support them.

Mr. BAGBENU ADEITO NZENGEYA (Zaire) (interpretation from French): Never before in the history of mankind has a conflict been so much in the forefront of international news or given rise to so many passions as the Middle East crisis. The United Nations has since the very first years of its existence been involved with the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East and its fundamental cause - the problem of Palestine. The United Nations has certainly devoted to those two questions more time and attention than to any other international problem.

(Mr. Baqbeni Adeito Nzengeya,
Zaire)

The Middle East conflict, with its many complex and delicate problems, all of which are closely interconnected, has been the subject of very lengthy debates in both the General Assembly and the Security Council, as well as at international conferences devoted exclusively to this issue.

Frequent armed confrontations marked by loss of human life and property and fanned by emotions exacerbated by misunderstanding, a lack of dialogue and passion have so far characterized the situation in the Middle East. The obstinacy of both sides in refusing to comply with the general rules of international law and with the provisions of the numerous resolutions the United Nations has adopted over the past 40 years have made the question of the Middle East the most debated and the most controversial of problems.

The positions of the various parties to the conflict in the Middle East remain far apart, despite their acceptance of Security Council resolution 242 (1967), which set forth two important principles of the Middle East settlement, namely:

"Withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied...[and] acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force."

(Security Council resolution 242 (1967), op. paras. 1 and 2)

In addition to those two principles, the United Nations has also recognized that any settlement of the Middle East question must include a satisfactory solution of the Palestinian problem based on recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination.

Until 1977 the United Nations enjoyed the firm support of the majority of Member States and the co-operation of the major Powers in the Middle East peace process. That trend led to a cessation of all belligerent acts by the protagonists with a view to finding a comprehensive settlement dealing with all aspects of the

(Mr. Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya,
Zaire)

question and with the participation of all interested parties; to that end, the United Nations surely provides a unique and appropriate framework for such a settlement.

The international community is becoming increasingly aware of the fact that the solution to the Middle East problem cannot be achieved through confrontations, mutual attacks and the violations of territories and human rights that have only exacerbated an already tense situation and increased the hatred between the communities involved, but that only peace and security in the region can provide all the States in the region with an atmosphere propitious to negotiations and dialogue.

Analysis of the many peace plans that have been prepared, either by the Arab States in the Declaration adopted on 9 September 1982 at the twelfth Summit Arab Conference at Fez or by the constructive proposals of the President of the United States of America on 1 September 1982 and by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on 15 September 1982 and 29 July 1984, clearly indicates that no definitive solution to this crisis acceptable to all the interested parties has yet been found.

In that connection we should mention that all the elements for a comprehensive, just and lasting solution are contained in the many resolutions adopted, when taken together and with all the plans, accords and peace initiatives so far put forward, and that they certainly in our view provide a consistent and integrated course of action that the United Nations should follow in order to find a conclusion to this question dating back to the period of the League of Nations and inherited by the United Nations.

If all the parties to the conflict have not, since 1947, been able to resolve it by war, the delegation of Zaire infers that no other strategy relying on force and posing a standing and permanent threat to international peace and security in

(Mr. Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya,
Zaire)

the region can provide a solution to the thorny problem of the Middle East and Palestine.

If there is one State that has suffered from the war in the Middle East, to the point that its independence, its territorial integrity and its freedom are at stake, that State is Lebanon. A country that a few years ago was a true oasis of peace - especially the tourist city of Beirut - has today become a torn and threatened land where security, the sine qua non for any development or progress, is no longer guaranteed.

The United Nations is therefore in duty bound to work towards the consolidation of the independent and territorial integrity of that State Member of our Organization and to ensure the protection of its civilian population.

The delegation of Zaire believes that there can be no lasting peace in the Middle East so long as the Palestinian people are not free, do not enjoy their right to self-determination and do not, at the same time, recognize Israel's right to exist.

For its part, the State of Israel, which understands better than any the interest of living in peace, should abide by the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territories by force.

Thus, it is incumbent upon the United Nations to put an end to the cycle of offensive and defensive violence that breeds frustrations and arouses vengeance in that part of the world and that it apply to the settlement of this dispute the methods and principles of peaceful solution and dialogue provided in the Charter of the world Organization.

Mr. MOHAMAD RAZLAN (Malaysia): In its debate on this item, the situation in the Middle East, the General Assembly is appropriately focusing on the Arab-Israeli conflict, for it constitutes the fundamental issue. This item has been a regular feature on our agenda of the United Nations almost since its

(Mr. Mohamad Razlan, Malaysia)

inception. To quote the words of the Secretary-General in his current report on the subject, the United Nations has:

"devoted to this issue more time and more attention than to any other international problem". A/40/779, para. 34)

However, despite all the attention focused upon it and all the time and effort invested in it, no real inroads have been made towards a comprehensive and lasting solution to it. Clearly, it is not due to lack of trying, for many attempts have been made to find a solution, both within the United Nations and in other forums. Indeed, in the view of the overwhelming majority of us here, many of the elements and proposals contained in the various resolutions adopted by the United Nations point the way to a just and lasting solution.

(Mr. Mohamad Razlan, Malaysia)

Israel continues to obstruct all efforts towards a just and comprehensive settlement, preferring instead the path of aggression and military strength. Secure in the knowledge, as it were, that it can count on the unqualified support of its super-Power benefactor, it has continued to ignore and reject efforts for a comprehensive solution. Israel has shown no compunction in its recourse to military might. We need not repeat here the innumerable occasions on which it has done so.

In the eyes of its powerful friends Israel is a modern-day Sparta, a "little David", fighting and succeeding against such overwhelming odds. Never mind the fact that Israel is reckoned to be among the world's most militarily powerful States. The myth that has been built around that "little David" tends also conveniently to obscure the fact that Israel's actions are not in defence of its territory or even its right to exist, but its "right" to Arab lands which it has occupied since 1967 and its denial of the right of the Palestinian people to exist.

On the other hand, the victims of Israeli aggression - the homeless and dispossessed Palestinians and the Arabs generally - in an age when derogatory ethnic caricature is unacceptable have been portrayed in terms of violence, terrorism, irrationality and uncompromising refusal to come to terms with the existence of Israel or to accept the norms of decent behaviour. The terrorism inflicted by Israel in the name of self-defence, retaliation and justice is perceived as "justifiable". Its refusal to give up the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan Heights is also justified in terms of Israel's strategic interests.

Although this myth about Israel and its intentions has been planted by a massive propaganda machine at its disposal, we are not deceived. The issues may be falsified but the fact cannot be obscured that the onus of responsibility for the

(Mr. Mohamad Razlan, Malaysia)

continuing conflict in the Middle East falls on Israel, whose actions and policies are at the root of the conflict. In violation of the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, Israel, hiding behind the cloak of self-defence, has embarked upon a course of aggression clearly calculated for the purpose of acquiring more land, more territory. The subsequent annexation of Arab lands and building of settlements is evidence of Israel's motives.

While Israel insists on its right to exist, it denies the right of Palestinians to exist. For the overwhelming majority of the international community the essence of the conflict concerns the right of Palestinians, an ancient and historical people with its own culture and national identity, to exist. It is also about justice in terms of the exercise of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and their own independent State and the return of all Arab lands occupied since 1967. Indeed, those elements are essential in any durable and comprehensive settlement.

It is in this context that the General Assembly has repeatedly endorsed the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East, to be participated in by the major Powers and all the parties involved in the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. Malaysia believes that such a conference would serve as a viable forum for a meaningful framework towards an eventual comprehensive settlement taking into account all the interrelated aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the multiplicity of contending interests inherent in the conflict.

Israel has steadfastly refused to participate, ostensibly because it cannot agree to the participation of the PLO. But the PLO after all is recognized by the

(Mr. Mohamad Razlan, Malaysia)

United Nations and, more importantly, by the Palestinian people themselves. Israel may question its legitimacy, but the PLO's legitimacy is assured, just as surely as it sits amongst us as an Observer representing a constituency made up of the Palestinian people. Who is being unreasonable and unbending?

My delegation also regrets that the Secretary-General in his consultations with the Security Council pursuant to General Assembly resolution 39/49 D with regard to the convening of the conference has been unable to elicit a favourable response from all Council members - although most Council members agree.

We fully agree with the observation made by the Secretary-General in his report that the machinery of the United Nations in the peace process has been made more difficult to use because of the "increasingly divergent policies among the permanent members of the Security Council" (A/40/779, para. 35). Malaysia also shares the Secretary-General's view that:

"... the support of the major Powers, especially the Soviet Union and the United States, is essential for any lasting settlement in the area". (Ibid., para. 36)

Indeed, over the years events in the Middle East have developed in a direction which makes a solution to the problem infinitely more difficult, not least because the strategic concerns of the major Powers have become enmeshed with the problem, thus widening its dimension. The intrusion of big-Power rivalry increases the global implications in the event of further conflagration. In terms of global stability, the Arab-Israeli conflict cannot be allowed to languish unchecked indefinitely. It has always contained the ingredients for a major flashpoint, and that potential grows with each passing year that the conflict is allowed to fester.

(Mr. Mohamad Razlan, Malaysia)

Lasting peace in that long-troubled area cannot be served through force of arms. Military force can kill, maim and destroy, but can it subjugate a people? Certainly not in the case of the Palestinian people who, despite the awesome ferocity of Israel's power, which is regularly unleashed on them, continue to insist on their rights as a people with a distinct identity and a legitimate right to their own homeland. Nor can peace be served by Israel's insistence on hanging on to the occupied Arab territories. Indeed Israel learned in Lebanon that a subjugated people will willingly pay the ultimate price for their freedom. Has the situation brought Israel the security it claims it seeks? No nation in a perpetual state of conflict can make such a claim.

The broad international consensus has shown itself to be consistently supportive of a comprehensive, lasting settlement. It is not one which favours the Arabs over the Israelis, which is again a myth of Israeli propaganda, but one that would bring justice to the Arab peoples as well.

Despite the seeming inability of the international community to persuade Israel to abandon the path of aggression and expansionism, as illustrated by the tone of this debate and other past debates on this item, the overwhelming majority of States Members remain unstinting in support of a comprehensive and lasting settlement, which must by definition take into account the legitimate rights of the Arab peoples.

The PRESIDENT: We have heard the last speaker for this evening. One representative wishes to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to 5 minutes for the second intervention, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. FARTAS (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (interpretation from Arabic): I apologize for speaking in right of reply after such a long list of speakers and at this late hour. However, what happened this morning makes it necessary for me to do so.

The representative of the Zionist entity this morning as usual avoided the item under discussion, the trouble in the Middle East, in an overt and undisguised attempt to divert attention from the debate on the item. This is not the first time, and it will certainly not be the last.

I do not need to reply to the lies and fabrications in his statement, for such lies and fabrications will not deceive any of the representatives of friendly and brother countries, for they have all heard the same lies and fabrications at past sessions and they will hear the same lies and fabrications again at coming sessions.

It is ironic that that representative tries to show hypocritical sympathy with our brother country of Tunisia, as though he wants us to forget the barbarous and brutal raid on residential areas of Tunis, a raid by seven military aircraft that caused loss of life among children, women and the elderly.

The international community, represented in the Security Council, has condemned that raid and characterized it as an aggression in an explicit and clear decision. That brutal raid reminds us and the Palestinian people of similar massacres such as those at Deir Yassin and Kafr Kassem, Qibya and the two refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila. The speaker hypocritically also tried to show sympathy for Iraq, as though he wanted us and Iraq to forget Israel's sudden unjustified raid on the Iraqi nuclear reactor, which was built for peaceful purposes. It will be remembered that that raid could have caused a catastrophe through atomic radiation, had it not been for the preventive measures the Iraqi authorities took at the time. The Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

(Mr. Fartas, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

reaffirmed at the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly that subjecting nuclear installations to such attacks by conventional weapons could lead to a nuclear war.

The Israeli entity, which arrogates to itself a divine right to strike here, there and everywhere, does not care in the least about the world confronting an atomic catastrophe. That possibility should elicit the concern and horror of the international community as a whole.

The speaker showed hypocritical sympathy with our sister country of Egypt, as though he wanted us and Egypt to forget the victims of the school of Bahr el Bakar - the students and the children. Can the people of Egypt forget that the Zionist entity still occupies a cherished part of Sinai just because the representative of the Zionist entity wants to show hypocritical sympathy with Egypt in a devious attempt to foment discord and divide the ranks? The Libyan people have not forgotten the victims on the Libyan civil jet liner that was shot down by Zionist missiles while on a regular trip between Tripoli and Cairo. Israeli military jets forced it to fly over the Sinai peninsula, then launched some air-to-air missiles against it; the aircraft crashed on Sinai and all the passengers died.

The Zionist entity believed that the world would forget that crime and that it would be buried forever in Sinai. There were a number of doctors, engineers and lawyers from Libya aboard the aircraft, among them a former Foreign Minister and the first Libyan female doctor. The Arab people cannot forget that crime, and we shall always remember its victims.

The strangest thing we heard from the speaker this morning was that he wanted to include on the agenda of the General Assembly a new item under which the General Assembly would discuss the victims of its crimes and massacres, with a view

(Mr. Fartas, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

to the ultimate adoption of a document that would acquit the aggressor and condemn the victims. Indirectly the speaker asked us to eliminate from our agenda the items on the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East.

(Mr. Fartas, Libyan Arab
Jamahiriya)

We do not blame him. He knows better than anyone else that our discussions will be fruitless and that he will not respond to any of the resolutions or decisions of the General Assembly or the Security Council; that he will if necessary ride roughshod over them in this Hall, as the leader of the Zionist entity did the General Assembly resolution that declared Zionism to be a form of racism. He knows better than anyone else that the fate of the resolutions of this international Organization on the question of Palestine is to become the "garbage of history", as his leader said as he tore up the General Assembly resolution in question.

What can we expect from that entity, whose leader and founder, David Ben-Gurion, said in 1950 before the students of the Hebrew University:

"The Israeli empire must include all the territories between the Euphrates and the Nile"?

What can we expect from the entity whose leader, David Ben-Gurion, when he became Prime Minister, set the following condition: "I agree to form a Government provided that we use all possible means to expand to the south." The map of Greater Israel, which is engraved at the top of the Zionist Knesset building is a constant reminder to Israeli legislative bodies - and reminds us, too - of the expansionist designs aimed, following Palestine, at the rest of the Arab countries.

For this reason the Zionist entity has not so far set itself any borders. The borders of that entity are and will remain "where the furthestmost Israeli tank is", as Ariel Sharon, former Minister of Defense and current Minister of Commerce of the Zionist entity, said.

The meeting rose at 8.15 p.m.