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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND FIRST MEETING

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

President:	Mr. DE PINIÉS	(Spain)
later:	Mr. BERROCAL SOTO (Vice-President)	(Costa Rica)
later:	Mr. AL-KAWARI (Vice-President)	(Qatar)
later:	Mr. MOUSHOUTAS (Vice-President)	(Cyprus)

- Question of Palestine: [33] (continued)

- (a) Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People
- (b) Report of the Secretary-General
- (c) Draft resolutions

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 33 (continued)

QUESTION OF PALESTINE

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE (A/40/35)
- (b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/40/168)
- (c) DRAFT RESOLUTIONS (A/40/L.23 to A/40/L.25)

Mr. AL-SABAGH (Bahrain) (interpretation from Arabic): It gives me great pleasure at the outset to express our warmest thanks to the Chairman and other members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for their consistent efforts to give prominence to the decisions of the General Assembly and to help bring about a just solution to the question of Palestine and the restoration and guaranteeing of its legitimate rights. The Committee has contributed to gaining support for the Palestinian cause and making the international community more aware of it.

The question of Palestine is undoubtedly the core of our debate today. It has been under discussion for many decades and will be the subject of negotiations and debates for as long as it remains unresolved. During those years the General Assembly and the Security Council have adopted various resolutions, which, however, remain a dead letter. Thus we are bogged down in a repetitious discussion.

Nobody can deny that this thorny problem is the core of the Middle East problem. Its settlement would bring stability and peace to all the States of the Middle East and would help in the maintenance of international peace and security. This, of course, will never be achieved until the Palestinian people enjoy the right to self-determination and to establish their own State on their national soil. The attainment of this objective is in keeping with the preservation of the

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historical national identity of the Palestinians. This is the right of all peoples. Thus, the struggle of the Palestinian people receives every kind of support from all peace-loving countries and peoples.

After the partition of Palestine and the establishment of the Hebrew State it was hoped to establish a Palestinian State in accordance with the Partition resolution, resolution 181 (II), of 1947. However, at that time the Security Council did not fulfil its responsibilities, it did not strive for the establishment of a Palestinian State. After that ominous resolution, years went by and the Palestinians were not only deprived of the right to establish their independent State but the remaining part of their territories was taken by force, including the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; other Arab territories were also occupied and annexed to Israel, such as the Golan Heights.

Israel has continued its aggressive, racist practices. It has denied the Palestinian people their fundamental rights, including the right to return to their homeland and to struggle for the liberation of their land. It has branded them terrorists and tried by all possible means to deny their existence and obliterate their national identity. Israel has also violated the rights of the Arabs - rights to which all human beings are entitled. It has violated the Geneva Conventions and made comprehensive political, geographical and demographic changes in occupied Arab and Palestinian territories; it has established settlements and deported and tried to assassinate mayors. It has closed universities and schools and desecrated Holy Places.

Our purpose in the United Nations is to strengthen the will of the international community as expressed at the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, which was held in Geneva in August-September 1983. The Declaration on Palestine adopted by that Conference called for the convening of an

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international peace conference in the context of the question of Palestine, which is the core of the Middle East crisis, with a view to reaching a comprehensive solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict through the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with Arab Jerusalem as its capital.

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It has become imperative to hold such a conference, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of all the parties concerned, including of course the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which is the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Participation by the Palestine Liberation Organization is necessary for all endeavours to ensure peace.

At its last session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 39/49 D, in which it reiterated its conviction that the convening of the Conference would constitute a major contribution towards the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, in accordance with the firm guidelines constantly advocated by the United Nations. We call upon the General Assembly to invite the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Security Council, to take the necessary measures to convene this Conference. Needless to say, the United Nations has shouldered a historical and legal responsibility for ensuring a solution to the Palestinian question.

The convening of this Conference will greatly contribute to the fulfilment of the aspirations of the Palestinian people to the establishment of their own State and will contribute also to bringing an end to the bloody conflict in the region and to international polarization. It will put an end to the ever-increasing violence and terrorism caused by Israel's intransigence, its refusal to comply with the relevant United Nations resolutions and its defiance of the will of the international community.

It is no exaggeration to say that Israel's intransigence has caused the deterioration of the situation and the increase in tension in the region. We see more evidence each day of the fact that Israel is not a peace-loving State. That is obvious from its terrorist and aggressive record from the time it was established to the present day. It has helped to introduce terrorism into our

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region. The fact that some major Powers want to close their eyes to the intransigent attitude of Israel, which rejects peace and does not promote peace and stability in the region. Is it just to make so much fuss because one single American citizen was killed, and yet to disregard the Israeli terrorist attack on the headquarters of the Palestine Liberation Organization in Tunis, in which more than 100 Palestinians and Tunisians were killed or injured? This applies also to the assassination of Alexander Ouda, the Director of the Arab-American Friendship Committee office in California. He was an American citizen of Arab origin. We regard all these activities as terrorism, which must be confronted by all means. An end must be put to the constant aggression by Israel against the Arab and Palestinian peoples. If that is not done, it is hard to predict the kind of tension, trouble and upheaval that will prevail in the region. It has become obvious that the policy of repression, murder, dispersion and seizure of land is a futile policy. No one with a claim to a right has ever lost in the end.

Bahrain expresses praise for the latest joint Palestinian-Jordanian declaration, which is a courageous and outstanding landmark that constitutes an incentive to moving towards real peace and breaking the vicious circle of no-war, no-peace prevailing in the region today.

The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization this year (A/40/1) suggests that the Security Council should concentrate on solving one or two of the complex problems confronting the world today. In our view, the Palestinian question, which is the core of the Middle East problem, deserves such attention and should be treated as a matter of priority. It should be noted that during its meeting on 26 September 1985 commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the Organization, the Security Council heard a number of Foreign Ministers of States members of the Council call for an urgent solution to the explosive situation in the Middle East.

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It is unnecessary to repeat that Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which called for a just and lasting solution to the conflict, constitute a sound basis for the solution of the Palestinian problem, which is still not solved despite the fact that it has lasted for about four decades now. What is important, therefore, is the implementation of the resolutions - not the adoption of more resolutions.

Those two resolutions as well as scores of others relating to the Palestinian question and the question of the Middle East have had unanimous international support; they must be respected and implemented. We call upon all States, particularly those which are concerned in the conflict, to exert all their efforts and exercise all their political will in order to establish a just and lasting peace and bring about the recognition of the Arab and Palestinian rights within the framework of international legitimacy, so that all the States in the region may enjoy security, peace, sovereignty and stability. That is all the more important since the experience of the past years has proved that Israel's policy of expansion, repression and domination lead only to an increase in tension and violence. It is obvious to everyone that the restoration of the Arab territories as the counterpart to genuine peace - as is called for by the Arabs today - is the only way to the establishment of that genuine peace for all. A peace that is imposed by force, fear and a policy of *faits accomplis* is a fragile peace that will not last. That has been proved by facts.

Mr. GOLOB (Yugoslavia): The heroic and resolute struggle of the Palestinian people for freedom, independence, dignity and a State of its own has lasted for decades. During all these years it has been clear that a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the crisis in the Middle East presupposes a solution to the question of Palestine in accordance with the United Nations Charter and with

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full respect for the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and national independence. The General Assembly will doubtless take the same position again.

The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are a question for the conscience of the international community; they are the responsibility of the United Nations. But the fact remains that at the end of the twentieth century and in the fortieth year of the existence of the United Nations the Palestinian people is denied even the right to exist and that hundreds of thousands of Palestinians - indeed generations - have been born as refugees, without a land of their own, and have spent their lives in camps. Their fate is being discussed in this Assembly because of their rights and because of their will not to give in to aggression.

Israel has tried, without any success, to break the will of the Palestinian people by aggression, by terror, by expansion and by domination. That is the main obstacle to the self-determination of the Palestinian people and to the solution of the crisis in the Middle East. Intervention, naked force and State terrorism by Israel are keeping peace away from the Middle East and have held back all attempts and initiatives designed to achieve a just solution to the Palestinian question.

This has been going on for years. This year has been no different, except that repressive measures on the occupied Palestinian territories have been stepped up and that, in total disregard for international censure, new settlements are being constructed on the Palestinian lands and annexation is being relentlessly pursued. The West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Jerusalem, the Syrian Golan Heights and parts of Lebanon continue to be occupied.

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Palestinian refugee camps, no matter how far they may be from the borders of Israel, are the target of its bombs and attacks. In an attempt to destroy all things Palestinian, death and destruction are visited upon new areas. Armed attacks are carried out on an increasing number of independent and sovereign countries. In pursuit of aggression and terror Israel is reaching out to the other end of the Mediterranean region, threatening the security of independent States in the name of what it blithely calls its own security interests. The bombing of Tunis was a flagrant violation of the sovereignty of that non-aligned, independent and peace-loving country and of the basic principles of the United Nations Charter and the norms of international behaviour. Actions likely to bring about a conflagration in the region of the Middle East and in the Mediterranean area should be cut short by concerted international action.

In his message on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the President of the Presidency of Yugoslavia, Mr. Radovan Vlackovic, pointed out that:

"it is high time for the international community to stop the policy and practice of State terrorism, which prolong the suffering of one people and jeopardize the others. Urgent and concrete measures should be taken in order to enable the Palestinian people to realize their inalienable rights and legitimate national aspirations."

No country, be it big or small, can satisfy and protect its interests by violating the principles of the Charter. The policy of force and faits accomplis and the imposition of an alien will are not and cannot be acceptable in the Middle East or, for that matter, anywhere else in the world. The Palestinian people has proved by its long struggle that no solution can be achieved without it or at its expense. No war machine, however powerful, is a match for the resolve of a people

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to win its inalienable right to freedom, independence and a State on its own national soil.

There is no denying that the Palestinian people has its own ethnic, historical, cultural and geographic identity. Its political identity and its resolve to decide independently on its destiny is expressed through the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The PLO and its leadership, headed by the Chairman of the Executive Committee, Mr. Yasser Arafat, enjoy the full support and trust of the Palestinian people. That will and support are reflected in the PLO's full membership of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, in the PLO's observer status in the United Nations and in the recognition of the PLO as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

The non-aligned countries have always been of the view that peace and security can be strengthened only through the solution of the crises provoked by the denial of the rights of peoples to self-determination and independence. We believe that the international community should not reconcile itself to the existence and continuation of these crises.

At the Ministerial Conference in Luanda, Angola, the non-aligned countries emphasized once again their firm solidarity with and full support for the just struggle of the Palestinian people, as they have always done since their first summit Conference in Belgrade. The Conference stressed that the crisis affecting all areas of international relations could best be solved through dialogue, particularly multilateral negotiations within the framework of the United Nations. The Foreign Ministers of the non-aligned countries reiterated that the convening of an international conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations constitutes the best framework for a just, lasting and comprehensive solution.

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The convening of such a conference, with the participation of all parties directly concerned in the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the PLO and members of the Security Council, was supported also by the Committee of Eight Non-Aligned Countries on Palestine, of which Yugoslavia is a member. It should be recalled here also that the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Massamba Sarré of Senegal, is engaged in a quest for the same goal.

The United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, should continuously uphold the cause of the Palestinian people and their right to self-determination, to independence and to their own State. Failure to do so would leave the field wide open to manipulation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and to brutal and aggressive action aimed at the elimination of the PLO and the entire Palestinian people.

Yugoslavia, independent and non-aligned, is giving full support to the Palestinian people and its legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization. We hold that there can be no solution without the Palestinian people and the PLO. They must participate on an equal footing in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the question of Palestine.

A just and lasting solution of the Middle East crisis and the right of all peoples and countries of that region to independent and secure development must be ensured on the basis of the unconditional withdrawal of Israel from all the Arab and Palestinian territories occupied in 1967 and subsequently, including Jerusalem. The solution must be based on the attainment by the Palestinians of their inalienable rights: that is, the right to return to their homeland, to the soil from which they were expelled; the right to freedom and self-determination; and the right to establish their own State on their own national soil.

Mr. WASIUDDIN (Bangladesh): At this historic fortieth session, the United Nations General Assembly is considering the question of Palestine, which has been on our agenda since the founding of this great world body. No other issue in contemporary history has been discussed and deliberated so extensively; yet the problem remains unresolved and continues to threaten international peace and security. During the period under review the international community has once again failed to achieve any concrete results towards a successful resolution of this long-standing problem. To the contrary, the situation has further deteriorated steadily during this period and Israel has further intensified its ruthless design to eliminate the Palestinian people and their sole and legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

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Israel, in violation of all norms of international law, and of the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter, unleashed yet another aggression against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Tunisia - a country more than 1,500 miles from its borders. That act of aggression was yet another manifestation of its relentless drive to persecute and liquidate the Palestinian people. The Israeli policy of aggression, occupation, persecution and expansion in the Middle East has further exacerbated the situation in the region. The question of Palestine, which is at the centre of the problems in the Middle East, should therefore be considered as a matter of the utmost importance.

For our deliberations we have before us the latest report of the Secretary-General (A/40/168) and the latest report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian people (A/40/35). My delegation commends the Secretary-General and the Chairman and other members of that Committee for those valuable reports and also for their sincere and persistent efforts to uphold and enhance the cause of the Palestinian people.

My delegation has consistently emphasized that the present explosive situation in the Middle East is a direct consequence of a historic injustice, when the Palestinian people were forcibly uprooted from their hearths and homes. We are equally convinced that it will not be possible to bring just and lasting peace to the region unless the legitimate and inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people are fully restored. Those rights are based on the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter as well as on international law and jurisprudence and cannot be denied to them on any pretext. The political entity of the Palestinian people is an internationally recognized fact which cannot be questioned.

Bangladesh's position on the question of Palestine is based on our unflinching faith in the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter and our deep

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commitment to the cause of the oppressed peoples all over the world who are waging a just struggle to free themselves from the bondage of colonialism and racism. On the basis of that firm and principled position we have made sincere and persistent efforts to uphold the just cause of the Palestinian people in all international forums. We have reiterated our firm conviction that any international effort to restore peace in the Middle East must be based on a comprehensive solution of the problem which, inter alia, must ensure the complete and unconditional withdrawal of Israeli forces from all occupied Arab and Palestinian territories, including the holy city of Jerusalem, and the restoration of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people under the leadership of the PLO - their sole and legitimate representative.

My delegation is particularly concerned at the prevailing conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories. In the latest report on the subject it has been emphasized that the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories are fundamentally affected as a direct result of the Israeli occupation policies pursued for almost two decades. Besides political domination and de-Palestinization policies, Israel's occupation of the Palestinian lands has had a number of far-reaching socio-economic consequences. The economies of the West Bank and Gaza are being tied to that of Israel and made subservient to it. Settlement policy has led to confiscation of Palestinian lands and the annexation of Jerusalem, and settlement of Jewish residents therein. Systematic depletion of the water resources of the West Bank and their use for the needs of Jewish settlers have led to severe drought and forced Palestinian farmers to abandon their traditional homes. The demographic consequences of the occupation are extremely alarming. These obnoxious and illegal policies carried out by Israel

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against the people of Palestine in the occupied territories are clearly in contravention of the Geneva Conventions and must be halted forthwith.

The developments in the Middle East during the last four decades have clearly signalled that concerted international action, under the auspices of the United Nations, is a necessary condition for evolving a just, viable and lasting settlement of the problem. My delegation therefore attaches particular importance to the early convening of the proposed international peace conference on the Middle East and we fully appreciate the Secretary-General's current initiative to that end.

The Arab peace plan, which my delegation fully supports as a sound basis for a comprehensive solution of the problem, and other plans which have been submitted from various quarters, are already before the international community. What is needed now to initiate the peace process is the generation of the necessary political will, particularly on the part of the major Powers, who are in a position to influence developments in the region. The situation in the Middle East is extremely grave and explosive and any further delay in starting the peace process might trigger off a totally unmanageable crisis, making it more difficult, if not impossible, to restore peace in this region.

It is unfortunate that at a time when the international community is making a renewed effort to restore peace in the region, Israel should have undertaken a systematic effort to heighten tension in the region with a view to jeopardizing the current peace process. It has made persistent efforts to block any new initiative, on one pretext or another. On the other hand, it has further exacerbated the situation through its relentless expansion and unabated aggression against the Arab and Palestinian people. We commend our Arab brothers who, in the face of such hostile policies of Israel, have demonstrated the utmost restraint and statesmanship and have continued to make every possible effort for a durable peace in the region.

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The United Nations has a special responsibility towards the Palestinian people. Our failure in the past to implement our own decisions and resolutions has only encouraged Israel to intensify its policy of aggression and occupation against the Arab and Palestinian people. That trend must be halted and reversed. It is our sincere hope that the current historic session will deliberate on the question of Palestine with greater wisdom and foresight, with a view to adopting a concrete course of action to initiate the peace process in the region.

In conclusion, I reaffirm our total and unflinching support for, and solidarity with, our Palestinian brothers in their heroic struggle for the restoration of their inalienable national rights, under the leadership of the PLO, their sole and legitimate representative. Their cause is just and legitimate, and their victory is inevitable.

Mr. KHALIL (Egypt) (interpretation from Arabic): The current debate on the question of Palestine is taking place at a time when it might be said that conditions for the appropriate, sincere efforts needed to find a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of the Middle East are more suitable than at any time since the outbreak of the conflict in Palestine. Since last year's debate on the matter in the General Assembly we have witnessed many very important developments with serious implications for the peace efforts to settle the question of Palestine. Among the most important is what is happening in occupied Palestinian territory - the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Holy Jerusalem. Those events and developments have made it clear that the Palestinian people are still determined to resist all Israel's attempts to break their will and their resistance.

We have followed with admiration, and we support, the resistance of the people of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to the arbitrary and oppressive measures of the Israeli authorities against the cities and villages of the occupied territories. Those measures started with futile attempts to influence the cultural life of the

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new generations of Palestinians. Now those efforts and measures include organized violence, the demolition of houses, the expulsion of citizens, the expropriation of land, administrative detention and the declaration of whole areas as military zones under the direct rule of a military governor. They are accompanied by a settlement process encouraged by the Israeli State and carried out by settlers with expansionist ideologies. It is a process that is doomed to failure and defeat.

The Palestinian people, led by its youth, who were born in the occupied territory and have lived there all their lives, knowing nothing but Israeli oppression, have faced up to all Israel's acts of violence. They have confirmed that the national flame of the Palestinians will not be put out and that their efforts to acquire their right to self-determination will ultimately be crowned with success.

As for the attempts to settle the problem, the Arab side has made it clear that it favours a peaceful settlement. That option has been strengthened by the Jordanian-Palestinian agreement of 11 February 1985, described by His Majesty King Hussein in his statement to the General Assembly on 27 September. It provides the necessary machinery for the implementation of the decisions of the Fez Arab Summit, which confirmed that the Arab nation had opted for a peaceful negotiated settlement.

In his statement to the Extraordinary Summit Conference of Arab States on 7-9 August this year, held in Casablanca, His Majesty King Hussein presented the elements and concepts of the Jordanian-Palestinian agreement. Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) also explained those points and concepts, and the Final Communiqué of the Conference stated that it had taken note with full appreciation of the explanations given by the two Arab leaders with regard to the Jordanian-Palestinian agreement.

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Matters did not end there. Various important developments have taken place in the Arab positions, for the Palestinian and Jordanian side is moving sincerely and vigorously to embark on active negotiations that will lead to a just solution to end the nightmare of suffering, instability and violence afflicting the Middle East in general and the Palestinian people in particular.

Accordingly, His Majesty King Hussein clarified his position when he expressed to the General Assembly his readiness to participate in direct negotiations with Israel, under appropriate auspices, in implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). He said that the appropriate forum would be an international conference in which the five permanent members of the Security Council took part.

As for the PLO, the Cairo Declaration issued by Mr. Yasser Arafat on 7 November this year, which was reaffirmed by the legitimate, elected leadership of the PLO, meeting in Baghdad, confirmed that the PLO condemned and denounced all terrorist acts, whether carried out by States, individuals or groups, against innocent, unarmed people, anywhere in the world. That historic Declaration contains many points that should be considered, pondered upon and read with great interest, for they are extremely significant.*

I wish now to pinpoint some elements in that Declaration. The first concerns the continued belief in peace and the efforts to be made to prepare the region and the international community for a peaceful, just settlement of the problem. The second deals with the adoption of the peaceful alternative, by all the Arab parties, including the PLO, with Security Council guarantees, and in conformity with international legality. That is in accord with decisions adopted at the

*Mr. Berrocal Soto (Costa Rica), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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Casablanca Summit Conference this year. Thirdly, the Declaration reaffirms the right of each State in the region to existence within secure and internationally recognized boundaries, and the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and to establish its own independent State in Palestine. Those elements were contained in the Geneva Declaration on Palestine at the 1983 International Conference on the Question of Palestine, in which Egypt had the honour to take part. Egypt has followed very closely, and has participated effectively and actively in, these Arab efforts, for it has spearheaded the drive in those directions.

Bearing in mind the courage and sincerity required to adopt such historic positions, and remembering the long struggle of the Arab nation to restore the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, Egypt has made clear its beliefs with regard to a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. First, a just settlement requires respect for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the right to establish its own State on its own land.

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Secondly, a permanent settlement of the question requires the participation of the PLO, as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Thirdly, the comprehensive settlement of the conflict requires the withdrawal of Israel from all the Arab and Palestinian territories occupied since 5 June 1967, including Arab Jerusalem. Such also requires recognition of the right of all States in the area to live in security and good-neighbourliness.

That is the position that we adopt and that is widely adopted on the Arab side. We believe that it is adopted also by many other parties whose aim it is to bring about a peaceful settlement of the conflict and that preserves the rights of each party and protects its vital interests and its right to live in peace.

It remains for the Israeli side to take positive action to move closer to all the proposals made by the Arab side for the purpose of the peaceful settlement of the question. In this regard there are many elements with regard to the Israeli position that should be made much more clear before it can be said unequivocally that the situation is ripe for the serious effort that is necessary to arrive at a peaceful settlement.

At the present time it is evident that wide sections of the Israeli society, desire a peaceful settlement of the situation. However, those whose objective is expansion and hegemony are still influential. It is therefore necessary that the forces of peace succeed in defeating those that support expansionist ideologies. Furthermore, the Israeli side should recognize the Palestinian problem and that the Palestinians have legitimate rights. Indeed, this was recognized by Israel within the framework for peace signed in Washington on 17 September 1978. Israel should decide once and for all to opt for peace and good-neighbourly relations and should

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also specifically acknowledge the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including of course the right of the Palestinian people, a people which numbers millions, to self-determination. Recognition of this right remains our main demand. Israel should accept, as the Arab side has accepted, the reality of the situation, which is the need to recognize that the Palestinian people indeed have legitimate representatives and that they should be talked with and negotiated with. That is why Egypt, affirms, as do others, that rejection or opposition to negotiations with the PLO will lead only to further complicating the situation and creating further impediments, which might lead the whole situation into an impasse.

The continuing attempts to annex more land and to expand at the expense of the Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip will lead to more obstacles to the peaceful settlement of the problem and to further violence. This will affect the whole area of the Middle East and spill over into neighbouring areas and the world as a whole. Egypt has always called upon Israel to confirm its desire for peace in order to build confidence not only in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip but also in the Middle East as a whole. We are still waiting for the implementation of the necessary confidence-building measures.

The President of Egypt, Mohamed Hosni Mubarak, in his statement at the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly, said the following:

"Allow me to address an appeal from this rostrum to the Israeli people to respond to the challenge of peace, to reject the concepts of expansion and territorial annexation and to give concrete expression to its desire for coexistence with the Palestinian people. A golden opportunity exists for

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Israel to achieve true peace, transforming its borders with the Arabs into areas of attraction, interaction and fruitful exchange. These borders should no longer be marked by trenches, barbed wire and barricades. We are all called upon to work for a historic reconciliation. We cannot proceed towards the future saddled with the antiquated notions and residues of the past. It is impermissible for any party to try to impose peace, because such a peace would be no more than an armed truce, an invitation to revenge and a source of future bloodshed, violence and hostility." (A/38/PV.10, p. 17)

Egypt believes that the most appropriate framework for a settlement such as we are all endeavouring to achieve and for which we are working, is an international conference, with the participation on a footing of equality, of all the parties, including the PLO. It should be a conference at which the views and the concepts of each party are expressed, at which negotiations take place between the parties concerned and lead to the restoration of the national legitimate rights of the Palestinians; a conference that achieves peace and security for all and leads to the withdrawal of Israel from all the occupied territories; a conference that also leads to the reaffirmation of the right to existence of all parties in the area, including Israel. All the countries of the region have the right to live in peace and good-neighbourliness.

The message which the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General on 26 February 1985, regarding the implementation of General Assembly resolution 39/49 D, on the convening of such an international conference, stated:

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"It is clear from these consultations" - that is, his consultation with the Council members - "that almost all members are in favour of the principle of holding such a conference. Many of these members feel that it should be convened as early as possible; some others consider that the conditions that would make it possible to convene such a conference have not been met as yet."

(A/40/168, p. 3)

My country hopes that all the parties concerned now appreciate the necessity and the appropriateness of convening such a conference. Indeed, the members of the Security Council, it is clear from the President of the Council's message of 26 February 1985 that the members of the Council invited the Secretary-General to continue consultations on this matter in any manner he deemed appropriate. The Secretary-General, in his report (A/40/779 and Corr.1) referred to this matter and he recalled his suggestion that the machinery of the Security Council be used to enhance the search for a settlement of the problem of the Middle East, as well as all other ways and means available to the United Nations in the search for a lasting peace in the Middle East.

Many people say that the history of the search for a settlement in the Middle East is the history of lost opportunities. I must add that Egypt will continue in its endeavour, and do everything possible to promote peaceful efforts to bring about a settlement of the problem for the benefit and the well-being of the Palestinian people and all the people of the Middle East. It is incumbent on all parties, on all those that aim at a real, lasting, just peace in the Middle East and security and stability in the whole area, to take the opportunities available to us.

Mr. DJOUDI (Algeria) (interpretation from French): The tragedy of the Palestinian people is daily retaining our attention with increasing persistence, reminding us that the international community has still been unable to end its ordeal. Indeed, so far, no just and definitive settlement has been embarked upon that would tackle the national dimension of the Palestinian problem.

It is almost four decades now that the Middle East has been the arena of a conflict as a result of serious developments that show no sign of ending in the near future. On the contrary, everything indicates that each new twist in the conflict, particularly because of its recent extension to new regions of the world, show a further worsening of the constant threat to peace and international security it poses.

The question of Palestine is first and foremost a problem of a people that was expelled from its own country, stripped of its belongings and forced into exile. It is also the determination of that people not to relinquish its right to exist and its right to freedom and independence and its exemplary struggle for the liberation of its lands and the recovery of its despoiled national rights. Finally, it is the stubbornness of the occupant who persists in denying that people's rights and in occupying its lands, systematically using force and aggression to accomplish its aims of domination and power over the peoples of the region.

For a long time, however, the crux of the problem has been deliberately concealed. For a long time attempts have been made to reduce the question of Palestine to a refugee problem that at best would be given what was called a humanitarian solution. For a long time some have sought to focus only on the exterior manifestations of the crisis, thus ignoring the real nature of the problem: the denial of the rights of the Palestinian people and the occupation of its lands.

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

As a result of their sacrifices and trials in the pursuit of their determined struggle, the Palestinian national fact made itself known internationally, while the international community recognized the legitimacy of Palestinian rights and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and the indispensable partner in any effort or negotiation for peace.

In recognizing the rightness of the struggle of the Palestinian people and by identifying the essential elements of the conflict and of its solution, the General Assembly 11 years ago committed itself to taking the only way likely to promote the definitive and just settlement of the conflict. That approach of absolute rectitude was able, two years ago - once the basic elements of the settlement of the problem had been identified and subsequently reaffirmed - to define the only framework for negotiation: the holding of an international conference on peace in the Middle East.

Now that the elements and the framework for settling the problem have been defined, all efforts should be directed towards eliminating the obstacles that continue to arise on the road to peace, so that all parties to the conflict, including the PLO, could, on an equal footing, take part in that conference, which has been endorsed by all Arab States.

That it has not yet been possible to hold that conference is once again due to the stubbornness of the Zionist leaders who, in multiplying conditions and pushing back deadlines, continue to oppose all peace efforts and all initiatives, including that of the Heads of Arab States agreed on in September 1982 in Fez.

The situation in the Middle East is worsening every day owing to the policy of aggression and intimidation being pursued, with total impunity, by the Zionist régime against the Palestinian people and the Arab States of the region. In the occupied Arab territories, repression against the Palestinian population is

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

intensifying and worsening every day; it is part of an inexorable systematic exercise aimed at annexing the last of the Arab territories and at liquidating the Palestinian presence.

That repression is accompanied by a truly genocidal campaign against the Palestinian people, extending as far as the Maghreb, where exile and tribulation have led them. The recent aggression against Tunisia, quite apart from the dozens of innocent victims, is an instructive illustration of this natural vocation for escalation that the very notion of sovereignty under international law seems unable to contain.

In the light of the constant violations of the sovereignty of Arab States, in the light of the invasion and occupation of their territories, in the light of the most abominable massacres, whose names, from Deir Yassin to Sabra and Shatila, history remembers in the light of the murderous raids against civilian populations and targets - the international community, particularly the Security Council, have never been able to go beyond a modest reprimand.

Also, in the light of the discrimination shown by the Zionist leaders for our Organization's resolutions, in the light of their decision to annex the Golan Heights and to declare the sacred city of Al Quds their "eternal capital", and to pursue their policy of colonizing occupied Arab territories by establishing settlements and radically modifying the demographic status and geographical character of those territories, the international community has had no choice other than to issue condemnations, and has been unable to take the effective measures the seriousness of the situation required.

The fact is that the body the Charter made responsible for the challenging task of maintaining international peace and security has failed in its duty. In the case of the racist Zionist régime of Tel Aviv, as in the case of the racist régime of Pretoria, it is obvious that the Security Council has been unable, to act

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

with the firmness and severity the seriousness of the situation and the grave threat to international peace and security required of it.

Worse still, the Security Council has always refused, unlike the General Assembly, to recognize the national dimension of the Palestinian problem, just as it has been unable to make the necessary efforts to accelerate the peace process initiated by the General Assembly and work for the early holding of the international conference on peace in the Middle East.

Algeria wishes to reaffirm here its unshakeable support for the Palestinian people, under the leadership of its sole legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization, in its just struggle to recover its legitimate national rights and the building of an independent State in Palestine. The Palestinian people, which has shed its blood and which has known torment and exile, rightly deserves its right to freedom, dignity and independence.

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

Faced with the danger of the extension of the conflict in the Middle East to other parts of the world, and the worsening of the situation, with all the consequences for peace and international security, it is time for the international community to assume its responsibilities and to make decisive efforts to put an end to the policy of aggression and threats, to end the occupation of Arab territories and to ensure that the Palestinian people has restored to it finally all its inalienable national rights, including its right to self-determination, the right of return, and the right to create its own independent State on its national soil in Palestine.

Mr. DIATTA (Niger) (interpretation from French): As we speak in the debate on the question of Palestine, my delegation would like, first of all, to express its thanks and pay a well-deserved tribute to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, and in particular to its Chairman, Ambassador Massamba Sarré of Senegal for the excellent report submitted to us, which testifies to the remarkable work it is doing for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people whose suffering cannot leave unmoved any person or Government that believes in justice and in the ideals of the United Nations.

The question of Palestine, which is now before us, has existed since the founding of the United Nations. It is the history of a people which for 40 years now has experienced only suffering and exile, since it was driven from its land by force. But the remarkable fact is that in spite of all adversity, and the flagrant injustice done to that people, it has never lost hope and is fighting with unflagging determination to recover its legitimate rights.

The question of Palestine has today reached a critical stage which requires even more vigorous action on the part of the Member States of our Organization in the search for a just and lasting solution. Every day we witness Israel's fierce

(Mr. Diatta, Niger)

repression and unlawful practices in the Palestinian and other occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem, in violation of international law and any sense of morality. All means are being used by Israel to wipe out Palestinian resistance, including arbitrary mass imprisonment, forced transfers of individuals or groups, the creation and expansion of settlements, modification of the geographic nature and demographic composition of the territories, as well as all the measures taken by Israel in violation of the Geneva Conventions on the treatment of prisoners of war and the protection of civilian persons in time of war. All these acts of oppression and this institutionalized terrorism committed by Israel against the Palestinian people can only lead to an outcry of the human conscience.

It therefore comes as no surprise, in view of such barbarous acts, that the Zionist régime has established co-operation with the minority régime of South Africa which, as the Assembly knows, uses the same methods to oppose the legitimate claims and aspirations of the black majority. Their odious crimes, their repeated violation of the laws and rules of international behaviour, their attacks on human dignity and their sinister co-operation in order more effectively to oppress the people that they have placed under their yoke by force, must arouse the condemnation and repudiation of international public opinion.

In addition to these acts of repression of all types which we have just mentioned, Israel has also shown its arrogance and complete disdain for the United Nations by refusing to respect the many resolutions adopted on the question of Palestine.

This attitude of defiance and the régime of terror established by Israel in the Palestinian and Arab occupied territories, including Jerusalem, cannot and must not continue indefinitely with impunity. In our view, the responsibility to induce Israel to adopt a policy consistent with the wishes of the international community

(Mr. Diatta, Niger)

lies above all with the Security Council and especially its permanent members in so far as the Charter has conferred on it special responsibilities in the maintenance of international peace and security. My country hopes that it will assume that responsibility with the necessary firmness by losing no time in taking measures not only to put an immediate end to the harmful policies pursued by Israel in the Palestinian and Arab occupied territories, including Jerusalem, but also to induce Israel to respect the relevant resolutions of our Organization concerning Palestine and the Middle East. Strict mandatory sanctions under Chapter VII of the Charter should also be envisaged.

We must remember that Israel is a creation of our Organization. Alas, Israel itself, forgetting the lessons of history, is attempting to disregard the right of another people to exist, and worse yet, has forced it into exile and seized all its property.

Niger wishes to reaffirm here that it will continue to support the heroic struggle of the Palestinian people to recover its fundamental rights, convinced as we are of the justice of its cause. We also wish to reaffirm that we consider that the question of Palestine is at the core of the Middle East conflict and directly affects the peace and stability of the region. In our view, any move that does not take that reality into account would be doomed to failure. Hence we believe that any negotiation designed to seek a peaceful solution to the problem of the Middle East and Palestine must have the effective participation of the Palestinian people through its sole, legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). We must recall in this respect that the PLO, in its attitude and statements has shown a great deal of flexibility and good will in order to facilitate arrival at a peaceful solution to the question, in contrast to the warlike and aggressive attitude of Israel.

(Mr. Diatta, Niger)

Future negotiations should also take into account the fact that a just and lasting peace in the region cannot be established without a total and unconditional withdrawal by Israel from all the Palestinian and Arab occupied territories, including Jerusalem and without the recovery of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to return to its homeland, its right to self-determination and its right to the establishment of a national and independent State.

In its resolution 38/58 C the General Assembly approved the convening of an international conference on the Middle East, and that resolution won almost unanimous support. This reveals how urgent the international community feels is the need for a solution for the region that takes due account of the legitimate aspirations of all the parties to the conflict. My country, which supported that resolution, hopes that all States, in particular those that have the formidable task, under the Charter, of ensuring the maintenance of international peace and security, will make every effort to see that that conference can, in fact, be held, by not placing any obstacles in its way or by helping to eliminating any obstacles. We are convinced that with sustained political resolve to create the right conditions our Organization will be able to turn a painful page in its history: that dealing with the ordeal of the Palestinian people.

Mr. ADENIJI (Nigeria): General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 stipulated the establishment of two States in Palestine - a Jewish State and an Arab State. That was the legal basis for the creation of the State of Israel. Israel was required by the United Nations, as a condition for its creation, to agree to the United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine. Unfortunately, since its birth, Israel has engaged in policies and practices which deliberately violate the undertakings that it freely entered into. It has consistently pursued a policy of expansion and aggression against the neighbouring Arab States and the Palestinian people. There is no disguising the fact that the Israeli design has been to annex all the lands which the United Nations Partition Plan had earmarked for the Palestinians.

For nearly 40 years the General Assembly has continued to deliberate on the question of the Middle East and the question of Palestine. Numerous resolutions have been adopted calling for the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. Considerable efforts have been exerted to find a peaceful solution to the conflict in the Middle East of which the question of Palestine is the core. All those efforts have been unsuccessful mainly because of Israeli intransigence and the unconditional support that it has always received from a super-Power. Taking advantage of that support which guarantees that the Security Council will not be able to adopt appropriate decisions, the Israeli authorities have progressively annexed, seized, and consolidated their hold on, territories by establishing permanent settlements on them without regard for world opinion and international instruments to which Israel is a party.

Israeli pronouncements on the status of occupied Arab territories leave us in doubt as to its intentions. It has unequivocally claimed such occupied territories as part of Israel, with no intention to return them to their original owners. Israeli actions therefore represent a flagrant violation of international law and should be deplored by the international community.

(Mr. Adeniji, Nigeria)

There is no gainsaying that the tension in the Middle East which poses such a grave threat to international peace and security will not be relaxed so long as the rights of the Palestinians are not seen by all as an indispensable element in the solution. Indeed, it is the universally accepted dictum that the Palestinian problem is the core of the question of the Middle East. Unless a just solution is found for the issue of Palestine and the inalienable rights of the Palestinians there can be no peace in the Middle East. Efforts at partial solutions, however well intentioned and carefully executed, have proved ephemeral in the end. In my delegation's view, such will always be the outcome of attempted solutions that seek to ignore the Palestinians.

In our view, the 1983 International Conference on the Question of Palestine held in Geneva, proposed all the elements that a peaceful solution of the Middle East needs. Nigeria holds the view that the Geneva Declaration which emanated from that Conference provided a sound basis for a lasting and just settlement. The Declaration, it should be recalled, affirmed the attainment by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, including to return to its homeland, self-determination, and to establish its own independent State in Palestine. It affirmed the right of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the representative of the Palestinian people, to participate on an equal footing with other parties in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East.

The Declaration stressed the need to put an end to Israel's occupation of Arab territories, in accordance with the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, and to secure Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem; the need to oppose and reject such Israeli policies and practices in the occupied territories and any de facto

(Mr. Adeniji, Nigeria)

situations created by Israel which are contrary to international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly such practices as the establishment of settlements which constitute major obstacles to the achievement of peace in the Middle East.

It should also be recalled that the Declaration considered as null and void all legislative and administrative measures and decisions taken by Israel that have altered or purported to alter the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, including the appropriation of land and properties situated there, and in particular the so-called Basic Law on Jerusalem and the proclamation of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. It affirmed the right of all States in the region to exist within secure and internationally recognized boundaries, with justice and security for all the people.

The Geneva Conference also recommended the holding of an international conference on the Middle East which would provide an opportunity to bring all the parties to the conflict to the negotiating table. My delegation has therefore noted with dismay in the Secretary-General's report contained in document A/40/168 that the arrangements for convening the said conference have continued to be thwarted by what we consider to be the spurious argument that the conditions that would make it possible to convene such a conference have not been met as yet. My delegation feels that the Secretary-General should be encouraged further to continue his consultations with a view to convening the conference, which we believe will give all the parties to the dispute an opportunity to arrive at a solution that is fair and acceptable to all.

(Mr. Adeniji, Nigeria)

My delegation has studied very carefully the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People contained in document A/40/35, which gives a clear account of the various activities that the Committee undertook during the year in fulfilment of its mandate. I wish to thank the Chairman, Ambassador Massamba Sarré of Senegal, and the other members of the Committee for their untiring efforts aimed at the restoration of the rights of the Palestinians and the international awareness it has created through its Programme of Action. Our gratitude goes also to the Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories for that Committee's steadfastness in carrying out its mandate in spite of the obstacles placed in its way by the occupying Power.

I should like, in conclusion, to reaffirm Nigeria's policy on the question of Palestine. It is our firm belief that any settlement of the problem should proceed from the starting-point of Israel's withdrawal from occupied Arab territories. It must also provide for the return of the Palestinian refugees to their homeland and the exercise by the Palestinians as a whole of their right to self-determination in a homeland of their own. As the sole and authentic representative of the Palestinian people, the PLO must participate in all negotiations concerning a peaceful settlement of the Middle East crisis. A logical forum for such negotiations, in our view, is the proposed international conference on the Middle East. We therefore call again on all countries to make it possible for the conference to be convened at an early date.

Mr. SAHBANI (Tunisia) (interpretation from Arabic): This year the United Nations is celebrating its fortieth anniversary and the peoples of the world are anxious to glorify the ideals on which it rests and the objectives for which it was created.

(Mr. Sahbani, Tunisia)

These objectives represent the essence of what must be promoted in order to guarantee to the human race peace, dignity, freedom and a tranquil life.

How we would have liked to celebrate today the attainment of that goal, were it not for the realities we too often must confront and which can only remind us that between those objectives and the present situation a great distance remains to be travelled: so many tragedies unceasingly occur on the way, tragedies growing in complexity in spite of the tireless efforts made in this forum and the many steps to which they have led.

Clearly, the question of Palestine is one of those grave, chronic cases that elude a solution. It is not that it is basically insoluble, but that political will, foresight and the implementation of agreed principles fall by the wayside when what is at issue is the question of Palestine and the destiny of the Palestinian people.

Today we have the problem before us once again, more complex and acute than ever, four decades since it emerged, a period during which the problem has only festered.

The Tunisian Government had very early on drawn the attention of world public opinion to the need to consider this issue seriously and clearly on the basis of the facts in order to understand it correctly and to attempt to resolve it so as to guarantee the natural rights of peoples, taking into account the undeniable realities, and to preserve peaceful coexistence between the communities.

In affirming its views on this question, Tunisia has met with many difficulties, and its President, H.E. Habib Bourguiba, has many times been exposed to misunderstanding and much criticism.

(Mr. Sahbani, Tunisia)

None the less, we reiterate today that same position, persuaded of the correctness of our opinions, of the effectiveness of our approach and firmly convinced that this cause is just and that it deserves our continued efforts in its defence.

Once again we affirm that this is not a problem of refugees, to whom charity is given and for whom we try to find shelter, assistance and relief; we are dealing with the commitment of an entire people to fundamental rights that concern it just as they concern all other peoples, that is, the right to a homeland on a land where the blood and sweat of its children were shed; the right to dignity, to its own specific personality; the right to self-determination in implementation of the principles and decisions of the United Nations

If the situation were different, the whole world - with the exception, of course, of the dominating State, which is party to the issue - would have applauded the struggle of the Palestinian people because that people, in spite of the vicissitudes of fortune, has resisted; it has stayed on its feet, inspired by faith in its rights, never despairing of human justice and morality.

There is a flagrant paradox that strikes the observer. When we compare the situation of the Palestinian people with similar situations concerning other peoples, we see that the whole world supports the latter and pledges to defend them on the basis of the principles accepted by the conscience of the world. But when the Palestinian people are at stake, other criteria intervene: self-interest replaces principles, whereas natural law is indivisible and cannot be altered by changing circumstances or by the specific characteristics of the peoples concerned.

International public opinion has gone through turbulent stages in dealing with this issue. From the outset it has understood the substance of the problem by realizing that the dispute results from the coexistence on a single territory of two peoples, each inspired by sharp nationalism and each claiming its full and absolute right over the territory.

(Mr. Sahbani, Tunisia)

It has proven impossible to bring the two parties to agreement on a shared national concept, given the Israeli party's rejection from the very outset of that concept of a single homeland.

Hence the international community in 1947 adopted resolution 181 (II), which provides for the division of the territory into two parts: an Arab territory and an Israeli territory. Subsequently, the State of Israel was established, but the Palestinian state remained in limbo.

Although that resolution, in our view, was unjust, and President Bourguiba denounced it as an example of the use of force and constraint for the solution of international problems, Israel none the less considered it to fall short of the acceptable minimum and to be incompatible with its concept of a Zionist state. It has therefore unceasingly - and this is common knowledge - expanded into the territory granted to the Palestinian state. Moreover, it has denied to the Palestinians the right even to have a personality and to set up a State in application of the terms of the very document that made the creation of Israel possible.

Given these developments, public opinion gradually forgot resolution 181 (II) and began to consider the issue from standpoints that do not always correspond to the spirit of that resolution, confining itself to certain aspects of the problem but losing sight of the essential one as reflected in the decision taken in 1947.

Political thinking has, generally speaking, followed that trend. Many efforts failed and it was natural that they should fail, especially with Israel obstructing any plan that might open the door to a discussion likely to lead to the establishment of a just and equitable peace that would restore to the Palestinian people its rightful place and spare the region any attempts at hegemony or arbitrary rule. Even proposals from Israel's friends have not escaped its rejection.

(Mr. Sahbani, Tunisia)

Resolution 181 (II) remains, in our view, the main reference point for our consideration of the question of Palestine because, among all the resolutions adopted by the United Nations, it is the one which comes the closest to fairness and wisdom. It is also the one which has commanded the support of most of the major Powers, including the United States and the Soviet Union.

Although 38 years have gone by, this decision remains viable both in its spirit and in its philosophy.

(Mr. Sahbani, Tunisia)

We make that statement without losing sight of the evolution of this question or of the adjustments required by present reality.

The Arab States as well as the Palestine Liberation Organization demonstrated at the Fez Summit in 1982 their readiness to tackle new situations realistically and with tolerance and to shoulder their full responsibility vis-à-vis the situation that prevailed in 1967. They therefore made the whole world witness to their good intentions and pledged to preserve the peace, the stability and the coexistence of all the States of the region without exception.

My country has given its full support to the Fez plan, particularly in connection with the question of Palestine, as well as to all sincere and credible proposals that are in keeping with that plan. In this context, Tunisia considers that the United Nations decisions, although not in every way consistent with our approach to a solution, none the less do for the most part contain positive aspects to which we can refer, thus making these decisions, on the whole, a basket of legitimate international proposals that balance and dovetail with each other. Therefore, it would not be logical to cling to one or two texts and reject the others. It is high time for international public opinion to reflect on this approach, which could help in the quest for a way out of the present impasse.

The persistence of this tragedy has brought about, from the standpoint of ethics and morality, harmful behaviour that had not been prevalent in the region before. The continuation of these manifestations can only further worsen and complicate the situation. It has become clear that the consequences will not be confined to the borders of the region. It is urgent to put an end to this situation by eliminating the root causes.

Along those lines, there is a need for a change in the attitude that some have taken on this problem, an attitude that consists of refusing to recognize the

(Mr. Sahbani, Tunisia)

adversary and avoiding any discussion with those who bear arms, under the pretext that they are terrorists. We believe that this is a serious mistake. Of course, my country rejects terrorism, denounces irresponsible behaviour and condemns the harm done to innocent persons, regardless of the origin or the pretext. But my country lived through a period in the past when Bourguiba himself was considered to be the leader of the terrorists. And were not the Tunisian militants described as terrorists because of their struggle for the liberation of their country? Was this not true of many countries in their struggle for emancipation? And yet it was subsequently established that real peace could not be attained without the efforts of those militants, and that their involvement was essential for solutions to succeed.

The same applies to the question of Palestine, and it is a waste of time and effort to deny that fact. We firmly believe that the involvement of the legitimate representatives of the Palestinians in the search for and the achievement of peace will contribute enormously to the success of that undertaking.

With manifest courage the Palestine Liberation Organization, together with the Arab community, has given sufficient evidence of its desire for peace, of its readiness to negotiate - in the framework of adequate international guarantees - with pragmatism, a sense of responsibility and a commitment to an honourable peace.

Peace does not endanger Israel - not the Israel created by the United Nations, not even the Israel which, at the cost of a war every 10 years, expanded illegitimately until 1967. Peace is a danger only for those who want constantly to increase their territory by force of arms - not for States whose sole concern is to meet the challenge of our day: the survival and well-being of their nationals. May Israel show the same commitment and free itself of the fear of the establishment of peace.

(Mr. Sahbani, Tunisia)

Therein reside our hopes. May the efforts of the United Nations command the support of men of good will so that this fortieth anniversary may mark the advent of a new era in which mankind will have reason to hope.

I take this opportunity to extend to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, and above all its Chairman, Ambassador Massamba Sarré, our sincere gratitude for their efforts in the Palestinian cause. We appreciate the valuable recommendations contained in the Committee's report. My country fully supports the report and those recommendations, which contain elements in respect of this problem that deserve our consideration.

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

The question of Palestine, in its many aspects, is doubtless one of those that have received the most attention from our Organization. While it is important for us to take a periodic look at this question, it is clear that the main responsibility and the means of finding a peaceful solution to this complex problem lie primarily with the parties directly concerned. Until they are prepared to make substantial reciprocal concessions, discussions in this Assembly will continue without any decisive result that would make it possible to improve the lot of the sorely tried Palestinian people.

On the contrary, every year that passes without substantial progress being made towards the solution of the Palestinian problem - which I hardly need say is of paramount importance for peace and security in the Middle East - makes the situation more difficult, because the feelings of hostility continue to become entrenched, and add further difficulties to existing problems.

(Mr. Philippe, Luxembourg)

Acts of violence and terrorism are particularly harmful in this respect. They contribute to an escalation which is bound to be counter-productive when it comes to the peaceful settlement of disputes. On the contrary, it is necessary to establish a climate of confidence and understanding, which is a key element in the search for any solution. It is necessary in fact that the enemies of today stop regarding each other as enemies if there to be any chance of seeing an end to the conflict in the region.

We take this opportunity to appeal to all the parties concerned to refrain from any action that might hinder the development of such a climate of confidence and understanding. Our Assembly can contribute to this by using moderate and conciliatory language when it discusses the problems of the Middle East.

The principles of our policy aimed at finding a solution to the problem of Palestine are well known. Such a settlement must be based on Secretary Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and must encompass the right to existence and security of all States in the region, including Israel, justice for all peoples of the region and the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people, with everything that that implies. These principles must be accepted by all the parties concerned, including the Palestinian people and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which must be associated with the negotiations.

It is clear that a negotiation process is essential if we are to find a satisfactory solution to the question of Palestine. Such a process must involve a mutual recognition of the existence and rights of the parties to the conflict.

We have often stressed our conviction that Israel will not obtain the security and recognition to which it is entitled unless it seeks a negotiated settlement

(Mr. Philippe, Luxembourg)

that, in particular, satisfies the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people. We would like to see the Palestinian people able to pursue its objectives by political means the implementation of which would take account of the need to recognize and respect the existence and security of all.

We believe that no effort should be spared to maintain and strengthen the present direction of the peace process and to facilitate a dialogue between the parties to the conflict.

A satisfactory solution to the question of Palestine requires that the principles of the non use of force and renunciation of the acquisition of territory by force be respected by all.*

A key element in the solution of the conflict is the question of Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967. It is clear that under Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) Israel must end the territorial occupation that it has maintained since 1967. We would like to remind the Assembly, incidentally, that the provisions of the Hague Convention of 1907 and the Fourth Geneva Convention are applicable to those territories. It is very disturbing that the situation in the occupied territories is so serious and alarming and continues to worsen. The Israeli settlements policy continues in particular to be a matter of great concern to us. The colonies established in the occupied territories since 1967 and any change in the status or demographic structure of those territories are illegal under international law and are a serious obstacle to these peace efforts. Similarly, Israel's policy in the eastern part of Jerusalem and in the Golan Heights is contrary to international law and decisions taken as part of that policy should consequently be regarded as null and void.

*Mr. Al-Kawari (Qatar), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Philippe, Luxembourg)

Before concluding, we think it essential to reaffirm our profound concern over the distress of the Palestinian civilian populations and our desire that the competent international organizations should be able to provide their assistance without hindrance.

Finally, we wish to stress once again the need for all the parties concerned to implement in full Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and to respect the principles to which we have just referred. We also think it essential that every effort should be made to ensure that the action taken by the King of Jordan and the Jordan-Palestine agreement of 11 February, like other encouraging developments, should bear fruit and that tangible progress should at last be made towards an overall, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine.

As in the past, we stand ready to make our contribution to such a solution.

Mr. MOUSHOUTAS (Cyprus): Only a few weeks ago we observed the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations. The significance of that observance was stressed by the presence and active participation of a great number of Heads of State Government, who invariably expressed their faith in the Organization as well as the expectations of the peoples of the world.

Despite the achievements of this Organization in numerous fields over the 40 years of its existence, there remain great expectations on the part of oppressed peoples throughout the world which have still not been realised. The people of Palestine, the displaced, tormented and homeless Palestinians, have still not achieved recognition of their inalienable rights.

(Mr. Moushoutas, Cyprus)

The United Nations has been dealing with the Palestinian problem ever since its inception. Yet while the international community has expressed in unequivocal terms in numerous resolutions its support for the rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty, the problem remains unresolved. Instead of progress, we witness retrogression; instead of an improvement in the overall situation, we see a noticeable worsening, in both human and political terms.

The question of Palestine, which is at the core of the Middle East problem, represents a test case for this Organization. Its persistence does not make a positive contribution to the credibility of the United Nations. Rather, it points to the weaknesses of the world Organization, that is, the non-implementation of its own resolutions. It was for this reason that the President of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr. Spyros Kyprianou, proposed at the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly the inscription in the agenda of the Assembly of the item entitled "Implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations". Unless we devise and agree on the means by which this Organization can implement its resolutions and decisions, its credibility and effectiveness will unfortunately continue to be questioned. Moreover, the universally condemned perpetrators of injustice will continue their practices undisturbed in the knowledge that the international community has no means of implementing its decisions as expressed through the General Assembly and the Security Council.

Above and beyond its repercussions on the United Nations and on regional and international peace and security, the Palestinian problem is a cause of human dignity and of survival. It is a problem affecting the lives of millions of suffering Palestinians who live either as refugees away from their homelands or in the occupied territories under Israeli administration.

(Mr. Moushoutas, Cyprus)

The plight of the Palestinians is well known to the international community. It is well known to the people of Cyprus because of geographical proximity and because of their traditional ties of friendship with the Palestinians. Also well known is their heroic struggle, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

Last week, on 29 November, the international community marked the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. In a message to the United Nations Committee for the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People the President of the Republic of Cyprus expressed the conviction that with unity and perseverance in their just struggle the Palestinian people, with the support of all countries and peoples who value human dignity and justice, would be able to achieve their inalienable rights.

The position of Cyprus on the question of Palestine has been unequivocally in favour of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. As a member of the United Nations Committee for the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Cyprus has stood firmly in support of Palestinian rights, including the people's right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State.

We have also maintained that the Palestinian people must be parties, through their sole and legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization, to any peace negotiations concerning their future. Any process aimed at a just and lasting solution of the problems in the Middle East will have not only to deal with the Palestinian question - the Palestinians' right to return to their homes and lands, their right to self-determination and their right to independence - but also to involve the legitimate representatives of the Palestinian people.

We regret that so far not only has progress not been achieved towards the solution of the problem but on the contrary that we are witnessing a deterioration of the situation, which has added to the human suffering of innocent people.

(Mr. Moushoutas, Cyprus)

Cyprus will exert every effort to promote the just cause of the Palestinian people and the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions and decisions on Palestine.

We owe it to the people of Palestine, the people of Namibia, the people of Cyprus, to all suffering peoples and to the future of humanity, to ensure that peace and justice are achieved where they are lacking, to ensure that the conditions by which there are oppressors and oppressed, conquerors and people conquered, are eliminated. We believe that this Organization could, on the basis of the principles enshrined in the Charter, play a most significant role in promoting peace and justice in our world.

The commemoration of the fortieth anniversary gave the international community the opportunity to express its continued commitment to the United Nations and the principles of its Charter. We must build on that basis and strive to realize in practice the positions we uphold as expressed in our resolutions. The question of Palestine must and will be solved on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions and decisions, and within the framework of the United Nations. Only then will a just and lasting peace be established in the region, which will allow the much tormented Palestinians, as well as all the other peoples in the region, to live and prosper in peace and security.

Mr. HUCKE (German Democratic Republic): In this fortieth year of United Nations activity the General Assembly is having to deal with the still unresolved question of Palestine. In spite of the success of United Nations efforts towards implementing the right to self-determination for many peoples, a solution to the problem - which has now been on the agenda of the world forum for nearly 40 years has not yet been found which would meet the interests of the Palestinian people.

(Mr. Hucke, German Democratic Republic)

There are, however, ways and means towards a solution of the question of Palestine, based on the will of the majority of United Nations Members as well as on the Charter of this world Organization. Those ways and means are outlined in numerous United Nations resolutions and decisions, the decisions of the 1983 Geneva Conference on the Question of Palestine and the Fez peace plan, as well as in the proposals concerning the Middle East submitted by the Soviet Union in July 1984.

The reason why it has so far been impossible, despite the comprehensive efforts of the international community, to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights, specifically its right to self-determination and to establish a State of its own, resides in the sustained policy of aggression and occupation pursued by Israel. It is an undeniable fact that a lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict would have been achieved long ago and its core, the question of Palestine, justly solved if it were not for the unqualified political, economic and, especially, military assistance rendered to Israel by its strategic ally.

The Arab peoples and notably the suffering Palestinian people have to pay a high price for Israel's expansionist drive and the policy of State terrorism practised by the aggressor.

The latest example of Israeli action in disregard of all norms of international law was the barbaric air raid on the city of Tunis, which has been denounced throughout the world. Each day the Israeli occupiers are perpetrating new crimes, while consolidating their repressive régime in the Arab and Palestinian territories under their occupation. They continue quite overtly to uproot and displace the Palestinian population from their homes and property. They also continue their land-grabbing and economic plunder and designs to disrupt the

(Mr. Hucke, German Democratic Republic)

Palestinian community and educational structures, and they go on suppressing that people's national cultural identity.

Their aim is to create in the occupied territories an atmosphere of fear and terror, in order to intimidate the Palestinian population and break their legitimate resistance to the occupation. The crusade of oppression pursued by the ruling Israeli circles towards the Palestinians goes hand in hand with the futile attempt to eliminate the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as a political factor and thus to deprive the Palestinian people of its sole legitimate representative.

All those measures are designed to perpetuate the occupation and advance the process of creeping annexation of the occupied Palestinian territories.

The German Democratic Republic resolutely condemns Israel's policy of terror against the Palestinian people and joins the majority of States in advocating resolute action against the aggressor.

(Mr. Hücke, German Democratic Republic)

With each passing day it becomes ever more imperative to bring about a just and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine, as the dispute over the problem is being further aggravated.

While the progressive forces of mankind in the struggle for the maintenance of peace and security in the world and for the peaceful solution of international conflicts are redoubling their efforts in order to enable the Palestinian people eventually to exercise its legitimate national rights, imperialist forces are stepping up their endeavours to revive the policy of separate deals and negotiations with the PLO excluded.

Through those machinations, Israel and its imperialist allies are trying to remove the Middle East conflict and the question of Palestine from the agenda, to betray the Palestinian people and deprive it of its national rights for good and all. These attempts and practices must be stopped. Joint and resolute action by all peace-loving forces is now more necessary than ever before.

We welcome all steps aimed at strengthening unity and cohesion within the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the alliance of all anti-imperialist and patriotic forces in the Middle East.

This year the peoples of the world commemorated the fortieth anniversary of the victory of the Soviet Union and the other States and peoples of the anti-Hitler coalition over fascism, a victory in the wake of which the United Nations was founded. The General Assembly at its current session has proclaimed the coming year as the International Year of Peace. These events and measures should lead to increased collective efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace for all States and peoples in the Middle East, including the Palestinian people.

(Mr. Hucke, German Democratic Republic)

The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was commemorated on 29 November, when the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and Chairman of the Council of State of the German Democratic Republic, Erich Honecker, sent a message to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. In it he reaffirmed solidarity with the struggle waged by the Palestinian people under the leadership of its sole legitimate representative, the PLO, for the implementation of its inalienable national rights, and once again underlined the German Democratic Republic's position regarding the settlement of the Middle East conflict and the question of Palestine. He stated, inter alia:

"The special responsibility of the United Nations for a comprehensive, just and therefore lasting settlement in the Middle East requires collective efforts and can be achieved only on the basis of Israel's immediate and unconditional withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied since 1967, the implementation of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to establish an independent State of its own, and the safeguarding of the right of all States of that region to exist and develop in independence. The only practicable way to attain this goal is an international Middle East conference under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all interested parties, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, which was again advocated by the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty in their Declaration adopted in Sofia.

"You may rest assured, dear Mr. Secretary-General, that the German Democratic Republic will be equally committed to this stance in the future. This will involve its active co-operation within the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, which

(Mr. Hücke, German Democratic Republic)

over the past decade has been strongly dedicated to the just cause of the Palestinian people."

Ms. NGUYEN BINH THANH (Viet Nam) (interpretation from French): The General Assembly has just commemorated the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, which was established after one of the most terrible events in human history - the Second World War. As a result, our Organization set as its purpose that of contributing actively to the maintenance of international peace and security, respect for the independence and freedom of peoples and the strengthening of international co-operation.

Forty years have gone by, but the international community still faces many threats to international peace and security. A number of peoples, including the Arab people of Palestine, are still denied the exercise of their fundamental national rights, as laid down in the Charter.

Year after year the General Assembly and the Security Council have adopted many resolutions strongly condemning the continued acts of aggression by Israel against the peoples of Palestine and other Arab countries and affirming, inter alia, that the Palestinian people, like the other peoples of the world, have an inalienable right to independence and freedom on their own territory.

In spite of all those resolutions and the unanimous condemnation of the international community, the tragic situation persists of millions of Palestinians driven out of their native land and living in exile, because the Israeli authorities continue to deny them their right to return to their homes. The Palestinian people has become a population of refugees, whose property has been stolen, whose homes have been blown up and whose schools and universities have been closed. Worse still, the systematic massacres, and the raids by the Israeli

(Ms. Nguyen Binh Thanh, Viet Nam)

Air Force on Palestinian refugee camps, continue. The names of Sabra and Shatila have been added to those names of tragic memory, Lidice and Oradour-sur-Glane, as further intolerable outrages upon the human conscience. To top it all, an attempt has even been made to deny the Palestinian identity. We strongly denounce and condemn those criminal acts by Israel and demand that it immediately end its expansionist policy and inhuman practices against the Palestinian and other Arab peoples.

It is crystal clear that that aggressive policy towards the Arab people of Palestine would not have been possible without the political, military, financial and diplomatic support of the United States, Israel's strategic ally, which gives it billions of dollars in financial aid and highly sophisticated weapons, thus encouraging it to pursue its expansionist policy of aggression and occupation, which is a grave threat to the security of the Arab States and the peace of the region and the world.

(Ms. Nguyen Binh Thanh, Viet Nam)

Furthermore, Israel's strategic ally has feverishly endeavoured to hinder the international peace efforts by resorting arbitrarily to its right of veto in the Security Council. At the present time it is attempting by all means to impose partial and separate solutions by practising its policy of division aimed at weakening the unity of the Palestinian resistance movement and the solidarity of the Arab countries.

The attempts to arrive at separate and partial agreements or to open negotiations without the authentic representative of the Palestinian people - that is, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) - are incompatible with the interests of the Palestinian people and the peoples of the region. The experience of these many years demonstrates irrefutably that the conflict of the Middle East and its central problem, the question of Palestine, cannot be resolved through separate agreements, which far from contributing to the establishment of peace in that part of the world have, on the contrary, increased the complexity of that bloody conflict and have diverted it from the path toward a just and equitable solution to the Palestinian problem.

It is not difficult to find an explanation for the policy of the major imperialist Power toward the question of Palestine. That Power uses Israel as a regional policeman in the Middle East to oppose the Palestinian resistance movement and the progressive independent countries in the region in order to impose its influence and domination. Its policies and practices, as well as those of its protégé, demonstrate once more the aggressive nature of the strategic alliance between the forces of imperialism and Zionism. They do all in their power not only to prevent the Palestinian people from exercising its inalienable rights, but also to implement the counter-revolutionary global strategy of the vanguard of imperialism. The international community must forcefully condemn this policy and these practices and make them come to an end without delay, not only because

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they violate law and morality, but, above all, because they constitute a source of tension in the Middle East with all its concomitant and familiar effects on international peace and security.

By their criminal acts, the Zionist authorities thought that they could put an end to the existence of the Palestinians as a people, discourage them in the pursuit of their right to a homeland, and, lastly, subjugate them. But they underestimated the Palestinian people. Under the leadership of the PLO, its authentic representative, the Palestinian people are continuing their heroic struggle against the aggressors, for the exercise of their right to self-determination, and their right to a homeland, where they can live free and in peace with their neighbours. By that heroic struggle, which has won the admiration of all mankind, the Palestinian people have become an important factor which cannot be ignored and much less left out of the search for peace and security in that strategic and ever-troubled region of the world. It is clear today that a lasting and solid peace in the Middle East cannot be established without a just solution to the question of Palestine on the basis of the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

The international community has been deeply concerned at the plight of the Palestinian people. We have thus expressed our sympathy to them and we have given them our assistance. But that is not enough. To bring freedom and well-being to a people that have suffered too much, only an end to Israel's occupation can accomplish that. Israel's war-like policy, aided and abetted by its imperialist protector, must be denounced ever more forcefully.

For their part, the people and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, loyal to their consistent internationalist policy, have given and will continue to give their firm support to the people of Palestine. The Palestinian people will be able to thwart all imperialist manoeuvres however perfidious to

(Ms. Nguyen Binh Thanh, Viet Nam)

divide them, and will successfully complete their struggle for the recovery of their fundamental national rights.

We are in favour of the convening of an international conference on peace in the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the PLO, on an equal footing and in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and of the Non-Aligned Movement. The long-awaited solution to the question of Palestine, on a just basis, in the framework of a global settlement of the question of the Middle East, will undoubtedly make a crucial contribution to the cause of peace and security in that still-troubled region and in the world.

Mr. AL-SHAALI (United Arab Emirates) (interpretation from Arabic): I would like at the outset of my statement to express my thanks to Ambassador Massamba Sarré, the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, and to the other members of the Committee for their report, contained in document A/40/35. That report included more examples of the actions and practices in opposition to the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. We meet here once again to consider the question of Palestine. If we want to review in general the developments which took place since the last session, as far as this issue is concerned, we will find various developments in the same direction taken up by events since the adoption of the General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 on the partition of Palestine.

During that time there emerged the theory of new colonialism, whose objectives are identical with those of the Zionist movement, namely to establish a military settler base in Palestine as an experiment and a model.

The developments that took place since the last session point to annexation of further Arab and Palestinian territories, the expulsion of more Palestinians

(Mr. Al-Shaali, United Arab Emirates)

outside the land and the imposition of more repressive and oppressive actions against civilians. They are the target of military, social and economic constraints imposed by Israel in a feverish attempt to liquidate the Palestinian people, morally and physically.

The Israeli raid against our sister State Tunisia, last October was a vivid proof of Israel's intentions and its insistence on pursuing the Palestinian people and murdering them wherever they are. This military and material pressure was accompanied by political pressure in order to force the Palestinians to relinquish their land and accept occupation, and through international pressure exercised by certain Western countries in order to secure recognition by the Palestinian people of the usurpers of their land and to force them to surrender to those who murder them.

Therefore, the practices against the Palestinian people took two parallel forms. The first is a direct one, undertaken by Israel, through physical liquidation and military and material pressure. The second form is that undertaken by certain Western countries through political pressure and information and psychological campaigns. These practices are intended to deprive the Palestinian people of their political powers, as well as the organization of authority, sabotaging all their achievements during long years of struggles and stripping the cause of its political content so that it may be dealt with henceforth as a refugee problem and therefore a humanitarian question and not one of a people expelled from their land.

(Mr. Al-Shaali, United Arab Emirates)

From another point of view the political support and the economic, military and technical assistance provided by the Government of the United States to Israel have reached awesome levels and are a source of threat, concern and uncertainty as to their purpose. In our view, this goes far beyond the traditional argument about the protection of Israel and extends to the perpetuation of the Israeli rejection of peace and the continuance of the cycle of violence in the Middle East.

There is no doubt that the displaced Palestinian people is facing a vicious attack amid difficult circumstances. However, the Palestinian people is still making history by its heroic resistance and its insistence on recovering its land and its legitimate national rights, despite the brutality of the forces it faces and of the information, economic and military machinery which is being used in an attempt to annihilate the Palestinian people. In this connection the Palestinian people invokes its inherent right to its land, its long Arab history and the forces of freedom, justice and peace in this world, as represented by the Non-Aligned Movement, and its high principles and ideals. Those principles give the impetus to the struggle of peoples against belittlement, colonialism and underdevelopment in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

We take this opportunity, particularly in the light of the new international circumstances, to pay a tribute to that Movement for the role it is playing and to reaffirm the need to exercise the utmost caution against the attempts being made to divide and undermine it by isolating its members.

With regard to the initiatives designed to establish peace in the region, we note that despite the efforts made and the different proposals submitted the Israeli position is still characterized by intransigence and the policy of diktat for the purpose of paralysing and undermining the peace process. If this indicates anything it is that Israel neither desires nor needs peace.

(Mr. Al-Shaali, United Arab Emirates)

Israel's lack of the desire to see established peace stems principally from the Zionist ideology upon which Israel was established and which runs counter to the principle of peace, because peace strips it of its glamour and makes it subject to the principles of international law, which does not accord with its political aspirations and expansionist ambitions. That is particularly true in that Israel, in the view of its leaders, is still an indeterminate State, subject to expansion through the occupation of further Arab lands and the absorption of more refugees, and that the borders of Israel, according to the Zionist doctrine, extend to wherever its army may go. Undoubtedly, peace runs counter also to those that support Israel as an experiment and a model.

The reason Israel does not need peace, is a simple economic fact, namely, that its annual income, which comes from the financial assistance of a single State, is \$3 billion, which means that the annual net per capita income in Israel from this assistance is \$1,000, whereas statistics indicate that the per capita income in many countries of the world is no more than \$200 a year. If we add to this other special military and technical assistance and the fact that the cost of all the wars launched by Israel and all its adventures is pre-paid, we may well wonder what more peace could bring to Israel. In the light of these circumstances, Israel's rejection of peace is logical.

However, the big question which is still hovering over Israel is whether the supporters and allies of Israel really want peace. The future will provide the answer to that question. We hope that the response will be positive, even though we doubt it.

The Arabs and the Palestinians, through the Arab peace plan approved by the Fez Summit Conference in 1982, have done their best, quite sincerely, to reach a just and comprehensive peace which takes into account all the dimensions of the problem and to deal with it seriously and objectively.

(Mr. Al-Shaali, United Arab Emirates)

The whole world is well aware of the obstacles put in the way of that plan by those that oppose it. The attempt of some to depict the problem one of boundaries or of refugees and to solve it on that basis are contrary to the United Nations Charter and resolutions. Those people also ignore the basic facts of the conflict in the Middle East, the core of which is the question of Palestine. Any resolution which does not take these facts into consideration only helps to perpetuate the problem, with the threat it poses to international peace and security.

In conformity with the Arab peace plan, and on the basis of the Declaration of the International Conference on Palestine, we reaffirm our respect for resolution 38/58 C, which endorses the convening of an international conference on peace in the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations. We reaffirm that the United Nations is the natural and practical framework for the solution of this problem, which originated in its meeting rooms. We condemn all attempts to deal with the issue outside the United Nations. We realize that the aim behind them is to isolate the Palestinian people in order to compel it to surrender its rights.

We realize that peace will be established only when Israel feels that it needs peace and that will be only when it faces a firm international position based on the relations of States with it being determined by its response to the peace process and the cessation of acts of violence against the Palestinian people and the Arab States.

The countries which provide Israel with all its means of existence should cease to provide all those means, in particular military and economic means, and humanitarian assistance.

(Mr. Al-Shaali, United Arab
Emirates)

In confirmation of the position of the United Arab Emirates, my delegation reaffirms its support for the legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people. We believe that to be viable any solution must take into account the basic facts of the problems and be based on the restoration of the legitimate national right of the Palestinian people to return, to self-determination and to establish its independent State on its national soil, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole, legitimate representative.

Mr. ALAOUI (Morocco) (interpretation from Arabic): There is no cause for which the United Nations bears a greater responsibility than that of Palestine. The constant attention devoted by our Organization to this question and to the rights of the Palestinian people is a clear indication of the extent of understanding and support which the international community affords the inalienable rights of this struggling people and its total rejection of Israel's policy in the Middle East, considering that it is a policy based on force, deportation and denial of the most fundamental human rights of those who have inhabited that land for millenia.

We are all aware that the Palestinian question is the crux of the crisis in the Middle East and the core of the tragedy which befell this region. It is a question of the denial of right and law, of a people uprooted from their land and driven away from their homes by persecution and terror.

Decades have elapsed and the Palestinian people continues to wait for this Organization to honour its undertakings towards it, longing all the time for a homeland to cherish and a State to rally around.

The United Nations, as the international Organization which is the guardian of international law and legitimacy, spares no effort in reasserting its total solidarity with the Palestinian people and its political and legal commitments on this question. Since the adoption of its historic resolution 3236 (XXIX), dated 22 November 1974, the General Assembly, on every occasion and at every session, reaffirmed the actuality and the power of the rights of the Palestinian people, including their inalienable right to self-determination, independence, sovereignty and the right to active participation as a separate and major party in any endeavour seeking a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Furthermore, the Security Council, as the supreme international authority entrusted by the Charter with the maintenance of world peace and security, has not

(Mr. Alaoui, Morocco)

missed any opportunity to condemn Israeli practices in the region and to consider them null and void.

The commemoration a few days ago of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people was an occasion which enabled the majority of the countries and Governments of the world to renew their solidarity with the Palestinian cause and to stand alongside the Palestinian people, supporting their rights and unequivocally condemning the Israeli occupation.

Nevertheless, and in the face of widespread international support, Israel was able to treat United Nations resolutions with extreme disdain and to continue its intransigence in its occupation of the Arab and Palestinian territories by setting up and expanding Jewish settlements and arresting thousands of Arab citizens, by hurling them into jails without trial, by collective punishment and dissolution of elected councils, in addition to numerous terrorist practices, such as armed attacks against holy shrines and schools, the burning down of farms, the demolition of houses and forcing the inhabitants of the country, the Arab citizens, to emigrate.

The list of such criminal activities is indeed long, as we are informed in the last Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories. It is no secret to the international community that the ultimate aim of the acts of genocide which are committed in broad daylight and under the very eyes of everyone, is the destruction of the Palestinian revolution and the attempt to extinguish the flame of the Palestinian people's free struggle, so that Israel can easily deny the existence of such a people and thwart their legitimate national rights.

In order to attain this objective, Israel, in the absence of any effective international deterrent, has continued to implement its expansionist scheme, step-by-step, basing itself on the policy of the fait accompli. It has annexed

(Mr. Alaoui, Morocco)

Holy Jerusalem and declared it an eternal capital. It has opened up new fronts in order to draw in other Arab parties towards the heart of the conflict in the hope that the Palestinian question will gradually lose its character familiar to the world as the basic component of the Middle East problem.

The crisis which besets the Middle East region, and which is essentially linked to the fate of the Palestinian people, has assumed today increasingly dangerous dimensions and poses a direct threat to international peace and security.

In addition to the accumulation of destructive power and of different types of armaments, including nuclear arms, Israel does not hesitate to resort to different types of threats, including State terrorism, as testified by its last raid against fraternal Tunisia and the headquarters of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). As the Assembly is aware, the main aim of this odious operation, which has already been condemned clearly and resolutely by the Security Council, is the physical liquidation of Mr. Yasser Arafat, the leader of the PLO and the symbol of the struggle of the Palestinian people.

The carrying out of this attack on the capital of an Arab country renowned in the world for its tolerance and moderate policy and its defence of just, human causes, represents a direct threat against all Arab countries. These countries, which on numerous occasions have separately and collectively denounced terrorism in all its forms and from all its sources, reaffirmed their abidance by the principles of right and justice and their reliance on legitimate means endorsed by international instruments to achieve their objectives and to defend their national interests. This was reaffirmed recently in the Final Communiqué of the Extraordinary Arab Summit Meeting held in Casablanca from 7 to 9 August 1985, a few weeks before the attack on Tunis.

(Mr. Alaoui, Morocco)

In a recent message addressed to the American President, Ronald Reagan, by His Majesty, King Hassan II on 13 November following the Israeli attack on Tunisia, the incident of the Achille Lauro and the hijacking of an Egyptian aircraft, His Majesty officially expressed Morocco's condemnation of this operation. He also did so in his capacity as current Chairman of the Arab Summit Conference, as well as stating the position of all the Arab leaders, as adopted and endorsed at the Casablanca Summit Meeting in which the PLO participated in the person of Chairman Arafat, who played an important role in the success of this Conference and in his firm defence of the proposals and recommendations in the Final Communiqué.

On the basis of this public and explicit policy expressed by the Arab leaders in their last Summit Meeting, which was attended by the PLO, we can come to the following conclusions, as reflected in His Majesty's message:

"First, the PLO is not a terrorist organization, as claimed by some. It is indeed a liberation movement which struggles and fights for the Palestinian people and for the restoration of their legitimate rights, within the framework of a just and comprehensive solution which would restore peace, security and stability in the region".

(Mr. Alaoui, Morocco)

"Secondly, to continue to deny the legitimacy of the representivity of the Palestine Liberation Organization - a legitimacy endorsed by the Rabat Arab Summit in 1974 and recognized and reaffirmed on numerous occasions by the majority of the members of the international community - could completely thwart the efforts made by the forces in the world that cherish peace and justice."

The legitimacy of the PLO's representation of the Palestinian people is a firm reality that must be recognized and endorsed. Any attempt to diminish such legitimacy must be considered not merely an explicit violation of the relevant United Nations resolutions but complete disdain for and defiance of the feelings and rights of the Palestinian people, and will undermine all the efforts so far exerted to attain a just and comprehensive settlement of this question.

His Majesty reaffirmed that reality in the message he addressed to Mr. Ronald Reagan, President of the United States of America, and Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev, the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, on the occasion of their recent meeting in Geneva, basing himself on the following two essential elements.

The first is the element of reality. Since the Arab Summit in Rabat in 1974 approved the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, any attempt to substitute any other representative for the PLO is certainly null and void, because it is unrealistic.

The second is the legal element. Ever since then the international community has endorsed by an overwhelming majority the legitimacy of the PLO and acknowledged it to be the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. That organization has become a member with full rights of numerous regional and specialized organizations, in addition to participating in United Nations activities with Observer status.

(Mr. Alaoui, Morocco)

It is a source of satisfaction that the majority of the statements we have heard so far on the question of Palestine leave no room for doubt as to the sincere and responsible position of those countries, Governments and peoples in favour of the Palestinian people's legitimate struggle. The fact is that lengthy debates on the question of Palestine are no longer necessary; the solution to this problem is no longer intractable.

In this context, the International Conference on the Question of Palestine represented a major step in the efforts exerted by the international Organization in its search for a solution. It is not necessary to continue to laud the positive results achieved by that Conference since most of them have been endorsed by all regional and international organizations, including the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and, most recently, the Extraordinary Arab Summit Conference.

As a contribution to those efforts and an expression of their conviction of the historic responsibility that they shoulder in respect of the Palestine question and the Middle East conflict as a whole, the Heads of State or Government of Arab countries have approved a courageous Arab plan, known as the Fez peace plan, collective Arab commitment to which was reaffirmed at the recent Extraordinary Arab Summit Conference in Casablanca.

Morocco and our international Organization, which is today considering the question of Palestine, believe that we should reaffirm once again our conviction of the legitimacy of this question and our total support for and unqualified solidarity with the Palestinian people in its heroic struggle and with other Arab countries struggling against the yoke of occupation.

Morocco's solidarity with and the support of its people and Government for the Palestinian people in their struggle have been reaffirmed on many occasions by His Majesty King Hassan II. It is not a new position, but was expressed years ago

(Mr. Alaoui, Morocco)

when Morocco suffered the scourge of foreign occupation and the late King Mohammad V, in a historic statement in Tangiers in 1947, expressed his solidarity with the Palestinian people in their struggle to recover their legitimate rights, including the right to self-determination. As reaffirmed by His Majesty, such solidarity emanates not merely from the natural solidarity of one Arab people with another but from our ethics and our compliance with the internationally accepted norms that must be adhered to as the basic pillar of relations among all the members of the international community.

Accordingly, I wish, on behalf of the Government and people of Morocco, to address a fervent appeal to the peoples of the world, all the countries concerned and all countries that cherish peace and justice to strive to secure justice for the Palestinian people, under the leadership of their sole, legitimate representative the PLO, and to reaffirm their usurped rights. As we reiterate that appeal in this its fortieth anniversary year, we call upon the United Nations and all its organs to fulfil their responsibilities and commitments to the Palestinian people until such time as they regain their freedom, dignity and sovereignty and establish an independent State on their national soil.

That was also reiterated by the Foreign Minister of Morocco in his latest statement to this session of the General Assembly, when he said:

"The responsibility of our Organization in the matter is primordial, since it was this Organization which decided at the outset on the creation of two States in Palestine. Nearly 40 years later, we note, however, that the Palestinian people is still denied its right to self-determination and to existence as an independent State, without the achievement of which it is not possible to arrive at a peaceful and lasting solution to the Middle East question as a whole." (A/40/PV.21, p. 31)

(Mr. Alaoui, Morocco)

The thwarting of all efforts so far exerted to reach a negotiated, peaceful settlement of this conflict is the fault of Israel and its obduracy. Israel wants peace and the land at one and the same time. We say that we want peace and the restoration of land at one and the same time. As I said in my statement in the Security Council on 11 October when that body considered the question of the Middle East:

"Israel's policy in the region, its contempt for the relevant United Nations resolutions, its intransigence in denying the Palestinian people its rights, its attempt to gain international acceptance for the transfer of its capital to Jerusalem: all those facts are but a reflection of an overall, well-orchestrated and unchanging policy ...

"The aim is to create an irreversible situation which will make it doubtful that the Palestinian people will be able to exercise its right to self-determination." (S/PV.2621, p. 6)

(Mr. Alaoui, Morocco)

The Palestinian question is organically linked to the Middle East problem. A just and lasting solution of both problems can be attained only if the following conditions are achieved: first, a total and unconditional Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab and Palestinian territories; secondly, the realization of the legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to return and to establish their independent state on their own land; thirdly, the reaffirmation of the legitimacy and the representative nature of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and the right of that organization to participate on an equal footing with all the parties concerned in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East; fourthly, the need to declare as null and void all Israeli administrative and legislative measures which aim at altering the nature of holy Jerusalem; fifthly, the reaffirmation of the right of all the States of the region to live in security within internationally recognized borders.

Finally, allow me to extend my thanks to the Secretary-General, Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar, for the personal efforts he deploys in respect of the Palestinian question, as well as our tribute to all relevant bodies of the United Nations, including the Division for Palestinian Rights and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People under the chairmanship of Ambassador Massamba Sarré, for their constant efforts in this field.

Mr. SHIHABI (Saudi Arabia) (interpretation from Arabic): From the time that a number of Member States that represent a minority of the nations of the world today voted in 1947 on a draft resolution to dismember the body of Palestine, an Arab country, and to give part of it to an immigrant minority of Zionist Jews, the problem of Palestine has inflamed the region and taken up much of the time of the United Nations and a great deal of its efforts, especially since the United Nations became an authentic mirror representing the peoples of the world and

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a genuine voice expressing the international will. This is because Israel, the ungrateful son of an unjust resolution by this Organization in 1947, has left no rule of international law unassailed and left no norm of international relations unviolated. It was a misfortune for the United Nations and for Palestine that those few States were then in the majority in our Organization, because most of the peoples of the world that are participating with us today as proud and independent States now were then subjected to the nightmare of colonialism without a voice of their own, and were chained by foreign occupation, without a will of their own.

The authentic majority of the United Nations today, which represents the real international will, denounces Israel and the deeds it has committed, and still is committing, and what it is proposing to do, and supports Arab rights in Palestine, despite the occupation and colonization of oppressed Palestine. That majority condemns Zionist practices, and both those who commit them and those who support them and thus share with Israel the blame and the guilt.

Zionism had the illusion that it was possible for it to consider the Arabs in Palestine and elsewhere as a people that could be disposed of and eliminated, like the populations of the countries that were discovered in the Middle Ages. But in these designs the Zionists ignored the history of the region and the difference in time. They ignored the history of the Arab people and its great culture, in planning to destroy its unity and to annihilate it. By their settlement policy they were attempting to wage war against the facts. For that purpose they made use of all their capacities and the capacities of other States that fell victim to their influence. But future history will record their ultimate defeat; this is a fact that the Arabs know, that all of us know; this is recognized today by the Zionists in the depths of their sick minds. They can read the writing on every wall that they face, despite their desperate attempts to change the course of human history.

The Zionists reject peace, except verbally. They try to hinder every

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initiative to end the conflict in Palestine, whenever there seems to be a chance to do so. Why are they afraid of peace? Why do they undermine every framework that appears to the world as a framework that might provide the basis for peace in the region? Is it the rights of the Arab people in Palestine that they do not want to recognize? And how can they live in Palestine and the region, in any form, if they do not recognize the rights of the Palestinians?

Why do they fight peace by every means? I think we know by now; and they have always known. Their aggressive intentions and designs are nothing new; indeed the whole of Israel was and still is based on aggression, since the time the Zionists built their first settlement in Palestine under the shadow of foreign occupation. Their aggressive designs on the Arab and Moslem world are still the basis of their existence and their survival. That is the story of the occupied Palestinian territories, the Syrian Golan Heights, and Lebanon, which is still bleeding from their last aggression. Their aim of domination from the Nile to the Euphrates is a well known myth; they dream about it and work under its inspiration, as if the Arab and Moslem world were an empty area, an unknown jungle, that was awaiting the arrival of Zionist immigrants to destroy its population and to establish a state on the ruins of their homes.

After 1919 and under the shadow of an imperialist Power, the Zionists established settlements that were protected by the imperialists' bayonets, to the detriment of the people of the land. After 1947, the Zionists invaded parts of Palestine by force of arms and asked the United Nations, at the same time, to recognize that part of Palestine was theirs. We said then that Arab land is not a vacuum that is open to adventurers and settlers, and we pointed this out to our Organization. We warned the United Nations about the consequences of a conspiracy by a few Member States against the rights of the Arab and Moslem peoples, and against the security of the region.

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But despotism continued. In 1967 the Zionists invaded the rest of Palestine and the Golan Heights in Syria. In 1982 they invaded Lebanon, and they remain in the southern part, where the patriots are waging a heroic, suicidal war against them.

In Palestine, amidst a wave of settler colonialism, Zionism is being practised in its ugliest forms, the rights of the people of the land and of its legitimate owners are being usurped, their lands are being confiscated, their homes are being destroyed, their schools shut, and their sons pursued into the streets to be slain. It is usurping all the rights of the Arab people in Palestine - one of the peoples of this international Organization - with no regard for truth and with no fear of punishment. Under the tyranny of Zionist terror, a man is deprived of his humanity because he is an Arab. In South Africa they say to the deprived man: you are black; and in Palestine they say to him: you are an Arab. This is ugly racial discrimination. The Zionist discrimination against every Arab citizen, in his home, his farm, his work and under the sky of his land, wherever he moves, is a crime against all ideals and moral principles, against all that the United Nations stands for. It is a crime for which the price will be paid by its Zionist perpetrators and the responsibility for which will be shared by those who support this discrimination and protect it.

All the United Nations reports concerning Palestine uncover the Zionist racial practices in the country. Israel's social structure, its laws and regulations, its measures against the Arab owners of the land, are all based on racial discrimination. The immigration laws which give any Jew in the world the right to immigrate as a first-class citizen, while depriving the Arab owner of the land of his rights; the administrative and police procedures which facilitate Zionist attacks on the rights of the people of the land and deprive the Arab of his continued presence in his own country; the laws and measures that punish the Arabs collectively for the simplest of violations, while protecting Zionist terrorists

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before the eyes and ears of the world; the terrorizing of educational institutions, raiding them and closing them for the least of reasons and suspicions; the economic measures that deprive Arabs and transfer to Zionist hands all economic activities: are not all those measures one of the ugliest demonstrations of racial discrimination and settler colonialism in the twentieth century? It is shameful that Zionism was able, a few weeks ago, to organize a conference for these racial practices under the roof of the United Nations - as if organizing such a ridiculous meeting under the roof of the United Nations could hide the tragic reality on the land of Palestine.

No imposter, no matter how good a painter he is, can paint this racial discrimination in anything other than its real colours. This is the other side of the ugly picture which the world has begun to become aware of in South Africa, which the world deplores and condemns and is adopting measures against. It is the picture of an immigrant who entered the country under the shadow of an imperial Power, who attacks a people that has deep roots in the history of the land in order to take over its land and deprive it of its rights.

The report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People is testimony in our hands now, showing how the Arab people in Palestine are captives in their own country and aliens in their own homeland. They are subjected to a Zionist terror that is shameless and has no fear of punishment. But punishment is by the will of God. And, as we have seen with the remnants of nazism, punishment follows those who deserve it to the grave.

The problem is rooted in the inalienable and fundamental rights of a people. It is the essence and the core of the problem. It is the key to war and to peace in the region.

Where does the road lead from here? What course is to be taken? And what is the goal, the objective? Palestine, its people and land are occupied unjustly and

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by force. Zionism is imposing upon it a State of immigrants, whose sovereignty is not recognized by the peoples of the land. The majority of the Members of this Organization do not recognize the legitimacy of its acts and reject what it is committing against the people of the land. Israel, a Member of the United Nations, has no recognized borders; they are not recognized by Israel itself, nor are they recognized by the whole world. What signal on the horizon is that? And what message to the future does it convey?

Wars have been waged, and periods of no-war, no-peace have lasted since the year 1948. The Arabs proposed a plan for security and a basis for peace in which they offered great sacrifices. They agreed on it unanimously at the Fez Summit. It was rejected by Zionism, which is still putting obstacles in its way. Israel continues to mobilize for war as well as to disrupt peace efforts, and it attempts to deceive the international community. It practises in Palestine the most horrendous acts of settler colonialism on the land and against the people of the land, while Zionist terrorist gangs wreak havoc in the land under the protection of Israeli police, who commit their own share of crimes against the population. They threaten the security of citizens and attack their holy shrines and places of worship, as well as disrupting their means of livelihood and their continued presence in their homes.

Al-Quds, the first of the two Kiblas and the third holiest shrine, has been exposed to grave danger for some time now. The authorities of Zionist terror, in their efforts to reshape Al-Quds and its population, are trying to change it into a Jewish city. They encourage Zionist extremists to attack the Al-Aqsa Mosque. We will see that the continuation of these attempts and attacks on the Al-Aqsa Mosque will turn out to be a historical misfortune for Zionism. We will all see how the whole Islamic world will explode, and then we will remember these words.

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I also hope that members do not underestimate the gravity of the Israeli attack upon the Al-Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron and on other Holy Places. They are all time-bombs that Israel is unconsciously storing beneath its flimsy foundations, unaware that the explosion resulting from this accumulation of crimes cannot be prevented by all the missiles in the air or all the fleets at sea.

Whither Zionism and Israel? It is perpetrating all these crimes against peace, human rights and the rights of the Arab and Muslim people inside and outside Palestine. It is practising the ugliest form of racial discrimination. It is using its illegal influence inside some countries to direct the policy of these countries in Palestine and the region, a policy against righteousness and truth, and even against the interests of these countries themselves. That is the most abhorrent feature of this Zionist equation. Whither Israel? Perhaps its soldiers who fled from Lebanon could say why they fled and why the Zionist war machine fled after them to Northern Palestine and South Lebanon, waiting also to be expelled from there? If war is Israel's only method, then that has only one outcome, the one we all know. Israel is bound to lose the battle against some 200 million Arabs and 1,000 million Moslems. The gap of technical and military superiority over the Arabs is narrowing with every sunrise. At every sunrise the falseness of its claims and the decadence of its structure is demonstrated to the world.

We have to remind this distinguished audience of representatives of nations that the Arabs' defence of their rights in Palestine is not a political game or an election picnic whereby they win a round in a day, a month or a year. It is to be or not to be. It is a reality of the fundamental rights of life that one has to struggle to secure, no matter what Israel does by means of tyranny, and no matter what the friends of the Zionists do, whether by miscalculation, ill-intent, or ignorance, in order to buy the political opportunities that are temporary

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by their very nature, at the expense of the livelihood of a people and their rights, and even at the expense of human rights everywhere, which is one of the most important pillars of this international Organization to whose Charter they are committed. We have to mention here, in order to remind some people, that working to different standards of rights and morality has never benefited an individual in his own community or a community within its own State. It has never benefited a State throughout history. To the contrary, it has exterminated those individuals, corrupted societies and destroyed States. Yet in Palestine rights are being attacked, conventions are being violated and the most horrendous crimes are being committed against humanity. All these facts are on one and the same scale.

A few days ago inside this building, representatives heard the message of His Majesty King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud of Saudi Arabia, to the United Nations and its people on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, in which he affirmed the Kingdom's firm stand in support of Arab and Muslim rights in Palestine, as well as against the injustice and tyranny that has befallen its people and land. He reiterated the commitment of the Arab and Muslim nation to preserve its rights. Our firm and resolute stand in the Kingdom in support of the rights of the Arab Palestinian people is the stand of every Arab and every Muslim, and every fair person seeking justice and freedom. We are certain that the march of injustice will be short, right will prevail, and will not be prevailed upon.

The question that is being asked by every Arab and Moslem today, and I am now going to pose it to members, is this: is there no end to this darkness? Do the Zionists think that they can deceive all the people all of the time? Do the Zionist racists think that they will succeed, at the end of the twentieth century, in transforming a people rooted in their land, which occupies a central

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geographic position on the map of the world, such as the Arab people in Palestine, into a people that are deprived of rights and of places to stand on, merely because they have temporary superiority in fire power. History will record that if the opportunities available to Israel now to secure peace and security are rejected and relinquished by it, and there are strong indications that this is the case, then there will come a time that is not too far away when Zionism will never have such opportunities again. The Zionist protagonists will be standing here, as they did in 1947, to try to deceive the world into believing that they are the peaceful lambs. If so they will miss the train. Will members join us in looking forward to save the world from still further tragedy, after we and they have failed to avoid the tragedies of the past?

Mr. OUDOVENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): This anniversary session of the United Nations General Assembly is marked by the fact that its participants are, one might say, assessing the balance sheet of the 40 years of the Organization's activities. They note its successes, they express their views as to how to increase its effectiveness and voice deep concern over the existence of unsolved international problems. One of these problems is the continuing dangerous centre focal point of tension in the Middle East, which has existed now for almost 40 years.

During this session, the majority of representatives have expressed concern for the volatile situation in the region, which represents a threat to international peace and security.*

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

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Consideration of this question was the subject of a meeting of the Security Council called on the initiative of the non-aligned countries, during which speakers noted with great concern that there had been no progress towards a just and comprehensive Middle East settlement because of Israel and its patrons. Having expelled a whole people from lands which had been theirs since time immemorial and being in occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, Israel has generated one of the most acute problems, the Palestine problem, which is the crux of the Middle East conflict.

Statements made in this hall by the head of the Political Department of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Mr. Farouk Kaddoumi, once again showed the full tragedy of the situation of the sorely tried Palestinian people.

In spite of General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 181 (II) and 3236 (XXIX), and other relevant resolutions, the Arab people of Palestine are still denied their inalienable right to self-determination and the creation of their own independent State. They are forced to wander abroad or to live under the oppression of occupation.

The ruling circles of Israel are carrying out a deliberate policy of driving the Arabs from the lands they have seized, in order to colonize them. Illegal settlements are being created in the occupied Palestinian territories. Among the inhabitants, a chauvinistic fervour is being aroused. In an attempt to suppress the growing resistance to the occupiers, the authorities are resorting to murder, mass arrests, deportations, the demolition of houses and the changing of the demographic status of the occupied territories. There has been a spectacular increase in the campaign of terror and oppression and the policy of genocide directed against the population of the occupied Palestinian territories. All this

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has frequently been a matter of concern for the Security Council, up to as recently as September this year.

As we have already mentioned in the Security Council, all these actions are flagrant violations of the United Nations Charter and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 on the Protection of Civilian Populations in Time of War. They have frequently been condemned by the Security Council, the General Assembly and other United Nations bodies. It is these activities that are the cause of the legitimate struggle of the Palestinians for their rights, by every means, including armed struggle.

Behind the backs of the Israel aggressors, who shamelessly carry out their aggressive policy against the Arab peoples, ignoring relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, there is the support of their overseas strategic partner. As has often been noted in United Nations bodies, including the Security Council, the billions of dollars injected into Israel's military machine and its unconditional political and diplomatic support for the aggressor, make official Washington a direct accomplice of the illegal policy of the ruling circles in Israel against the Arab peoples. While with the one hand protecting and shielding its junior partner, with the other hand the United States works to oppose the achievement of a just and comprehensive Middle East settlement by imposing separate deals on the Arabs. Its aim is to bury the Palestinian question, dropping entirely from the agenda the demand for the creation of an independent Palestinian State, to deprive the PLO of the status of a fully fledged participant in any negotiation to settle the problem, to assist Israel to maintain the Arab territories it has captured and to turn the Middle East into a new colonial staging area in the struggle against the national liberation movements of the peoples of Asia and Africa. Those who cherish any illusion as to the genuine intentions of

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the strategic allies, or place any hopes in the ending of Israel's occupation with the assistance of behind-the-scene deals, are seriously mistaken. In fact, the overseas patrons are trying to resuscitate Camp David, to consolidate their positions in the Middle East and to force one of the active divisions of the Arab national liberation movement to capitulate.

The true position of these countries is shown by their negative attitude to the efforts of the international community to seek ways of solving the Middle East problem. It is they who are blocking the adoption of virtually every proposal aimed at a just solution of the Palestinian problem and the achievement of a comprehensive Middle East settlement. They are responsible for the failure to implement resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, regarding the creation of an Arab Palestinian State. It is also their fault that the recommendations produced in 1976 and endorsed every year by the General Assembly - that is the recommendations of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People - have not been implemented. Those resolutions set forth ways and means of achieving those rights.

As is noted in resolution 39/49 D, and reports of various regional and international symposia organized this year by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the negative position of the United States and Israel towards the idea of convening an international conference on the Middle East, which enjoys the support of the overwhelming majority of States, is the main obstacle to the convening of such a conference.

Speaking at a meeting of the Security Council on 3 October this year, a meeting devoted to the latest Israeli act of State terrorism, the brutal air attack on Tunis, I said:

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"... during the 1970s and 1980s the United States of America made use of its veto power 17 times in Israel's interests, in order to protect it from the consequences of its expansionist acts against Arab States. Ten of those vetoes were in fact cast under the present Administration. The most recent case was on 13 September this year, when a draft resolution sponsored by the non-aligned countries was blocked; that draft resolution would have condemned the latest repressive measures by the Israeli authorities against the Arab population of the occupied Palestinian territories.

...

"There can be no doubt that this unconditional assistance and support will impel Israel and its military authorities to new adventurist acts against Arab countries and peoples. The latest act of Israeli aggression, against Tunisia, has once more demonstrated to the peoples of the region what actions they can expect from the United States-Israeli strategic alliance. ... It will inevitably lead to increased tension in the Middle East and to a new cycle of violence." (S/PV.2613, pp. 16 and 17)

It is quite obvious that the solution to complicated Middle East problems, including the Palestinian problem, must be pursued not by means of new, separate deals but rather on the basis of taking into account the legitimate interests and aspirations of all parties concerned. Such a path has been elaborated in the United Nations and endorsed in many resolutions and recommendations. It was also proposed in the well-known Fez Peace Plan, which has consistently been supported by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. For example, the Soviet proposal on a Middle East settlement of 24 July 1981 takes into account the legitimate interests of all countries and peoples of the region and has been widely supported in the Arab world and praised by the United Nations.

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Those proposals state that a comprehensive, just settlement in the Middle East can be achieved only by the collective efforts of all the parties concerned, on the basis of the withdrawal of Israeli troops from all territories occupied since 1967 and a genuine guarantee of the exercise of the inalienable national rights of the Arab people of Palestine. A definitive solution of the Palestinian problem by the creation of an independent State for the Palestinians is of key significance in the struggle to achieve such a settlement. It is possible only within the framework of an international conference, with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization. What is needed is a uniting of all forces to realize that idea and to take every opportunity to overcome the obstructionist position of the United States and Israel in opposing a Middle East settlement and the convening of such a conference.

That constructive position was reaffirmed recently in the statement of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, adopted at the meeting in Sofia on 22-23 October. The policy of the Soviet Union in recognizing the inalienable right of every people to freedom and independence, the independent choice of its own future and support for peoples struggling for their independence was reaffirmed in a recent speech by the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev, at the most recent session of the USSR. He stated our unwavering solidarity with the just struggle of the Palestinian and other Arab peoples for their inalienable rights and the elimination of the consequences of Israeli aggression. We call for close co-operation between the anti-imperialist national patriotic forces of the Arab countries, including the Palestine resistance movement. We see in that a guarantee of success in the struggle against imperialism and Zionism.

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As a member of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic has taken an active part in the work of that important United Nations body, and has comprehensively supported the just struggle of the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights, including its right to self-determination and to create its own independent State. We have consistently supported convening an international conference on the Middle East.

That position was reaffirmed by the Foreign Minister of the Republic, Mr. Kravets, when a delegation of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People visited Kiev in August this year. In his statement during the general debate at this session, he emphasized:

"The interests of peace and international security urgently require that a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement in the Middle East be achieved without delay." (A/40/PV.22, p. 33)

Consequently, we support finding a solution to the Palestinian question immediately.

The peoples of the region must be assured a just and lasting peace. The aggressor must not enjoy the fruits of aggression. It must withdraw its troops from all occupied Arab territories, and the Palestinians must be given an opportunity to exercise their right to self-determination and to create their own independent State. Those who oppose that, or try to block it, bear the full responsibility for all the consequences of failure to settle the Middle East conflict.

Mr. AL-KAWARI (Qatar) (interpretation from Arabic): It is disappointing, in this year of our commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the creation of the United Nations, that our international Organization, which has succeeded in resolving a number of major problems - in particular, that of decolonization, a few

(Mr. Al-Kawari, Qatar)

years after the United Nations was created - is still unable to settle the question of Palestine, although the United Nations has been considering the question year after year ever since its creation, without any glimmer of hope of a speedy solution that will guarantee justice and international peace and security, which are threatened by the gravity of that explosive problem, a steadily deteriorating situation that could explode at any moment.

The question of Palestine is primarily a responsibility of the United Nations. The problem is still being considered because decisions taken by United Nations bodies have not been implemented. The United Nations must now discharge its responsibilities with regard to the problem of Palestine, which is a political, juridical and moral problem.

The problem originated with the League of Nations, of which our Organization is considered to be the successor in the international system. The United Nations gave the problem its present form by deciding on partition, which resulted in the creation of the Zionist State and which the Zionists regarded as the green light to use force, to appropriate as much of the land of Palestine as possible and to wage aggression against the neighbouring Arab States and other Arab States thousands of kilometers away.

Unfortunately, blind force continues to prevail in that part of our Arab homeland. The situation, which is a threat to international peace and security, will continue as long as the problem of Palestine remains unresolved and as long as the international community, expressing its will through the United Nations, remains unable to dissuade the aggressor, guarantee justice and achieve a just, comprehensive solution to the problem.

The right of peoples to self-determination, freedom and independence is one of the ideals of the international community that has been enshrined clearly and firmly in the United Nations Charter. Decisions of the United Nations have

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affirmed those principles. Here I wish to refer to resolution 2625 (XXV), the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. The Declaration states, inter alia, that any action taken to resist aggression by a people deprived of the right to self-determination is legitimate, and that that people is entitled to receive outside support and aid in its legitimate struggle, in accordance with the principles and purposes of the Charter.

As the Prime Minister of a Western country rightly pointed out a few weeks ago, "To deny the legitimacy of the use of force by a movement seeking to free its homeland from foreign occupation would be to ignore the laws governing the course of history."

(Mr. Al-Kawari, Qatar)

My country supports the efforts of the resistance, which expresses the determination of the Palestinian people to confront the occupiers and achieve its legitimate goals of self-determination and the establishment of an independent State. Israel is trying by all possible means to impede this heroic resistance by means of repression and violence, and by expelling citizens, closing schools and universities, destroying houses and filling the prisons and concentration camps. History shows that such measures will never extinguish the flame of freedom but rather give it new strength.

Any just solution of the question of Palestine must take into account the rights of the Palestinian people, above all its right to self-determination and to establish a State on its national territory. The solution must take into account the fact that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is the sole legitimate representative of that people and the PLO must participate in all efforts to find a solution to this problem. My country believes that the convening of an international conference, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the PLO, and the permanent members of the Security Council, would be one approach that might lead to a comprehensive, just settlement. This was reaffirmed by the General Assembly in its resolution 39/49 D.

Many speakers from this rostrum have asserted the need to reinforce the prestige and credibility of this Organization. We believe that this credibility and prestige cannot be ensured until the United Nations, thanks to the necessary political will, is able to implement its resolutions. Those that stand in the way of the implementation of these decisions are responsible for the harm done to the United Nations and its credibility. Israel has been able to ignore the will of the international community thanks to the military, financial and political assistance given to it by Member States of this Organization, in particular the United States.

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The Arabs, anxious to secure peace and give proof of their good faith to the whole world, worked out a peace plan in 1982 at the Fez Summit which was approved by all the Arab parties, including the PLO. That plan was favourably received by the international community, but in vain, because the Zionist entity continues its acts of aggression and rejects peace. The international community, through its many resolutions, has fully rejected the policy of aggression, force and occupation by force practised by the Zionist local authorities. We hope that the day is not far off when these resolutions will be implemented by the force of law and the struggle based on international legality.

Mr. NGO (Zambia): May I first of all pay a well-deserved tribute to the Chairman and the members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for the important work they continue to carry out in the search for a peaceful and lasting solution regarding the question of Palestine. Their efforts, which are aimed at the attainment of a comprehensive and just settlement of this complex problem, deserve the maximum support of the international community.

The explosive situation in the Middle East poses a serious threat to international peace and security. We are, therefore, gravely concerned and worried that the prospects for an early settlement are at present remote. The lack of an early settlement is attributable to Israel's intransigence and its utter obstinacy in pursuing its abhorrent policy of creating settlements in the occupied Arab lands. Indeed, Israel's obstinate refusal to recognize the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people continues to make the prospect of a true, fair and lasting peace in the Middle East remote.

(Mr. Ngo, Zambia)

We remain concerned that as long as the people of Palestine do not have a place they can call their own, and as long as the Palestinians remain a tormented people, conflicts in the Middle East will continue to escalate into wars. If Israel is looking for genuine peace, and if it is serious about genuine peace, it must allow the Palestinians to return to their homes in order that they too can freely exercise their right to self-determination, for this right applies to them as it does to any other people. Israel and its allies should recognize the fact that the continued denial of this right to the Palestinians is not in its best interest. One would have expected that Israel, whose people have suffered throughout their history, would be the first country to appreciate this fact.

It must be realized that it will be difficult to solve the problem of the Middle East as a whole without the creation and establishment of an independent sovereign Palestinian nation. Indeed, it will be almost impossible to achieve a solution to this complex problem if the Palestinian people are ignored in negotiations of any kind. It would be absurd to assert that any meaningful negotiations on the question of Palestine could be held without the full participation of the genuine representatives of the Palestinian people. Israel should in this regard show its seriousness by agreeing without pre-conditions to sit down with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole and authentic representative of the Palestinians, and, in a spirit of determination to achieve one common objective, lasting peace in the Middle East, be flexible in those negotiations.

The Palestinian people have suffered for a very long time under Israeli occupation. During the last three decades hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have been expelled from their homeland and now live in destitution as refugees. The concern of the international community has been expressed in the many efforts that have been made in seeking a peaceful solution to this problem.

(Mr. Ngo, Zambia)

The 12th Arab Summit, held in Fez, Morocco, in 1982, came up with a blueprint for resolving the Palestinian issue peacefully. We believe that the important elements in the Final Declaration of that Summit are as pertinent now as they were then. Indeed, the General Assembly has adopted a number of resolutions on the Middle East, all in the search for a peaceful solution. Israel should therefore desist from using pretexts to avoid genuine negotiations. In this regard, Israel should take a bold step by withdrawing from all occupied Arab lands. We cannot accept the acquisition of territory or territories by the use of force.

(Mr. Ngo, Zambia)

We should all accept the fact that the question of Palestine is the core to the Middle East conflict. We should at the same time accept the fact that an overall peace in the Middle East cannot be achieved by military aggression and that the quest for freedom and national independence cannot be suppressed by military might of an oppressor. Israel should, therefore, contribute to the creation of the necessary conditions for achieving the goal of peaceful co-existence between itself and its Arab neighbours with secure and internationally recognized boundaries. The problem of the region needs a political settlement. It is to this end that Israel and the entire international community should make a positive contribution.

While advocating a peaceful solution, let us all remember that the longer it takes, the more difficult it will become to achieve what we all desire. At the same time, we should all be aware that no matter how long it takes victory is on the side of the Palestinian people because theirs is a just struggle.

Mr. MARDOVICH (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): The inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination without outside interference is clearly stated in many resolutions of the General Assembly, including those adopted at its thirty-ninth session. Together with the relevant decisions of the Security Council, those documents represent a legal and generally recognized basis for a just solution to the Palestinian problem under a comprehensive Middle Eastern settlement, taking into account the legitimate interests both of the Arab people of Palestine and all the States of the Middle East.

However, the aggressive expansionist policy and activities of Israel in the Middle East so far have prevented the Arab people of Palestine from exercising their inalienable right to Statehood. Trying by every available means to prevent a

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positive solution to the Palestinian problem, the Zionists and their patrons have turned the region into a continuing centre of war and conflicts, openly challenging the entire international community. Five large-scale acts of aggression and, in the intervals between them, numerous commando raids into Arab lands, including the air raids over Lebanon and on the Iraqi research centre near Baghdad, as well as on the headquarters of the Palestine Liberation Organization in Tunis, all of which have caused untold suffering, death and destruction - that is the basic so-called contribution of Israel's rulers to all the efforts of the international community to normalize the situation in the Middle East.

Something similar is taking place in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel. There Israeli soldiery systematically and deliberately carry out acts of terror and violence, and mass expropriation and confiscation of lands belonging to Palestinians. They impose their military garrisons and military settlements there, thus creating the material basis to enable them to consolidate their occupation.

Paragraph 19 of the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (document A/40/35), submitted to this session of the General Assembly, clearly shows that even by 1984 Israel had seized over 51 per cent of all the territory of the West Bank and had installed some 180 settlements there.

The creation of new settlements and the confiscation of additional Arab land, the report notes, is accompanied by sophisticated measures of pressure, violence, harassment and provocation. In suppressing the protests of the Palestinians, specially trained dogs are used, as well as clubs, tear gas, firearms, and arbitrary arrests, accompanied by torture and various forms of inhuman treatment.

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Israel's policy and practices in the occupied Arab territories is aimed at definitively expelling the Palestinian population from lands which have long legitimately belonged to them, eliminating the individual characters of those territories, and changing their geographic and demographic features in order to annex them completely and thereby completely eliminate the Palestinian question from the agenda. Their intention is clear, and cannot be covered up by any verbal exercises such as demagogic statements about security. It obviously violates the fundamental principles of the Charter and the rules of international law, as well as many United Nations decisions, including decisions of the Security Council, on the question of Palestine, and has serious consequences not only for the exercise by the Palestinians of their inalienable rights, but also for peace and security in the region.

As stated by the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Israeli Communist Party, the word "no" has become an abbreviation for Israel's platform regarding this policy. "No" to withdrawal from the West Bank of the Jordan River, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights occupied by Israel since 1967. "No" to a complete withdrawal from Lebanon to internationally recognized borders. "No" to the creation of an independent Palestinian State. "No" to recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organization. "No" to the convening of an international United Nations conference on the Middle East. And only one "yes" - to the strategic alliance with the United States of America. This, to put it politely, double standard in Israel's policy sheds much light on events in the Middle East and explains why the United States provides Israel with vast and ever-increasing military economic assistance and gives it political protection in the United Nations and in other international forums. As the saying goes, people do not throw their money away for nothing.

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In that connection the Syrian newspaper, Tishrin, noted, on 23 May of this year:

"The aim of the United States administration is clear: by strong military and political pressure to force the Arab countries to agree to peace on the model of Camp David, which would pull them into the political orbit of American imperialism and its allies and thus force them to renounce support for the national cause of the Palestinians".

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Israel would not dare to act in the Middle East as provocatively as it does now if it knew that its aggressive actions would meet with well-deserved opposition, including that of all Arab States. In the course of the struggle of the Arab peoples against the forces of imperialism and its Zionist agents, in defence of their national interests, there can be no success without appropriate co-ordination, close mutual action and a closing of the ranks of all Arab States. The way leading to peace in the Middle East and to the just settlement of the Palestinian problem is not the path of defeatism or separate deals, but rather the path of struggling against the policy of the right-wingers of imperialism and Israeli Zionism. In that struggle the strengthening of the unity of the Arab countries and the Palestinian movement is of tremendous significance.

The delegation of the Byelorussian SSR strongly condemns the policy and practices conducted by Israel in the Middle East which are profoundly hostile to the interests of the Arab peoples. Similarly, we strongly condemn the actions of those who provide Israel in this area with comprehensive support, encourage its aggression and plunder and who have been blocking the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region.

Our delegation once again reaffirms its unswerving support for the just struggle of the Arab peoples, for full elimination of the consequences of Israeli aggression and for an early solution to the Palestinian problem, the heart of a Middle East settlement, and we believe that such a settlement is only possible on the basis of strict observance of the principle of the inadmissibility of seizure of other people's land by aggression. Therefore all the territories occupied by Israel since 1967 must be returned to the Arabs.

It is necessary, in practice, to ensure the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, to create their own State on land which will be liberated from the Israeli occupation, for the decision of the United

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Nations General Assembly, which calls for the creation on the former Mandate Territory of Palestine not only of a Jewish but also of an Arab State to be scrupulously implemented. All States in the region must be, de facto, assured of the right to a secure and independent existence and development with full respect for their independence. An end must be put to the state of war, and peace must be established between the Arab States and Israel.

Finally, it is necessary to adopt international guarantees for the settlement of the Middle East problem. The solution of this group of problems can only be assured on the basis of collective efforts by convening the proposed international conference on the Middle East, with the participation of all parties concerned on an equal footing, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and also with the participation of many States, including the Soviet Union and the United States.

There can be no doubt that the solution to the Palestinian problem on a just basis within a Middle East settlement would make a significant contribution to strengthening peace in the region and would improve the international climate as a whole.

Mr. ENDREFFY (Hungary): The General Assembly has been dealing with the Question of Palestine as a separate item on its agenda for more than 10 years now. The attention devoted by the United Nations to this issue is fully justified. The Question of Palestine has been recognized by the international community as the crux of the Middle East problem, without the solution of which there cannot be a just and lasting settlement of the Middle East question. In these past 10 years numerous resolutions have been adopted not only by the General Assembly but also by the Security Council and yet we do not seem to be closer to a solution than we were when we started. Having said this we do not mean that the adoption of these resolutions has been futile. The emergence of guidelines, principles that could

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serve as a basis for a solution, should be recognized and given credit. The most important among these are the following: reaffirmation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people including the right to self-determination and the right to establish its own independent State in Palestine; recognition of the fact that the Palestinian people is a principal party in the establishment of peace in the Middle East and that its sole, legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), should have the right to participate on an equal footing with other parties in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East; the demand that Israel should withdraw completely and unconditionally from all the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem.

Needless to say, in spite of the resolutions referred to above the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are still denied them. They live like exiles in their own land under Israeli occupation or as refugees in other Arab countries.

The Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People - of which Hungary is a member - noted with mounting concern that the situation in the occupied territories has continued to deteriorate. This was confirmed also by the evidence of witnesses before the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population in the Occupied Territories, as well as in the reports of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Israel has continued its repressive policies and practices aimed at stifling Palestinian national expression. One could speak at length about detention without charges, deportation of persons, bulldozing of houses. The aggressive Israeli intentions do not recognize boundaries and are not confined to the occupied territories. Let me just mention the recent barbarous Israeli attack against the

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PLO headquarters in Tunisia, which violated every norm of international law and resulted in the loss of life of many innocent people.

To turn our attention back to the occupied territories, I should like to mention that even the less drastic or less draconian measures, like economic policies in the occupied territories, are also pointing to the direction of making these territories less and less attractive to the Arab population. As regards land and water - the basic natural resources in the occupied Palestinian territories - the occupying authorities took possession of 47.5 per cent of the total area and controlled the use of water by the Palestinians, which meant severe limitation of the use of water resources. In relation to the population, employment in the occupied territories declined. We have an economy unable to absorb its own workers, thus forcing them to work in Israel.

Palestinian higher education suffers from three serious problems as a result of Israeli practices, namely constraints on the autonomy and freedom of academic institutions, the absence of an effective local Palestinian authority to plan, co-ordinate and support higher education, and the scarcity of resources.

While we see deprivation and repression for the indigenous Palestinian population, on the one hand, on the other we see support and encouragement for the creation of Jewish settlements. According to data, as of May 1984, Israel had about 179 settlements on the West Bank, of which 31 were in and around Jerusalem, involving an estimated total of about 146,000 settlers. In addition to establishing settlements in unpopulated areas, Israeli settlements were being created within the densely populated areas of Palestinian towns. It is fair to say that the establishment of these settlements constitutes one of the major obstacles to the achievement of peace in the Middle East, since this policy more often than not involves conflict and violence in the form of the evacuation, deportation and expulsion of Arab inhabitants.

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The Israeli measures aimed at changing the geographical character, demographic nature and even the legal status of the occupied territories must not be allowed to continue.

The question of Palestine should be solved on the basis of the guidelines recognized and accepted by the overwhelming majority of the international community the basic prerequisite of which is Israel's withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem. The inalienable rights of the Arab people of Palestine - including self-determination and the establishment of its own independent State - should be recognized. Finally, the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the region, including Israel, should be respected.

In our considered opinion, those problems can be solved only by a comprehensive settlement covering all the complex issues and involving all the parties concerned. Such a settlement can best be achieved at an international conference on the Middle East. We have noted that during this session of the General Assembly the idea of such a conference has gained even wider support than before. On the other hand, we know full well that there are still many obstacles on the road leading to the convening of such a conference. But, frankly, there is no other way.

We must work together for an improved international climate and conditions enabling the convening of such a conference. Until that is achieved, we express our solidarity with the Palestinian people and wish it success in its just struggle.

Mr. VLASCEANU (Romania): The review of the accomplishments of the United Nations at its fortieth anniversary session shows that, in spite of all efforts and resolutions adopted, there is little progress in discharging the responsibility assumed by the Organization with regard to the Palestinian people and for ensuring peace and security in a sorely tried area of the world as the Middle East region.

(Mr. Vlasceanu, Romania)

The commemorative session, as well as today's debate, proves that in the absence of a comprehensive settlement of the complex crisis in the Middle East, the crux of which is the Palestinian problem, and of the necessary security arrangements that should ensure conditions for a free, independent development and mutual co-operation, the peoples of the area, in particular the Palestinian people, have been exposed to new sufferings, and peace and security in the region and the world at large have been permanently threatened.

In this regard, the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in document A/40/35, submitted to the plenary Assembly for consideration by its Chairman, Ambassador Massamba Sarré, the Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations, is well documented and deserves all our attention. The report rightly points out the legitimate concern in connection with "the increasing aggravation of the conflict in the Middle East" as a result of the continued military Israeli occupation in the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, as well as in connection with the "continued deterioration" of the situation concerning the rights of the Palestinian people.

In fact, as the report indicates, we have been witnesses of the continuation of the policies and practices of establishing new Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, continued denial of the right of return to hundreds of thousands of Palestine refugees, measures and practices of repression and violence against the Palestinian population which have done nothing but complicate even more the very tense situation in the Middle East, making more difficult the chance of achieving a comprehensive solution of the problem and return of peace to that part of the world.

(Mr. Vlasceanu, Romania)

We share the special concern of other Member States and the international community as a whole, as expressed during the commemorative meetings and the present debate, over the negative developments in the Middle East, as well as concern for intensifying and broadening the political and diplomatic efforts in search for a solution to the Palestine problem, establishing a just and lasting peace, and creating conditions for the free and peaceful development of all the peoples in the region.

Moreover, the latest developments in the Middle East underline the urgency of embarking on the settlement of the complex situation in the area so as to put an end to the tragedy of the Palestinian people, the acts of violence which result in immense human sufferings and loss of lives, and to the threatened outbreak of a conflict that would gravely endanger international peace and security.

Throughout the evolution of history, experience has always proved that wars, acts of violence and occupation have never led to the settlement of pending problems but only worsen them. Even developments in the Middle East show that true peace and security cannot be built or assured by the use of force or denial of the legitimate rights of other peoples. It has been clearly proved here that the essential element of the conflict is the Palestine problem and that without its solution it is not possible to establish a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. At the same time we see that the will and determination of the Palestinian people to shape its own destiny cannot be defeated and that its legitimate struggle enjoys the support of the entire international community.

Romania and the Romanian people firmly support the just cause of the Palestinian people, its aspirations to self-determination and to live free in its own independent national State. That position is actively promoted and upheld in international conferences, meetings and forums.

(Mr. Vlasceanu, Romania)

President Nicolae Ceausescu works constantly for the settlement of the Palestine problem in all its aspects, the political solution of the situation in the Middle East, and the establishment of a just and lasting peace in that region, in accordance with the wish of the peoples there to live in peace, security and harmony.

We believe in and support the right of the Palestinian people, like all other peoples, to organize its life in accordance with its aspirations, without any outside interference. Without the solution of the Palestinian problem based on implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people there can be no peace in the Middle East. The settlement of the crisis in the Middle East necessarily requires the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing in all negotiations for the solution of the Palestine problem and the establishment of peace in the Middle East. Needless to say, the equal participation of all the parties concerned in any negotiation is a prerequisite for the success of the talks.

As is known, President Nicolae Ceausescu of Romania is engaged in sustained activities in laying the ground for appropriate conditions for initiating the process of negotiations towards a comprehensive solution and the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, based on Israel's withdrawal from the Arab territories it has occupied since 1967, the solution of the problem of the Palestinian people through the exercise of its right to self-determination, including the setting up of an independent Palestinian State, and assurances for the existence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of all the States in the region.

(Mr. Vlasceanu, Romania)

In the context of the efforts made in recent years to promote the process of negotiation for the political solution of all aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and in particular the problem of the Palestinian people, we would like to mention and to stress the importance of the efforts made in connection with the convening of an international conference on peace in the Middle East, an idea launched by the Head of the Romanian State as far back as 1978.

Surely any initiative aimed at achieving a political settlement and the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region based on the aforementioned principles should have international support.

On the basis of the present international situation, we are of the opinion that the organization of an international conference, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of all interested parties, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, as well as the permanent members of the Security Council and other States which could contribute to the solution of the problems and the establishment of peace in the Middle East, would provide the most appropriate framework for negotiations between the parties. Such a conference would be instrumental in removing the obstacles created by mistrust and the other well-known problems, particularly since United Nations resolutions call for the convening of such a conference.

Precisely for this reason, Romania appreciates the fact that the United Nations has an important role to play and offers the most suitable framework for the negotiations. Of particular importance, we believe, is the strengthening of the role of the Secretary-General in the attainment of this goal and his more active involvement in the search for a solution of the Palestinian problem and the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

(Mr. Vlasceanu, Romania)

The Romanian delegation wishes to pledge Romania's continued firm support for the legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people and for a political settlement of the complex situation in the Middle East, which should ensure recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, its legitimate representative.

The meeting rose at 7.55 p.m.