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SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE
17th meeting
held on
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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 17th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KORHONEN (Finland)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF AMBASSADOR JOHN DAVIS LODGE, FORMER MEMBER OF THE UNITED STATES DELEGATION

1. On the proposal of the Chairman, the members of the Committee observed a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of Ambassador John Davis Lodge, former member of the United States delegation.

AGENDA ITEM 75: REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE POPULATION OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/40/541, 542, 575, 583, 649 and Add.1, 686, 702)

2. Mr. ABLOU GHEIT (Egypt) said that the report of the Special Committee (A/40/702) was tantamount to a crushing indictment of the oppressive Israeli practices affecting the Palestinian people in the occupied territories. Despite the fact that Israel had persisted in its obstinate refusal to co-operate with it, the Special Committee had succeeded in amassing more facts concerning Israeli conduct over the past year. The report revealed the persistence of practices that were incompatible with all fundamental freedoms, whether those of movement, education, worship or expression. It also exposed the existence of economic measures aimed at harassing the inhabitants of the occupied territories in order to induce them to leave their land to make room for more Israeli settlers.

3. In recent months there had been an escalating series of acts of violence, confirming that Israel was persisting in its plans for the gradual annexation of the occupied territories with a view to transforming them into an economic appendage of Israel. His country had been in the forefront of those that had condemned such acts of violence.

4. The settlement policy was still being implemented, either by decision of the Israeli Government or at the initiative of Israeli terrorist groups acting with the full knowledge of that Government. The Palestinian response had come in the form of clashes with settlers in an attempt to prevent them from achieving their goals and implementing their plans. It was both interesting and astonishing that Israel had not succeeded in breaking the spirit or undermining the resistance of Palestinian youth born under Israeli occupation. Israel's repressive measures had, on the contrary, enhanced both its ability to resist and its desire to do so.

5. Successive reports of United Nations committees, and even Israeli sources themselves, had revealed that Israel's goals were to stifle Palestinian society in order either to free the occupied territories of their inhabitants or to transform the Palestinian people into a source of cheap labour for the Israeli economy. The measures adopted in order to achieve those goals included terrorism, constant harassment, expropriation of land, expulsion, administrative detention, proclamation of entire towns as closed military areas, appropriation of water sources, restrictions on the export of Palestinian products, obstruction of the

(Mr. Aboul Gheit, Egypt)

development of the Palestinian port at Gaza, financial restrictions and the expropriation of Palestinian land for the construction of a road system linking the occupied territories to Israel.

6. Israel had spoken much in the course of the past year of new measures aimed at building confidence in the occupied territories, including the easing of certain monetary and economic restrictions. However, news reaching the outside from visitors to the occupied territories indicated that there had been no material change in the situation. Israel had, rather, escalated its acts of violence and oppression and had also taken it upon itself to attack the Palestinian people outside the occupied territories.

7. A comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East would first require Israel to change its current policies and abandon the idea of occupation and expansion at the expense of its neighbours. Acceptance of Israel's existence by the Arab world would require its relinquishing the occupied territories. It was important for Israel to adopt specific confidence-building measures in the occupied territories that would stimulate efforts for a just solution to the Middle East problem in all its aspects.

8. Until Israel abandoned its current policies, Egypt would continue to condemn them and all acts incompatible with the relevant international conventions. Egypt would, on the other hand, act to encourage any peaceful moves and any initiatives for a settlement. It was confident that the people of the occupied territories would ultimately realize their legitimate hopes for freedom and the right to self-determination.

9. Mr. FARTAS (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the documents before the Committee showed that the Zionist entity was continuing to ignore the purposes and principles of the Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the fourth Geneva Convention. It also chose to ignore the mandate of the Special Committee.

10. Mr. BARROMI (Israel), speaking on a point of order, said that the Libyan representative had referred to Israel by a name other than that recognized by the United Nations, and asked the Chairman to remind him that that was improper practice.

11. The CHAIRMAN said that points of order should relate only to the proper conduct of business. He appealed to all members of the Committee to refrain from remarks which might divert attention from substantive issues on the agenda.

12. Mr. FARTAS (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that, despite the previous speaker's objections to the term "Zionist entity", that entity still refused to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization and its officials did not even acknowledge the existence of the Palestinian people. He felt that the time had come for new efforts to persuade the Israeli occupation authorities to recognize the mandate of the Special Committee, by allowing its members to visit the occupied territories. The argument that there were no diplomatic relations between the Israeli occupation

(Mr. Fartas, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

authorities and the countries of certain members of the Special Committee was merely an excuse used by those authorities to prevent access to information about their inhumane practices in the occupied territories. The Special Committee must be allowed to discharge its functions.

13. The Israeli occupation authorities treated every inch of land occupied or expropriated since 1947 as belonging to the so-called "promised land", and it was for that reason that they continued to establish new settlements and to expel the indigenous Palestinian population. Statements by officials on behalf of the occupation authorities showed the true nature of their aggressive expansionist intentions with regard to the establishment of settlements throughout the occupied territories. Zionist theory clearly did not acknowledge the existence of the Palestinian people, nor the justice of allowing refugees to return to their homeland.

14. Despite the express provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, the Israeli occupation authorities continued to state their determination to annex more territory and to claim that withdrawal from the West Bank would prevent the establishment of peace in the region.

15. The occupation authorities had recently chosen to resurrect certain laws promulgated by the British mandate authorities in occupied Palestine in 1945. The laws permitted the military occupation authorities to detain any Palestinian without trial or justification and to deport any person without providing a reason. Although a right of appeal was accorded by the newly resurrected laws, the military governor was not obliged to comply with it. Application of the laws had led to the deportation of a number of Palestinians, the imposition of curfews, and the placing of a number of other members of the Arab population under house arrest. Paratroopers had replaced the former border guards, and force had been used against peaceful members of the population in an attempt to terrorize them.

16. The occupation authorities imposed restrictions on freedom of movement in the occupied territories, as well as on travel abroad. They also exercised absolute control over curricula in higher education, in an attempt to perpetuate academic backwardness in the area. Interference in education had led to the deletion of the word "Palestine" from school textbooks and the placing of limitations on the teaching of scientific subjects. Journalistic publications were subject to censorship, and restrictions were also imposed on cultural activities. The Palestinian journalist Mrs. Raymonda Tawil had been prevented from travelling outside the occupied territories merely for having expressed her political views.

17. Nine different forms of tax were levied on Arabs living in the occupied territories, and three of those taxes were used for military purposes. Such taxation meant that members of the Arab population were required to finance military action aimed at the destruction of their own people.

(Mr. Fartas, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

18. History could provide no precedent for what was happening in the occupied Arab territories other than the case of the racist régime in South Africa. The Zionists practised discrimination on the basis of religion or ethnic purity while the South African régime based its policy on race and colour. The victims in both cases were the indigenous population. The two régimes represented the most heinous racist settler movements in history: in spite of the differences in their methods, their objectives were the same.

19. Despite international condemnation of the Israeli and South African régimes, some countries still provided them with support and justified the aggressive actions of those régimes. Such support would only serve to encourage them to defy the wishes of the international community and to ignore international covenants.

20. The Israeli occupation authorities were likely to continue their illegal practices until they had fulfilled their ultimate scheme. Accordingly, the international community must counter that scheme by recourse to General Assembly resolution 194 (III), which resolved that all Palestinian refugees should be permitted to return to their homes. The occupation authorities should also be compelled to respect the fourth Geneva Convention and to recognize the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of its own independent State on its own national soil.

21. Mr. AL-HASSANI (Kuwait) said that the most damaging findings in the comprehensive report prepared by the Special Committee (A/40/702) were that the Israeli military occupation authorities continued to apply measures which seriously restricted a number of fundamental freedoms. Their policy reflected the Zionist entity's clear intention of annexing the occupied territories, in violation of the fourth Geneva Convention.

22. There had recently been an increase in the number of atrocities perpetrated against Palestinians in the occupied territories, on the grounds of so-called security. The Israeli policy was clearly designed to expropriate gradually all Arab land and drive out the indigenous Arab population. The Palestinian population was being subjected to a campaign of psychological and physical warfare conducted by the forces of Kahanism, Sharonism and vigilantism. The witch-hunt carried out against Palestinians living abroad and their institutions, without regard for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the host countries, was another aspect of that policy.

23. The Special Committee's report provided abundant evidence of the repressive measures and inhuman practices carried out by the occupying authorities against the Palestinians, in violation of the fourth Geneva Convention and in defiance of the will of the international community. The forces of Kahanism and Sharonism, through their campaign of psychological warfare, sought to dehumanize the Arab population. The vigilante element, which could be described as "a government within a government", circulated freely, terrorizing and murdering in order to drive the Arabs from their land.

(Mr. Al-Hassani, Kuwait)

24. In addition, a campaign of psychological and physical warfare was being waged against Palestinians and their institutions in other countries with a view to destroying the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. According to a recent study, 52 per cent of the land of the West Bank and Gaza had already been seized by Israel in the 19 years of its occupation. If the Zionists continued their gradual usurpation of Arab lands and the United Nations continued to play the role of spectator, the rest of the land of Palestine would eventually fall into their hands.

25. There was growing public acceptance in Israel of Kahane and his supporters, who had always been tacitly accepted by Israeli society and were only expressing what many Israelis secretly thought. Kahane's general line of thinking was not different from the traditional Zionist policy. Since the early days of the Zionist movement, the Palestinians had been considered as non-existent. The slogan "A land with no people for a people with no land" demonstrated that fact. Such ideas were subsequently expressed in the notorious statement by Golda Meir to the effect that the Palestinian people did not exist, and were in keeping with Menachem Begin's well-known ideas about Judea and Samaria. Kahane's racial slurs against the Arab population were tantamount to an open invitation for a war of genocide against the Palestinians.

26. There was a much more vehement and systematic campaign, however, to mislead world public opinion by attempting to equate the struggle to fulfil Palestinian national aspirations with international terrorism, in order to justify attacks against the Palestinian people and their institutions in any place and at any time. That vicious fabrication, however, fooled no one. Palestinian terrorism arose from an identifiable political grievance, Palestinian homelessness; it reflected the frustration of the Palestinians at being unable to regain their land.

27. It was ironic that Israel, which had been brought about through terrorism and had the longest record of State terrorism, would dare to assume the task of lecturing the international community on that subject. The same people who had suffered from so-called anti-Semitism for centuries were using the same methods against other Semites, the Palestinian Arabs. The greatest irony of all was that the only State created with the help of the United Nations openly violated United Nations resolutions and international law. One had the impression that the Zionist authorities would like to rewrite international law in order to carry out their expansionist designs with impunity.

28. The international community should not tolerate that state of affairs simply because the Zionist State had the support of a super-Power. Like any other aggressor, Israel should be condemned as an enemy of peace and punished accordingly. As in the case of South Africa, sanctions should be imposed against the Zionist State and the credentials of its delegation should be suspended.

29. Mr. PHAM NGAC (Viet Nam) said that for many years the Middle East had been one of the most explosive regions in the world because of the Israeli policy of

(Mr. Pham Ngac, Viet Nam)

aggression and expansion conducted with the support of a nuclear Power. The international community, however, must continue its efforts in support of the just struggle of all Arab nations against Israeli aggression, terrorism and genocide.

30. He welcomed the report of the Special Committee (A/40/702), which had fulfilled its mandate despite the arrogant and unco-operative attitude of the Israeli Government. The report provided a clear picture of the plight of the Arab people living under Israeli domination. Obviously Israel had no intention of abandoning its scheme of annexing the occupied territories. The flagrant violation of a number of fundamental freedoms was a direct result of that policy. Furthermore, Israel, in defiance of the international community, continued its policy of Jewish settlement in the occupied territories.

31. All those practices gravely violated the right of all nations to live in peace in their own land without the threat of genocide; that right had been repeatedly violated by Israel and its accomplices in various parts of the world. The Israeli practices were part of the overall Zionist policy of aggression and territorial expansion aimed at expelling the Arab population from the occupied territories or completely subjugating them within a larger Israeli State.

32. Israel was able to carry out its aggressive policy in defiance of world public opinion because it enjoyed the political and military support of a major nuclear Power, which used Israel as a "gendarme" in its dealings with Arab countries, particularly those which pursued a policy of independence.

33. His delegation reiterated its strong condemnation of Israel's hostile acts against the Arab peoples, as exemplified by its recent attacks against Tunisia and Lebanon. Israel's policy should be condemned as State terrorism. The international community should join efforts to put an immediate end to Israeli aggression against sovereign Arab States and its violation of the human rights of the Arab peoples in the occupied territories. Those who supported Israeli terrorist activities must also be held responsible. His delegation therefore urged the United States to cease its support for Israel.

34. The Vietnamese people firmly supported all Arab nations in their struggle against Israel to regain and defend their independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. The legitimate rights of all Arab peoples living in the occupied territories could be restored through the total withdrawal of Israeli forces from all Arab territories and the implementation of the right of the Palestinian people to establish their own State on Palestinian soil. His delegation fully supported the convening of an international conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations with the participation of all parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.