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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 28 November 1986, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. CHOUDHURY (President) (Bangladesh)
later: Mr. OSMAN (Vice-President) (Somalia)
later: Mr. THOMPSON (Vice-President) (Fiji)

- The situation in the Middle East: reports of the Secretary-General [37]
(continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 37 (continued)

THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/41/453 and Add.1, A/41/768-S/18427)

Mrs. BERTRAND (Austria): Questions related to the Middle East have figured prominently on the agenda of this Assembly for almost four decades. For 39 years the United Nations has tried to influence and shape events in that region. By passing resolution 181 (II) in 1947, which called for the creation of two sovereign States in former mandated Palestine, it assumed a unique responsibility towards all the peoples living in this region.

Over the years the United Nations has devoted considerable human and material resources with the aim of arriving at long last at an equitable, durable and peaceful solution of the problems of this region. The United Nations, through this Assembly and through the Security Council, has developed formulas for peace. Thousands of United Nations employees carry out the social and educational tasks entrusted to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Thousands of brave soldiers are serving under the flag of the United Nations in the Middle East, often under very dangerous circumstances, as we saw only very recently.

(Mrs. Bertrand, Austria)

And yet, a comprehensive solution to the Middle East crisis has remained elusive to this Organization, just as it has remained elusive to all others who undertook similar efforts outside the framework of this world body.

Austria is deeply convinced that the crucial role the United Nations is playing in the Middle East ought to be further enlarged. We simply cannot afford not to use the peace-keeping and peace-making potential the United Nations offers to the fullest.

The Middle East, a cradle of civilization, of many cultures and religions, remains one of the focal points of tension in today's world. We are aware of the grave dangers the situation in the Middle East continues to hold for global peace and security. The terrible suffering of human beings, innocent civilians, which has marked the Middle East for so many decades, continues and is one of the most severe consequences of the present stalemate in the search for a solution to the Middle East problems. The terrible increase and the heavy toll of terrorist attacks which we have witnessed in Europe and elsewhere this year painfully reminded us of the umbilical cord between Europe and the Middle East.

I should like to recall here that my country, Austria, is determined to fight terrorism relentlessly in all its forms and by all adequate means. Terrorism, a new scourge of mankind, cannot be justified under any circumstances or for any reason. But we cannot close our eyes before situations in which suppression and hopelessness create an atmosphere in which the pretence of fighting for a right cause with inadmissible means of violence and terrorism can prosper.

For many years Austria has maintained that European interests and European security cannot be seen as detached from developments in the Middle East. Austria's position on the question of the Middle East remains unchanged. Only an acceptable solution to the Palestinian question, which is at the core of the Middle

(Mrs. Bertrand, Austria)

East problem, can lead to lasting peace. My country, Austria, was among the first Western European countries which has devoted considerable energy and goodwill to contribute towards a negotiated solution. In the humanitarian field Austria, indeed, is assisting the Israeli and the Arab sides in several ways to resolve certain problems.

It is, therefore, our firm conviction that a formula for peace cannot be found as long as the rule of the iron fist is not replaced by the rule of international law. Respect for international law must be universal. No party to the conflict can be spared the effort to come to terms with each other's existence and to make its proper contribution towards peace.

Permit me to recall here once again which elements, in our view, are essential for a just solution:

First, Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) still provide the most widely recognized framework for a political settlement.

Second, Israel's continued presence in the occupied territories and its policy of tacit and open annexation remain, in our view, a serious obstacle to peace. Israel's withdrawal from territories occupied in 1967, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), must come about.

Third, the acquisition of land by force remains unacceptable. The formula "land for peace" has lost none of its validity and appeal.

Fourth, on the other hand, the right of all States - including Israel - to exist within secure and internationally recognized boundaries must be respected by all parties concerned.

Fifth, the national rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to its own State, must be recognized and respected.

(Mrs. Bertrand, Austria)

Sixth, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the representative of the Palestinians must have its role in a comprehensive negotiating process. Let me recall in this context that every country can choose its friends, but no country can choose its geographic neighbours.

Seventh, the situation in the occupied territories is a cause for continued and serious concern. The applicability of the Geneva Convention on the Protection of Civilians in Times of War cannot be put in doubt, pending the Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories.

During the last year we have witnessed a number of diplomatic developments which could indicate that long-held positions of various sides might gradually begin to evolve.

Austria strongly supports the concept of an international peace conference on the Middle East under the aegis of the United Nations. In our view, the participation of all permanent members - I repeat, all permanent members - of the Security Council and all parties to the conflict, including the Palestinian side, would appear to be of high importance.

Recently, new proposals have been put forward with regard to the setting in motion of such a process. Austria, for its part, welcomes all proposals that could indeed lead to such a conference. In this context, the declaration made by the Chairman of the PLO before the Eighth Summit Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement with regard to Security Council resolution 242 (1967) should not go unnoticed.

If there was any need for evidence of how political conflicts cause immense human suffering, we only need to look at war-torn and internally-divided Lebanon. National reconciliation is certainly up to the Lebanese people itself. But the restoration of the full sovereignty of this heavily suffering country has to be included in all considerations about a future stable peace in this region.

(Mrs. Bertrand, Austria)

Austria therefore supports the call of the Security Council - in its resolution 587 (1986), adopted a few weeks ago - for an end to any military presence in southern Lebanon which is not accepted by the Lebanese authorities and its appeal to all parties concerned to co-operate unreservedly with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon in the fulfilment of its mandate.

At their recent meeting President Mubarak and Prime Minister Peres expressed the hope that 1987 would indeed become the year of negotiation.

I wish, on behalf of my Government, to address a firm appeal to all parties concerned to realize - also vis-à-vis their own populations - their joint responsibility for peace in the Middle East. What is needed today more than ever before are imaginative, bold and decisive measures to ensure peace. Otherwise, we fear that the hopes of the peoples of the Middle East will once again be frustrated.

Mr. FAKHOURY (Lebanon) (interpretation from Arabic): As we look at the latest report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Middle East it becomes clear to us that there is still no just and lasting solution to the various aspects of the problem with which he dealt. The question of Palestine and that of the Palestinian people continue to be unresolved. The question of an international peace conference continues to be ambiguous. Israeli practices and acts of aggression within and outside the occupied territories continue to increase in frequency and violence. The situation in southern Lebanon continues to worsen. The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) continues to be unable to fulfil the mandate entrusted to it by the Security Council eight and a half years ago. All this is largely because of the position adopted by Israel and its intransigence and refusal to adhere to the resolutions of the United Nations and its refusal to respond to the wishes of the overwhelming majority of Member States.

(Mr. Fakhoury, Lebanon)

We have warned repeatedly against this grave situation and its persistence. Today we reaffirm that Israel's position must serve as an incentive to Member States to act seriously, individually and collectively, in order to find a just and lasting solution to the situation in the Middle East. Israel's position must not be a cause for discouragement or a reason to succumb to the policies of force and fait accompli adopted by Israel in the achievement of its inordinate ambitions. We find it impossible to be convinced by the statements made by Israeli officials to the effect that they have no special ambitions in the territory and waters of Lebanon. Israel continues to occupy Lebanese territory and to carry out inhuman and criminal acts of aggression day after day against the villages and the population of the south either directly or through its puppet forces, which it has called the South Lebanon Army.

Israel is continuing its secret preparations to divert Lebanese waters to its territory. Israel is continuing to block the fulfilment by UNIFIL of its mandate enshrined in resolution 425 (1978) and the subsequent resolutions on the subject. In so doing, Israel is violating the United Nations Charter and failing to fulfil its obligations as a Member State. It is also violating the most fundamental norms of international law as well as those of the Geneva Conventions of 1949. In continuing to pursue this policy, Israel has further exacerbated the situation in southern Lebanon. Israel is solely responsible for any explosion that might take place there.

In this Hall we have repeatedly stated the position of Lebanon with regard to the situation in the south as well as its just demands for implementation of the United Nations resolutions. We reaffirm our position and our demands for the settlement of the situation and the strengthening of the rights that Israel has continued to flout. The Security Council is responsible for the full and immediate

(Mr. Fakhoury, Lebanon)

implementation of its resolutions pertaining to Lebanon from resolution 425 (1978) to resolution 587 (1986). In demanding the implementation of those resolutions, Lebanon desires to make the southern part of its territory a zone of security and peace under the authority of the Lebanese State. Lebanon recognizes the United Nations Interim Force as the operational instrument entrusted with confirming the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Israeli forces, ensuring the deployment of UNIFIL to the international frontier and assisting the Lebanese authorities, ensuring the return of their effective authority in the area. For eight and a half years this Force has been unable to fulfil its mandate because of Israel's refusal to abide by the resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. The Security Council must therefore reconsider the powers and effectiveness of the Force. The members of the Security Council must, individually and collectively, give it their strong and effective support. That support must also be accorded to the efforts of the Secretary-General and his staff. The Force enjoys the unlimited and absolute support of Lebanon. Lebanon has affirmed its keen interest in its safety. It has also reaffirmed its readiness to contribute as far as possible towards facilitating its task by deploying its own army to stand side by side with the Force. Lebanon insists that the presence of that Force is essential and of vital importance until it has fully discharged its mandate. If it were to be withdrawn before it had fulfilled that mandate, the consequences would be unpredictable, as the Secretary-General has warned repeatedly in his reports to the Security Council.

(Mr. Fakhoury, Lebanon)

Lebanon states again that it is not responsible for the protection of Israel's security. Lebanon rejects any measure that encroaches upon its sovereignty. Lebanon's responsibility is limited to Lebanese security measures to protect Lebanon's boundaries, its territory and its people.

Lebanon also condemns again the continued Israeli acts of aggression. It reaffirms its rejection of Israel's allegation that these acts of aggression are pre-emptive measures.

Lebanon considers that legitimacy in the southern part of the country is embodied in the steadfastness of the people and their legitimate resistance to the occupation.

Lebanon's aim is to liberate its territory from the Israeli occupiers and to spare its people the continued scourge and tragedy of Israeli practices and acts of aggression, so that the southern part of the country may become a zone of security and peace under the authority and sovereignty of the Lebanese State. Authority and sovereignty are indivisible. Lebanon rejects any encroachment upon its sovereignty or authority. Every citizen of or resident in Lebanon, every inch of Lebanon's national soil, must be under the authority and sovereignty of the Lebanese State.

Mr. FERM (Sweden): The position of the Swedish Government on the issue now before us is, in a nutshell, that we recognize the rights to self-determination and statehood of both the Israelis and the Palestinians. The Israelis have had their State since 1948. The Palestinians do not have a State. For decades they have been forced to live in refugee camps, under foreign occupation or as - sometimes unwelcome - guests in other countries.

Sweden believes that in the territory that was once known as the Mandate of Palestine there is room for two peoples, two nations and two States. This basic concept, laid down in General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 1947, continues to be

(Mr. Ferm, Sweden)

one of the cornerstones of a fair and peaceful solution. Also, Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) provide elements essential to a comprehensive settlement and an adequate basis for negotiations. My Government's understanding of the essential thrust of those two resolutions is that, as a result of negotiations, Israel would withdraw from the territories occupied in 1967. Israel's neighbours, on their side, would give full recognition to Israel's right to live in peace within secure and recognized borders.

For more than half of its existence Israel has occupied the West Bank, Gaza and the Syrian Golan Heights. Israel, rightly, prides itself on being a democracy. But what happens to the ideals of democracy when an ever-increasing part of the population under Israel's physical control are people living under military occupation, without any political rights? Nineteen years is a long time, and the effects on both sides - on the Palestinians under occupation and on the Israelis exercising occupation - are not negligible. This situation fosters neither peace nor democracy. The claim sometimes made by Israeli spokesmen that their occupation is more lenient than that of certain others are out of court. No people has the right to take the destiny of another in its own hands. The legitimate demands of the Palestinian people for self-determination on their national soil must be satisfied.

A just solution to the conflict in the Middle East cannot be based on violence or military superiority. It cannot be dictated by an occupying Power. Nor, obviously, can it come as a result of a vicious circle of terrorist acts and harsh, indiscriminate reprisals. It must be a solution negotiated between Israel and those who can speak for the Palestinians - that is, in our view, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). That is a prerequisite for a lasting peace.

(Mr. Fern, Sweden)

On many occasions Sweden has criticized Israel's policies in the occupied territories. We believe that many of those policies constitute serious violations of international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention. Attempts to annex or change the status of occupied territories are unacceptable.

The Swedish Government condemns Israel's continued settlement policy in the occupied territories. Apart from being a major political obstacle to a settlement of the conflict, this policy is in clear contravention of international law.

During the last four decades, wars and violence have taken a heavy toll among the civilian population in the Middle East. Many innocent lives have been lost in heinous terrorist acts, which still continue today in the region and have spread to other parts of the world as well. Harsh and sometimes disproportionate retaliatory measures have followed, often in violation of international law and at the cost of heavy civilian losses.

The tragic spiral of violence in the Middle East continues to this day. That trend must be reversed. It is absolutely necessary to combat terrorism in all its forms. All States and organizations must shoulder their responsibility and join forces against this evil. Above all, the parties concerned must make real efforts to achieve a peaceful solution to the conflicts in the region. It is not to condone international terrorism to state that certain acts of international terrorism most certainly would not have taken place had it not been for the unsolved Palestinian question.

It is more than four years since the Israel Defence Forces launched what was called "Operation Peace for Galilee". Since then the delicate social and political fabric of neighbouring Lebanon has been even further torn asunder. Much blood has been spilled, new antagonisms have come into the open and political moderation has suffered.

(Mr. Fern, Sweden)

In the midst of this turmoil the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) is trying to establish and maintain a modicum of order and stability in southern Lebanon. A few months ago the Swedish Government agreed to increase the Swedish participation in UNIFIL. It was not an easy decision. UNIFIL has so far been prevented from carrying out its tasks to the full. We acceded to the request of the Secretary-General out of solidarity with the population in southern Lebanon and because we attach importance to the stabilizing and moderating role which UNIFIL plays in spite of the difficulties. We appeal to the parties concerned to co-operate with UNIFIL. We also appeal to the members of the Security Council, and indeed to all Members of the Organization, to give their full support - political and financial - to the peace-keeping force.

The mandate of the Force, dating from the Israeli Litani operation in 1978, has often been termed vague. But there is nothing vague about the stipulation that Israeli troops should withdraw to the international border. That has still not been done. Israel's continued military presence in southern Lebanon is unacceptable. It is a violation of basic principles of international law. It is in contradiction with the repeated requests of the Security Council. In our view it is one of the main reasons behind the increasing tension in the area. This tension in itself limits UNIFIL's possibilities of being the efficient peace-keeping force which it should be. Hostility against Israel is increasing. We must ask whether this situation really is in Israel's own interest, whether in the long run the kibbutzim and moshavim in Galilee will be safer than they were five years ago.

(Mr. Ferm, Sweden)

The contribution which a country like Sweden can make to the solution of the tragic Middle East conflict is obviously of a very limited nature. Yet, over the years, upon request, Sweden has provided mediators, emissaries, arbitrators, military observers, and peace-keeping forces.

My delegation would like to congratulate Egypt and Israel on their decision to resort to arbitration with regard to the Taba territory. Arbitration is a means of peaceful settlement of disputes that could be used much more widely. The President of the Arbitration Tribunal will be a Swedish judge, Mr. Gunnar Lagergren. He thus becomes the latest in a series of Swedish citizens called upon to assist in the solution of problems pertaining to the conflict. Some of his predecessors have been Count Bernadotte, Secretary-General Hammarskjöld, Ambassador Jarring, and Mr. Rydbeck, the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

Let me conclude by underlining that the United Nations must continue to insist on the principles of international law and such basic tenets for a solution as I outlined earlier. In addition, the Organization should try to facilitate the peace process by offering a framework which is conducive to bringing the parties together in direct negotiations. Perhaps it could assist the parties in breaking the political taboos that have prevented a solution so far. A United Nations conference could serve as such a framework. We believe that the opportunities and United Nations potential should be fully used by the parties.

Mr. KORHONEN (Finland): The problem of the Middle East has been of special concern to the United Nations for almost 40 years. During these years several wars have been fought; no peace has followed the wars. The cycle of violence has resulted in an expanding arms race, and more sophisticated and more destructive weapons have been introduced to the area. The situation continues to pose the most persistent threat to international peace and security.

(Mr. Korhonen, Finland)

The international community has sought various means to settle peacefully this long-standing crisis; to our regret they have all failed. At the moment there are hardly any serious negotiations. Yet a peaceful and lasting settlement can be achieved through negotiations only.

The basic framework for a peaceful solution has been laid out in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). The Government of Finland believes that those principles, which were defined long ago and are almost universally recognized, still remain valid. Accordingly, the acquisition of territory by force is inadmissible; Israel must therefore withdraw from territories it has occupied since 1967. It is equally imperative to guarantee the right of Israel and of all other States of the area to exist within secure and recognized boundaries.

In addition, provision must be made for the legitimate rights of the Palestinians, including their right to national self-determination. That presupposes the right of the Palestinians and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the most significant representative of their national aspirations to participate in negotiations on their own future, within the framework of a comprehensive solution in the Middle East.

The core of the conflict - the question of Palestine - must be addressed and its solution must be part of any such comprehensive settlement.

One major obstacle to achieving a comprehensive solution has been the series of illegal acts committed by the Government of Israel. Israel has continued its settlements policy, extended its jurisdiction to the Golan Heights, and illegally changed the status of Jerusalem, a Holy City of three great faiths. Finland has joined the international community in condemning those acts.

Lebanon, where the tragic cycle of violence continues, has become a hapless victim of all the disputes and conflicts resulting from the unsolved basic problems

(Mr. Korhonen, Finland)

in the Middle East. Several efforts towards national reconciliation have failed. The fighting among the various armed elements has turned the daily life of tens of thousands of innocent civilians into endless suffering. We appeal to all the parties to refrain from any further acts of violence, whether internal or across international borders. Lebanon's independence, territorial integrity and national sovereignty must be respected. All foreign troops must be withdrawn from Lebanese soil to enable the restoration of Lebanon's authority over its own territory, within the internationally recognized borders.

In accordance with its policy of neutrality, Finland has taken a balanced and conciliatory position on the various controversial issues in the Middle East. We have thus maintained good relations with all the nations concerned, including the most direct parties to the dispute. It is our firm intention to continue this policy and thereby retain the confidence of all parties to the Middle East conflict.

The volatile situation in the Middle East poses a great challenge for the United Nations. The Organization has an obligation to offer its services to the parties in the conflict and support their efforts aimed at a comprehensive, just and lasting solution. While a negotiated solution continues to elude us, we are convinced that United Nations peace-keeping operations play a vital role in the area. The conditions created by peace keeping for peace making should be fully utilized by the parties.

A tangible expression of Finland's peaceful services is the sizeable contribution which it has made and continues to make to United Nations peace-keeping activities in the area from their very beginning. At present Finland participates in all ongoing United Nations peace-keeping activities in the Middle

(Mr. Korhonen, Finland)

East, including the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which has pursued its duties in southern Lebanon during the current year under constant and growing danger. Despite the less than satisfactory circumstances in which the Force is obliged to operate, Finland continues to believe that UNIFIL's role is vital.

The Middle East problem is a question that affects not only the parties to the conflict but also the whole international community. There is no other area in the world where problems are as complex and the situation potentially as explosive. Nowhere is peace needed more urgently than in the Middle East.

Mr. AHMAD (Brunei Darussalam): More than four decades have passed since the creation of this world body, and almost for the same length of time this Organization has continued to be presented with and challenged by the familiar question "The situation in the Middle East". It has been discussed extensively at regional and international conferences, and not least in the Assembly. Many efforts have been undertaken under the auspices of the United Nations to resolve the conflicts in the Middle East. These include the formulation of the principles and framework for a peaceful solution, which have been repeatedly reaffirmed at successive sessions of the General Assembly.

Developments in the Middle East, however, have not taken a turn for the better. The situation continues to be explosive and volatile, particularly in Lebanon and the occupied Arab territories, owing to the aggressive and expansionist policies of Israel, which continues to obstruct all efforts to bring about a just and comprehensive settlement, preferring instead the path of aggression and military might.

Brunei Darussalam joins the international community in its condemnation of the continued Israeli occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem. We are concerned about the Israeli policy of consolidating its control in the occupied territories, which includes the establishment of Israeli settlements. This act is contrary to the Security Council resolution which declared that the settlements established by Israel in Palestine and other territories occupied since 1967 are illegal, null and void. It is therefore imperative that Israel relinquish unconditionally all the Arab territories it has occupied since 1967 and dismantle its illegal settlements, in order to facilitate the attainment of genuine peace in the region.

There is no need to remind the Assembly of the basic reality that the international community would not be burdened by such a critical problem as that of

(Mr. Ahmad, Brunei Darussalam)

the situation in the Middle East had Israel recognized the existence of the Palestinians and allowed them to create a homeland in Palestine in 1947. The Palestinians were, instead, denied not only their rightful homeland but also their fundamental rights, including their inalienable right to self-determination. Since then the world has also witnessed several bloody confrontations between the two conflicting entities in the Middle East. The war has also spilled over to the neighbouring Arab countries.

We were reminded about the other situation in the Middle East, but the question of Palestine still remains the central issue of the situation in the Middle East. Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) are still unimplemented. A just and durable solution to the problem therefore requires recognition of the national rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to its own independent sovereign State. Since the conflict has its roots in the denial of Palestinian rights, the Palestinians must participate in the peace process. Thus, the idea of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, with the participation of all the permanent members of the Security Council, the parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) on an equal footing, is welcomed by Brunei Darussalam.

Brunei Darussalam, however, shares the concern of the Secretary-General, which he emphasized in his reports A/41/453 and Add.1 and A/41/768, that there is still no consensus on the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the General Assembly. Israel is still adamant in refusing to accept the idea. Israel refuses to listen to the clamour of the world community. Israel refuses to adhere to United Nations resolutions and to abide by international law and norms in the conduct of international relations. It is obsessed by its military strength, which has been unleashed unhesitatingly on Palestinians in refugee camps in southern Lebanon.

(Mr. Ahmad, Brunei Darussalam)

All fingers clearly point to Israel. Without conciliatory efforts on the part of Israel, peace in the Middle East will never be restored. The conflict also has tendencies to spill over and spread to other parts of the globe, threatening international peace and security. The attainment of a just and comprehensive settlement of the problem in the Middle East is therefore a matter of great international priority. In this regard, Brunei Darussalam supports all efforts by the Secretary-General, as well as the United Nations peace-keeping operations in the region. Through the efforts of the Secretary-General the envisaged International Peace Conference on the Middle East has gained wider international support. It is also hoped that with his continued efforts the differences between the conflicting parties will eventually be resolved. At the same time, my delegation feels that it is important for the United Nations peace-keeping operations to continue, with their indispensable role of containing and easing the tension in the area.

My delegation also feels that the Middle East problem must not be left solely to the Secretary-General, the related peace-keeping operations and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). We, as members of this international body, have a role in facilitating the peace process by offering a framework likely to bring all parties together in direct negotiations, as called for in the resolutions before us today. In this connection, my delegation shares the view of the Secretary-General that the machinery of the Security Council could be used to further the search for a peaceful settlement in the Middle East. It is hoped that the members of the Security Council will review and renew their positions and co-operate within the framework of the Security Council in promoting an early settlement of the Middle East problem.

Mr. GORE-BOOTH (United Kingdom): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 12 member States of the European Community.

A few days ago, in the debate under item 35 of the agenda, on the question of Palestine, we had occasion to set out in detail the views of the Twelve on the Arab-Israeli dispute, which traditionally has been regarded as the conflict central to the problems of the Middle East. Without wishing to understate the importance we attach to the solution of that conflict, I shall confine myself today to a summary of our well-established position, which has been set out in the Venice Declaration and in subsequent statements.

Speaking on 23 September in the general debate, on behalf of the European Community and its 12 member States, my Foreign Minister, Sir Geoffrey Howe, reaffirmed that a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute can be achieved only through negotiation. He appealed on behalf of the Twelve to the parties concerned, the Arab States, Israel and the Palestinian people, to open the door to peace by recognizing each other's rights.

(Mr. Gore-Booth, United Kingdom)

It has consistently been our view that any solution to the dispute should be based upon Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and include the right to existence and to security of all States in the region, including Israel, and justice for all peoples of the region and the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people, with all that this implies. These principles should be clearly and unambiguously accepted by all. They apply to all the parties concerned, including the Palestinian people and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which will have to be associated with negotiations.

In accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), we believe that Israel must put an end to the occupation of Arab territories it has maintained since 1967. The resolution of the problems between Israel and its neighbours should be based on the principles of non-recourse to the use of force and the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force. As we have made clear in previous debates, we consider that the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention are applicable to the Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967. Any change in the status and demographic structure of these territories, including the establishment of settlements, are illegal under international law. We furthermore reiterate that the Israeli annexation of East Jerusalem, and its decision to extend its law, jurisdiction and administration to the Golan Heights, are contrary to international law and therefore invalid.

The cycle of violence engendered by the continuing failure to find political solutions to the conflict has made the search for peace even more difficult. We deplore such violence, from whatever quarter it may come. Where it takes the form of terrorism, as we have also made clear in recent statements, we firmly believe that such acts are never justified and do not serve whatever political cause the perpetrators claim to be furthering.

(Mr. Gore-Booth, United Kingdom)

The situation between Israel and its Arab neighbours is not the only focus of tension in the Middle East. The continuing violence and fighting in Lebanon, and the lack of progress in achieving a political solution to Lebanon's problems, remain a matter of grave concern to us. The Foreign Ministers of the Twelve, meeting in The Hague, made this clear in their statement on 27 June, and referred in particular to the escalation of violence involving the civilian population in Beirut, especially the Palestinians in refugee camps, and leading to the heavy loss of life and property on all sides. Fighting of this nature there and in Tyre and Sidon has continued. We reaffirm the need for the parties concerned to exercise restraint, to make efforts to end the present bloodshed and to allow organizations such as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to co-operate freely.

Another source of tension in Lebanon is the continuing occupation of a part of Lebanese soil by Israeli forces. Not only is this unacceptable in itself, but it leads to continuing friction and violence, and prevents the deployment of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) to the border and the fulfilment of its mandate from the Security Council. A solution to the problems confronting UNIFIL and southern Lebanon will not be possible without a complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanese territory in accordance with the resolutions of the Security Council. The continuing support for the Force given by the Twelve, three of whose members are among the troop contributors, remains as strong as ever. We reaffirm that the sovereignty, unity, independence and territorial integrity of Lebanon must be respected. We share the serious view taken by the Secretary-General in his report on the situation in the Middle East for this year (A/41/768) of the dangers inherent in the continuing instability in Lebanon, with the risk of an outbreak of serious hostilities.

(Mr. Gore-Booth, United Kingdom)

In speaking of Lebanon, we should once again express our grave concern for the fate of all hostages, both Lebanese nationals and foreigners, held in that country, and appeal strongly, on humanitarian grounds, for their release as soon as possible. Several of these are nationals of Community countries, including my own. I should like if I may, to add, on a personal note, my feelings of sympathy for the families of Alec Collett, whose brave wife lives in New York, and of John McCarthy.

Another conflict in the Middle East region about which the Twelve are seriously concerned is that between Iran and Iraq, now in its seventh year. The appalling human suffering it has brought, together with the material harm done to the well-being of people on both sides, has rightly caused horror and dismay in every country in the world. The continuing attacks on civilians are evidence of a disturbing tendency by both sides to ignore the provisions of humanitarian law in armed conflict, including the Geneva Conventions of 1949. The Twelve urge each Government to exercise maximum restraint, and to honour the undertakings given to the Secretary-General in June 1984 to cease deliberate attacks on civilian targets. We join in the strong condemnation of the use of chemical weapons in the fighting, evidence of which was accepted by the Security Council in its statement of 21 March, and which constitutes a contravention of the 1925 Geneva Protocol. We are, in addition, gravely concerned by the continuing occurrence of attacks on vessels flying the flag of States, including our own, which are not involved in the hostilities. We furthermore stress the importance we attach to the freedom of navigation and commerce in international waters, and to respect for the relevant international conventions and law, especially those dealing with the safety of civil aviation and maritime traffic.

(Mr. Gore-Booth, United Kingdom)

The suffering and destruction caused by the war has gone on far too long. We appeal for the observance of an immediate ceasefire, a cessation of all hostilities, and withdrawal of all forces to the internationally recognized boundaries without delay, in accordance with Security Council resolution 582 (1986) of February this year. We urge the parties to reflect urgently upon the opportunity this resolution offers for peace, and to comply with its provisions. We draw encouragement from the confidence expressed by both sides in the Secretary-General, and we furthermore urge them to take advantage of his good offices. We reiterate our complete confidence in him and our full support for his efforts in this regard.

We are especially conscious of the danger posed to neighbouring countries of any escalation of the conflict. We call upon both sides to exercise restraint and to respect the territorial integrity of all States.

The Twelve are fully aware of the wider dangers posed to international peace by the different points of tension and conflict in the region. We take due note of the observations in this regard contained in the Secretary-General's report this year on the situation in the Middle East (A/41/768). We renew our support for all the efforts he is making to assist in finding peaceful solutions, and we reaffirm our readiness to do all in our power to help bring such solutions about.

Mr. ADENIJI (Nigeria): The annual debate on the problem of the Middle East is a sad reminder of the constraint imposed on the United Nations in undertaking steps necessary for safeguarding peace. Year in year out, it is repeated in this Assembly that the Middle East remains one of the most explosive areas in the world. All the elements for a conflagration of both regional and global proportions not only are present but continue to be aggravated. A people denied the right to self-determination and deprived of its homeland; countries whose territories are occupied through use of force; periodic aggression against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States; neighbours in a state of belligerency, and an arms race that has taken on a nuclear proportion. To these local elements, is added big-Power interest, which have continued to complicate the situation and to make a solution impossible. In his current report to the General Assembly (A/41/215), the Secretary-General referred to the situation in the region as highly volatile, with a general sense of insecurity. It is a situation fraught with the danger of outbreak of major hostilities as has happened in the past. What is more frightening is the quantity of sophisticated weapons in the region, which can easily escalate any military conflict. In this connection, the reported acquisition of nuclear-weapon capability by Israel should not be underestimated. This development heightens the risk of super-Power involvement and direct confrontation as has happened before, especially in 1973.

Ever since its involvement in 1947, the United Nations has exerted as much effort on the Middle East problem as on any single issue. The principles for a solution elaborated as far back as 1967 have unfortunately remained unimplemented. Security Council resolution 242 (1967) stipulated that the establishment of a just and lasting peace should include the application of two principles, to wit: withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the June 1967 conflict, and termination of all claims or state of belligerency and respect for

(Mr. Adeniji, Nigeria)

and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force. By its resolution 338 (1973) the Security Council reaffirmed these principles and called upon all parties to commence their implementation.

The continued occupation of Arab territories by Israel, therefore, almost 20 years after the unanimous call upon it to withdraw, remains a major obstacle to a solution. What is more unacceptable are Israeli actions designed to change the character of the occupied territories, thus indicating determination to perpetuate its occupation. Of particular concern is Israel's annexation of Jerusalem, which it has declared as its capital. Such a unilateral alteration of the status of the City as well as measures to change its physical character, its demographic composition and institutional structure are, of course, null and void as far as the United Nations is concerned. It is nevertheless a challenge which the Organization has been rendered incapable of resolving, owing to lack of consensus in the Security Council.

The blatant acts of aggression against Lebanon by Israel is another dimension of the problem. The invasions of that country, accompanied by wanton acts of destruction and the instigated mass murder of Palestinian refugees have constituted direct violation of the sovereignty of that country and the major contributory factor to its present travail. The United Nations peace-keeping efforts in Lebanon are being rendered ineffective by the incursions of Israeli troops. The Security Council should take serious note of the Secretary-General's call on its members to take urgent action collectively and individually to unblock the impasse created by the refusal of Israel to withdraw its troops totally from Lebanon. Meanwhile, I should express to the Government and people of Lebanon with which Nigeria has very

(Mr. Adeniji, Nigeria)

warm relations, my delegation's solidarity at the continuing national trial which they are facing.

Even before 1974, when the issue of Palestine was included as a separate item in the agenda of the General Assembly, many had expressed the conviction that the Middle East situation could not be resolved in a just and lasting manner without firm recognition of the rights of the Palestinians. Those inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination without external interference and the right to national independence and sovereignty have been reaffirmed annually in this General Assembly. However, there seems to be a lack of recognition by Israel, in our view, of the crucial nature of the Palestinian issue to the wider problem of the Middle East. Exercise of the right of self-determination by the Israelis cannot be at the expense of others just as sovereignty of the State of Israel should not be at the expense of the territorial integrity of other neighbouring States. The report of the Special Committee on Israeli Practices in Occupied Territories is a catalogue of policies and practices designed to suppress and humiliate the Palestinians, to dispossess them, and to break and crush their national identity and aspirations. This is not going to help all the complaints about so-called terrorism in the Middle East.

Nigeria has always maintained its unflinching support for all peoples seeking to exercise their inalienable rights. Therefore, my delegation reiterates in no uncertain terms its support for the legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people in their quest for a homeland, for national independence and sovereignty. We salute the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) under whose leadership the plight of the Palestinians have attracted universal attention. We are convinced that justice for the Palestinians will prevail, and in any case is indispensable for a solution of the problem of the region.

(Mr. Adeniji, Nigeria)

A comprehensive solution to the problem of the Middle East will require the participation of all parties in the peace process. The Geneva Declaration on Palestine quite rightly emphasized the right of the PLO to participate on an equal footing with other parties in an international conference on the Middle East. In endorsing the proposal for an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations, the General Assembly in 1983 invited all parties to the conflict in the Middle East, including the two super-Powers, other concerned States and the PLO to participate on an equal footing. This position has been reiterated often in the General Assembly including in its latest resolution 40/168 A adopted in 1985. Other important international forums have made similar calls. At their Eighth Summit Conference held in Harare in September 1986, the Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement devoted attention to the problem of the Middle East. In their declaration, they lent their weight to the call for an international conference on the Middle East. Regrettably, we read in the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations that his consultations revealed that opposition still persisted to the convening of the conference. Yet, this mechanism appears to be the best option for a comprehensive solution covering all aspects of the conflict and involving all the parties concerned, which should include, of course, the PLO.

(Mr. Adeniji, Nigeria)

My delegation therefore calls upon all parties, but especially on the Government of Israel, to co-operate with the United Nations in its efforts to find a solution that will ensure lasting peace in the Middle East. There can be no viable alternative to a negotiated, comprehensive solution which meets the aspirations of all who are affected and which ensures that all the peoples and countries in the region live in peace as good neighbours.

Mr. OSMAN (Somalia): My Government deeply regrets that the situation in the Middle East - for so long a grave source of regional and international tension and insecurity - still seems far from a peaceful solution. Whatever form Middle East issues may take, the underlying problems continue to be Israel's expansionism at the expense of the Arab peoples of the region, its callous disregard for Palestinian rights and its contempt for the decisions and resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

The General Assembly's judgement that Israel is not a peace-loving State was not made lightly. This judgement is fully justified by Israel's continuing illegal occupation of Arab territories in the West Bank of the Jordan, the Gaza Strip and southern Lebanon, and by its annexation of Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, in gross violation of international law. The illegality of Israel's presence in the occupied territories is compounded by its harsh military administration and by its settlement policy, aimed at altering the demographic composition, institutional structure and status of those territories. Those policies, which are all flagrant violations of the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949, obviously constitute a serious obstacle to the achievement of peace in the Middle East. Above all, Israel's adamant denial of Palestinian rights ensures the continuation of a vicious cycle of violence and conflict in the Middle East.

(Mr. Osman, Somalia)

My Government strongly supports the international consensus which has established that peace and stability in the region can be achieved only when the Palestinian people are enabled to regain and exercise the right to return to their homes, the right to self-determination, the right to national independence and the right to establish a sovereign State in Palestine.

It is often reiterated that the Palestinian question is at the heart of the Middle East conflict. However, the time is long past when this judgement should have been translated into practical terms and positive action. That can be done if the necessary political will is exerted to implement the provisions of General Assembly resolution 3236 (XXIX) and subsequent resolutions reaffirming Palestinian rights, and if the just and reasonable recommendations of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People are promoted and followed.

The need for Security Council action in support of the General Assembly's initiatives on Palestinian rights is also critical. We hope that the Council will not continue to delay the carrying out of its responsibilities in regard to a situation which continues to threaten international peace and security.

Certainly the world community must continue to expose and condemn unequivocally Israel's efforts to obstruct the achievement of a just and lasting Middle East peace. Those efforts are clearly seen in Israel's settlement policies in the occupied territories - policies aimed at precluding the realization of Palestinian national rights in Palestine.

A world community committed to the protection of human rights must also condemn the subjection of Palestinians and other Arabs under Israeli occupation to arbitrary mass arrests, torture, displacement, expulsion and the destruction of their homes. Above all, the world community must show its abhorrence for Israel's genocidal attacks on the Palestinians outside Palestine - whether it be the

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hounding of the Palestinian freedom fighters or attacks on refugee camps. Those attacks, as we are all well aware, are carried out with utter disregard for the taking of innocent human lives and for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the States of the region.

No State should be able to carry out policies of lawlessness and aggression with impunity. It is to be hoped that Member States will sever all diplomatic, trade and cultural relations with Israel as long as it continues on its intransigent course.

My Government fully supports the United Nations decisions and resolutions that call for a comprehensive settlement based on Israel's total withdrawal from all occupied Arab territory, including Jerusalem, and the restoration of Palestinian rights, in particular the right to statehood in Palestine. We believe also that the Arab peace plan adopted at Fez and repeatedly reaffirmed is an important contribution to the peace process.

We share the widely held view that the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East would bring significant progress to the search for a Middle East peace. To be effective, however, the peace Conference would of course require the full and active participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

Every initiative that could promote a Middle East settlement must be taken, for the time for peace in the region is running out. The longer the state of conflict continues, the more difficult it will be for the problems of the region to be solved. We hope that all those most closely concerned will exert every effort to bring about a just and lasting settlement, in the interests of regional stability and of the enhancement of world peace and security.

Mr. MAHMUD (Pakistan): The General Assembly is once again considering the situation in the Middle East, an issue which continues to harbour the seeds of great perils, and of a greater conflagration in that region.

Decade after decade the international community has expressed its wishes for a just and equitable solution to the question of Palestine and the Middle East situation, and in this connection the General Assembly and the Security Council have adopted many resolutions on an early comprehensive settlement of this festering conflict.

(Mr. Mahmud, Pakistan)

While the pile of resolutions has increased, there has been no reduction in the suffering of the Palestinian people, who continue to be denied the exercise of their fundamental and inalienable right to self-determination. This denial remains at the core of the Middle East conflict and attempts to sidestep this crucial element only increase the tensions and difficulties.

For 40 years the energies and abilities of the United Nations have been severely taxed in the efforts to restore peace and security in that embattled and inflamed region. The Arabs have amply demonstrated their willingness to negotiate a just and lasting settlement on the basis of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. They have been forthcoming in putting forward constructive and all-encompassing proposals. The Fez plan was one such effort. However, their readiness, regrettably, has not been reciprocated. On the contrary, Israel's attitude and behaviour have over the years become more unaccommodating. Israel persists in the mistaken belief that by unleashing an endless cycle of terror and violence it can assure its security and establish its hegemony in the Middle East. In thwarting various peace initiatives, Israel has belied its own pretensions to peace and given proof, if proof is required, of its expansionist policies. By the all too familiar logic of the aggressor, Israel rebuffs the offers of peace by accusing of obduracy those that have suffered aggression. The only peace Israel seeks is for itself and on its own terms.

Israel has raised the bogey of security to becloud the real issues. It has at its disposal armed might which not only protects it from any possible threat in the region but has also become an instrument for its belligerence and expansionism, endangering the security of others. In the past 30 years Israel has at one time or another committed aggression against all its neighbours. By the acquisition of

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a vast military machine Israel has also arrogated to itself the right to draw widespread security parameters and to commit aggression in distant lands. Tunisia was a recent example.

The ravaged landscape of the Middle East is made more sombre by Israel's compulsive obsession with eradicating any and every vestige of Palestinian identity and Palestinian nationalism. It finds expression in aggression against homeless Palestinians living in exile in neighbouring Arab States, as well as in the repression and harassment of those living in the occupied territories. The invasion of Lebanon, the massacres of Sabra and Shatila, the attack on the headquarters of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in Tunis, the displacement and harassment of the Palestinian and Arab population in the occupied territories, the forcible evictions and the establishment of illegal settlements are all manifestations of this syndrome. This is also evident in Israel's attempts to destroy the PLO, which is considered by the international community to be the sole representative of the Palestinian people. Israel must come to terms with this reality if it seeks peace and security.

Israel must also desist from its illegal policies and practices in the occupied Arab territories, the sole objective of which is to annex and absorb them into a greater Israel. Israel has been ruthlessly attempting to alter the legal status of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights. Irrefutable evidence of its systematic efforts to change the demographic composition and historical character of these territories is found in the gradual annexation of land for the establishment of illegal Jewish settlements. Nearly 60 per cent of the land in the West Bank has been forcibly confiscated from its legal owners. It is therefore not surprising that all peace initiatives, regardless of their origin, have demanded that the establishment of settlements be halted. Israel must abandon

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its annexationist policies if it entertains a genuine desire for peace in the region. Israel's military might gives it the capability of inflicting death and destruction. It will not, however, enable Israel to destroy the determination of the Arabs to live as sovereign, independent people; nor will it succeed in coercing them into accepting a less than just and honourable peace. Israel should know that a people determined to be free cannot be subjugated; a people determined to be independent cannot be enslaved.

No people can for ever exist in a state of war. Israel has a choice. It can opt for lasting peace by recognizing the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. Otherwise it will keep on pursuing its fragile security at the cost of the permanent hostility of its Arab neighbours and the perpetual destabilization of that strategic region. This would not only entail an incalculable loss in terms of human and material resources, in blood and tears, but continue to pose a grave threat to international peace and security. Israel's isolation can come to an end if it arrives at a just and honourable peace with the Palestinian people and its Arab neighbours.

The declarations and decisions of the United Nations offer a genuine and viable framework for a just and peaceful settlement of the Middle East question. In this context we urge the early convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East within the parameters defined by the International Conference held in Geneva in 1983. The Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Countries, at their recent meeting in Harare, emphasized the "necessity for the early convening of the international conference on the Middle East" (A/41/697, p. 87, para. 182) and called upon the United Nations Security Council to consider setting up a preparatory committee, with the participation of its permanent members, to examine effective ways and means of holding the International

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Conference. We fully agree that the Security Council provides a practical framework for setting in motion the peace process in the Middle East, predicated on the participation on an equal footing of all the parties to the conflict and of the five permanent members of the Council, without prejudice to their respective positions. Israel should rise to the challenge.

The time for decisive action has come. We cannot allow this historic opportunity to be lost. A just solution to the question of Palestine and the Middle East problem is imperative, not only to restore peace to a highly sensitive region but also to sustain and reinforce the relevance and credibility of the United Nations as an instrument for international peace and security. The alternative is too grim even to contemplate.

Mr. MUDENGE (Zimbabwe): Once again we address ourselves to the question of the Middle East - an area where injustice, conflict and the potential for disaster on an unprecedented scale have drawn, indeed demanded, the attention of the international community for nearly four decades. Notwithstanding the sterling efforts of countless men and women of honour, who have dedicated themselves, at one time or another during the past 40 years, through this Organization and others, we remain today with a situation which, in the words of our Secretary-General, "continues to be highly volatile" and one which constitutes a major and very real threat to international peace and security.

There can be no doubt that the matrix of contradictions in the Middle East emanates from the policies of Israel - in particular, in the continuing Israeli occupation of Palestine and other Arab territories seized by force of arms since 1967; in the obstinate refusal to allow the Palestinian people to exercise its legitimate and inalienable rights, and in the unacceptable policies and practices which have been and continue to be adopted by Israel - not only towards those who suffer directly under its occupation forces, but also towards those nearby and neighbouring States whose sense of morality and justice have determined that they should side with and support the cause of the dispossessed and oppressed Palestinian people.

The international community has sought on many occasions to redress that situation and, in so doing, to defuse the growing tension within the Middle East. However, in open and arrogant defiance of a host of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, and notwithstanding overwhelming international criticism, Israel has continued its policies, increasing its grip upon the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, increasing its oppression of those whose land it occupies, and stepping up its aggression against all those who resist or reject its expansionist designs.

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

The decision by Israel to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration upon the occupied Syrian Golan Heights represents but one glaring example of this expansionism I have mentioned; the annexation of the Holy City of Jerusalem, the decision by Tel Aviv to declare that city the capital of Israel and the measures effected since then to alter the physical character, demographic composition and the religious and cultural status of Jerusalem represent yet another such example. The continuation by Israel, and in spite of repeated calls for it to desist, of its policy linking the economy of the occupied territories with its own economy thereby ensuring that any socio-economic development in those territories is geared more to the benefit of Israel than to that of the indigenous Palestinian and other Arab people, represents a further example and constitutes proof of Tel Aviv's strategy leading towards the total incorporation of these occupied territories into an enlarged Israeli entity.

The most blatant and most provocative manifestation of Israel's expansionism with regard to the occupied territories is the continuing establishment of Jewish settlements thereupon and the expulsion or deportation of Palestinian nationals therefrom. So perturbed is the Secretary-General about these practices, that in his latest report on the situation in the Middle East he says:

"... I am particularly concerned about the consequences that would flow from the establishment by Israel of additional settlements in the occupied territories. This is a matter of deep concern and, more than any other single factor, contributes to doubts in the minds of many about Israel's readiness to negotiate a peace settlement that would require its withdrawal from these territories." (A/41/768, para. 36)

Directly related to this creeping annexation of the occupied territories, has been a marked deterioration in the situation as it affects the Palestinians

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themselves - both those who suffer within the occupied territories and those who wander as refugees in neighbouring States. In his report on the situation, the Secretary-General confirms that "the plight of the Palestinian people, most of whom now live under occupation or in exile, remains a matter of acute international concern". (para. 34)

The latest report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People makes for depressing reading and tells a tale of increasingly cruel and inhumane treatment by the Israeli authorities of their Palestinian captives, treatment which constitutes a serious and unacceptable violation of human rights and of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which clearly and unambiguously defines the obligations of an occupying Power towards the peoples under its occupation.

In addition, let us recall the horrifying massacres which took place at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in 1982 and let us note the continuing armed and other Israeli-inspired aggression against the Palestinians in those and other camps beyond Israel's boundaries. Let us recall the murderous air attack perpetrated by the Israeli air force against the Palestine Liberation Organization headquarters in Tunis, and again, the deliberate violation of international law when Israeli aircraft intercepted a Libyan civilian airliner over the Mediterranean.

All these actions, quite apart from heightening tension in an already unstable region, are merely designed to further the Israeli goal of eliminating, entirely, any form of Palestinian leadership or organized resistance to the illegal and unacceptable Israeli occupation of Palestine.

This final solution-like approach to the problem is most tragic, particularly coming from the Israelis who, themselves, were victims of a final solution programme during the Second World War. The Jews have been one of the persecuted

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racess of this world. Indeed, their sufferings across the ages and their determination to fight persecution are written with the blood of their people and their anguish and persecution is immortalized by Shakespere in the famous words of Shylock, the Jew, when he said:

"Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? if we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge, the villany you teach me I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction." (Merchant of Venice, Act III, Scene 1)

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

But the Israelis seem not to think, or not to be convinced, that the same fire that burned in them burns just as brightly and as fiercely within the Palestinians today. If they should substitute "Jew" for "Arab" and "Christian" for "Jew" in the Shylock passage they may be able to feel, or perhaps "touch", the intensity of emotion in the voices of their Palestinian cousins. For let no one ever delude himself that the Palestinian people can ever stop writing their own history with their own blood until they establish an independent and sovereign State of their own in the land of Palestine. For as Shylock reminds us:

"The villainy you teach me I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction." (III, 1, 76)

The Heads of State or Government of the non-aligned countries have repeatedly reaffirmed that the question of Palestine is at the heart of the Middle East crisis and have agreed that a just and comprehensive peace in the region can only be based on:

"... Israel's total and unconditional withdrawal from all the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, and the restoration of all the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to return to their homeland, the right to self-determination without foreign intervention and the right to establish their own independent and sovereign State on their national territory ...". (A/41/697, para. 156, p. 77)

Another most alarming and frustrating element in the Middle East imbroglio has been the role played by some Powers and forces foreign to the region - most particularly by the United States of America. Its unquestioning support for Israel, which has translated itself into a strategic co-operation agreement, the provision of modern and highly sophisticated weaponry and the bankrolling of Israel, has, in the end, given Tel Aviv the arrogance and wherewithal to pursue the aggressive and expansionist policies I have already described.

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

The involvement of any major Power in the region, even indirectly, inevitably and inexorably invites the interest and involvement of other major Powers, thus heightening tension, complicating an already extremely complex situation and making the search for a peaceful solution more difficult. And yet that solution must be found, and soon, if we are to avoid any further outbreak of hostilities, with all the grave dangers to international peace and security that such a development would entail, especially at this stage when so many diverse interests, regional and international, are at play.

By its resolution 38/58 C of 13 December 1983, the General Assembly proposed the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East, a proposal which my delegation has previously described as the most hopeful of all proposals put forward in the many years that we have debated this issue. This Conference, which has the full support of the non-aligned countries, would take place under the aegis of the United Nations. Given the complexity of the Middle East question, and the necessity for us to reach a comprehensive, all-embracing solution, such a Conference would obviously require the participation of all concerned parties, including the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

Sadly, it appears that although the idea is gaining wider support within the international community, there is still no consensus on the convening of the Conference. And both the United States and Israel remain negative in their approach thereto.

In this respect the Heads of State or Government of the non-aligned countries have proposed to the Security Council that it should

"consider setting up a Preparatory Committee with the participation of the Council's permanent members to examine effective ways and means of holding the International Conference". (A/41/697, p. 81, para. 168)

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

We believe this is a constructive and worthwhile suggestion which could very well establish a firm basis from which fuller discussions, and perhaps even the peace Conference itself, could be launched.

In conclusion, let me once again quote the Secretary-General in his current report on the situation in the Middle East:

"Few international issues are as complex and potentially dangerous, or involve as directly the relevance and credibility of the United Nations, as the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East. The persistence of that conflict nearly four decades after it was brought before our Organization underscores the need to bring about a comprehensive settlement. It is therefore essential that every possible effort be made by the international community and individual Member States to achieve such a settlement as a matter of urgency." (A/41/768, para. 39)

We urge all concerned to heed those sombre words of the Secretary-General. For the situation brooks no delay.

Mr. DJOUDI (Algeria) (interpretation from French): Ever since the middle of this century, the Middle East has been the scene of a major conflict which, because of its manifold developments, constitutes a serious threat to international peace and security. This conflict, which has been characterized by an unrelenting rise in violence and a steady escalation of tension, knows no geographic limits, and is now spreading dangerously to other parts of the world. However, for many years the causes and origins of the Middle East problem have been well defined. The chief elements of a solution have been determined and the framework for a comprehensive and final settlement of the problem has been identified. The crisis into which the Middle East has been plunged with all its turmoil and tragic consequences, originates in an intolerable injustice which through its persistence

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and its repercussions, has radically affected the destiny of the peoples of that part of the world. This injustice is inflicted on the Palestinian people, despoiled of its homeland and of its national rights.

It is continuing, through the persistent denial of those rights by means of the Zionist régime's use of terror and repression against the Arab populations in occupied Palestine and the pursuit of the systematic colonization of the occupied territories and the seizure of their resources, in order to consolidate the Zionists' grip on the Arab territories with a view to their annexation.

This injustice has been accompanied and aggravated by the Zionist régime's resort to power politics and attempts to dominate the Arab States of the region, and a year ago, by the extension of its sphere of aggression to the Maghreb. Thus, after the Arab countries of the Machrek had, each in turn, fallen victim to the Zionist régime's policy of force and aggression - from Jordan, so often attacked, to Iraq, whose peaceful nuclear facilities were destroyed - last year it was Tunisia that suffered a brutal assault on its sovereignty and territorial integrity, and thus through Tunisia the Maghreb as a whole.

By extending its menace to the other end of the Mediterranean, and by inflicting on the Maghreb the kind of terror which has been inflicted on the Arab States of the Machrek, the Zionist rulers set a new precedent, highly dangerous for international peace and security, which confirmed, if any confirmation were needed, the warlike and aggressive nature of a régime that scorns law and justice.

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Even today the Arab territories remain occupied and their populations are subjected to increasingly brutal repression, aggravated by a campaign of terror and intimidation conducted by armed settlers and racist groups.

That is true of the Holy City of Al Quds, declared the "eternal capital" of Israel, whose Arab inhabitants are exposed to all kinds of brutality by groups of fanatics acting with full impunity, as can be seen from the events of recent weeks. It is true also of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, where the occupation forces, seconded by racist terrorist groups, have been spreading terror among the Arab peoples - who, notwithstanding reprisals, terrorist attacks, arbitrary detention and expulsion, continue to put up such fierce resistance to the occupier that everyone must admire and respect them. Lastly, it is true of the Golan Heights, where the Syrian people have been subjected to intolerable measures designed to attack their Arab character and their identity and where a systematic policy of Zionization, affecting all aspects of life, is being conducted.

Lebanon, which also experienced a barbarous invasion and occupation, with the attendant destruction, and whose heroic people forced the invader to retreat and withdraw from the greater part of its territory, still has to endure every day affronts to its independence and territorial integrity which are quite unacceptable.

While a part of their territory remains occupied today, notwithstanding Security Council resolutions demanding the unconditional and total withdrawal by the Israeli occupation troops from the whole of Lebanese territory, and while southern Lebanon continues to be subjected every day to raids, attacks and bombardments by the Zionist troops of aggression, the Lebanese people have none the less shown their fierce determination to struggle to preserve their freedom and independence, recover all their territory and rebuild their unity.

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The denial of the national rights of a people cannot in any way suspend its rights, in particular its right to self-determination and independence; still less can it mean that another party can speak on behalf of that people. Similarly, the occupation of a territory by force remains, in international law, a temporary de facto situation which cannot, therefore, justify any measure or action designed to encroach upon the territorial integrity of the occupied territory or perpetuate occupation of it.

The General Assembly, on the basis of those compelling facts, decided more than a decade ago to adopt the sole attitude capable of bringing a just and comprehensive solution to the problem of the Middle East. That attitude is that the question of Palestine is the central cause of the Middle East problem. It leads to the conclusion that the settlement of that problem necessarily involves the restoration of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people and the unconditional withdrawal of the Zionist régime from all the occupied Arab territories, including the city of Al Quds and the Golan Heights.

By recognizing the correctness of the Palestinian people's cause and endorsing the Palestine Liberation Organization as its sole legitimate representative and the necessary partner in peace negotiations, the General Assembly decided to discharge its historical responsibilities and to do its utmost to ensure that the Palestinian people were enabled to exercise all their national rights.

Three years ago those efforts led to the identification of the sole framework in which to deal with the Middle East conflict as a whole - that is, the convening of an international conference under United Nations auspices, with the participation on an equal footing of all the parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, in its capacity as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. If that conference has not yet been

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

convened, notwithstanding the general support it enjoys, that is the result, yet again, of the intransigence of the Zionist régime.

The persistence of the Middle East conflict and its increasingly disquieting dimensions, caused by its spread to other geographical areas, show that the conflict is worsening and that it poses a formidable danger to international peace and security. The need for a comprehensive final settlement of the conflict is thus all the more urgent.

The Security Council, which the Charter has given the mandate of maintaining international peace and security, bears special responsibilities in this regard. The primordial role with which it has been entrusted in organizing and convening the international peace conference on the Middle East provides it with an opportunity to make a decisive contribution to the promotion of a just and comprehensive solution to the Middle East problem, thereby restoring its own authority and credibility. We still venture to believe that the Security Council will prove able to meet the expectations of the peoples of the Middle East and that it will bring its full weight to bear in order to restore peace to that sensitive part of the world.

Mr. HAMIED (Sudan) (interpretation from Arabic): The situation in the Middle East is the focal point of our debate today. In that respect, I would refer to the statement we made in this Hall during the debate on the question of Palestine earlier this week. We reaffirm our view, which is identical to that of the majority of members here. It was endorsed by the General Assembly a few years ago and has been confirmed each year since then.

That view recognizes that the question of Palestine is the core of the chronic Middle East problem. It acknowledges that there can be no hope of improving

(Mr. Hamied, Sudan)

the situation in the Middle East unless the question of Palestine is solved, that such a solution is the condition sine qua non for peace and stability in that part of the world.*

My delegation endorses the Secretary-General's latest report in document A/41/768. We agree with his observations, particularly those on the difficulties regarding the convening of an international conference on the Middle East, suggested in the 1983 Geneva Declaration. We hope that the efforts to that end will continue and that all the necessary pressure will be brought to bear until Israel and its allies remove the artificial obstacles they have placed on the path to the sole means of bringing a just and lasting peace to the region.

We hope that the Security Council, including its permanent members, will be able to establish a preparatory committee for the conference, the convening of which the international community impatiently awaits. We hope, also, that all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, will be able to take part in that conference on an equal footing.

The establishment of peace in the Middle East, notwithstanding the complexity of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is not impossible if there is the necessary sincere political will to achieve peace, and provided that words are matched by deeds.

The necessary conditions for peace are: First, Israel must withdraw from the Arab territories it has occupied since 5 June 1967, including Al Quds (Jerusalem), the Golan Heights, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

* Mr. Osman (Somalia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Hamied, Sudan)

Secondly, Palestinians outside the occupied territories must be able to exercise their fundamental right to return to their homes and establish an independent State on their land. Thirdly, the political independence and territorial integrity of the States of the region, including their right to exist in peace within recognized and secure borders, must be respected.

We believe that these points, defined in the Secretary-General's report, could provide a basis for a settlement. The General Assembly must take the necessary measures to give an impetus to the peace process and help the Palestinian refugees, who are still awaiting their return. At the same time, the social and humanitarian conditions of the Palestinians in the occupied territories must be improved.

We wanted to affirm the foregoing and add it to our observations during the debate on Palestine, which is the essence and substance of the Middle East conflict and has had serious repercussions for world peace and security.

Mr. DIATTA (Niger) (interpretation from French): The Middle East region continues to be an arena of tension and confrontation which has been doing great harm to the peoples living there, who, for almost 40 years now, have not known the stable peace and security which are absolutely necessary to enable the young nations that have emerged in the area to devote themselves resolutely to the task of nation-building and even create a prosperous future for their peoples.

Like many African and Asian countries, a number of countries in that region were the victims of a long period of colonial occupation, which in many ways prevented them from fully achieving all their legitimate aspirations. Furthermore, hardly had they regained their political sovereignty and begun to lay the foundations for their economic and social development when they were confronted with successive wars caused by Israel's warlike attitude and conduct, wars that resulted in a great loss of human life and incalculable material damage.

(Mr. Diatta, Niger)

My country cannot but express its deep feeling of concern at the wholly unstable situation that persists in the Middle East. It feels concern at the suffering of many kinds endured by the Arab and Palestinian peoples of that region, with which my country and its people have been able over the centuries to establish many cultural and trade links that have led to friendship and mutual respect, which, thanks to a common religion and tried and true solidarity, continues and strengthens. It feels concern also because the Middle East is geographically, a strategic zone. Any disruption or instability that prevails there can have grave consequences for peace and security not only regionally but also internationally.

If our Organization has since its inception been seized of this important question it is not only because there have been several breaches of the peace in that region but also because Israel has developed and maintains there a policy of aggression and expansion, constantly and flagrantly violates the principles of international law and the rules of conduct applicable to relations among States and, finally, refuses to comply with the many Security Council and General Assembly resolutions on the Middle East or with its obligations under the United Nations Charter.

Since the 1967 war Israel has continued to occupy Arab and Palestinian territories and, despite the condemnation of the entire international community, has annexed the Holy City of Jerusalem to make it its capital. The better to buttress its expansionist policy, Israel has also established settlements in the occupied territories, which, as rightly emphasized by the Secretary-General in the excellent report he has submitted this year on this question:

"is a matter of deep concern and, more than any other single factor, contributes to doubts in the minds of many about Israel's readiness to negotiate a peace settlement that would require its withdrawal from the territories". (A/41/768, para. 36)

(Mr. Diatta, Niger)

Similarly, again in the occupied territories, Israel has cynically endeavoured to terrorize the indigenous populations, impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration and commit all sorts of violations of human rights ranging from the arbitrary arrest and imprisonment of Arab and Palestinian citizens because of their struggle for self-determination and to free their territories, to daily humiliations and insults and other punitive measures directed against their dignity and self-respect.

Once again this year the Commission on Human Rights has considered and condemned in the most categorical manner those repeated violations of human rights and all the Israeli practices in the occupied territories.

As my delegation has said on several occasions, Israel's aggressive attitude to the peoples of that region, its lack of respect and utter disdain for international law and its manifest arrogance towards our Organization have the primary aim of preventing the Palestine people from enjoying their fundamental, inalienable rights - the issue which is at the very heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Palestinian people have been deprived by Israel of their lands and condemned to live in exile or in camps, at the mercy of weather and disease and in circumstances that shock the human conscience.

The Palestinian people is living a veritable Calvary to which no one, no nation, that believes in justice and equity can accept or allow to be perpetuated. Our Organization, which has a special responsibility regarding the settlement of the Middle East question, must therefore further mobilize its efforts to respond to the challenge thrown down by Israel, not only to put a final end to the sufferings of the Palestinian people but also to restore its own authority and credibility with regard to the respect it must demand of States Members for its relevant decisions and resolutions. To meet that challenge it is necessary to compel Israel to withdraw fully and unconditionally from the occupied Arab territories and

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recognize the Palestinian reality, especially that right of the Palestinian people to return to their homeland and establish their own national independent State there.

Israel, which bears full responsibility for the climate of instability in that region, must face the facts as quickly as possible that no peace process will succeed in the region until the legitimate, fundamental rights of the Palestinian people are taken fully into account and recognized.

My delegation would like to avail itself of this opportunity to pay a well-deserved tribute to the Palestinian people, who, in spite of the adversities and sufferings they have had to endure for more than four decades, have not lost courage or hope and have continued to struggle with unrelenting determination under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), their sole, legitimate representative, to regain their fundamental rights and live once again on the soil of their homeland. Faithful to its consistent policy, Niger will continue to give its active support and solidarity until final victory.

Nevertheless, we are bound to note that at present a peaceful, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict is not very likely. However, the General Assembly, by giving effect to its conviction that only the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East will allow us to achieve that desired objective, by bringing together on an equal footing all the parties concerned, including the PLO, the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people - has established an acceptable instrument for the initiation of negotiations, the central element of which must be the Palestine problem.

The Secretary-General, again in the report he submitted this year on the situation in the Middle East, has told us that great differences still exist, especially on the scope, date and, above all, the participation in the Conference.

For our part, we consider it essential that those differences be resolved as soon as possible. To this end, we urge all the parties concerned to exert every

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effort and demonstrate unshakeable political determination. In this connection, my delegation believes that the permanent members of the Security Council to which the Charter of our Organization has assigned a crucial role in the maintenance of international peace and security, must shoulder fully their responsibility to create this platform for negotiation, which should be acceptable to all the parties involved and lead to an overall settlement of this crisis, which has already lasted too long and whose settlement we all earnestly desire.

(Mr. Diatta, Niger)

In conclusion, we should like to thank the Secretary-General for his tireless efforts to enable the peoples of this region, afflicted by so much suffering, to live once again in peace and to devote their energies and fertile imagination to the building and prospering of their nations, whose immense contribution to the common heritage of mankind cannot be disregarded.

Mr. FARES (Democratic Yemen) (interpretation from Arabic): Every year the General Assembly considers the item pertaining to the situation in the Middle East. We are considering it once again at the forty-first session of the Assembly, which coincides with the International Year of Peace, which gave us reason for optimism as to the effectiveness of the United Nations. We are considering the item after expressing in an unprecedented manner the importance of the United Nations as the most appropriate international forum for negotiation and dialogue, after affirming the need to reactivate its role and increase its effectiveness to deal with and solve international and regional problems.

Once again we find ourselves putting forward the objective realities, the facts of the deteriorating situation in the Middle East, that will be included in resolutions adopted by the General Assembly without it being able to implement them. This is the situation. Despite the fact that we have deep faith in the United Nations and share the great hope of the overwhelming majority of the international community that we will be able to see the Organization play the positive, effective role necessary for the resolution of the international and regional problems of our world, nevertheless, we know that the General Assembly will adopt many resolutions about the situation in the Middle East, which will not differ in content from those adopted at previous sessions, and will also remain unimplemented.

We will express our deep concern over the gravity of the situation in the Middle East and the continued escalation of tension and instability due to the

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continued Zionist occupation of Palestine and other Arab territories as a result of the expansionist, aggressive settler policy and practices of Israel in the region, which constitute a grave threat to international peace and security.

We will reaffirm anew our solidarity with the just struggle of the Palestinian people. We will state again that the major cause of the Arab-Israeli conflict is the question of Palestine, which is the core and crux of the crisis in the Middle East. We will reaffirm anew that without unconditional, complete withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, and in the absence of a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine, that would guarantee the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people including their right to return and to self-determination, and to the establishment of their independent State on their national soil, the Middle East will know neither security nor stability, and the situation in the region will continue to deteriorate, thus threatening international and regional peace and security.

Nevertheless, we continue to find before us the grim picture described by the Secretary-General in his report of 29 October 1986 concerning the situation in the Middle East, where he observed that:

"The attainment of a just and lasting peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israel conflict in the Middle East continues to be elusive." (A/41/768, p. 10, para. 33)

Why such a grim picture? Why cannot the resolutions of the General Assembly be adopted? It is clear that the reason is the fact that these resolutions always come up against their rejection by Israel and the United States of America, and their continued defiance of the international will and disregard of the United Nations, which is paralleled only by that of the racist Pretoria régime. It is ironical that Israel should challenge international legitimacy and reject and flout

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United Nations resolutions, while it itself was created through a United Nations resolution in 1947.

Through its expansionist and aggressive policy, Israel has proved that it has no desire for peace and does not wish to see security and stability restored to the Middle East region. This was affirmed by the General Assembly resolution which stated that Israel is not a peace-loving State and does not fulfil its obligations under the Charter. This is not surprising, because the Israeli aggressive tendency is but a natural extension of the terrorism of the Zionist gangs practised against the Palestinian people during the period of the Mandate and their subsequent criminal oppression and intimidation of that steadfast people within and outside the occupied territory, as well as the exercise of State terrorism in all its forms, from the occupation of and acts of aggression against Lebanon, to its violation of Tunisia's sovereignty, and to its acts of air piracy.

How can we expect Israel, and the terrorist Shamir, who has recently become the Prime Minister of Israel, to comply with the resolutions of the United Nations when he himself took part in the assassination of Count Bernadotte in 1948 and used his terrorist expertise in leading military operations in the occupied Palestinian territories?

The Israeli policy and aggressive tendencies are a clear reflection of the Zionist doctrine based on racism. This was affirmed by the General Assembly in its historical resolution in which it considered Zionism to be a form of racism.

The alliance between the régimes in Pretoria and Tel Aviv, and their close relations and similar inhuman practices against the indigenous populations in Palestine and southern Africa, are all based on these racist tenets. They both

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follow a policy of settlements, expansionism, occupation, aggression and State terrorism against neighbouring States.

It has become abundantly clear that had it not been for the support rendered by Washington these two racist régimes in Pretoria and Tel Aviv could not have continued to defy the international will and pursue a policy of racism, occupation and aggression.

Not only does the United States Administration give Israel moral and material support and encourage it to continue its policies and practices in the Middle East and to continue to flout the resolutions of the United Nations, but it also supports Israel's policy on all levels, using all its weight as a super-Power to achieve that goal.

In addition to the strategic co-operation which encourages Israel to continue its expansionist, aggressive policy in the region and to jeopardize efforts aimed at the establishment of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace, the United States also consistently uses its right of veto to protect Israel, to prevent the Security Council from shouldering its historical responsibilities and to prevent it from imposing sanctions against Israel, in accordance with Chapter VII of the Charter. It also commits itself closely to all Israeli policies in all aspects of the Israeli conflict.

The convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the aegis of the United Nations, in accordance with the provisions of a General Assembly resolution, with the participation of all parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, continues to be the only effective mechanism for the attainment of a just, comprehensive and peaceful settlement in the region.

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It is necessary that a preparatory committee be established under the Security Council and with the participation of its permanent members. The convening of the international conference enjoys wide international support. Yet, the United States Administration is trying, in accordance with the wishes of the Tel Aviv rulers, to impede all efforts to convene the conference, in an attempt to exclude the United Nations from the solution of the problem and to put forward a unilateral and partial solution that will satisfy its strategic ally, Israel, and serve its interests.

How then can we expect the United States of America to contribute to the achievement of a just settlement while it is completely and blindly biased towards Israel? How can we invite it to adopt a balanced policy towards that conflict while the Zionist lobby in Washington is laying the foundations of the United States policy in the region?

It has become clear that the basic facts about the situation in the Middle East are not going to change and that United States policy in the region will not change. The United States will only increase in its enmity to the causes of the Arab peoples and to the cause of the Palestinian people, the central cause in the region. We are fully confident therefore that the cause of the people will be victorious. However mighty the forces of occupation, racism and aggression may be, we are confident that the Palestinian people will be victorious. We are confident that the United Nations resolutions will be implemented.

Mr. FARTAS (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (interpretation from Arabic): Once again we are discussing the situation in the Middle East just as we have discussed the question of Palestine in session after session. The two issues are discussed under two separate items because the nature of the rights and the parties involved differ. In spite of these differences, the two issues are organically and closely

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interrelated in a way that is without precedent anywhere in the world. Because of the interrelationship and the bond of common destiny of the Arab patrimony, the Palestine question is the core of the problem of the Middle East. But the problem of the Middle East is in fact only a part of the Israeli-Arab conflict and is an extension of that conflict.

Month after month, year after year, we have to witness the unfolding of the Zionist entity's expansionist schemes, which are not confined to Palestine but also spill over into the neighbouring countries.

Zionist expansionism, which at the outset took the form of agricultural settlements, has now reached a second stage, which is called the national home for the Jews. International zionism claims that this is simply a cultural and religious regrouping of its members, but the outcome of its regrouping in 1948 is now a warmongering entity which, with the support of colonialist forces led the General Assembly to adopt resolution 181 (II) on 29 November 1947, which come to be known as the partition resolution, thereby conferring legality on one of the most notorious colonialist phenomena of ancient and modern times, even if we take into account the expansionism of Emperor Cyrus and of Napoleon, and if we end with the Balfour Declaration.

The Zionist entity, in accordance with all the criteria of history, is the product of colonialism and European expansionism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Any objective analysis of the elements that accompanied the creation of the Zionist entity leave us convinced that the establishment of this entity in the heart of the Arab nation was the product of a colonialist process aimed at expansionism. After the adoption of General Assembly resolution 181 (II), the Zionist entity declared, through David Ben-Gurion, that it no longer recognized that resolution because it had put limits on expansionism and on the hegemonist

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spirit which was rooted in the mentality of the people there. Ben-Gurion said:

"There is nothing to be grateful to the United Nations for, or to the partition resolution."

This lack of recognition of the partition resolution shows the intentions of the Zionist entity and the expansionist schemes of the leaders of the Zionist entity. It indicates that they considered that they had a position in Palestine on the basis of which they could further annex Arab Palestinian land.

David Ben-Gurion was quite sincere when he stated, on 15 October 1947:

"When we take a thousand or 10,000 dunams, we do this, not because it is an objective in itself, but because we strengthen thereby our position and it enables us to acquire all territories which are ours."

David Ben-Gurion did not say exactly which territories he was talking about.

But he did say, in another statement:

"As regards borders, these borders can be changed. They have been changed in the Bible and in accordance with law. There are different definitions for borders. There are no definitive geographical borders."

In a talk between Ben-Gurion and the Minister for Justice of the Israeli Government, Pinhas Rozen, the following was said:

"Rozen: The question of borders is important; it cannot be disregarded.

"Ben-Gurion: Anything is possible. If we decide not to refer to specific borders, there is nothing obligatory.

"Rozen: But this is a question of obligations. It is a legal question."

Ben-Gurion replied: "Law is what people decide on."

This quotation is taken from a book of 1949, The First Israelis, page 18.

After Ben-Gurion, Yizhak Shamir, the current leader of the Zionist entity, stated:

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"Israel has not taken property from legal owners. We have freed countries which we took over in 1948. We have not annexed them and we do not annex territories which belong to others."

This strategy of the first Israelis is evident today. The Zionist doctrine is based on the conviction that Jews the world over must join together in their historic lands. This idea is the very basis of zionism. The Zionist entity was created in circumstances of invasion, of occupation, of lawlessness and terrorism.

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After it established itself in Palestine, the Zionist entity tried to carry out its expansionist plans. In a second stage it occupied Om Al-Rashrash, which they call Eilat in Hebrew. They also gained access to the Gulf of Aqaba. Then, in complicity with the United Kingdom and France, they invaded Egyptian territory in 1956, in order to have an outlet and the right of passage through the Red Sea, which is a sea whose sovereignty belongs to Egypt and to Saudi Arabia because the Red Sea does not exceed the 12-statute mile limit in width. In the case of Egypt and Saudi Arabia, their respective territorial waters do not exceed six miles, half the legal limit.

The Zionist entity seriously thought in 1956 that it could use the tripartite invasion in order to continue its expansionism. Therefore, in 1956 it was asked whether the British did not oppose the occupation of the West Bank. This means that the Zionist entity intended to invade Trans-Jordan, even though Jordan was not involved in the war. But Ben-Gurion had to drop this idea because he did not get the support of his accomplices in aggression. He held the idea in abeyance, however.

In 1967 the Zionist entity launched a military attack against Egypt. It occupied the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, the Sinai and the Golan Heights. Thus, the Zionist entity was able to occupy the whole of Palestine. It gave the hills, valleys and towns Hebrew names on the basis of so-called historic right and religious law. The French newspaper Le Monde, known for its objectivity and seriousness, published an article in 1968 in which it stated that Ben-Gurion had asked the French President, Charles de Gaulle, to support the acquisition by the Zionist entity of territories on the West Bank, because they were territories where the Zionist entity's intentions underlay all of its foreign policies.

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When a question was asked of Ariel Sharon as to the borders of the Zionist entity, he said that those borders stopped where the last Israeli tank stopped. In fact, they stopped on the Golan Heights, the West Bank and Sinai.

In 1956, 12 years before the second occupation of Taba, Ben-Gurion said: "If we bring down Nasser, neutralize the area, put the Canal under international control, control the entrance to Eilat, the area of Taba, and disarm Sinai, all of the balance of power in the Middle East would be changed in our favour". This means that for Ben-Gurion the area of Taba was not a simple tourist hotel, but an important base near Om Al-Rashrash or Eilat. This is what Ben-Gurion called a basic change in the balance of power in the Middle East.

Within the same framework, we could consider the occupation of the Golan Heights in Syria, where 41 Zionist settlements have been established in flagrant violation of Security Council resolution 465 (1980), which declared that the Zionist settlements were illegal. On the contrary, the Zionist entity stated that it annexed the Golan Heights and that it had applied Zionist laws to the Syrian population of the region. However, this was a policy which the Syrian population repudiated.

The Israeli invasion forces have also occupied Lebanon several times. The invasion forces in 1981 came to the gates of Beirut, the literary capital of Arab thought and culture. The invasion forces also began a dialogue of fire and cannon balls with that city. It was an invasion that caused 80,000 deaths and rendered 800,000 homeless. The series of Israeli aggressions against Lebanon and its people continues unchecked. The Zionist entity wishes to make Lebanon non-Arab; it wishes Lebanon to abandon all of its Arab commitments. But the heroic people of Lebanon has courageously resisted. That is why Lebanon opposed the agreement which the

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Zionist entity wished to impose upon it by force of arms. The people of Lebanon have aborted that agreement, and declared its rejection of Zionist occupation. It continues its struggle to regain its freedom and sovereignty. The Zionist entity still wishes to carry out reprisals against the people of Lebanon because it aborted the Zionist agreement. This, in fact, was in accordance with all of the United Nations resolutions calling for Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon, including Security Council resolution 427 (1978) which required the Zionist entity to withdraw immediately to the international borders. The Zionist entity did not comply with any of those resolutions and created the army of southern Lebanon which it uses in order to sow division and terror in all Lebanon.

For 10 years now, the occupation forces of the Zionists in southern Lebanon have been arresting Lebanese citizens, going into their homes, their schools and they make no distinction between the aged, women and children. They have even gone so far as to arrest religious persons and children. They have also burned fields and crops, and have perpetrated other crimes which are known to the whole world. All of these policies of the Zionist entity are in direct contradiction to international law, especially the Geneva Convention of 1949, the Hague Convention of 1909 and are also in violation of the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the principles of international law.

We hold the United States after its strategic agreement with the Zionist entity to be a direct accomplice and the party primarily responsible for the expansionist war of the Zionist entity, a war which the latter could not have been able to wage without the support and assistance which it obtains from the United States on the economic, military, and technical levels and which gives it all the material and moral support it needs.

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That is why the Zionist entity has consistently ignored all General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. It has persisted in its aggressive expansionist policy. This is a policy which has led the General Assembly, in Emergency Special Session resolution ES-9/1 of 5 February 1982 to call that entity as one not devoted to peace, and in General Assembly resolution 3379 (XXX) of 1975 it called this entity racist.

Mr. KIILU (Kenya): For more than 40 years the question relating to the situation in the Middle East has been discussed variously in many international conferences and other gatherings, including the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council. In all those discussions, no solutions have been found either to defuse or to settle the problems existing there. Among all the problems that have so deservedly attracted the attention of the United Nations, the plight of the Palestinians singularly stands out. The plight of the Palestinian people today, continues as it has done from the beginning, to constitute a grave situation that cannot fail to be a threat to the well-being not only of the Palestinians but also of the entire world; therefore the volatile situation obtaining in the Middle East should be of great concern to us all, because of its dire consequences.

In addition to being uprooted from their ancestral homes, the Palestinians have been denied the right to return to their properties and other people have been, and continue to be, brought from all over the world and settled in usurped properties and lands illegally acquired. Whereas the Jewish sector of Palestine was made the State of Israel by this very Organization, the United Nations, the Arab sector became a bone of contention because it was not given the status of a State for the Palestinians.

It is worth recalling that the decision to partition the then mandated Palestine into Arab and Jewish sectors in 1947 did not lead to an acceptable solution in Palestine; thus partition led to friction and the eruption of war between Arabs and Jews. The situation was further aggravated by incoming Jewish immigrants from all over the world. Those people came under the guise of returning to Israel, to occupy the sector set aside for the Jewish people of Palestine, which was then the State of Israel. However, no sooner had they arrived than they unveiled a grand design to create the legendary Greater Israel, stretching far beyond the boundaries designated under the partition arrangements.

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This turn of events created the friction between the two communities that has continued to plague their relations ever since, punctuated from time to time by hostilities and war. Consequently, much destruction of life and property has taken place not only in Palestine but also in the region as a whole. Furthermore, many Palestinians have been forced to flee from their homes and property and their right to return has been denied. Those Palestinians who remained in the territories - namely, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip - now occupied by the State of Israel are constantly subjected to untold harassment, oppression, repression and suppression. They are likewise subjected to the indignity of being denied the right to self-determination and independence. This state of affairs, in our view, is the main core of the problems that have continued to threaten peace and tranquility in the Middle East. A just and fair solution must therefore be found.

It is most regrettable that our Organization has not been able to settle the problems of the Middle East, in particular the plight of the Palestinian people who were uprooted from their ancestral homes and have been denied the opportunity to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination.

The conflict has continued to widen and it now engulfs the whole region. It has now become evident that countries far or near cannot claim to be immune from hostilities emanating from the centre of the conflict in Palestine. The tragic situation in Lebanon is a case in point. Israel continues to occupy southern Lebanon and Lebanese cities have become theatres of war, with much destruction of buildings, loss of lives and untold suffering to the inhabitants. The air raid on the headquarters of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in Tunis was yet another case involving a flagrant violation of the territorial integrity of a peace-loving African country, Tunisia. We mourn the death of innocent men, women and children who lost their lives as a result of these deplorable acts, which we

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strongly condemn. Such actions cannot be justified under international law and accepted norms of conduct.

The international community has time after time pronounced itself on the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by the use or threat of use of force. Kenya fully shares that position. We hold the firm view that no nation can ever justify its own existence at the expense of others. We believe that all States in the region have an equal right to exist in peace and security and within internationally recognized and secure borders. We reiterate that no durable peace can be achieved in the region until the legitimate rights of the Palestinians to self-determination and an independent State of their own are realized.

As I have already stated, the core of the ongoing tensions and conflicts in the Middle East centres on the question of Palestine. For its settlement the question demands an all-embracing solution covering all aspects of the problems existing in that region. Without such a solution the situation will continue for a long time to come to be one of increasing tensions and conflicts, which will increasingly continue to bedevil relations amongst the States of the region and threaten international peace and security. It is our earnest hope that the parties directly involved with the problem will realize the dangers that are likely to arise as a result of the lack of a solution to the problem. We feel that the parties could avoid such dangers through a moderation of their positions in favour of a just solution.

On the part of the international community the necessity to exert every effort towards the peaceful settlement of the problems obtaining in the Middle East cannot be overemphasized. In the view of my delegation the international community has an obligation to the people of Palestine and must continuously engage itself fully in

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the efforts to bring about a comprehensive and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. Equally, the international community must strive hard to bring about durable peace in the Middle East region. It is in this regard that Kenya supports the call to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, to be attended on an equal footing by all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the permanent members of the Security Council.

(Mr. Kiilu, Kenya)

The international community has on many occasions unequivocally pronounced itself on the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territories the use or threat of use of force. But Israel has violated this principle with impunity. The international community has again and again reiterated the need for all countries to respect the principles of non-interference and non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States and respect for the territorial integrity of other States.

Ever since the problem of Palestine arose the United Nations system as a whole has devoted much time and energy to finding a solution to the issues involved. However, such efforts have not been able to so far bring about the resolution of the intricate aspects relative to the question. Every effort has been met with defiance and intransigence. Even the latest resolutions of the General Assembly have met a fate similar to that of other resolutions adopted over the years. We must all without exception fulfil the obligations imposed upon us by the United Nations Charter. Yet, again, we find Israel interfering and infringing the territorial integrity of other States. Kenya respects the principles of the international community and would like to see others respect them equally. In this regard, we fully associate ourselves with the call upon Israel to withdraw from all territories occupied since the 1967 war and to cease its incessant violation of the territorial integrity of Lebanon.

Elsewhere in the Middle East, we cannot fail to express our deepest regret that there exists a continuing war between the States of Iran and Iraq. We appeal for wise counsel to the leaders of these nations so that they may agree to end the war. Also, in Lebanon, the civil war is claiming too large a part of the energies of the people of that country. A way should be found to bring peace and harmony to that country. In this respect, the principle of non-interference, as applicable, should be scrupulously adhered to by all States in the region and elsewhere.

Mr. BENNOUNA (Morocco) (interpretation from Arabic): The reports submitted to us on the situation in the Middle East and the question of Palestine inform us that the situation in the region is one of increasing tension as a result of Israel's persistence in its occupation of Arab and Palestinian territories and its inhuman practices in those areas. This increases the threat to international peace and security.

Thus, in the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, we find the following statement:

"As a consequence of the policies and practices of Israel and of the resulting lack of progress towards a peaceful, just, durable and comprehensive solution, tension and violence have continued to grow in the area, further endangering international peace and security." (A/41/35, para. 5)

In his report the Secretary-General states that

"the situation will remain unstable so long as such a settlement is not reached". (A/41/768, para. 34)

The Secretary-General has also expressed in his report his growing anxiety at the establishment of new Jewish settlements, in the following terms:

"I am particularly concerned about the consequences that would flow from the establishment by Israel of additional settlements in the occupied territories. This is a matter of deep concern and, more than any other single factor, contributes to doubts in the minds of many about Israel's readiness to negotiate a peace settlement that would require its withdrawal from the territories." (para. 36)

The report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories says that Israel pursues the implementation of a policy of annexation, settlement and usurpation of the rights of Palestinians and Arabs living in the occupied territories.

(Mr. Bennouna, Morocco)

It says:

"As may be seen from the information reflected in the report, the policy of annexation and settlement has continued to be implemented by the Israeli authorities ...

"The information contained in this report reflects new factors further aggravating the plight of the civilian population. The Special Committee is concerned at the escalation of violence caused by the implementation by the Government of Israel of a revived 'iron fist' policy, as announced by the authorities themselves." (A/41/680, p. 5)

There can be no doubt that Israel does not intend to abandon its plans to impose a policy of fait accompli and the liquidation of the legitimate Palestinian cause, in total disregard of United Nations resolutions, world public opinion and the fundamental principles of international law.

All this causes the international community serious concern. That concern was expressed by the Heads of State or Government of the non-aligned countries in their final declaration at the eighth summit conference, which states:

"The Heads of State or Government expressed concern over the deterioration of the situation in the Middle East as a result of the continued Zionist occupation of Palestine and the other Arab territories, and the Israeli policy and practices clearly manifested by Israel's expansionist acts of aggression in the region which pose a dangerous threat to international peace and security." (A/41/697, p. 76, para. 153)

The persistence of such tensions as a result of the continued Israeli occupation of Arab and Palestinian territories and the continuance of its inhuman practices will inevitably lead to an escalation of acts of violence. This has been reaffirmed by recent reports in the press concerning racist demonstrations in Jerusalem by extremist Zionist elements.

(Mr. Bennouna, Morocco)

This is not the first time that hostile acts have been perpetrated by extremist Zionist organizations against the Arabs. This fact is highlighted in the report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories. Morocco denounces these hostile acts, which can only increase the state of tension and hinder all efforts to find a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Middle East question, and wishes to reiterate its support for and solidarity with the Palestinian people in their just and legitimate struggle to restore their usurped land and rights, including the right to self-determination and the establishment of a State on their national soil, under the leadership of their sole, legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

The question of Palestine is the core of the Middle East crisis and therefore there can be no lasting peace in the region so long as the rights of the Palestinian people are denied and their land colonized. The situation in the Middle East will continue to threaten international peace and security so long as the Palestinian people are unable to regain their inalienable right to self-determination and the establishment of their independent State on their land under the leadership of the PLO. Therefore, we believe that any contribution to the establishment of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the region must be based on the recognition of those rights and on the total and unconditional withdrawal of Israeli forces from all the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, including Holy Jerusalem. This was reaffirmed in the final documents of the Eighth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Harare, as follows:

"... partial solutions confined to some aspects of the conflict and excluding others can only lead to further complications and a deterioration of the situation in the Middle East, and that a just and comprehensive peace in the

(Mr. Bennouna, Morocco)

region can only be based on Israel's total and unconditional withdrawal from all the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, and the restoration of all the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to return to their homeland, the right to self-determination without foreign intervention and the right to establish their own independent and sovereign State on their national territory ..."

(A/41/697, p. 77, para. 156)

Within this framework, the Fez Peace Plan can be considered to be an effective and constructive contribution, and hence it has gained widespread support in various international circles, including the United Nations and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

In the final documents of the Eighth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Harare in September 1986, support for the Arab Peace Plan was expressed as follows:

"The Heads of State or Government expressed anew their support of the Arab Peace Plan adopted by the Twelfth Arab Summit Conference held at Fez from 6 to 12 September 1982 ..." (p. 90, para. 190)

That plan laid down the appropriate principles as the basis for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

So long as the Israeli occupation of Palestinian and Arab territories continues and inhuman practices are perpetrated in those lands, the plight and suffering of the Palestinian people inside and outside the occupied territories will continue unabated. The report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) informs us that the situation regarding those refugees has deteriorated and therefore is cause for serious alarm. Such concern was expressed by the members of

(Mr. Bennouna, Morocco)

the Advisory Commission of UNRWA in a message addressed to the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, as follows:

"The Commission shares your concern for the conditions under which the Palestine refugees live, especially those in south Lebanon." (A/41/13, page v)

Morocco, which shares the anxiety of the Committee concerning the worsening of the situation of the Palestinian refugees, especially in southern Lebanon, wishes to reaffirm, first, its full support of Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity on the basis of the withdrawal of foreign troops not desired by the Lebanese Government and, secondly, we lend our full support to the efforts made by UNRWA to lessen the suffering of the Palestinian refugees until such time as a just and lasting peace can be established, a peace that would allow the refugees to return to their homes and property and to establish a State on their national soil under the leadership of their sole and legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization. We also hope that the international community will demonstrate greater solidarity in consolidating and supporting UNRWA and providing the financial resources necessary to allow UNRWA to fulfil its duties and obligations with respect to the Palestinian refugees.

In this respect, I can only pay a high tribute to Mr. Giacomelli, the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, for the efforts he has deployed to resolve the financial crisis facing UNRWA. We wish to extend our thanks also to all the countries that have helped the Agency resolve its financial crisis.

The Eighth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries held in Harare last September urged the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with the Geneva Declaration and General Assembly resolution 38/58. This reaffirms the serious consideration given to the idea of holding the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, to be

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attended by all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, in addition to the five permanent members of the Security Council. However, despite the growing support for the Conference, differences remain which prevent the convening of the Conference, which has been reflected in the Secretary-General's report, which states:

"From the contacts I have had during the past year, it is clear that there is still no consensus on the convening of an International Peace Conference in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the General Assembly. However, the idea of an International Peace Conference appears to be gaining wider support ..." (A/41/768, para. 37)

(Mr. Bennouna, Morocco)

Morocco greatly appreciates all the efforts made and wishes to assure the Secretary-General of its full support for the consultations he intends to undertake, as mentioned in his report in document A/41/215. We hope that his efforts will shortly be crowned with success, as indeed we hope will be the case for all efforts aimed at establishing a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

Mr. MOUSHOUTAS (Cyprus): The situation in the Middle East and the question of Palestine are two grave international problems so closely interlinked that the latter is correctly considered the core of the Middle East problem. The Middle East crisis has been accurately described in various reports of the Secretary-General as one of the major world problems and as posing a direct threat to international peace and security in a most sensitive and strategic part of the world.

Because of proximity, tradition, friendly ties and deep concern for the security of the region and mankind, we follow with profound concern the drama unveiling in our area, considering always that a common destiny binds us with the peoples involved. We are concerned at the lack of progress and indeed the worsening of the situation regarding solution of this problem, which is further aggravated by sectarian strife, group confrontations and individual violence.

Regrettably, it is evident that so far the only outcome of our long debates over the past 40 years has been the accentuation of human suffering, in vivid contrast to our inability to deal effectively with a grave world problem as old as our Organization itself.

(Mr. Moushoutas, Cyprus)

The failure to achieve a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East crisis is particularly serious in view of the high political and economic stakes involved. No other regional conflict poses greater dangers for mankind.

The essential elements for the solution of the problem are the withdrawal of Israeli troops from all occupied areas in accordance with resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), respect for the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to return to their homes and lands and full recognition of their right to self-determination, including the right to form their own State. This can be achieved only with the participation in meaningful negotiations by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, trampled upon for decades, must be respected and restored.

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the President of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr. Spyros Kyprianou, reiterated on behalf of the Government and people of Cyprus our firm support for the liberation struggle of the Palestinian people and our unswerving commitment to a just solution to the Palestine question. He went on to say:

"A solution to this long-standing question, which should be based on the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, will undoubtedly serve peace in the sensitive and volatile Middle East region. The struggle of the Palestinian people under the leadership of their sole and legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization, is a struggle for freedom, justice, human rights and dignity. Like all other peoples in the world, the Palestinian people are entitled to enjoy these rights in an independent and sovereign State of their own."

(Mr. Moushoutas, Cyprus)

The tragedy of Lebanon, a small, friendly, neighbouring State, and its just struggle for the preservation of its sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and unity, are very close and dear to the hearts of our people. The immediate restoration of that country's rights is strongly supported by the Government of the Republic of Cyprus.

We consider the annexation of foreign lands unacceptable and inadmissible. The Security Council resolution adopted in this regard demanding the withdrawal of Israel from all territories acquired by force since 1967, based on a fundamental tenet of international law, must be implemented if a just and peaceful solution to the problem is to be found.*

Thus, the occupation of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Jerusalem, the Golan Heights and parts of Lebanon must be terminated and the policy of expropriating lands must be finally ended. The international community cannot and must not reconcile its principles with trampling the rights of others, faits accomplis, acts of aggression and occupation.

When will it be learned that security does not depend on force, repression, domination and occupation? When will it be realized that recourse to violence begets violence and that the sole course for the survival of mankind is one of good neighbourliness, the peaceful settlement of disputes and, as in the present problem, the implementation of solemn United Nations resolutions and decisions.

The convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of all interested parties, including, of course, the PLO, on an equal footing, would provide the best

*Mr. Thompson (Fiji), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Moushoutas, Cyprus)

framework for a comprehensive, just and lasting solution. We support it, because we feel not only that every effort should be utilized, but that the earliest possible convening of the International Conference would have a positive effect on the critical situation now prevailing in the area, which in turn would have a beneficial effect on the polarization of mankind.

Mr. RAJAIE-KHORASSANI (Islamic Republic of Iran): The Middle East is a very important part of the world in every respect. Imperial powers acknowledge the importance of this region with reference to its oil and other mineral resources or with regard to its strategic importance.

We, the people of the Middle East, did not come to the Middle East for the sake of its oil or to exploit its strategic location. We are there because we have always been there, when no one knew about its oil and when the strategic values of that region were not even defined. The people of the Middle East are not immigrants. For us the Middle East is simply our region, whereas for the opportunists who wish to control or influence our region it is the oil, the strategic value and other aspects of the Middle East that attracted them to the region.

(Mr. Rajaie-Khorassani,
Islamic Republic of Iran)

The honest approach to the situation in the Middle East is therefore the approach of the indigenous people, who have lived there for centuries; it is the interest of these people that should really matter to the General Assembly; it is their arguments and their concerns that should be taken seriously. As for us, the Middle East is simply our region. Therefore, what should be the focal point of the decisions of the General Assembly is the people of the Middle East, who are there just because they have always been there.

The major problem that has seriously disturbed the peace and security of the region is the occupation of Palestine by the Zionist emigrants. The blame for this historic crime should be placed on the imperialist Powers that have turned our part of the world into a centre of conflict, confrontation, war and bloodshed. By setting up a terrorist base in occupied Palestine, they not only have sent millions of Palestinian people into homelessness but also have destroyed the peace and tranquillity of our region. Palestine is still under occupation; and while the Palestinians are still in refugee camps longing to go back home, those behind the occupation of Palestine are trying to finalize the occupation and make it look like a fait accompli.

To that end, they worked out the Camp David Agreements; different versions of those Agreements were worked out by others. But we strongly condemn all of them and consider them to be treacherous plots designed to attain legitimacy for the illegal occupation of Palestine. If the main problem of the Middle East stems from the occupation of Palestine - as has been held by almost everybody in the General Assembly for many years now - then the greatest mistake would be to let the problem endure and extend its expansionist roots in our region. Similarly, any attempt aimed at recognition of the Zionist base occupying Palestine is wrong and invalid,

(Mr. Rajaie-Khorassani,
Islamic Republic of Iran)

whether that recognition be de facto, covert, implicit, through an international conference - no matter who participates in it - or whatever. Such recognition is wrong and illegal. The occupation, too, is simply illegal and the participation of the different power blocs in a seminar cannot legalize it. This child is illegitimate; therefore it is wrong to recognize it - not that recognizing it makes it legitimate. Our sincere advice to those concerned is not to embroil themselves in something that only complicates the problem for themselves and for the Muslims of the region as well.

Palestine has two different aspects. The first is that it is the homeland of the Palestinian people, who have every right to their homeland and must therefore be allowed to go back to it and rehoist the flag of Palestine. That aspect must without any doubt be the concern of the international body. But the other aspect of Palestine is that it is an Islamic territory that just cannot be given away to the Zionist usurpers, under any conditions. It is the Holy Land which has in its bosom the second most important Muslim sanctuaries, and it is forbidden to surrender those sanctuaries or the land to a Zionist base. It is the duty of each and every Muslim to strive and struggle for the liberation of the Holy Land. In that respect, Palestinian and non-Palestinian Muslims are equally responsible.

If the General Assembly, a seminar, a conference or any other body orchestrates a scenario in order to reach a decision which is in conflict with the Islamic duties of the Muslim nations of the world, that decision will have no legal validity and will only add insult to the prevailing injuries. The Muslims of the region will never recognize it, and more turbulence and bloodshed will come to our region. Please avoid that, by avoiding attempts to provide for regional recognition of that base.

(Mr. Rajaie-Khorassani,
Islamic Republic of Iran)

Lebanon is still partially under occupation, and the international body has not been able to force the Zionist army to withdraw from the areas under its occupation. The Muslim people of Lebanon are still defending themselves courageously, but at a heavy cost indeed. Only yesterday several areas of southern Lebanon were bombarded by Zionist aircraft. The international body must shoulder its responsibilities under the Charter and take the measures necessary to liberate that part of Lebanon from the Zionist occupation. Such action will certainly revive the Lebanese Muslims' confidence in the international body and promote the cause of peace in the region.

The Golan Heights are still under the occupation of the Zionist usurpers. It is well understood that the Zionist forces have been trying to exchange land for security. That deal will never work. It is impossible to exploit the land of any people, and definitely not that of the Syrian people, as leverage to gain recognition from them. Moreover, the Syrian land is as Islamic as that of Palestine. Therefore, any attempt to keep that land under occupation is only to plan for a very dangerous and vast war against the Muslims of the region. If the Zionists do not wish to understand that point, those who believe that the Middle East is a very important region must inevitably understand it, or else there will never be peace and security in our region.

Finally, and above all, there is the actual occupation of Palestine itself. We hundreds of millions of Muslims of the world are strongly committed to the liberation of Palestine. If the international body wishes to be objective and promote the cause of peace in the world, it should not make any attempt to accommodate the factors of war and turmoil. It is theoretically both impossible and wrong to feed the germs and at the same time fight for a patient's recovery.

(Mr. Rajaie-Khorassani,
Islamic Republic of Iran)

Such a patient can only die. The United Nations cannot promote contradictory causes. I assure the Assembly that it is obvious that there is no way by which the occupation of Palestine can be legitimized. Therefore we should avoid using irrelevant rhetoric about the crimes of the Zionist base for the purpose of preparing the ground to ask it to stop those crimes - thereby bypassing the original argument: its illegal existence. The issue is not that the Zionist non-entity is cruel, bad, violating human rights, aggressive, or whatever: the issue is that it must go - and it will.

(Mr. Rajaie-Khorassani,
Islamic Republic of Iran)

I wish to express my delegation's appreciation for the valuable report submitted by the Secretary-General in document A/41/768. It is very true that, as stated therein:

"There is a grave danger that if the present deadlock in the peace process is allowed to persist, major hostilities will break out again in the area as has happened several times in the past." (A/41/768, para. 34)

I wish to add only that major hostilities cannot be prevented solely by negotiating for peace; they can be prevented only if the root of the hostilities, namely, the occupation of Palestine, is eradicated.

It is true that United Nations reports, documents, records and realities must set the language. The report's language is in accordance with existing United Nations documents. However, to the surprise of United Nations Members, the Zionist forces were defeated for the first time and expelled from Lebanon not by States Members of this Organization or any of its resolutions but simply by the Muslims of Lebanon. Those Muslims, who have been actively fighting and struggling to defend their territories and succeeded in expelling the Zionist forces from an important part of Lebanese territory, are not represented in this Assembly, because their position is not that of any Government. Therefore, the United Nations cannot be unmindful of the fact that those people, who are increasing in number and power, are fighting for their cause, regardless of any resolutions and decisions of this Assembly or other United Nations bodies. It is therefore a unique situation, in which the struggle will continue regardless of the decisions of this Assembly. The United Nations should take note of the uniqueness of the situation.

Finally, the Zionist lobby in the United States, which has considerable control over the media in this country, has always been trying its best to create a distance between the Arab Muslims of the Middle East on the one hand and the

(Mr. Rajaie-Khorassani,
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Islamic Republic of Iran on the other by making baseless allegations about the Islamic Republic of Iran. Muslims of the region have never been deceived by such divisive propaganda; they know very well that the Zionists have always been trying to fool and deceive public opinion by such efforts. To our surprise, the Zionists seem to have succeeded as far as certain Arab representatives are concerned. In their statements they have given ample evidence of the sad fact that they are behaving exactly the way the Zionists wish them to. My delegation advises those concerned not to play into the hands of the Zionist enemy and reminds them that they should show more wisdom and sagacity, instead of simply dancing to the tune of the Zionist media.

The whole effort of the Zionist forces occupying Palestine and those supporting them is directed at diverting the attention of the international body from the occupation of Palestine to other baseless and irrelevant issues simply in order to prepare the ground for denying the fact that the occupation of Palestine is the main cause of all the problems of the Middle East. We hope that those naïve individuals will not prepare the ground for the Zionist base occupying Palestine, for they would then be working in the best interests of the Zionist base occupying Palestine.

With regard to the substance of those allegations - they do not know anything other than the allegations repeated in the media - they should be patient, because the truth will come out sooner or later.

Mr. DUMEVI (Ghana): Among the outstanding regional issues that pose serious challenges to the international community for so long must surely be mentioned the nagging problem of the Middle East. It is regrettable that for nearly four decades the peaceful solution of the Middle East conflict has remained a mirage, despite unceasing and penetrating efforts by the United Nations and the

(Mr. Dumevi, Ghana)

international community. Because of its prolongation, the conflict has claimed many lives and brought untold hardships and miseries to many people, especially Palestinians, who continue to bear the brunt of its effects.

Indeed, the latest report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Middle East, dated 29 October 1986, gives much cause for pessimism. The Secretary-General states the following:

"The attainment of a just and lasting peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israel conflict ... continues to be elusive."

He adds that, despite bilateral contacts between the leaders of the interested parties:

"there is at present an alarming absence of a generally accepted and active negotiating process...

"... the positions of the parties directly concerned are still far apart. The major Powers, whose support is essential for the establishment of any lasting peace in the region, are also divided.

"... it is clear that there is still no consensus on the convening of an international peace conference in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the General Assembly."

Again, the Secretary-General eloquently states that, although

"the idea of an international peace conference appears to be gaining wider support and a number of procedural proposals have been made in bilateral contacts involving parties in the region and others who are interested in a settlement of this long-standing conflict" (A/41/768, paras. 33, 36, 37), important disagreements still remain on the scope of the Conference, on its timing and especially on the question of participation.

(Mr. Dumevi, Ghana)

My delegation does not wish, at this stage of the debate, to recapitulate the details of why the United Nations and the international community, in spite of their unanimity on the gravity of the conflict, have still not been able to find a peaceful solution. What the Ghana delegation wishes to emphasize here is that it is not simply that the United Nations and the international community have failed in their quest for a solution to the conflict. After all, the dimensions of the Middle East conflict have been explored and the necessary panacea prescribed; but the parties directly or indirectly involved have not demonstrated enough will to follow through with the prescription.

While we procrastinate, therefore, in reaching agreement on how to administer the prescribed panacea, those in the maelstrom of this protracted conflict, namely, the Palestinians, continue to suffer its disastrous effects. My delegation does not wish to talk about the details of the plight of the Palestinian people, which is well known to many people here. However, we wish to highlight some of the relevant and serious aspects of the situation in the occupied territories.

Reading from the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (A/41/35) and the Secretary-General's report on the situation in the Middle East (A/41/768), the seriousness of the situation in the occupied Arab territories comes to light.

The report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People indicates that "this creeping annexation of the occupied Palestinian territories" (A/41/35, para. 20, p. 5) has been accompanied by suppression of all forms of resistance and of political, social, cultural and economic expression of the Palestinian people. Also quoting from Israeli-Arab sources, the report indicates that:

(Mr. Dumevi, Ghana)

"Acts of collective punishment and other forms of repression against the Palestinian population by the Israeli occupying forces had become an almost routine occurrence." (para. 23, p. 6)

Demonstrators had been dispersed by the use of tear-gas, and in some cases fired upon, while schools and refugee camps have been stormed and homes of residents accused of involvement in security incidents have been demolished. The local population has also been subjected to searches, beatings and other forms of intimidation and harassment.

The Secretary-General's report, to which I referred earlier, stated that:

"The plight of the Palestinian people, most of whom now live under occupation or in exile, remains a matter of acute international concern. There is continued tension, and violent incidents frequently occur in varying form and degree in Israeli occupied territories and beyond." (A/41/768, para. 34, p. 10)

It was precisely because of these blatant human rights violations that the Security Council met between 21 and 30 January 1986 to consider the situation in the occupied territories. Unfortunately, the Council could not take any decisive action due to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Security Council. Consequently, the situation in the occupied territories continues to deteriorate.

In the meantime, the United Nations, through its Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) has continued to provide some relief measures to the local people affected by the conflict, especially the Palestinian refugees. The United Nations has also, through its peace-keeping operations, helped to maintain some tranquillity in sensitive areas, such as the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon. However, as the Secretary-General has rightly pointed out, these measures are "essentially temporary" arrangements intended to facilitate the search for a peaceful settlement." (para. 34, p. 10)

(Mr. Dumevi, Ghana)

It follows, therefore, that a more determined effort on the part of the international community is necessary to find a comprehensive and lasting solution to the Middle East problem. In this regard, my delegation wishes to take this opportunity to urge the international community, as well as the parties directly involved in the conflict, to muster the necessary will to settle their disagreements so that the International Peace Conference on the Middle East can be convened without any further delay. In so doing, they will be saving the Middle East region from the disastrous scourge of the prolonged conflict and also removing the dangerous threat that the conflict poses to international peace and security.

In conclusion, the Ghana delegation wishes to reiterate its conviction that since the core of the Middle East conflict is the question of Palestine, any peace process, therefore, should deal with all aspects of the conflict and should involve all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Specifically, it is our view that for a comprehensive and lasting solution, justice will have to be done to the Palestinians. It is also our view that inasmuch as the Palestinians themselves have elected the PLO to represent them, it should be allowed to participate in all international negotiations relating to the question of Palestine without any pre-conditions.

Mr. ARMSTRONG (New Zealand): The report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Middle East makes very bleak reading. Since this Assembly last considered this item there has not been a development on any aspect of the problems of that region to which the Secretary-General feels able to draw attention in positive terms.

The peace process is stalemated. Violence is endemic, especially in Lebanon. Israel continues to occupy Arab territories acquired in 1967 and to conduct itself there in ways which the entire international community considers to be contrary to international law.

(Mr. Armstrong, New Zealand)

The Secretary-General's observations on the situation are also sobering. He notes that instability is certain to persist if a peaceful settlement of these problems is not reached. He notes too that the wide measure of agreement within the international community concerning the principles on which a comprehensive peace settlement should be based is not matched by a comparable agreement on the procedures to be followed in order to bring about this settlement. He rightly sounds a note of alarm at the absence of a generally accepted and active negotiating process.

(Mr. Armstrong, New Zealand)

As a distant observer of developments in the Middle East but one which takes a principled interest in the situation there and recognizes the vital importance of the region for global stability, New Zealand shares these concerns. My Government is very conscious of the dangers alluded to by the Secretary-General. We regret that neither regional initiatives nor great-Power involvement has pointed a way out of the current impasse. Each year that goes by without a solution adds to the intractability of the problems. For its part the United Nations has played a useful and constructive role over the years, seeking to create the conditions in which the problems of the region may be resolved. The peacekeeping operations, the work of United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the activities of the Secretary-General himself, all bear witness to the constant and patient efforts of the United Nations to this end. New Zealand will continue to give active support to those efforts. I would make reference here to New Zealand's deep regret at the death only a few days ago of three more Fiji soldiers serving with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). It is appropriate that we should pay special tribute to Fiji, your own country, Mr. President, whose contingent has served with the Force since its establishment, and to the other participating nations which have carried out their role with honour and distinction, often in difficult circumstances and without the full co-operation of the other parties involved.

In New Zealand's view, the basis for a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East is provided by Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). The principles laid down in the former resolution are clear and just. It should be implemented in all its parts. That resolution emphasizes the inadmissibility of acquiring territory by war. Accordingly, Israel must withdraw from the territories occupied in 1967. We regret that it shows no inclination to do so and that many of

(Mr. Armstrong, New Zealand)

its actions point in a contrary direction. New Zealand does not recognize the validity of Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem, the extension to the Golan Heights of Israeli law, jurisdiction and administration, or the establishment of new settlements in the occupied territories. The Secretary-General's deep concern about the settlements policy is one which we consider well founded. We have been disturbed during this session to hear representatives of Israel defend their settlements policy and their administration of the occupied territories by reference to the material well-being of the inhabitants. We are disturbed not because of the truth or otherwise of these claims, but because they are not germane to the essential concern of the international community, which is that Israel's occupation of these territories is illegal and a continuing obstacle to a negotiated solution. We have heard no indication of Israel's thinking on the political future of these territories nor on the process by which that might be decided.

In New Zealand's view, any settlement must take account of the rights and aspirations of the Arab people of Palestine. Palestinian refugees are entitled to be repatriated or compensated. Their rights include the right to self-determination. If they wish to establish an Arab State of Palestine, that is their decision. Whether they wish to set up as a separate State or to become part of a larger Arab State with that State's agreement, is also for them to decide. They may not be denied the freedom to choose, or the rights enjoyed by people elsewhere as citizens of independent States.

New Zealand also recognizes and supports the right of Israel, as an independent and sovereign State, to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries, free from threats or acts of force. We regret the reluctance among Israel's neighbours and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to accept

(Mr. Armstrong, New Zealand)

unequivocally that Israel has this right. That reluctance will need to be overcome if there is to be a durable settlement. A negotiated peace calls not only for flexibility and compromise, but for recognition of the rights of all the parties.

Without reciprocal concessions, the Secretary-General's gloomy assessment of the prospects for the convening of an international conference in the foreseeable future seems likely to be borne out. New Zealand sees merit in the idea of a conference under United Nations auspices in which all parties concerned could conduct direct negotiations. Those parties include Israel, the Palestinians and the neighbouring Arab States. Who should represent the Palestinians is a matter for decision by the Palestinians themselves. No settlement will be lasting if it is not negotiated by Palestinians acceptable to the Palestinian people.

The success of an international conference will rest in large measure on a prior demonstration of readiness to resolve the long-standing and complex dispute by peaceful means and a determination among the parties to achieve agreements that will secure a just and durable peace. We hope that these qualities will soon be displayed in the series of contacts on procedural proposals to which the Secretary-General refers. We encourage those involved to press on with those contacts. The plight of the people of Palestine requires that a further and substantial endeavour be made to secure a future for them. Only in that way will a stable place for the people of Israel also be secured.

Mr. LESSIR (Tunisia) (interpretation from French): It is customary at each session to take stock of the activities of this Organization in the various areas under its competence. For the Middle East, the relevant reports of the Secretary-General are instructive with regard to the critical situation, fraught with threats, which continues to exist in this region. Indeed, numerous resolutions adopted in this regard by the General Assembly have remained a dead

(Mr. Lessir, Tunisia)

letter. Alas, there is every indication that Israel's rejection of United Nations decisions has become a customary and automatic practice. Whether the decisions emanate from the Security Council or from the General Assembly their fate is known in advance. That has an adverse effect on our Organization, which we wanted to make an instrument of peace and harmonious relations among peoples.

Ignoring the appeals of the international community, Israel continues to consolidate its occupation of both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, as well as in the Syrian Golan Heights and in southern Lebanon.

The report prepared by the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories (A/41/680) describes the developments which took place on the West Bank, in the Gaza Strip and on the Golan Heights. It mentions the gradual Judaization of those territories through the installation of more and more Jewish settlers who have come from the four corners of the world.

This policy, designed to alter the demographic character of the occupied territories, is contrary to the Fourth Geneva Convention and to the relevant United Nations resolutions. Moreover, it further complicates the already difficult situation prevailing in the Middle East.

Israel's present practice in the occupied Arab territories consists of tightening the vice around the Arab centres of habitation, of strengthening the settlements already established there and of creating others, so that in a very short time a quarter of a million Jewish settlers will be installed in the region.

(Mr. Lessir, Tunisia)

We have mentioned in the past the Drobles Plan on populating the West Bank, as well as the documents of the World Zionist Organization on the extension of settlements. Similarly, in the past we have drawn attention to the Ben Porat project, concerning the resettlement of Palestinian refugees. These plans and projects merely confirm Israel's real aims in the occupied Arab territories. In spite of the condemnation of the international community, this expansionist policy, which led to the annexation of Al Quds and the Golan Heights is designed to restore a demographic, strategic and economic "balance" in the region, with all that that implies in terms of peace and security. Thus, the small settlements will become villages, which in turn will grow into whole cities, with all the necessary infrastructure and security measures.

The role assigned to these colonies is strategic only in appearance, because the security argument so eagerly invoked by all Israeli leaders, from Golda Meir and Menachem Begin to the present leaders, is in fact merely a pretext to be used in the final analysis to justify annexing Arab territories.

Yigal Allon used to say that the colonies should be set up in strategically important zones all along the existing borders or near areas that could become border areas in the future.

Yitzhak Rabin stated in 1977, when he was Prime Minister of Israel, that the settlements provided a solid basis for the policy of calling for peace within defensible borders.

When asked on one occasion what territory Israel regarded as necessary for its security, Golda Meir replied:

"If you mean that we were supposed to draw a line, that we did not do. We shall do that when it becomes necessary. But one of the fundamental elements in Israeli policy is that the borders of 4 June 1967 cannot be

(Mr. Lessir, Tunisia)

restored in the peace treaty. There must be changes in the border, in all of our borders, for the sake of our security."

These statements, and many others about which the least one can say is that they are intended to bring about encroachments on the territories of neighbouring States and the absorption of the Palestinian territories, highlight the extraordinary concept of "defensible borders" which, if it gained acceptance, would undoubtedly put the seal on the use of force in relations between States.

Moreover it is this concept which, in spite of denials, seems to have been the reason for the barbaric invasion of Lebanon and for the vain attempt to impose a one-sided treaty on that country. That attempt failed, thanks to the courage and the spirit of sacrifice of the Lebanese, and today we are seeing an alternative solution designed to cut South Lebanon off from the rest of the country and create a zone of influence to serve Israel's hidden designs. Israel, like its quislings in the region, is now beginning to realize, after its many reverses in the territory of that small country, that it is not easy to subjugate a nation, however weak or ill-equipped it may be. We still hope that this setback in Israel's military adventures will serve as a lesson for it in the future. But we are still shocked by Israel's persistence in wishing to punish the Lebanese, and the Palestinians who had been made welcome in their country, whose only crime is to resist occupation and tyranny.

Violence, in all its various aspects, is now the region's daily destiny, but it is by no means limited to the region. We must make a joint effort to determine the underlying causes and deal with them radically. The essential cause of the violence is the Israeli military occupation, which is tightening its grip on the Arab populations and increasing the cruel and illegal treatment it is inflicting on them.

(Mr. Lessir, Tunisia)

At the very moment that we are debating the situation in the Middle East, rescue squads are working on the buildings demolished by the Israeli aircraft which are continuing their acts of aggression against Lebanon.

Israel is still invoking the false pretext of the security of its territory, and yet no one knows exactly where its borders are. Is there any other country in the world that makes a mystery of its borders? Ever since it was created Israel has continually extended its borders, in exemplification of the strategy laid down by the World Zionist Organization. However, we wish to emphasize that the security pretext, as invoked by Israel, does not stand up to examination; because, however far it may extend its borders, it will always end by finding itself next to neighbours it has not chosen and which have just as much right to the recognition of and respect for their sovereign and inalienable rights.

That is why we must reaffirm from this rostrum that blind force will not bring peace to Israel, or to those who continue to entertain the illusory hope of seeing a Pax Israeliana established in the Middle East. Neither daily demonstrations of force, nor spectacular attacks, the last one launched on 1 October 1985 against Tunisia, can bend the will of Israel's neighbours, who wish only to regain their occupied territories and to restore justice for the Palestinian people.

The English historian Arnold Toynbee described the fate of the Palestinians in these terms:

"The Palestinian tragedy is not only a local tragedy, it is a tragedy which concerns the whole world because it is an injustice which threatens world peace."

We associate ourselves with this man of vision, and call on the international community to act collectively to restore to the Palestinian people, under the

(Mr. Lessir, Tunisia)

direction of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), their fundamental and inalienable rights.

A solution of the Palestinian problem remains the keystone for any attempted settlement. The Fez plan, setting forth the outlines for a settlement, shows the readiness of the Arabs to make peace on the basis of law and justice.

Tunisia repeats its support for this plan, while at the same time welcoming any initiative from whatever source, that could restore a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. Consequently my country supports the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East, and urges the Secretary-General to continue his efforts directed to the convening of that Conference.

The PRESIDENT: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The voting on the draft resolution on this item will take place at a subsequent meeting of the Assembly to be announced in the Journal.

I call on the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, who has asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I would remind him that in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to 5 minutes for the second intervention, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. FARTAS (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (interpretation from Arabic): I have just reviewed the list annexed to the text of the statement made on Wednesday morning by the representative of the Zionist entity. That list is a total fabrication and was drawn up to serve two purposes: to divert the Assembly's attention from the item under consideration - which is a traditional Zionist ploy - and to cover up Israeli crimes and practices in the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories.

I shall comment on only one or two false allegations on that list in order to expose its falsity and bias and the fact that it was made up to serve the two specific goals I have mentioned. The list has it that the Jamahiriya attacked United States ships in international waters. The facts, well known to the world at large, are that aircraft of the United States fleet attacked civilian targets, such as the Libyan city of Sirte, after having taken off from aircraft carriers positioned off the Libyan coast. Moreover, United States warships had opened fire on Libyan patrol boats in Libyan waters, taking a serious toll in lives and material damage.

The list also has it that the only occurrence on 15 April 1986 was the explosion of a car-bomb a Lebanese street. According to the list, the United States did not launch a barbaric raid on that day against civilian centres in Tripoli and Benghazi. According to the list, the Security Council did not hold an urgent meeting to consider that raid; veto power was not exercised to block adoption of a draft resolution condemning it; the General Assembly did not discuss that act of aggression as one of the major items on its agenda for this session and did not adopt resolution 41/38 of 20 November 1986 with 79 votes in favour.

(Mr. Fartas, Libyan Arab
Jamahiriya)

What sort of credibility or objectivity can we ascribe to this selective and biased listing of events? In our view, this list is an insult to the intelligence of representatives and the General Assembly. To that Assembly we say that this list should be consigned to the rubbish bin.

This type of fraudulent allegation is a characteristic feature of Zionism, which did not stop at falsifying history but went on to falsify the very facts of religious rights, as established by modern and ancient history and by outstanding Jewish religious leaders such as Herman Adler, the Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom, thinkers such as Joseph René and writers such as Alfred Lilienthal. They have all made it clear that Zionist claims are total fabrications and have no basis in religion. Moreover, the deeply religious orthodox Jews constantly aver that Zionism is not their creed and that the Zionist entity does not represent them.

The meeting rose at 7.35 p.m.