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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE EIGHTY-FIRST MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 21 November 1986, at 3 p.m.

<u>President:</u>	Mr. MOUSHOUTAS (Vice-President)	(Cyprus)
later:	Mr. AL-ANSI (Vice-President)	(Oman)
later:	Mr. CHOUDHURY (President)	(Bangladesh)
later:	Mr. THOMPSON (Vice-President)	(Fiji)

- Question of Palestine [35] (continued)

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

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In the absence of the President, Mr. Moushoutas (Cyprus), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 35 (continued)

QUESTION OF PALESTINE:

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE (A/41/35)
- (b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/41/215-S/17916)

The PRESIDENT: I remind representatives that in accordance with the decision taken this morning the list of speakers in the debate on this item will be closed today at 5 p.m. Representatives wishing to participate in the debate should inscribe their names as soon as possible.

Mr. MUDENGE (Zimbabwe): During the past two weeks the General Assembly has focused its attention on the depressing and extremely dangerous situation prevailing in southern Africa today, a region living under the continuous and all-pervasive threat of subversion and State-sanctioned terrorism directed from Pretoria as that racist entity's only answer to the pressures, both internal and external, which continue to mount against it and against its abhorrent apartheid philosophy.

In its review of the situation in southern Africa the General Assembly once again identified apartheid, and the policies and practices of the racist Pretoria régime, as the prime sources of instability and conflict in the region. The General Assembly concluded that no peace or security could come to southern Africa until such time as the racist régime had withdrawn its forces of occupation from Angola and Namibia, ended its policy of regional destabilization and, finally, until such time as the evil system of apartheid has been eliminated.

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

We have before us today the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. In studying it one cannot avoid being struck by the many similarities and parallels which exist, on a variety of levels, between the situation in southern Africa and that in the Middle East, in particular between the plight of the Namibian people and that of the dispossessed people of Palestine as both struggle, against enormous odds, to regain the freedom and independence so cruelly and brutally denied them.

The report before us today confirms that the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories continues to deteriorate and provides us with detailed and tragic evidence to support that assertion.

In open and arrogant defiance of countless General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, and in the face of overwhelming international condemnation, Israel has continued to tighten its stranglehold, not only upon the occupied territory of Palestine itself, but upon the other Arab territories it seized by waging war nearly 20 years ago.

The past year has seen continuing confiscation of Arab-owned land in occupied Palestinian territories and a provocative increase in the size and number of occupationalist settlements upon that stolen land. In its determination to exert total control over that which it has confiscated, Israel has continued its policy of linking the economy of the occupied territories to that of Israel, ensuring that any socio-economic development therein is geared to the benefit of the occupying power rather than to that of the indigenous Palestinian and other Arab peoples.

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

In the words of the Committee's report:

"this creeping annexation of the occupied Palestinian territories was accompanied by measures designed to suppress all forms of resistance and of political, social, cultural and economic expression of the Palestinian people, as well as by acts of violence and provocation by Israeli troops and by armed Jewish settlers against Palestinians". (A/41/35, para. 20)

The Zionists have continued their illegal annexation of the Holy City of Jerusalem and, most recently, have incensed the Muslim world - particularly within the occupied territories, by deliberately and wilfully violating the sanctity and sanctuary of Islamic holy places, both in Jerusalem and in Hebron.

The past year has seen increasing numbers of Palestinians being deported - exiled from their own land; being detained without trial; being imprisoned in inhumane conditions, and being subjected to cruel, barbaric torture at the hands of the occupationist forces.

The reduction and, in some cases total withdrawal, of medical facilities from the occupied lands, has led to increases in infant mortality rates and a general deterioration in the overall health situation of the Palestinian people. In this regard, the report before us is most telling when it reveals that a special World Health Organization Committee of Experts was actually refused access to the occupied territories by the Israelis, who were obviously afraid that the excesses would be exposed.

The report before us is equally depressing in its coverage of the plight of Palestinians living in refugee camps in Lebanon for, notwithstanding the outrage of the civilized world, these tragic, defenceless souls continue to be the targets of vicious armed attack and are denied both protection from such attack and the provision of adequate medical attention and facilities thereafter.

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

This situation, just like that which prevails in Namibia and southern Africa as a whole, is outrageous and demands, more than ever before, our full and immediate attention. It is just not acceptable that we should have debated this issue for so many years and yet should have achieved so little in the way of real progress.

What is needed now is action, and there is no more appropriate venue to conceive and undertake such action than here at the United Nations. Indeed, as confirmed by the Chairman of the Committee whose report is before us today,

"the United Nations, and in particular the Security Council, have a clear responsibility to ensure the physical safety of the Palestinians, to bring about the exercise of their inalienable rights ... and to promote progress towards the attainment of a just and lasting solution in accordance with the United Nations resolutions".

Countless resolutions have been submitted containing demands, condemnations, and more importantly, proposals for concerted international action against Zionist intransigence and brutality. But, just as similar resolutions on Namibia and southern Africa have been vetoed and blocked by one or another Western Power in the Security Council, anxious to protect apartheid, so too has the implementation of these action-oriented resolutions on Palestine been prevented by the lack of co-operation and the total bias by certain Western Powers in defence of Israel.

It is our hope that this negativism will not again triumph by frustrating the most hopeful of all the proposals put forward in the many years that we have debated this issue, namely, the call for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East. Such a conference would be held under the auspices of the United Nations and attended by all parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the permanent members of

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

the Security Council. If approached in the right spirit, such an initiative has the potential to provide the basis for agreements and undertakings that could lead to a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement of the problems afflicting the Middle East. As such, one would have expected all parties readily to accept the challenge and to fulfil their obligations in the search for peace and security in the Middle East.

Unfortunately - and perhaps predictably - neither Israel nor its main ally, the United States, has shown any real interest in the proposal and both have been consistently negative in their approach thereto.

Indeed, the Israeli actions in attacking the PLO headquarters in Tunis, and in intercepting Libyan civilian aircraft - whilst their Western supporters have been doing their utmost to undermine the international reputation and standing of other important and influential players in the Middle East question, have done little to enhance the prospects for convening the conference in the near future, or for peace in that troubled region as a whole.

We cannot be put off and we cannot allow the situation merely to continue as it is. In their exhaustive review of the Middle East question, the Heads of State or Government of the non-aligned countries emphasized their conviction that the issue of Palestine lies at the very core of the problems and conflicts within the Middle East and requires urgent attention: they stressed the need for early convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and condemned the negative attitude of Israel and the United States towards the holding of the Conference. With a view to making progress on this issue, they also called upon the United Nations Security Council

"to 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, para. 168, p. 81)

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

The Non-Aligned Movement is committed to working towards the establishment of this preparatory committee which, to us, seems a constructive and promising initiative for forward momentum towards the convening of the proposed international conference and, towards a genuine and just settlement of the problems afflicting the Middle East.

In this respect, we would appeal, through you, Mr. President, to the members of the Security Council as a whole, and more particularly, to the United States of America, as well as other supporters of Israel, to co-operate with the Non-Aligned Movement and to join with us in taking this constructive and positive step forward.

As they dealt with the Namibian question, the Non-Aligned Heads of State or Government stated that any further delay in bringing independence to that Territory was immoral and should, under any circumstances, be avoided. Exactly the same terms could and indeed must be applied to the continuing and tragic question of Palestine. No further delay can be tolerated: the rights, indeed, the existence of an entire people is at stake. We have an opportunity to take a meaningful first step towards the restitution of those undeniable and inalienable rights: it is our duty, our moral duty, each and every one of us, to ensure that that step is taken.

Mr. PETROVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The United Nations has traditionally devoted the most careful attention to the question of Palestine. The urgent need for the General Assembly to adopt serious and effective measures to settle this crucial problem, one which cries out to mankind's conscience, is largely dictated by the particular responsibility of the United Nations for the destiny of the Palestinian people and the restoration of a just peace in such a troubled region of the world as the Middle East.

As Foreign Minister E. A. Shevardnadze of the Soviet Union said in his recent statement to the General Assembly,

"We believe that the United Nations should again take the matter of a Middle East settlement into its hands." (A/41/PV.6, p. 56)

It would be no exaggeration to say that during its more than 40-year history the United Nations has done an enormous amount of work in preparing international legal, political and humanitarian bases for building a just and stable system of peaceful relations between the States of the Middle East, the key aspect of the conflict situation in that region rightly being identified as the question of the national self-determination of the Palestinian people.

The General Assembly reaffirmed the fundamental principles for an Arab-Israeli settlement in clearly reasserting the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, independence and sovereignty and the right to create their own independent State. Political approaches have been developed in the relevant resolutions to find a way out of the situation of conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbours, to change their relations from those of war and hostility to those of peace and good-neighbourliness. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) has been given observer status at the United Nations as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and the need for it to participate in all efforts to resolve the question of Palestine has been reaffirmed.

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

Thus, the international community has for long taken as axiomatic the concept that the Arab-Israeli conflict will be finally and completely settled only when each of the peoples of the Middle East region is guaranteed the right to independent existence and free development and is given the opportunity to make a reality of its own legitimate interests and aspirations. It is indisputable that that refers primarily to the destiny of the Arab Palestinian people.

We can only describe as a stark anachronism the deprivation of a people numbering nearly five million of their homeland, while they daily experience the burdens of foreign occupation or languish in exile and cannot deal freely with either their present or their future.

In the final analysis, the implementation of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the creation of their own State implies full implementation of resolution 181 (II), of 29 November 1947, which, I emphasize, has never been repealed. That resolution speaks of the need to create in Palestine two States - a Jewish State and an Arab State. It has been confirmed in that form, and is recognized by the majority of States. If that resolution has been implemented in regard to one people, everything possible must be done to ensure its implementation with regard to the other people as well.

Without a solution to this fundamental question, there can be no just and stable peace in the Middle East. The imperative need today is to recognize that fact as a historic reality of our time, giving an impetus to immediate action. Unfortunately, Israel does not wish to understand this. The ruling circles of that country bear a heavy responsibility for the suffering and shattered lives of millions of people.

Furthermore, convinced of its own impunity, Israel continues to carry out an annexationist, colonialist policy with regard to the occupied Palestinian

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

territories and encroaches on the territorial integrity and sovereignty of neighbouring - and not only neighbouring - Arab States. That policy takes a form that is well known to the whole world. In fact, Israel's policy towards the peoples of the area is very little different from the actions of occupiers in other times and circumstances in history. We see the same kind of shameless pillaging of the local population, the same practice of forced expulsion of the indigenous population from their lands and the expropriation of their property and lands.

Since the occupation by Israel of Palestinian territories in 1967, according to data of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), 550,000 Palestinians have been forced to leave their homes, and more than 2,100,000 are now languishing in refugee camps in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and other States. The narrowly selfish, chauvinistic objectives of that policy are absolutely clear: to break the will of the Arab nations to resist and force them to accept Israel's conditions - including the right to arrogate to itself the ability to decide the destinies of the Middle East.

Year by year Israel now extracts from the blood and crippled lives of the 100,000 inhabitants of the West Bank alone \$1.2 billion in income, and it is counting on even greater profits. Tens of thousands of Israeli settlers and new settlers are living in the greatest comfort on lands taken from their legal owners.

No references to the need to ensure one's own security, no references to the struggle with terrorism, no loud declarations of peaceful intentions and the desire to raise the living standards of the people of the occupied territories can justify such a crude trampling underfoot by Israel of the norms of international law, the Charter and resolutions of the United Nations, of which Israel is a member.

There are practically no international agreements, treaties and conventions governing relations between civilized States that Tel Aviv has not broken. The

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

nearly daily punitive raids carried out against Palestinian camps in Lebanon, the mass arrests and roundups in the occupied territories, the seizure of aeroplanes in order to inspect them and totally unjustified raids on peaceful civilian cities and sites are only a few - but extremely serious - demonstrations of this illegal practice of the Zionists.

The following question inevitably comes to mind: does Israel really hope that such reliance on naked force and high-handed attempts to drive an entire people into reservations in fact really represents an effective means of ensuring its own security over a long period of time? Such thinking means making a mockery not only of the legitimate rights of peoples, but also of common sense. It also means jeopardizing the future of the Israeli people and the State of Israel.

Understanding is now growing throughout the world that one's own security can be achieved only by taking account of the security of other peoples and their desire to decide their own destinies. This is being proved by experience. So far Israel, despite barbaric methods and overt genocide, has still not been able - and we believe it will not be able - to break the Palestinian people and destroy its political vanguard, the PLO, which is protecting its legitimate interests. The existence of the Arab peoples, just like the existence of the PLO, is a fact of realpolitik, and no one has the right not to take it into account.

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

Obviously, part of the blame - indeed a considerable part of the blame - for the fact that the situation in the Middle East remains unsettled must be borne by the United States of America. An enormous share of United States economic and military assistance to foreign States goes for the financing of the expansionist and terrorist policy of Tel Aviv. During the past seven years alone, during the course of which Israel unleashed one major war and carried out dozens of punitive operations and expeditions against the Palestinians, Washington paid the Zionist State \$12 billion.

Facts do not go away. Knowing them, it is difficult to believe the assurances of American politicians regarding their desire for genuine peace in the Middle East. Behind these beautiful and sometimes slightly reworded flowery phrases we see an attempt to hide the old policy of encouraging the aggressor, trying to break the back of the Arabs, and above all the Palestinians, in order to force them to renounce their legitimate rights and national aspirations, and of searching out those who are willing to make separate deals, such as the so-called administrative autonomy for the West Bank of the Jordan river, or the Camp David so-called complete autonomy.

Against the background of the existing tensions in the Middle East arising out of this unresolved conflict between Israel and the Arabs, all peace-loving States are particularly concerned over Israel's involvement in the American Star Wars programme, the so-called Strategic Defense Initiative. We can already imagine the kind of consequences to which this explosive mixture of chauvinistic arrogance and space technology can lead. Unfortunately, Washington, to judge from foregoing facts, is not afraid of this "star sickness" of its junior strategic partner.

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

The question is whether it is not because the Americans themselves are devoured by those same dubious ambitions, with the sole difference that their ambitions encompass our entire planet.

As clearly stated in the statement of the Soviet Union to the Israeli Government in connection with the signing of the agreement on Israel's adherence to the American programme of the Strategic Defense Initiative:

"In making its contribution to transforming outer space into an arena of confrontation, the Israeli leadership is promoting an aggravation of tensions in the world and consequently in the Middle East as well. There can be no doubt that a growth of tension makes even more remote any prospects for the achievement of a just settlement of the Middle Eastern conflict, a settlement which would be in the interest of all the States in the area."

It should be clear to any unbiased politician that we are now at a turning point in human history, a time when we must take a decisive step towards a new kind of political thinking, towards an awareness of universally shared responsibility for the safety of our planet. This is precisely the position taken by the Soviet Union on the question of a settlement in the Middle East.

It sees a way out of the existing situation through the establishment of a comprehensive system of international peace and security which, inter alia, assumes, as stated at the twenty-seventh Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union:

"... unconditional respect in international practice for the right of each people, in a sovereign manner, to choose the ways and forms for its own development".

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

Only by using such an approach can there be a just solution to the question of the destiny of the Palestinian people. And in so doing the way would be open to an ultimate settlement of the conflict in the Middle East, which in that case could become a stable link in a system of universal peace and security. The USSR has never been inclined to limit itself merely to public statements of well-known principles regarding the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It has always been ready to undertake, and is continuing to undertake, specific steps in this area.

As originally proposed by the Soviet Union, the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, with the participation of all parties directly involved, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), remains before the Assembly.

The aim of such a conference, as we see it, must be the achievement of agreements to ensure the return to the Arab States of all their territory occupied by Israel from 1967 on; the right of the Arab people of Palestine to self-determination and to the creation of its own independent State; and the right of all States of the Middle East, including Israel, to live in conditions of peace and security. The holding of the international Conference has already been recognized by the international community as the best and the only acceptable means, and the best, for seeking a solution to such a complex problem as that of the Middle East conflict. Support for the idea of holding the Conference is to be found in the many resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East. All of the Arab States directly involved, and the PLO, support the convening of the Conference.

It might be asked why the Arab parties to the conflict and the international community as represented by the United Nations are insisting on the convening of

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

the international Conference and have rejected the so-called direct - and for practical purposes there is no other word for it - separate negotiations which the United States and Israel are seeing to impose. I think that the answer to this is obvious. Events after the Camp David agreements very clearly showed the defects in the policy of separate deals as a method for Arab-Israeli negotiations. A distinguishing feature of the direct negotiations being forced on the Arabs is indeed a renunciation of a just and comprehensive settlement, and the hope is to make use of such negotiations to force the Arab party or parties that have accepted that method of resolving the problem to retreat from the Arab demands.

There are very different kinds of negotiations. If one party is negotiating from a position of strength, it can impose its own conditions, but that is a distortion of the very concept of negotiations, and the Camp David negotiations provided the opportunity for doing exactly that.

What is dominant in the separate negotiations is the spirit of selfish interests, and an atmosphere conducive to ignoring the rights of those who are not participating in the negotiations. The agreements reached at such negotiations must inevitably give rise to new contradictions and differences. This is particularly so as regards the conflict in the Middle East, where a settlement could be lasting only if it resolved each and every problem arising out of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and if it encompassed all the parties involved in the conflict.

Because of the special characteristics of the Arab-Israeli conflict, particularly the obvious interdependence of its various aspects, and the close overlapping of interests of the sides involved, only collective efforts can lead to a solution to confrontation in the Middle East problem and move the problem into

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

the area of interaction and the achievement of mutually acceptable agreements. The search, the joint search, for ways to find peace must be used to remedy the present state of extreme tension. Of course, we are fully aware of the fact that between Israel and individual Arab parties there may exist and do exist problems that will require the holding of bilateral negotiations. That is exactly why the Soviet proposal provides for the establishment, within the framework of the international Conference, of both working committees or commissions that would include representatives of all parties to the conference, and bilateral groups that could work out the details of agreements which affect only the two parties concerned.*

*Mr. Al-Ansi, Oman, Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

The USSR continues to be ready, within the framework of collective efforts, to search for real and mutually acceptable approaches to finding a way out of the present impasse in the Middle East. The USSR continues to show the necessary flexibility to find a way for all parties directly concerned, including the PLO, to become involved in business-like and serious negotiations for the settlement of the Middle East conflict. This was the thrust of the idea put forward by Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev in the course of his talks with President Mitterand of France regarding the establishment of a preparatory committee, with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council, which would carry out the necessary work for convening an International Conference. Such a concrete step to ensure the beginning of the negotiation process would also have a favourable effect on the regional political climate and would make the Middle East situation less explosive.

Judging from the statements of the representatives of some countries, not everyone views the idea of a conference in the same light. Israel, and its protectors in Washington, although receptive recently to the idea of convening an international conference, see it only as a kind of international cover-up for their separate ways of achieving peace. Apparently, they would like to turn the preparatory committee into the same kind of umbrella. This is by no means in keeping with the aspirations of all peoples of the region and only serves the objective of the expansionist plans of those who see the prospect of a lessening of tension in the Middle East as a threat to their own narrow selfish interests.

In our view, there can only be one conclusion to such a situation. The time has come to take practical steps to implement United Nations decisions on the entire range of problems affecting the Middle East. It is important that the idea of an international conference again receive broad support at the current session of the General Assembly. The unification of the efforts of all States to ensure an

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

immediate and just political settlement would give a tangible impetus to a start of the movement towards peace. Particular responsibility in this matter is borne by the five permanent members of the Security Council, for understanding among them could affect the general Middle East situation in the most serious way and promote the establishment of a favourable climate for taking specific, concrete steps aimed at convening an international conference.

It is not fortuitous that in the discussion of the question of Palestine the Soviet delegation dedicated so much attention to the machinery for a solution to the Middle East conflict. We believe that no one will deny the obvious fact that without a radical solution to the question of Palestine, it is impossible to imagine the establishment of a just and stable peace in the Middle East. The achievement of a mutually acceptable agreement on the Palestine problem is the key to the Arab-Israeli conflict, as well as to other fundamental aspects of the problem, and this can only be achieved in the context of an international conference with the participation of all directly interested parties, including the PLO.

The Soviet Union once again calls on all States from this rostrum to make their contribution to finding a solution to the Middle East conflict and declares its readiness to co-operate with all those who truly wish to implement a solution to the Middle East problem on a just and stable basis, taking into account the interests and rights of all States and peoples of the region.

Mr. AL-FANNAH (Oman) (interpretation from Arabic): The question of Palestine will always be one of the most important of the contemporary international issues which the United Nations and all its organs must continue to consider until a just and comprehensive settlement, guaranteed by the international community, is

(Mr. Al-Fannah, Oman)

reached in favour of the Palestinian people. The Palestinian people must regain its land, exercise its inalienable rights to self-determination and decide on a régime of its own choice.

The question of Palestine, as everyone is aware, is at the very heart of the Middle East problem. It has been on the agenda of the General Assembly since its establishment, and to date, has been considered in the General Assembly, the Main Committees, the Special Committees, the Security Council, and in conferences and seminars organized by the Organization. Nevertheless, progress towards the desired settlement of this important humanitarian problem - a settlement which must be based on Security Council and General Assembly resolutions - has, unfortunately, thus far not been made. That is why this matter becomes all the more complex and is now considered one of the most serious problems threatening regional and international peace and security.

The deteriorating situation is a challenge to the credibility of the international community, which wants the principles of the Charter to prevail in the United Nations in accordance with the report of the Committee on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (A/41/35).

We note that the majority of Members of the Organization sincerely want the long-awaited just settlement of the problem as soon as possible. The report mentions the flagrant injustices imposed on the Palestinian people by the Israeli occupation authorities.

We take this opportunity to express our gratitude for the efforts made by the Chairman and members of the Committee. We would also like to insist that the five permanent members of the Security Council act swiftly, with a view to improving the present situation, and allow the International Conference on Peace in the Middle East, with the participation of all interested parties, to be convened. We

(Mr. Al-Fannah, Oman)

believe, too, that it is extremely important that the present situation be reviewed and that there be an Arab consensus. All Arab countries and peoples must adopt a common position regarding the Palestine question and the liberation of occupied Arab territories, including the Holy City of Jerusalem.

My country has supported, and continues to support the sincere Arab efforts to achieve peace, and has worked, and will continue to work towards a common Arab position. We have faith in the sincerity of all Arab efforts, from wherever they may come, including, of course, those aimed at ending the paralysis which has in recent years characterized the Palestine question.

(Mr. Al-Fannah, Oman)

We also wish to affirm that we support all sincere Arab efforts, in particular those made by the Arab Republic of Egypt, a sister Republic, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, a brother kingdom, and the leaders of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). We wish them every success and hope that their efforts may lead to the realization of the higher interests of the Arab nation as a whole.

We salute the resistance of the Palestinian people and its legitimate representatives. We appeal for better, more sincere and effective co-ordination of all the practical efforts made by our brothers in Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and the front-line States, since they are closest to the occupied Arab territories and come into daily contact with Palestinians living under the yoke of occupation or those that live in Arab-occupied territories because of reverses suffered in wars and displacement operations.

We welcome the presence of our brother Farouk Kaddoumi and his delegation, who are taking part today in the opening of the general debate on agenda item 35, concerning the question of Palestine. We also welcome Mohammad El-Farra, the Under-Secretary-General of the League of Arab States in charge of the question of Palestine, an experienced diplomat who is very familiar with the tragedy of the Palestinian people and of the inhabitants of the occupied Arab territories and continues to strive energetically to defend the sacred rights of Arabs.

Finally, my delegation cannot fail to pay a tribute to the efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and his able assistants responsible for dealing with the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East. We believe that the Secretary-General's report on the question of Palestine (A/41/768), of 29 October 1986, is a sincere report which covers all the positive and negative aspects of the current situation in all its dimensions. We hope that

(Mr. Al-Fannah, Oman)

it will command sustained support to facilitate the holding of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and the immediate establishment of the preparatory committee, in order to banish the spectre of war, massacres and diasporatism from the Middle East and contribute towards a just, comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian question, which is one of the most important Arab problems of our time.

There can be no doubt that Arab and Islamic co-operation and the solidarity of the Non-Aligned Movement, as well as of all regional and international organizations, are extremely important if we are to arrive at the desired just settlement.

The best gift that we could make to the Palestinian people and Arab citizens at present under the yoke of Israeli occupation would be the total ending of the devastating, unjustified war between Iran and Iraq and the cessation of all acts of foreign aggression from within or outside the country against Lebanese territory so that our brothers in that country may regain security and peace and we can together devote our efforts to supporting and ensuring the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

Mr. AL-ATASSI (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic): The General Assembly of the United Nations has been seized of the question of Palestine for nearly 40 years. When it adopted resolution 181 (II), of 29 November 1947, known as the Partition resolution, it created a Jewish State in occupied Palestine against the will of the Arab Palestinian people who then formed the majority of the population. The resolution also included the creation of an Arab State. However, that was aborted as a result of Zionist imperialist designs based on the judaization of the whole area in the interest of world imperialism.

(Mr. Al-Atassi, Syrian
Arab Republic)

The interest of the United Nations in this unique question and the high priority the Organization accords to it stem from the fact that the Organization bears the primary responsibility in this matter since it was the United Nations that created the artificial Zionist entity and thus made a major contribution to the plight and the displacement of the Palestinian people throughout the subsequent era.

The plight of the Arab Palestinian people undoubtedly has its roots in the General Assembly resolution that established the State of Israel. Since we are discussing the role of the United Nations in creating the Zionist entity, we should like to put on record our extreme appreciation of the fact that, despite the pressures brought to bear on it by the United States of America, the Organization has brought to light the plight of the Palestinian people and expressed solidarity with them, affirming their inalienable rights, recognizing that the problem of those people cannot be considered a refugee problem - even though the United Nations regards refugees with sympathy - but is rather a national political problem that has a direct bearing on peace and security in the area and in the whole world.

The rights of the Palestinian people - their right to self-determination, to an independent State on Palestinian soil, to return to their homeland and their native soil - are rights that the international community can never be permissive about. They have become part and parcel of the conscience and the very being of the United Nations. Without them the Middle East conflict will never be solved.

In sympathy with and in response to the problem of the Palestinian people, and in harmony with the earnest endeavour to rid them of injustice, we wish to put on record our appreciation of the role of this Organization in exposing the nature of the Zionist entity that occupies Palestine and the nature of those immigrants who came from various parts of the world, without any link that could be claimed to

(Mr. Al-Atassi, Syrian
Arab Republic)

bind them to that land and without a common history or a common language that could be claimed to bind them into a whole. They have been branded racists by the world Organization, and it branded the Zionist entity a racist entity that practises racial discrimination in General Assembly resolution 3379 (XXX), of 1975.*

*The President returned to the Chair.

(Mr. Al-Atassi, Syrian Arab Republic)

No matter how much zionism and the United States may strive to have that stigma eradicated, they will fail dismally because the international community, as represented in the General Assembly, has expressed the conviction, in adopting that resolution, that what had happened to the Palestinians - the displacement, the intimidation, the murder - had been rivaled only by the actions of nazism and of the apartheid régime in South Africa. Our respect for the General Assembly increased, at long last, when the peace-loving countries, in the resolution of 5 February 1982, exposed the Zionist entity as a non-peace-loving entity.

The question of Palestine and of the Palestinian people is unprecedented in the history of mankind. History will certainly not recount anything in the future equal to the kind of oppression and injustice inflicted on the Palestinian people. That people was expelled from its homeland; its territory was plundered; and it is still the victim of deprivation, harassment and repression at the hands of gangs that were expelled by their own societies because of their racist views. They came from all parts of the world and took the place of the Palestinian people in its own Palestinian land, its homeland and its villages.

Many peoples have experienced imperialist rule and have been the victims of repression and oppression at the hands of imperialists. But nothing has ever matched the Zionist settler-racist colonialism in Palestine. The objective of that colonialism is not merely to exploit, pillage and plunder: it is the extermination of the Palestinian people and the expropriation of all its land. That is the settler colonialism of Zionist imperialism, which was created by Great Britain in Palestine. That is the settler-racist colonialism which is nurtured by the United States on the land of Palestine.

(Mr. Al-Atassi, Syrian Arab
Republic)

Let us think back to the year 1917, to the ill-fated Declaration by Lord Balfour, who was at the time Foreign Minister of Great Britain - that empire on which the sun never set. The Declaration was given to world Zionism, represented by Lord Rothschild - a Jew and a Zionist. It called for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, against the will of the Arab Palestinian people. That illegal and immoral Declaration by Britain related to a territory it did not own and was made to a group of foreigners who had no right to it.

One may ask why Britain took this precipitate, immoral action. Could it not find a piece of land near London, or Manchester, or Yorkshire on which the leaders of Zionism could have established their so-called homeland, instead of displacing a whole people and turning it into refugees living in tents? Will history forgive Britain for the action it took? Will the Palestinian mothers forget who it was who killed their babies? The answers to those questions are crystal clear. The history of British colonialism is only too clear, and there can never be any mistake about it. We see this in South Africa and in the Malvinas Islands. British colonialism is the root cause of the plight of the people of Palestine, the people of Namibia, the people of South Africa and the people of the Malvinas Islands, which is part and parcel of Argentine territory.

Britain has now been pushed to the background in regard to support for Zionist designs at the expense of Arab rights. It now has a role subservient to that of United States imperialism and international Zionism. But I state from this rostrum that the Arab people, in all their countries, will never forgive imperialistic and racist Britain for its role in handing over Palestine to the Zionist usurpers and displacing the Palestinian people. The Palestinian people will never forget that

(Mr. Al-Atassi, Syrian Arab
Republic)

Britain put its entire potential at the service of the expansionist, aggressive and genocidal designs of international Zionism and its base, Israel. How can the Arab people forget the aggression committed by Britain in 1956, in collaboration with Israel, against Egypt during President Nasser's reign, under the pretext of protecting navigation in the Suez Canal? The Arab people will not forget the conspiracies hatched by Britain in an attempt to perpetuate the Zionist occupation of Palestinian and Arab territories. Nor will it forget that Britain has given its blessing to every act of aggression committed by Israel against the Arab nation. Indeed, Britain still denies that the Palestinian people have rights.

The history of Britain is replete with incidents of the oppression of peoples; there is no need to cite them in this brief statement.

The Zionist entity persists in rejecting United Nations resolutions, whether adopted by the General Assembly or by the Security Council. Despite the increasing recognition by all peoples of the world of the rights of the Palestinian people, Britain still refuses to recognize those inalienable national rights such as the right to return, the right to self-determination and the right to set up its own independent State on the soil of Palestine.

Although most of the States Members of the United Nations support the Palestinian people, the Zionist entity continues its intimidation of those people, seizes more Arab lands and displaces the indigenous Arab population. In order to terrorize Palestinian citizens, the Zionist régime commits one act of aggression after another against the Holy Places and houses of worship. It commits acts of armed aggression against schools and universities, with the aim of closing them and expelling the students. It persists in depriving the Palestinian people of their natural resources and in limiting their possibilities of earning a living. The aim

(Mr. Al-Atassi, Syrian Arab
Republic)

of the Zionist authorities in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is to complete the process of depopulation. Before the eyes of everyone, and in complete disregard for United Nations resolutions, the United Nations Charter and the Geneva Convention of 1949, the occupation authorities annexed the city of Jerusalem and claimed that it was Israel's "eternal capital".

Israel persists in carrying out its Zionist design of depopulating the Arab territories. Israel persists in implementing plans to keep the doors of Jewish immigration open in order to receive the largest possible number of new immigrants. Furthermore, in implementation of its settler designs, Israel is building more settlements in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as well as the Syrian Golan Heights.

(Mr. Al-Atassi, Syrian Arab Republic)

The Jewish Settlements Administration is in full operation and is putting forward many proposals to build yet more settlements. In the occupied Golan Heights alone the Zionist entity has set up more than 41 settlements and displaced more than 90 per cent of the population. In the Gaza Strip and the West Bank there are now more than 170 settlements, a situation that is in complete contradiction with Security Council resolution 465 (1980), which confirmed the illegitimacy of the establishment of Israeli settlements.

Israel will not be content until it sees all its settler, expansionist designs fully implemented. It pretended to accept resolution 181 (II) concerning partition, but did it really implement the Partition resolution? It did not observe it at all, and it persists in violating it step by step. A glance at the map of the area shows that Israel has occupied the rest of Palestine, which that resolution recommended be allocated to the Palestinian State. That is one of a series of tragedies, the price of which is the displacement of thousands upon thousands of the Palestinian populations.

Since the Balfour Declaration the Arabs have realized that Zionism is a settler, expansionist movement. It has no relationship whatsoever with the Jewish religion and is aimed at the complete colonization of Palestine and the creation of "Greater Israel extending from the Nile to the Euphrates". That means that it does not confine itself to the occupation of the whole of Palestine; its expansionist machinations show that it is intent on occupying yet more Arab lands. Persistence in the policy of building settlements is the clearest proof that Israel does not intend to return the Palestinian and Arab territories that it now occupies to their rightful owners.

(Mr. Al-Atassi, Syrian Arab Republic)

Have not the leaders of Israel stated that the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are part and parcel of the territory of Israel and that they do not intend to give them up? Did not Shamir state:

"Israel did not seize those territories by invasion from their rightful owners; rather, it liberated the territories from the countries that had invaded them in 1948."

And he went on:

"We did not annex them and will not annex them, since those territories are part and parcel of the territory of Israel, and what is part of your territory you do not annex."

The truth about Israel has been summed up by the Foreign Minister of Senegal, President of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, when he said:

"Israel's pretexts to justify its acts of aggression, assassination and invasion are based on one logic, the logic of Zionist policy, which is aimed ultimately at the subjugation of the Palestinian people and the creation of what has been called by Ben-Gurion the third kingdom of David and Greater Israel, extending from the Nile to the Euphrates."

The heart of the matter is that Israel will never implement United Nations resolutions. It will persist still further in flouting the will of the international community and in its absolute refusal to implement any such resolutions. That is tantamount to saying that the Palestinian people will continue to be denied the exercise of their inalienable historical rights, that their land will continue to be occupied by the Zionists and that the United Nations

(Mr. Al-Atassi, Syrian Arab Republic)

will continue endlessly adopting resolutions and reaffirming its previous resolutions without any progress being made.

Out of curiosity, we wish to put the following question. How can a small State characterized by racial discrimination between eastern and western Jews, between Ashkenazim and Sephardim Jews, black and white Jews - since Jewish society in Israel is based on such discrimination - flout the will of the international community? We are curious to know how a small State with very limited resources, torn by economic bankruptcy and with the highest inflation rate in the world, can ride roughshod over United Nations resolutions. We are curious to know how a State that is regionally and internationally isolated can stand on its own and flout the resolutions of the highest international authority? Those are questions that come to mind in relation to the might of this recalcitrant giant which defies the whole world. Some may wonder why Israel should comply with international authority and what kind of authority could compel it to implement United Nations resolutions. No one knows when Israel will observe those resolutions. It persists in exterminating the Palestinian people; it has made short work of taking the last inch of Palestinian land; it has annexed the city of Jerusalem and considers it to be its "eternal capital"; it has annexed the Golan Heights; it has applied Israeli laws there and imposes Israeli identity upon the Syrian citizens who continue to languish under Israeli occupation; it has invaded Lebanon and destroyed Beirut and southern Lebanon and still occupies part of that country in the teeth of resolutions adopted by this Organization calling for an immediate unconditional Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese territory.

It is clear from all the foregoing that Israel is not the only force involved. At the very least, Israel would not on its own have been able to flout the international will, since it is but a small State, torn by racial

(Mr. Al-Atassi, Syrian Arab
Republic)

discrimination and economic bankruptcy. Had it done so, it would, like other States in similar circumstances, have been held responsible, condemned and even isolated, if the international community had seen fit. Israel takes it for granted that it will go on doing what it has always done with impunity so long as the United States of America continues to back it and cover up its crimes and scandals. The United States of America is the first and principal enemy of the Palestinian people. In broad daylight and under pressure from the United States, in 1947 the land of Palestine was partitioned at the expense of the legitimate rights of its people. Under the protective umbrella of the United States, Israel has persisted in implementing step by step its expansionist design. It annexed Jerusalem, and then the Golan Heights, where it has enacted Israeli laws. Under American protection, Israel persists in its settler policy. It is building settlements and bringing in new Jewish immigrants. Lebanon was invaded in broad daylight and Palestinians were butchered in Sabra and Shatila. Again, the United States condoned all Israeli actions in implementation of its designs of judaization and the flouting of the right to self-determination of the Arab majority.

(Mr. Al-Atassi, Syrian Arab Republic)

The list is long. All this was perpetrated with the full knowledge of the United States. The United States still provides both political and diplomatic cover for all Israel's illegitimate and illegal acts and prevents the international community from condemning Israel. Nothing that can be said about the United States of America, could equal the reality of its actions.

We do not really know if the Zionist entity is harnessed in the service of American imperialism or whether the American Administration is working in the service of Israel's interest. It seems that there is no difference whatsoever between the two interests, and the collaboration between them continues unabated. The strategic character and common aim of both is the liquidation of the question of Palestine and the extermination of the Palestinian people.

We say to the United States of America, as we said before to its British partner: the Arab nation is committed to liberating itself and restoring its rights and self-determination. The Arab people will never forget who its main enemy is; it is in the Zionist entity, Washington's strategic ally. However Washington may try to distract the Arabs from the main issue - that is, Palestine - it will never achieve that aim. Trying to contain the Palestinian people at the expense of its rightful interests is futile. Peace initiatives in the American style will not achieve their aim, because they would not lead to real peace; they can lead only to more suffering by the Palestinian people, more murder and destruction. They are a waste of time.

Unilateral peace packages by America - like Camp David, the Reagan plan and Efran meetings - are not the way to settle the questions of Palestine and the Middle East. The solution is evident: effective unconditional withdrawal of all Israeli forces from all the Arab territories, and securing the inalienable right of the Palestinian people.

(Mr. Al-Atassi, Syrian Arab Republic)

We are desirous of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace; the Arabs confirmed that in the 1982 Fez plan. We consider that the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under United Nations auspices and with the participation of both the United States of America and the Soviet Union, together with all the parties to the conflict, is the right framework for achieving peace in the area. We look to the Assembly to support the Palestinian people's struggle by reaffirming that people's inalienable rights, since that is the cornerstone of any just peace in the area. We wish to reaffirm that the International Peace Conference on the Middle East is the framework for peace.

Mr. PEJIC (Yugoslavia): Almost 40 years have elapsed since the emergence of the Middle East crisis. All these long years have seen the suffering and ordeal of the Palestinian people and its just struggle for self-determination, national independence and the establishment of a State of its own. Marked by the courageous struggle for freedom and national dignity, they have borne eloquent witness that the question of Palestine is the core of the Middle East crisis and its solution the precondition for a lasting and comprehensive settlement.

To rectify that historic injustice and to ensure a speedy realization of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people therefore represent a debt owed by the international community, and a priority task and obligation of the United Nations. There is no doubt that that people enjoys the support and sympathy of the majority of the international community.

The Organization has discussed this issue many times, and has supported the just aspirations of the Palestinian people in many of its decisions. Yet not only have those requests not been realized but they are also being denied with ever more stubborn defiance and hardened intransigence.

(Mr. Pejic, Yugoslavia)

Past events have shown clearly and unmistakably that Israel's aggressive and expansionist policy and its attempts to impose itself by force and military superiority as a domineering factor and arbiter in the Middle East and the main obstacle to the solution of the problem of Palestine. This policy and behaviour, supported by certain countries outside the region, and the persistent attempts to deny the very existence of the problem of Palestine constitute a permanent source of tension and interference by external forces and factors, with dangerous potential consequences for peace and security in the region and beyond.

By occupying the Arab territories, raiding Palestinian refugee camps and institutions in neighbouring countries, stepping up construction of new settlements, and expanding those that already exist, confiscating property and purchasing Arab land, and by carrying out constant reprisals, arrests and persecution of the Palestinian population, Israel is attempting to bring about demographic changes, and thus realize its annexationist goals and ambitions and consolidate its control over the occupied territories.

Despite all those attempts and the enormous suffering and sacrifices, the Palestinian people has preserved its national, social and cultural identity. Attempts to suppress the resistance and aspirations of the Palestinian people by the policy of fait accompli, force and repression have only strengthened its will and resolve to persevere in its just struggle and demands.

Yugoslavia has always pointed out that there can be no lasting and stable peace and security in the Middle East without a just settlement of the question of Palestine. We have always stressed that the question of Palestine is the core of the Middle East problem and therefore has far-reaching global implications.

(Mr. Pejic, Yugoslavia)

Consistent in its resistance to the policy of force, aggression and the imposition of foreign will, Yugoslavia considers that the Palestinian people and its struggle under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) are a reality which no force or repression can deny or obliterate. In this connection, we should like to express our full support for the independence of the leadership of the PLO, which is the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and enjoys its full support and confidence, headed by the Chairman of its Executive Committee, Yassir Arafat.

For far too long attempts have been made to push the question of Palestine to one side, reduce it to a refugee problem, and declare that the just liberation struggle of the Palestinian people under the leadership of the PLO is terrorism. The right to survival cannot be ensured by the violation and denial of the rights of others. It is high time for the policy of force, expansion and suppression of the weak and oppressed to give way to dialogue and negotiations. The stubborn attempts to postpone the solution of the problem of Palestine is fraught with serious danger of further deterioration in the already explosive situation in the region.

At their Eighth Conference in Harare, Zimbabwe, the non-aligned countries expressed their full solidarity with and support for the struggle and demands of the Palestinian people. They stressed that a comprehensive, just and durable solution of the Middle East situation cannot be achieved without Israel's total and unconditional withdrawal from all the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967.

(Mr. Pejic, Yugoslavia)

The general debate at the present session broadly reflected the disposition of the great number of countries in favour of holding an international conference on the Middle East for the solution of the question of Palestine, without which there can be no stable peace and security in the region.

Yugoslavia firmly supports the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58, of 13 December 1983, with the participation on a footing of equality of all the parties directly interested, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

In this connection we consider that it is necessary that the Security Council assume its share of responsibility and play a more active role in the resolution of the problem of Palestine. This includes early consultations among the five permanent members of the Security Council with the aim of launching concrete preparations for the convening and holding of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. At their eighth summit Conference, held in Harare, Zimbabwe, the Non-Aligned Countries also stressed the major responsibility of the Security Council to facilitate the convening of the Conference and provide the appropriate institutional arrangements to guarantee the implementation of the agreements expected to be reached at the Conference.

On that occasion the non-aligned countries pointed to the need to invest active efforts to overcome the existing stalemate in the solution of this problem. In this connection they supported the efforts of the Committee of nine non-aligned countries on Palestine and decided that it should continue its work with a view to contributing to the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the Security Council and, in other appropriate ways, initiating and directing the efforts of non-aligned countries to bring about

(Mr. Pejic, Yugoslavia)

the resolution of the question of Palestine in a manner conducive to a comprehensive, lasting and just solution to the Middle East crisis.

History has shown that aggression, domination and force have never been able to quell the legitimate aspirations and requests of people for peace, freedom, independence and unhampered development. The struggle of the Palestinian people to achieve those noble goals is no exception.

Mr. GARVALOV (Bulgaria): The question of Palestine is one of the few international problems that have been in the international limelight since the very foundation of the United Nations. In December 1987 we shall commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of the well-known resolution 181 (II) on the partition of Palestine. On the eve of this sorry anniversary we must once again note with deep regret that in spite of the tireless efforts of the world community and the numerous United Nations decisions and resolutions calling for a just settlement of the question of Palestine, to date the Arab people of Palestine have been denied the exercise of their inalienable right to self-determination and to the establishment of a State of their own. It is high time that everyone realized that this festering problem underlies the explosive situation which has plagued the Middle East, and that barring a just settlement no peace in the region could be ever possible.

Today, the tragedy of the Arab people of Palestine is one of the most striking examples of the misfortunes that befall peoples as a result of the imperialist policy of expansion and aggression. As a result of that policy an entire people with an ancient history and a rich culture has been deprived of its sacred right to a homeland of its own and condemned to a life in exile. The sufferings of the Palestinian people, who have been subjected for decades to open terror, mass repression and national oppression, are difficult to recount. Even today Israel continues to occupy Arab territories. Those lands have been the target of

(Mr. Garvalov, Bulgaria)

unprecedented expansion and massive colonization. There is no end in sight to the attempts to alter the legal status, the demographic structure and the historically established character of the occupied Palestinian and other Arab lands, including Jerusalem.

All this is going on in spite of the explicit will of the international community and world public opinion, in blatant breach of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the norms of international law and the collective decisions of our Organization.

It is a well-known fact that Israel would not have been able, nor would it have dared, to pursue its adventurist policy in the Middle East had it not been able to rely upon the comprehensive and unqualified support of its strategic ally and if the United States had not resorted so systematically to its right of veto in the Security Council in order to block all prospects of condemning and taking effective measures against the aggressor. Needless to say, it is not moral principles but egoistic self-interest and hard-nosed schemes that have shaped the United States policy of support for Israel. We are all well aware that the United States has long regarded Israel as the principal instrument of its long-term strategy in the Middle East aimed at establishing military-political domination in that resource-rich region of the world. It was in accord with those schemes that the so-called strategic alliance between the United States and Israel was born as a weapon against the independence and sovereignty of peoples in that part of the world.

The attempts to impose separate deals, which would in fact foil the achievement of a just and comprehensive settlement of the Middle East problem, are completely at variance with the interests of the Arab nations. As a matter of fact, they are aimed at eliminating the Palestinian national liberation movement and at circumventing the Palestinian problem in its most important national, social

(Mr. Garvalov, Bulgaria)

and political aspects. It is perfectly clear, however, that such an approach is not only futile, but extremely dangerous as well. This has been demonstrated by the tragic aftermath of the Camp David accords. Quite rightly, this approach to the problems of the Middle East has been categorically and unequivocally rejected by the PLO as well as by the majority of Member States. This is so because the international community has become increasingly conscious and supportive of the need for undertaking urgent and effective measures to achieve a comprehensive, just and peaceful settlement of the Middle East conflict and of the Palestinian issue, which after all is at its core.

Past experience of developments in the Middle East indicates that the only way to solve this entangled and complex international issue, the various aspects of which are intricately intertwined and interrelated, is to involve the collective efforts of all the parties concerned in the attainment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. We have every reason to declare that the vast majority of States, including the People's Republic of Bulgaria, actively support that approach. A convincing manifestation of this fact is the prevailing broad international consensus on the principles and mechanism relating to the peaceful settlement of this problem as embodied in the numerous decisions and resolutions of the United Nations. Furthermore, this approach was endorsed at the summit meeting of Arab States at Fez, in September 1982, by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries in its political declarations at New Delhi and Harare, and by the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty in their political declaration of 1985 in Sofia, Bulgaria.

(Mr. Garvalov, Bulgaria)

Nevertheless, for well-known reasons, the Middle East conflict, in particular the question of Palestine, remains unresolved. Moreover, this year the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (A/41/35) notes with concern that the question of Palestine has reached a critical stage and in this connection calls for renewed and concerted collective efforts to find a just settlement of the problem within the framework of the United Nations and on the basis of its relevant resolutions with a view to putting an end to the tragedy of the Palestinian people. In view of the responsibility for the future of the Palestinian people vested in the world Organization and in the international community as a whole, my country, Bulgaria, fully shares this concern and joins in the aforementioned call which is addressed to all of us.

In this connection, we deem of utmost importance the Soviet proposal of July 1984 calling for the convening of an international conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations with the participation on an equal footing of all parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

The People's Republic of Bulgaria supports this constructive Soviet initiative which represents a realistic and balanced programme for the comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict and provides a good opportunity to achieve an enduring and just peace in the region. In particular, my country also fully endorses the idea put forward by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union in his statement to the General Assembly on 23 September 1986, calling for a Preparatory Committee to be set up within the framework of the Security Council as a first step in this direction.

(Mr. Garvalov, Bulgaria)

In conclusion, I should like to emphasize that the People's Republic of Bulgaria is committed to supporting the just cause of the Arab people of Palestine and the Palestine Liberation Organization and is convinced that their struggle for the realization of their legitimate national rights to self-determination and to the establishment of a State of their own is bound to succeed.

Mr. PITAKKA (Albania): The Palestine question, which constitutes the core of the Middle East conflict, remains one of the most serious problems of the present international situation. A solution of this problem, in compliance with the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, is a prerequisite without which there can be no discussion of a solution to the Middle East problem.

As the course of events shows, the prospects for the solution of this problem seem to be very dim. The Israeli Zionists, who have chased the Palestinian people from their homeland do not show the slightest sign of bringing about a change in their permanent stand, along with the other consequences that derive from it. On the contrary, they continue to ignore and trample underfoot the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, the existence of that people and their struggle by overtly defying progressive international public opinion, which demands an end to the cruel anti-Palestinian policy of the Israeli Zionists.

In the final analysis, it is crystal clear that the aim of the Israeli Zionists is physically to liquidate the Palestinian people and, by so doing, they can bury once and for all "the question of Palestine". The crimes perpetrated by the Zionists against the Palestinians are really chilling and make everyone feel full of hatred and disgust. They begin with the persecution and execution of specific individuals and go so far as to carry out massive massacres and killings of the Palestinian population. Such practices as discrimination in incomes and salaries, the cutting off of fresh water, the damage of sown crops, the destruction

(Mr. Pitarka, Albania)

of buildings by bulldozers or by blowing them up by explosives, the imposition of martial law, the surrounding of entire quarters and villages with barbed wire and so forth, are all common phenomena in the occupied Arab territories, and especially in occupied Palestine.

Under the pretext of fighting against terrorism and subversive activities, many people are put into jail and concentration camps without even sparing the use of bullets against innocent people, including small children, the elderly and women. Through the use of permanent terror, the Israeli Zionists aim at making the life of the Palestinians in their land unbearable and consequently forcing them to leave and take the road of emigration, thus increasing the ranks of refugees. When the question of the Palestinian people is discussed, their aim is also to have it discussed cynically as a question of refugees and not as one involving an entire people possessing their own motherland and homes. In so doing, the Zionists could create favourable grounds for the massive Judaization of the occupied lands, thereby legalizing the occupation of this land by making Judaization a fait accompli. The bitter reality is that the Jewish colonies are increasing each day in the West Bank and the other territories occupied by Israel.

The efforts at exterminating and liquidating the Palestinian people are also quite evident in Lebanon, that fraternal Arab country where the Palestinians have been compelled to settle after being expelled from their own land by Israel. We can mention here the ugly massacres perpetrated some years ago in the refugee camps in Sabra and Shatila that remain as symbols of the cruelty and savagery of the Israeli Zionists. We can also mention the new massacres and the barbarous raids of the Israeli air force and fleet in Sayda and elsewhere that leave behind only destruction and grief, hundreds of people killed and maimed, especially among the defenceless population. Numerous facts show that Israel intends to drive the

(Mr. Pitarka, Albania)

Palestinians by force from Lebanon too and to disperse them in other Arab countries in order to realize their objective of turning the Palestinians into a people of refugees.

In applying this criminal policy, Israel has enjoyed, and still enjoys, the continuous overall support of the United States of America. The most modern weapons of the arsenal of the American army are put at its disposal, with which the Zionists kill and massacre Palestinians, carry out aggression and threaten the other Arab peoples and countries. The United States is linked with Israel by an open military alliance known as a strategic alliance, which is directed, first of all, against the Arab peoples and countries. The General Assembly, the Security Council and other international forums serve as witnesses to the unreserved support rendered to Israel by the United States.

As a result of the United States use of the veto, many draft resolutions condemning Israel, its occupation of Arab territories, its policy of war and aggression and its collaboration with South Africa have not been adopted. The United States has gone so far as to threaten its departure from many international organizations if decisions or recommendations are taken condemning Israel as an aggressor State. This speaks clearly for the unity of their joint policy and activities - for the unconditional support of the culprit.

The pro-Israeli stand and the stand against the Palestinians and Arabs have placed the United States at the head of the most cruel and dangerous enemies of the Palestinian people and of their other Arab brothers.

(Mr. Pitarka, Albania)

Intensive anti-Palestinian and anti-Arab activities are also undertaken by the Soviet social-imperialists, irrespective of the camouflage they put on in pretending to be their ally. Soviet support for the Palestinian and other Arab peoples is, in fact, seen by the Soviet Union within the framework of its global policy and its interests and aims in the Middle East, where it has been engaged in a fierce rivalry for world domination and hegemony with the other super-Power - the United States of America.

While shedding crocodile tears for the Palestinian people, Moscow allows the easy and frequent emigration to Israel of hundreds and thousands of Soviet Jews, who are settled in precisely the lands the Palestinians have been expelled from. It enters into contact with the Israeli Zionists and holds official meetings with them under the pretext of establishing consular relations, but the real aim is to establish diplomatic relations with Tel Aviv.

In the anti-Palestinian and anti-Arab strategy of the two imperialist super-Powers a special place is given to the so-called initiative for the peaceful settlement of the Palestinian question and of the Middle East conflict in general. It is in this light that we can see the so-called joint Soviet-American consultations on the Middle East, which are becoming ever more frequent, to the extent of their being institutionalized. It is evident that these consultations are accompanied by bargaining for the division and redivision of zones of influence and the hatching of plots to carry out anti-Arab and anti-Palestinian activities.

The Palestinian problem and that of the Middle East in general are the most significant examples where the fierce rivalry, but at the same time diabolical collaboration, between the two super-Powers can easily be perceived. Both in the case of their rivalry and their collusion, everything is done at the expense of the Arab peoples.

(Mr. Pitarka, Albania)

Experience shows that the initiatives for the so-called peaceful solution of the Palestinian question and that of the Arab-Israeli conflict in general, whether United States or Soviet initiatives, have not produced, and never will produce, a solution to the Palestinian problem in conformity with the interests and legitimate rights of this martyred people. On the contrary, they have always aimed at defending Israeli interests, at ensuring for it so-called recognized and secure borders, at the expense of the Arab territories and, above all, of the vital cause of the Palestinian people - their homeland. They have simply complicated the situation in the Middle East and caused new quarrels and discords, in the interests of the super-Powers and Israel. The efforts of the Israeli Zionists, the United States imperialists and the Soviet social-imperialists have been aimed precisely at Arab unity, in order easily to continue their policy of divide and rule in the Middle East.

Under such conditions, to cherish hopes that the United States and the Soviet Union favour a real solution to the Palestinian question is but a sheer illusion, with grave consequences. In fact, the super-Powers favour not the prevalence of peace and tranquillity in the Middle East, but the existence of a tense situation close to the outbreak of war, a neither peace nor war situation, because only thus can they continue their expansionist and conspiratorial activity in this region, rich in oil and of great geo-strategic importance. This policy is the main cause of the worsening situation in the region, with grave consequences for peace and international security.*

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

(Mr. Pitarka, Albania)

The question of the Palestinian people continues to be an open wound. The Palestinian and other Arab peoples have not accepted, and will not accept, this situation. For some decades now, with great heroism, the Palestinian people have continued their just struggle, convinced that freedom and independence are not given but are won. Naturally, this is not an easy way; it requires numerous efforts and great sacrifices. But time has shown them that it is the only secure way to realize their legitimate aspirations. The fraternal Arab peoples and all freedom-loving and progressive peoples the world over, including the Albanian people, are on their side.

In the report presented to the ninth Congress of the Party of Labour of Albania, early this month, the leader of the Party and of the Albanian people, Comrade Ramiz Alia, said:

"The Albanian people and the Party of Labour of Albania have given, and will continue to give, consistent support to the just struggle of the martyred Palestinian people under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to regain their homeland, their territory and their own national State. Without a solution of the Palestinian problem there can be no real solution of the problems in the Middle East.

"Likewise, our people will support the other fraternal Arab peoples in driving the Israeli aggressors from the occupied territories and in defending their freedom and national sovereignty."

Mr. LI Luye (China) (interpretation from Chinese) It is several decades since the United Nations assumed responsibility for the question of Palestine. However, this question, a symbol of tragedy and misery in contemporary world

(Mr. Li Luye, China)

history, not only remains, but, as shown by numerous facts, may well linger on should the international community fail to redouble its concrete and effective efforts. The present state of affairs is extremely unfair to the Palestinian people and must be changed as soon as possible.

The Palestinian people and the Arab countries have persevered for years in their struggle to recover their occupied territories and to secure restoration of their national rights. In seeking a fair and reasonable settlement of the Palestine question, they have made many positive efforts and put forward a series of plans and proposals. In particular, the Arab peace plan adopted unanimously at the twelfth summit meeting of the Heads of Arab States provides a realistic basis for the solution of the Palestine question and gives full expression to the sincerity of the Arab countries and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

The international community, for its part, has also made prolonged efforts to promote an early settlement of the Palestine question, which is one of the most durable items under consideration by the United Nations and on which the Organization has so far adopted nearly 200 resolutions. These resolutions recognize that the issue of Palestine is the core of the Middle East question and that its just solution constitutes the basic component of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Middle East question as a whole. They also provide that any settlement of the Palestine question must include the following: termination of the occupation of all the Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967; restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people; and a guarantee of the enjoyment of the right to independence and existence by all the countries in the Middle East. Furthermore, these resolutions have set out ways and means to realize the above principles, including the holding of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

(Mr. Li Luye, China)

Regrettably, however, the justified demands by the Palestinian people and the Arab countries have not been fulfilled, as the reasonable suggestions and proposals aimed at bringing about a just settlement of the Palestine question have all been bluntly rejected by successive Israeli authorities. With the backing, shielding and connivance of one super-Power, the Israeli authorities have for a long time clung to their policies of aggression and expansion. Today, they have occupied the West Bank of the Jordan river, the Gaza Strip, the City of Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. Part of the Lebanese territories are in fact also under their occupation.

Under the slogan "a land without a people for a people without a land", the Israeli authorities have forced an alteration in the population composition in the occupied territories by expelling large groups of Palestinians from their homeland. Claiming that there are only Palestine refugees, they deny the existence of Palestine as a nation and refuse to recognize the national rights of the Palestinian people. Moreover, they have branded the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, a terrorist organization. The tyranny and ceaseless provocations of the Israeli authorities, in total disregard of the relevant United Nations resolutions and the norms governing international relations, have not only for so many years prevented the Palestine question from being resolved, but caused the long-standing turbulence in the Middle East, thus posing grave threats to world peace and security. Therefore, the international community must compel the Israeli authorities to abandon their policy of aggression and expansion if it wants to see the Palestine question resolved and peace realized in the Middle East.

As has been repeatedly affirmed by the international community, the heart of the Middle East question is the question of Palestine. There will be no peace and tranquillity in the Middle East so long as the question of Palestine is denied a

(Mr. Li Luye, China)

just and reasonable solution. Such a solution will hinge, in the final analysis, on the restoration of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination, to return to their homeland and to establish their own independent State. How can there be peace and tranquillity in the Middle East when millions of Palestinian people remain evicted from their homeland and wandering in other countries? What justice is there to speak of if Israel demands that others recognize its right to existence while trying hard to deprive the Palestinian people of theirs?

All the Israelis who have a sense of righteousness ought to realize that their rights should not be based on depriving other people of their national rights. It should also be emphasized that the PLO, which has established relations with more than 100 countries and has accredited representatives in more than 80 countries and a number of international organizations, is the legitimate representative of the national interests of the Palestinian people. No one can deny or ignore the fact that without the participation of the PLO as an equal party no attempt at settling the question of Palestine will be of any realistic value and thus succeed.

The Chinese Government and people have always stood firmly by the Arab countries and the Palestinian people, showing deep sympathy with and rendering resolute support to their just cause of recovering their lost territories and regaining their national rights, and have strongly condemned the Israeli authorities for their policies of aggression and expansion. Our position is steadfast: that Israel must withdraw from all the Arab territories it has occupied since the 1967 war, that the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people must be restored and that it must be recognized that all countries in the Middle East have an equal right to existence. We are of the view that the best way to settle the Middle East and the Palestinian questions is to hold peaceful talks,

(Mr. Li Luye, China)

participated in by all the parties concerned on an equal footing. We support all efforts aimed at fulfilling the above-mentioned principles and objectives and implementing all proposals and plans conducive to the establishment of peaceful talks, including the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations.

The United Nations should carry out in earnest its historical responsibility to the Palestinian people and take concrete and effective measures in urging all the parties concerned immediately to implement its relevant resolutions so as to expedite the settlement of the question of Palestine and the realization of peace in the Middle East. The Chinese Government is ready to contribute its share to the concerted efforts by the international community and all the parties concerned.

Mr. SALAH (Jordan) (interpretation from Arabic): The developments in the Palestinian question since it was considered by the General Assembly last year are a cause of extreme concern, which is shared by the international community as a whole. The situation in the West Bank, including the Holy City of Al Quds and the Gaza Strip has been deteriorating because of the illegal and inhuman policy of Israel. This means that the plight of the Palestinian people is worsening and becoming more urgent. In turn, this entails an increase in our responsibility to the Palestinian people.

Meanwhile, the international Organization continues to be unable to shoulder its responsibilities in this grave situation, which involves a very grave and real threat of a much wider conflagration the negative consequences of which may exceed the expectations of those that still pretend to be optimistic about the possibilities of the situation. This impotence of the international Organization stems from the persistence of those in certain circles in frustrating every effort

(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

of the United Nations to undertake the tasks stipulated by its Charter regarding the safeguarding of peace and realization of justice and security for all.

Moreover, the peaceful efforts which Jordan has been trying to keep alive in the hope of reaching the desired peaceful settlement have faltered in a most disappointing way. The gravity of the situation is compounded by the desire of some to ignore that gravity and proceed on the most terrifying premise that to discuss the Palestinian question and keep it under consideration will not lead to a solution and consequently it is better to ignore it.

These developments have been accompanied by an increase in acts of violence, terrorism and extremism, aimed largely at settling scores between certain factions whose disputes have nothing to do with the Palestinian cause.

(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

These are the elements of the present situation with regard to the Palestine problem. All these elements are directed at deciding the fate of the Palestinian problem in such a way as to perpetuate the Israeli occupation of the Arab territories. I need not reiterate the fact that this tendency, if continued, will mean more suffering, disruption and instability for generations to come.

If the increase in violence and terrorism is a source of concern for us, the attempt to brand the Palestine question, and with it the Arab and Islamic worlds, is unacceptable to us. The dimensions of this plot are now unfolding and are showing up the Powers and circles that manipulate the instruments of terrorism for purposes that have nothing to do with the legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people, "Islamic fundamentalism" or the struggle against "imperialism" and "world zionism", as claimed by the producers of this scenario. Those purposes have to do with package deals designed to influence the national decision-making centres of some and shape their attitudes towards regional questions that have nothing to do with the Palestinian tragedy. The only connection is that the name of the Palestinian tragedy was used by the producers as a title for their scenario, and the Palestinians and Arabs were thus made to bear the cost of those regrettable fabrications.

Certain circles whose sinister intentions are notorious have linked these acts, explicitly or implicitly, to the Palestine question whenever possible so that ultimately the Arab Palestinian people could be made to bear the responsibility for such acts.

The continued floundering of the efforts to achieve peace and a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the Palestine question and the Arab-Israeli conflict is a source of pain and puzzlement to us. Disquieted though we are by this renewed stalemate in the Palestine problem and the attendant extremism and violence, they

(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

provide an incentive for us to redouble our efforts and resolve to help bring peace at last to our brethren and kin in the occupied part of our territory.

Therefore, the developments in the West Bank, including Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, are our immediate concern in the present sensitive circumstances of the Palestine question. We still believe that the basic Israeli aim to judaize these territories has not changed. There is no practical justification for changing this conviction. Moreover, nothing can dispel our legitimate fears concerning the negative implications of such a situation remaining unchanged.

Israel's designs and integrated practical plans to get rid of the Palestinian people and expel them from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip at some stage have not changed either. There may be a slight change in the production of the scenario or the method of work, but it is only cosmetic and a mere public relations exercise in the effort to improve Israel's international image. This, as we know, is an all-out effort to which other international parties contribute.

Consequently, the policy of Israel towards the Palestinian people and the Arab States has not changed in principle. It continues to be the same old Israeli policy that manifests itself in such acts as the annexation of Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, the attack on the Iraqi nuclear reactor, the invasion of Lebanon, the seige of Beirut and keeping a part of the Arab State of Lebanon under Israeli control. It was also reflected in the attack against Tunisia and in the furtive, persistent drive to judaize the Arab territories and expel the Palestinians from them.

This Israeli policy is the crux of the Palestine question, just as the fate of the occupied Arab territories is the essence of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Israel has always tried to put the cart before the horse and thus confuse cause and effect. It has always claimed that its fate and its security are the core of the

(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

conflict with its Arab neighbours, thus denying the very existence of the Palestine question, which it regards as either a population that concerns the Arab States or a problem of terrorism that must be settled by force without concessions - and with international help, if possible.

However, the world is no longer deceived by such Israeli claims. Israel's daily practices in the occupied territories against Arab neighbouring States are irrefutable evidence of the real nature of its intentions, especially its resolve to liquidate the Palestine question.

In this respect, the United Nations has contributed to the exposure of Israel's expansionist designs, even though its contribution has been curtailed owing to the fact that a major Power has consistently blocked concrete action against Israel by the international Organization. Despite the curtailment of the United Nations role it is still to the credit of our international Organization that it tries. Consequently, we have to remain steadfast in our efforts. We have to reaffirm our position and continue to consolidate it until such time as the will of the majority, backed by right, emerges victorious over the extremism and intransigence of Israel and the support of the United States of America.

It has become evident that what is at stake is not the security of Israel but the very existence of the Arab Palestinian people and their independent national and cultural identity, which are threatened by Israel. Israel is the party that occupies the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Syrian Golan Heights. Its military machine is the force that wreaks havoc, threatens the security of Arab States, jeopardizes international peace and security and denies the Palestinians their legitimate rights.

(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

From 1949 on Israel refused to recognize the right of Palestinian refugees to return, so the Arab-Israeli conflict continued until it exploded in 1967, because the refugee problem was not settled and also because of Israel's greed and expansionist policy. The widening of the conflict was due to Israel's consistent refusal to accept a just solution to the problem of the Palestinian refugees, its unwillingness to withdraw from the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights and its refusal to implement Security Council resolution 242 (1967).

(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

In view of all this, it was not surprising that from the very beginning of the Arab-Israeli conflict the situation, so far as it concerned the Palestinian question, was one of stalemate and extremism. In such a situation, the Palestinian people continued to be the prime losers, because a stalemate leads to the perpetuation of an occupation, which provides Israel with a convenient cover for the continued Judaization of the Arab occupied territories, which is its main objective.

While Israel uses extremism as a pretext to reject dialogue and accommodation and to keep the Palestinian people cut off from their proper role and their rights, it also uses extremism, of which it is the main source, to mobilize Israeli society and persuade it to accept the burdens of occupation and the responsibilities entailed by expansionism, not to mention the recruitment of friends and supporters.

There has been a repeated oscillation from extremism to stalemate in the developments of the Palestine question, in a movement which resembles a vicious circle, where it is difficult to distinguish cause from effect. However, we in Jordan are aware that Israeli intransigence and rejection are the root cause of the extremism and violence in the area. We realize that the Arab Palestinian people wish only to live in peace, justice and moderation, and on a basis of dignity and equality.

Under occupation, our people have been able to retain an objective and balanced view of the situation. Their plight in the crucible of bitter experience, and their genuine national heritage, has endowed them with a sense of direction based on a desire for coexistence within an equation involving mutual recognition, mutual security, and above all the right of reciprocal survival.

Our people have resisted occupation under economic, social, psychological and security conditions of great difficulty. They have also resisted the drive to

(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

obliterate their very existence politically, materially and culturally. They have risen above the temptation to resort to extremism, violence and terrorism, and have clung to their native soil, their national identity, their cultural values and their historical rights without being sucked - as Israel would have liked - into the vortex of hatred and racial animosity, which could easily have happened, in view of the racist nature of Israeli occupation. When they reached out their hands to us across the river out of a feeling of national brotherhood, we extended our hands in return. We had to offer them succour in fulfilment of our national commitments, and in the light of our historical unity, in response to their genuine desire and their urgent appeal about their wishes, and in appreciation of their difficult circumstances and the consequences that might ensue if we did not stand by them. We therefore consider their aspirations, hopes and sorrows as our own.

The Palestinian people have indeed expressed the genuineness of their national identity through their adherence to Jordanian-Palestinian unity. This resulted from the unity of the national aspirations of the Jordanian and Palestinian peoples. It was also in response to a crucial and decisive stage in the history of the Palestinian problem, and the repeated attempts to eradicate the national identity of Palestine and to efface the Arab and world dimensions of the Palestinian tragedy. This distinctive Jordanian-Palestinian relationship bespoke a common history and common suffering in the present, and a common aspiration for unity in the future, which will constitute a landmark in the political endeavours of contemporary Arab history, just as it is the first safeguard of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians in Palestine.

We realize that it is the Palestinian people languishing under occupation who bear the brunt of Israel's policy and have to pay the price. It is the Palestinian people who have to contend against occupation and all that it entails in terms of

(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

unceasing mass detentions, torture and arbitrary imprisonment. It is the Palestinian people who bear the consequences of the policy of economic suffocation being pursued by Israel in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

In view of the many independent States and their peoples who are suffering the consequences of the deteriorating international economic situation, we can imagine the difficult situation of the Palestinians languishing under occupation. Israel controls the sources of their daily livelihood, and is exploiting their national resources, such as agricultural land, water and manpower, in the interests of its collapsing economy, quite apart from the arbitrary fines and astronomical taxes it imposes. As if that were not enough, the sinister settler policy of Israel, under which the occupation authorities have seized about half of the lands in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, continues with impunity.

Our constant position of principle with regard to our kinsmen afflicted by occupation is demonstrated by our refusal to accept any fait accompli and our rejection of both the condition of stalemate and the extremism which is being imposed on the Palestinian question. We are striving to translate the will of our people under occupation into political action and practical steps in adherence to the principals of our pan-Arab and national identity. That is our commitment of principle to the historical national Arab rights in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Jerusalem, and our commitment to the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people within the framework of the distinctive relationship between the Palestinian and Jordanian peoples.

We have spared no effort to ensure that our kinsmen remain in possession of their land, and to reinforce their steadfastness without any form of tutelage on our part, and without attempting to act as a substitute for them. We consider that we are equal partners with them in all circumstances. Clearly partners should not

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A/41/PV.81
74-75

(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

forsake each other in critical situations. The only benefit we stand to gain in this is the ability to secure the freedom of our kinsmen, reinforce their steadfastness and increase their chances of continued existence.

(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

If our position of principle on the Palestine question is misunderstood, it will not be the first time that that has happened. Nor will that be new to the Palestinian people. We do not expect anything else from our enemies and those who have sinister intentions towards the Palestinian question.

We have faced up to similar situations in the past, when we had nothing to show but our convictions and goodwill.

Today however, we can say that history has proved that our view was correct and that our approach from the beginning has been the right one.

Those have been the elements of our political approach and our belief in unity. It is part of the national history of the Jordanian people, who experience all the traumas under the occupation the Palestinians now suffer. That is our point of departure in connection with a question that is most sacred to us. Jordan faces the question squarely, earnestly, objectively and with a sense of commitment - just as the entire international community remains seized of it.

We in Jordan move on all levels without concessions on the points of principle, because we understand the requirements of a comprehensive, just, permanent peace. Such peace cannot be achieved until the legitimate demands of all parties are reconciled and their participation in the setting up of that peace is guaranteed.

On the international level, we have worked to make clear the conditions for a just peace and bring into being the practical machinery capable of achieving it. At one stage we did manage to reconcile different points of view. There was a preliminary response that could have been the beginning of practical steps towards a peace agreement that would have restored freedom to the Palestinian people and rid them of the burden of Israeli occupation. Under such a peace agreement,

(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

security and stability would have returned to the Middle East, and its peoples could have channelled their energies towards the reconstruction and development they so direly need.

Unfortunately, certain obstacles were put in our way and our efforts were obstructed. It has not been possible to fulfil the aims so far. But we shall continue to shoulder our responsibilities vis-à-vis the Palestinian people and their just cause. Those efforts will be in addition to what we have done in regard to the West Bank ever since it was occupied by Israel, in 1967. I have in mind the steps agreed upon at Arab summit conferences, especially the one in Baghdad in 1978. It is well known to everyone that our efforts are not viewed as a substitute for the joint endeavours to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement that would guarantee the liberation of our kinsmen, enable them to recover their usurped territory, and allow them to exercise their legitimate rights on their national soil, Palestine.

Hence, we have continued to call and work for the convening of an international conference to be attended by all the parties concerned in the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. We made a commitment at the Rabat Conference in 1974 to achieve peace on the basis of the complete withdrawal by Israel from all the Arab territories it has occupied since 1967, in return for recognition of, and security guarantees for, all the States and peoples of the region, without exception.

Hence, we call on those who are still hesitating about the holding of a peace conference to declare without delay their support for such a conference, in order to help the march towards peace and affirm that the fruits of peace are greater than the gains of conflict and rivalry.

The PRESIDENT: I wish to inform the Assembly that the representative of the Philippines has also requested to participate in the debate on this item. Since the list of speakers was closed at 5 p.m. today, I would ask the Assembly whether there is any objection to the inclusion of the name of the representative of the Philippines in the list of speakers. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Assembly agrees to the inclusion of that name.

It was so decided.

Mr. AL-SHAALI (United Arab Emirates) (interpretation from Arabic):

First, I wish to thank Ambassador Massamba Sarré, the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, as well as the other members of the Committee for the report they have submitted in document A/41/35. That report demonstrates unequivocally that Israel's policy towards the Palestinian people has not changed. In fact, Israel persists in its practices aimed at depriving the Palestinian people of their fundamental rights, thereby defying the will of the international community as expressed in many resolutions adopted by the General Assembly.

In November 1947 the General Assembly, by its resolution 181 (II), decided to partition Palestine and created what is known as the State of Israel on a part of Palestinian territory. That resolution was regarded as a kind of authorization by Zionism and its allies to create an entity foreign to the region - as a first step. That entity has since been constantly enlarged and expanded to serve the objectives for which it was created and which are well known to everyone.

The adoption of the resolution on the partition of Palestine created Palestinian refugees. Some yielded to attractive offers; others were chased out by the use of terror. The refugees in Palestine itself meet one single condition: they are Jews. Hence, all the Jews became citizens of Israel. But the refugees

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A/41/PV.81
79-80

(Mr. Al-Shaali, United Arab
Emirates)

who had to leave Palestine - Christians or Muslims - the true owners of the territory, were forced to leave their lands and their goods as a result of arbitrary racist practices that are the norm of Zionist thought today.

(Mr. Al-Shaali, United Arab Emirates)

Israel is the only State to have been created by a resolution of the General Assembly; it has no other legal or material basis for its existence than that resolution and the support of certain international forces, mainly Western forces. Similarly, Israel is the only State in the world to have been created on a racist and religious basis; that is, to be a State with only one religion, Judaism. We have nothing against Judaism, but we are against the use of religion to consecrate political racism and deprive a people of the exercise of its rights, in this case, the Palestinian people. Israel is also the only State whose material, human and political resources come from abroad, thanks to the support which it has continued to receive since its creation. Finally, Israel is the base that has been created by force in a setting into which it cannot fit, because it is the product of different, alien thinking.

It results from all the foregoing that we are faced with a unique situation when we speak of the question or the Palestinian problem. All these facts also serve to explain present political positions, for Israel is a State that has no frontiers. Its policy is a policy of fait accompli and it believes that its frontiers are those to which its military forces can reach. Therefore, its inhabitants are not satisfied with the lands they have usurped; they must always usurp more lands and expand. Similarly, its leaders cannot accept peace as a principle in the settlement of the problem because in that case Israel would lose the justification for its existence. Therefore at the present time Israel is like a criminal who feels the weight of his crime and can only rely on arms to continue to remain outside the law.

Israel was created outside the law. That is what emerges from what Lord Balfour wrote in 1919, as quoted by Christopher Sykes in Cross Roads to Israel. It was the following:

(Mr. Al-Shaali, United Arab Emirates)

"The great Powers have obligations with regard to Zionism and Zionism, right or wrong, has historical reasons which have their roots in the past, the present and the future. Those roots are much stronger than the aspirations of the 700,000 Arabs living in that territory."

That was what Balfour stated in 1919, when there were only 5,600 Jews in Palestine as compared with 700,000 Palestinians, and they possessed only 0.2 per cent of the territory, in accordance with the documents of the British Mandate.

I have quoted this because it summarizes the position of certain Western States and of Zionist thinking on a fundamental problem which is at the root of the Palestinian problem and therefore the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is the problem of the right to self-determination of the Palestinian Arab people.

That was the position of Western States 70 years ago and it is still their position, today, unfortunately. Of course, Balfour was not expressing the aspirations of the Jews, but the aspirations of the colonialists and that explains why the colonialist States have protected the Zionist movement and Israel in recent decades. The United Kingdom protected the Zionist movement when it had the Mandate over Palestine, until the creation of Israel and until 1956, the date of the tripartite act of aggression against the Suez Canal. Then it was France that protected Israel from 1956 to 1967, the date of the Israeli act of aggression against Egypt, Syria and Jordan. Then it was the United States of America that took on this task as the legitimate heir to the traditional post-colonial era.

I do not want to speak of the past, but the past explains the present and sheds light on the future. Today we are seeking a solution to this difficult problem, but we are not alone in doing so; many others before us have tried to do

(Mr. Al-Shaali, United Arab Emirates)

so since the creation of this problem, but their efforts have encountered the same obstacles. At each stage we run into a new Balfour, just as there is always a Maxine Rodinson, who summed up the colonialist mentality in Israel and the Arabs, when he said:

(spoke in English)

"Every territory situated outside that world (Europe) was considered empty - not of inhabitants, of course, but constituting a kind of cultural vacuum and, therefore, suitable for colonization."

That is the mentality we are dealing with.

(continued in Arabic)

The situation in the Middle East has deteriorated and it has become difficult for many to distinguish the various aspects, either through ignorance or because they do not wish to do so. Some speak of the crisis without dealing with the substance of that crisis. Others are misled by appearances and do not try to explain or understand the daily phenomenon. Others try to avoid speaking of the substance of the problem of the Middle East and link that problem to that of international terrorism. That link is only an attempt by certain States to escape responsibility for the creation and persistence of the crisis. They seek thereby to find subjective justification for pursuing their policies of support for Israeli practices and occupation. We have always hoped that those States would, even if only once, deal with the substance of the problem and engage in an objective consideration of the cause and obstacles that are impeding peace in the Middle East.

During the last session I explained in detail that Israel does not want or need peace. This has been reaffirmed by the events of the past year. All peace efforts have come up against Israeli rejection, which is based on the support it

(Al-Shaali, United Arab
Emirates)

receives from certain international forces, primarily the United States of America. We remain convinced that the United Nations, by its purposes and principles, constitutes the natural framework for the settlement of this problem, which was created within the United Nations. That is why we support resolution 38/58 C, which endorses the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations.

The holding of that Conference and its success are dependent upon a change of policy by certain world forces, cessation of the material and political support furnished to Israel by those Powers and the ending of the Israeli policy of fait accompli as a foundation for Israel's strategy in the region.

(Mr. Al-Shaali, United Arab Emirates)

Since its creation Israel has been a source of instability, the persistence of which must have negative repercussions on international peace and security and therefore on the interests of the parties it claims to defend.

Regardless of the present fait accompli - which might or might not be favourable to certain parties - it would be a mistake for anyone to be deceived by appearances. They are not in line with future prospects, and to ignore the reasons for the persistence of the crisis is not the best way to settle this problem, as has been proved in the last 40 years.

The Arabs have emerged once and for all from the era of colonialism, in spite of the acts of aggression, discriminatory practices and military threats to which they have been subjected.

The United Arab Emirates firmly believes that the Middle East needs peace more than ever before and that peace must be based on the following objective facts. A people - in this case the Palestinian people - must recover its rights: the right to return to its homeland, to self-determination and to create its own independent State. That people has stated its views on this question many times and considers the Palestine Liberation Organization to be its sole legitimate representative. When the international community is ready to analyse and deal with those facts it will at the same time be helping to map the road to peace in the Middle East.

Mr. PAL DAS (India): The question of Palestine and the tense situation in the Middle East have been debated continuously in the United Nations for several decades now. Numerous resolutions have been adopted by the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council on various aspects of the problem, but they all have remained unimplemented. We believe that a just solution of the Palestinian question is the crucial element in the search for an equitable and lasting political settlement in the Middle East.

(Mr. Pal Das, India)

The struggle of the people of Palestine since the turn of the century has been a saga of bravery and sacrifice, of sorrow and tragedy, of broken promises and unfulfilled hopes. We in India consider the struggle of the Palestinian people as part of the wider movement against colonial rule and oppression.

Almost 40 years ago the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution recommending the creation of two States in Palestine: a Jewish State and an Arab State. While Israel has come into existence, there is as yet no Palestine State. Since then the region has seen large-scale strife, tension, death and destruction. Israel is now in occupation of Arab lands larger than its own original territory. Millions of Palestine refugees have been thrown out of their homes and have had to live elsewhere. Those remaining in the occupied territories face policies of discrimination and terror, exploitation and humiliation. The continued expansion of settlements in the occupied territory in the West Bank has meant de facto incorporation of that territory into Israel. Israel's stranglehold over the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories tightens day by day.

We have too often been given the pretext that Israel's actions are undertaken on security grounds. It is obvious that security is equally vital and important to all States in the region. It is unacceptable that the security of one of them alone should be more fundamental than that of the others. Israel is seeking to bring about permanent geopolitical and demographic changes in the region at the expense of the Palestinian people. This must be prevented, because these policies contain in themselves the seeds of wider conflagration and conflict.

The international community has made efforts to find a comprehensive solution to the problem of the Middle East and the question of Palestine. These efforts received a fresh impetus with the holding of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine in Geneva in August-September 1983. The Geneva Declaration,

(Mr. Pal Das, India)

adopted at the end of the Conference, called for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East on the basis of the principles of the Charter and the relevant United Nations resolutions with the aim of achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, an essential element of which would be the establishment of an independent Palestinian State in Palestine. It was envisaged that the proposed peace conference would be convened under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all the parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), as well as the United States of America, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and other States concerned, on an equal footing.

In this context the Security Council was given the primary responsibility for creating appropriate institutional arrangements to guarantee and carry out the accords of the Conference. The importance of the time factor in achieving a just solution was stressed. It was further stressed that partial solutions were inadequate and delays in seeking a comprehensive solution would not eliminate tensions in the region. The recommendations of the Geneva Conference were overwhelmingly endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly.

It will be recalled that resolution 39/49 D requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Security Council, to continue his efforts with a view to convening the Peace Conference. We are grateful to the Secretary-General for having initiated the process of consultations. In our own response to the Secretary-General we conveyed our broad agreement with the plan of action proposed by him, at the same time suggesting that some flexibility be retained in the selection of participants in the Conference.

(Mr. Pal Das, India)

It was our view that the situation in the Middle East was such that urgent preparatory measures should be undertaken so that the Conference could be convened at the earliest possible time. While most of the States consulted indicated their agreement to the proposed peace Conference we deeply regret that some others have not found it possible to do so. The report of the Secretary-General (A/41/768) stated that there was still no consensus on the convening of the International Conference in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the General Assembly. At the same time, we note with satisfaction that the Secretary-General found that the idea of the International Peace Conference was gaining wider support and that a number of procedural proposals had been made in bilateral contacts involving parties in the region and others that are interested in a settlement of this long-standing conflict.

My delegation would like to acknowledge the important role played by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, under its Chairman, in finding a just solution to the question of Palestine. As a member, India has supported the Committee in its efforts to secure the rights of the Palestinian people and to promote their cause. Though the basic recommendations of the Committee remain unimplemented so far, its activities during past years have served to increase the support of the international community for the cause of Palestine.

The Palestine question has become a great challenge to the conscience of man. The passage of time will make the possibilities of the resolution of the Palestinian problem through peaceful negotiations more and more difficult. The Palestinian people, nevertheless, will continue their unfinished revolution. In that they have the support of the overwhelming majority of the international community. Their cause is a just one and history has shown that, arduous and difficult as the road might often seem, in the end justice will prevail.

Mr. MARINESCU (Romania) (interpretation from French): Because of the present particularly grave and complex international situation, the continuance of the state of direct military confrontation in the Middle East and the lack of concrete results regarding the comprehensive political settlement of the problems faced by the peoples of that region, the threat to regional and international peace and security persists and the peoples of the region continue to be exposed to suffering. The maintenance of the Israeli military occupation in the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories and the absence of a solution to the problems confronting the populations of the territories and the peoples of the region lead to an exacerbation of the Middle East conflict, with unforeseeable consequences for international peace and security. We believe - and this is confirmed further by history - that the existence of conflicts in various regions of the world leads to exacerbation of the world situation and an increase in the danger of the generalization of the conflict and its transformation into a general conflagration with extremely grave consequences.

Recent events in the Middle East as well as on a broader scale have shown that disputes and sources of conflict cannot be resolved by military means or by imposing positions of force; they can be settled only by means of negotiation. It has once again been demonstrated, if demonstration were necessary, that the complex problems of the Middle East can be solved only on the basis of a comprehensive settlement that takes into account the interests of all the parties and, first and foremost, the legitimate national interests of the Palestinian people, which is the key to the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region.

Romania shares the concern of the international community regarding the exacerbation of the situation in the Middle East, the failure to solve the problem of the Palestinian people and the lack of progress in the search for solutions that can lead to the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region. In its

(Mr. Marinescu, Romania)

efforts to promote a settlement of the situation in the Middle East Romania has consistently stressed the need for concrete action designed to lead to just solutions that take into account the interests of all the peoples of the region and of international peace and security. It is in that spirit that my country has striven and continues to strive for negotiations between the parties concerned towards a comprehensive solution and the achievement of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Romania and President Nicolae Ceausescu believe that the fundamental problem of the crisis in the Middle East is that of guaranteeing the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including the establishment of its independent State on its national territory. We continue to believe that the Palestinian people, like all other people, has the right to organize its life in accordance with its aspirations without any outside interference, and that until the Palestinian people achieve their rights the much needed peace in the Middle East will never be attained. The Palestinians must be enabled to decide for themselves, freely and independently, the way in which their legitimate aspirations should be fulfilled and the course of their independent development. It is the view of Romania and its President that, unless the fundamental objectives - namely, the self-determination of the Palestinian people and the establishment of their independent State - is achieved, the settlement of the Palestinian problem is not possible. The way in which that legitimate aspiration of the Palestinian people is fulfilled must be decided by the Palestinians themselves, together with other Arab States concerned.

Romania believes that irrespective of the manner in which those just aspirations are put into effect, the Palestinian people must be able to decide independently the course of their future development.

(Mr. Marinescu, Romania)

Within the context of the efforts made at the international level to find a just and lasting solution, a negotiated political settlement to the situation in the Middle East also falls the well-known proposal by the President of Romania, put forward in 1978, for the convening of an international peace conference in the region. That proposal, which enjoys increasing support and understanding, has, as members know, been endorsed by the General Assembly.

Through the Secretary-General, the opinion of the parties concerned and of Member States has been sought as to the practical possibilities and means of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. In the present circumstances, we believe that all the parties involved and concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, as the sole representative of the Palestinian people, Israel and the permanent members of the Security Council should participate in that Conference. Recourse could be had for the necessary preparatory work to the appropriate and acceptable methods that would make it possible to achieve the proposed objective, such as the establishment of a preparatory committee in the composition of which the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel would participate directly.

(Mr. Marinescu, Romania)

In our view, the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, primarily the settlement of the problem of the Palestinian people, requires the holding of a dialogue between the countries concerned in order to arrive at an appropriate agreement concerning its organization and objectives. Such preparatory contacts could be organized under the aegis of the Security Council or of representatives of the United Nations. It is the firm conviction of Romania and its Head of State that there can be no international conference unless the parties directly concerned discuss together the settlement of any problems which may be raised. None other than those directly concerned can find the best solutions to problems.

In view of the fact that problems can be resolved only by means of negotiation, it is quite natural that when the concept of the International Conference is accepted, account should be taken of the need to have a preliminary dialogue, in the context of the Conference, between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel, under the aegis of the United Nations.

Our delegation believes that the extension of contacts, sincere and open exchanges of views, the possibilities of overcoming preconceptions and the acceptance of dialogue are necessary alternatives to the perpetuation and aggravation of the conflict situation in the area, and will help to put an end to this serious situation in the Middle East. The fear of meetings and discussions must disappear. Anyone wishing to solve his problems must understand that he cannot ask someone else to do so for him. Each party must take direct responsibility for its own situation. Of course, international conferences and increased international support are required, but this cannot replace the responsibility of the States and organizations directly concerned regarding the solution of these problems.

(Mr. Marinescu, Romania)

In this connection, my country firmly believes that all existing problems between States must be resolved by political means alone, through negotiations and direct dialogue. The use of force, the military method, is not only immoral and illegal from the standpoint of international law, but also can further complicate and aggravate the problem, making it even more difficult to achieve a just and lasting settlement of conflicts.

In our view, we need resolute action that will lead to agreements to end the tension in the Middle East, a situation that has a negative influence in the area as well as on the development of international life.

It is the firm belief of Romania and of its Head of State that achievement of a just and lasting settlement in the Middle East requires the guarantee of the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, the establishment of an independent Palestinian State and the independence of all States in the region, including the countries directly concerned - the new Palestinian State and Israel.

Achievement of those objectives calls for intensified political and diplomatic activity designed to promote peace, détente, confidence and co-operation in the Middle East and in the world as a whole. Romania, for its part, is determined to work, in the future as well, in order to make its contribution towards these efforts to eliminate tension and achieve a political settlement of the situation in the Middle East, one that will lead to the realization of the legitimate inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, a settlement in which the Palestine Liberation Organization may play an active role as the true and effective representative of the Palestinian people.

Mr. OULD BOYE (Mauritania) (interpretation from Arabic): When we discuss what might be called the tragedy of the twentieth century, namely, the Palestinian problem, we confront a distressing problem, the fact that the Palestinian people

(Mr. Ould Boye, Mauritania)

has seen its land unjustly plundered by an aggression committed by a foreign Power. How did that happen? What were the reasons for it? Can history continue to allow this mistake to persist? What is the obligation of the international community to the Palestinian people? All these are important questions, but we do not need to remind members that the Palestinian people has suffered occupation of its homeland, expulsion and displacement for 25 years and has been waging an implacable struggle to regain the rights that it lost. I do not need to dwell on this at length because the tragedy of the Palestinian people is something that we have all witnessed. We have heard it denounced over and over again.

Mauritania believes that the Palestinian problem is the very core of the problem of the Middle East. We must take into consideration the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to self-determination and independence, under the auspices of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole legitimate representative of that people. That organization should be supported so that it can participate in all the negotiations on the future of the Palestinian people.

My country also believes that Israel must withdraw from all the occupied Arab territories and, first of all, from Al Quds. The United Nations has an obligation to the Palestinian people. That is why we hope that it will increase its efforts and initiatives to arrive at a just and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian problem, a solution which guarantees the withdrawal of Israel from Palestine and from all the occupied Arab territories, a solution that would enable the militant Palestinian people to exercise its legitimate right to return to its homeland, to exercise its right to self-determination and to establish its own independent State on Palestinian soil.

(Mr. Ould Boye, Mauritania)

Israel is clearly defying world public opinion and United Nations resolutions. Indeed, Israel continues to oppress the Palestinian people and to deprive it of its national rights and to reject all initiatives that seek to establish peace, including the General Assembly resolution which calls for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East.

(Mr. Ould Boye, Mauritania)

Our Organization should denounce the Israeli practices in the occupied Arab territories that are damaging to the Arab people and to the holy places there. It should also activate the process for convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and eliminate obstacles to its taking place. It should continue to reaffirm and defend the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to return, the right to self-determination and the right to establish their own independent State.

The people and Government of Mauritania will continue to give full support to the Palestinian peoples until they are able to exercise all their rights.

Mr. VALDERRAMA (Philippines): The question of Palestine has been on the Assembly's agenda for almost as long as the United Nations has existed. It has cost many lives, engendered mistrust and embittered peoples who would otherwise be working together for their own good and the good of all the peoples of the region.

The time has come, in this International Year of Peace, for the United Nations to resolve the question of Palestine, so that we may inaugurate an era of international co-operation, which the peoples of the Middle East and the world deserve to enjoy.

The basis for a peaceful and just resolution of the Palestinian question exists. It is to be found in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which have won almost universal support. The Philippines continues to support those resolutions and the inalienable right of the people of Palestine to exercise self-determination. At the same time, the Philippines supports the right to existence of all the States in the region, within secure and recognized borders. We also recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

(Mr. Valderrama, Philippines)

The Philippines believes that a lasting and just solution can be achieved only if all the parties concerned respect Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). The Philippines also supports the proposal to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under United Nations auspices, with the participation of all the parties concerned, together with the five permanent members of the Security Council, in order to resolve the Palestinian question once and for all, to the lasting mutual benefit of all and in the interests of all, including the people of Palestine.

The PRESIDENT: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 477 (V) of 1 November 1950, I now call on the Under-Secretary-General of the League of Arab States.

Mr. EL-FARRA (League of Arab States) (interpretation from Arabic): One might question the benefit of continuing to speak here about the Palestinian issue while the occupying Zionist forces impose new realities on a land that was usurped by military power and whose original legitimate inhabitants were forcibly expelled.

While the policy of maintaining the status quo and creating a situation of fait accompli have serious repercussions at the regional level, the policy of the spread of nuclear arms to entrench such situations and protect expansionist gains has more ominous consequences at the international level and from the humanitarian point of view. For more than two decades Israel has worked to strengthen its power and build itself as a nuclear Power in the region in order to achieve its ambitions. Since the 1950s we have warned the whole world from this rostrum that Israel was working to produce the atom bomb and have warned of the grave consequences that would follow. But the Western community remained silent in response to all the information it received, and today the world confronts a situation that cannot and must not be tolerated.

(Mr. El-Farra, League of Arab States)

The years are passing, and the Palestinian issue is once again being discussed by the General Assembly. The years are passing, and the hopes for a just end to the Arab-Israeli conflict become more and more remote, as a result of continuing repression, domination, expulsion and eviction.

Israel has never been satisfied with reinforcing its military power, but has resorted to cunning and trickery to win over world opinion. Recently it has succeeded in its attempts to distort the Arab image through a vicious publicity campaign that succeeded in creating feelings of doubt in the West about the Arabs. It is using that campaign to achieve its design to expel the Arabs and consolidate its domination of the occupied Arab lands. It is further trying to exploit the situation in order to shake the belief of the international community in the legitimacy of rights it had previously acknowledged as belonging to the people of Palestine, and to upset the friendly relations that exist between most European countries and the Arab States.

It is very difficult to speak logically and frankly of an issue which is dealt with in a distorted manner, when the party practising the deception has succeeded in profiting at the expense of justice and right, with every support from well-known international circles.

The secret of the existing situation in the Middle East lies in the acceptance by some part of world public opinion of the greatest deception of the twentieth century, for the Zionist leaders have largely succeeded in hiding the real face of Israel and covering it with the mask of a democratic, civilized peaceful State defending the values of the free world. Although the international community was not deceived by this ruse, the policies adopted by the United States, which has special responsibilities in Security Council, give Israel enough safeguards to

(Mr. El-Farra, League of Arab States)

not deceived by this ruse, the policies adopted by the United States, which has special responsibilities in Security Council, give Israel enough safeguards to continue its terrorist policy against the Palestinian-Arab inhabitants and to carry out military actions against other Arab countries, without fear of any deterrent penalty.

Israeli terrorist acts are varied and numerous, reaching into all the different aspects of Palestinian life. They affect the Palestinian people personally and collectively, in terms of their personality, freedoms, possessions and religious, social and cultural institutions.

(Mr. El-Farra, League of Arab States)

In the West Bank and the Gaza Strip the colonialist settlement wave has increased. Terrorism flows from such settlements so as to attack Arab citizens and to prevent them from tilling their land. They have desecrated homes, mosques, churches. At the same time Israeli occupation authorities have continued to destroy Palestinian refugee camps and to replace them by Zionist settlements at the expense of dispersing and replacing the Palestinian inhabitants. The result is that since 1967 there are 39 settlements in which 61,000 Jewish settlers live. The total area of the expropriated land exceeds more than half the land of the West Bank, while the annual average of the expelled inhabitants has reached more than 30,000. They were expelled from their homes through all sorts of terrorist acts, like blowing up houses and issuing departure permits without return or orders to join their deported families, and so on. The colonial settlement plans drawn up by the Jewish Agency, which covered the period until the year 2010, are of a terrorist nature and are based on the continuation of surrounding Palestinian cities and villages and the encouragement of the extremist Jews to settle in settlements built at the edges of the Arab population concentrations. The end aim of these plans is to evacuate the Arab inhabitants completely from the occupied lands.

Behind this Israeli policy, under cover of security reasons, lie racist motivations, brazenly declared and adopted by extremist religious groups which have acquired increasing political and popular appeal both in the Knesset and in Israeli society. It has also succeeded in militarizing the religious youth and in dominating the settlements in the occupied Arab land.

The growth of extremist religious groups, like the Gush Emunin Movement and its followers of the extremist Israeli Rabbi, Meir Kahane, and others, resulted in the emergence of the most extreme forms of the Zionist racism in the name of the Jewish religion and the religious purity of the State.

(Mr. El-Farra, League of Arab States)

These call for the expulsion of all the Arabs from Palestine and the return to the methods of killing and immigration. This makes it more difficult to imagine the limits of Israeli racial terrorism which the Arabs, both Christians and Muslims, suffer from daily, and which threatens directly the Dome of the Rock, and the Aqsa Mosques, the Ibrahimi Mosque and the Christian churches and Holy Places. It also threatens peace in the region as a result of the nature of the crimes perpetrated in the Arab lands and in Jerusalem, the Jerusalem which is indeed cherished by humanity at large.

Terrorist acts have continued to strike at journalists. What do the States which believe in the freedom of the press say when they learn that Akram Haniya, the journalist, faces a decree of expulsion from his city, Jerusalem, merely because he exposes Israeli arbitrary action? Such expulsion aims at afflicting and affecting the inhabitants of the occupied territories.

What do the jurists say about expulsion without due process by forces which claim to be democratic? What does this international Organization say about the shameless statements of certain Israeli politicians, that expulsion was indeed in accordance with the law, even if this law itself contradicts all the principles of the United Nations and the rights of people to live in their land, to move about and to return to their land? How can the United Nations not adopt an effective position towards most flagrant violations of most fundamental human freedoms?

Certain great countries have much to say about defence of the rights of Soviet Jews to emigrate from their country in the name of human rights. We heard from these countries nothing but silence on the right of the Palestinian to live and to return to his land, the land of his ancestors. The case of Akram Haniya and the daily Israeli violations of human rights and the Geneva Conventions, and the

(Mr. El-Farra, League of Arab States)

silence of Western Governments, all of this strikes us as a glaring example of the contradictions of Western human rights policies.

Today we heard the Israeli representative speak about terrorism and try to twist the facts. There is not enough time to go deeply into the question of terrorism and how it arrived in our holy land. Suffice it to mention certain terrorist crimes committed by the Zionists before the establishment of Israel.

We shall begin with a crime that is well known to all of us and this could be of particular interest to the representative of the United Kingdom. I have a book in front of me by Jacob Eliav entitled Irgun and Lehi. He is a terrorist and was a colleague of Itzak Shamir. In his memoirs he mentions the following:

"It appears to me that I have exhausted all the means of the normal guerrilla tactics and I have found new methods. I thought about polluting water sources in London by placing cholera germs. Chemical warfare could therefore strike a strong blow against Britain and help us liberate our country."

"We have sent our best youth to Paris for that purpose. Bertran, who was responsible for the water company in Paris, went on a holiday to London at the start so as to discover the water sources of London and how to pollute these sources with cholera germs."

Here is a terrorist who goes from Paris to London to pollute the waters of London with cholera, so as to kill hundreds of thousands of its inhabitants. He goes on to say:

"The Pasteur Institute in Paris, which dealt with cholera germs, had a number of Jewish scientists who were enthusiastic about such ideas and considered them an ideal method to achieve independence. We needed hundreds of bottles of cholera germs so that we could manage to spread such germs to

(Mr. El-Farra, League of Arab States)

each and every household in London. In any case, we called on the Jewish scientists at the Pasteur Institute to provide us with thousands of bottles of cholera germs to realize the requested aim. A number of our people were chosen to transport such bottles, and they were placed in luggage. The operation was halted after the adoption of the Partition resolution. This operation was on the verge of being implemented and was only halted by the Partition resolution."

It was indeed possible that all the inhabitants of London would have been stricken with cholera.

This is an aspect of terrorism which was totally ignored by the representative of Zionism this morning.

Other crimes were also committed before the establishment of Israel. What about the destruction of the King David Hotel, the assassination of Lord Moyne, the demolition of the Rex Cinema in Jerusalem, the Haifa Market explosions in 1937 and so forth?

(Mr. El-Farra, League of Arab States)

What about the massacre of 87 Arabs; explosions in the Haifa vegetable market when bombs were placed in the vegetable stalls. What about the assassination of the High Commissioner in 1944? The explosion in the Arab quarter in Jaffa? The assassination of Count Bernadotte? The mere mention of these acts testifies to the fact that terrorism began in the Holy Land and was perpetrated by international Zionist terrorists; such acts which could only come to Zionist minds, such as the cholera question I just mentioned.

I will conclude my statement by observing that it appears that the path will be long and arduous for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. Despite the virtually unanimous positive response to the idea of the Conference - Peres has already declared his acceptance without pre-condition - we have heard the representative of the Israeli authorities prevaricate on the subject. Yet is there any situation more dire than the Israeli occupation under the barrel of the gun? Peres and Shamir are two sides of the same coin. Are all the Israeli rulers sincere in accepting negotiations without conditions when at the same time they try to distort and change the facts completely in the occupied territories?

The representative of Israel is aware that Peres, who calls for unconditional talks, is the one who seeks to impose certain conditions on the Soviet Union, and one of his conditions is the exclusion of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian People. He said that the conference should have no terms of reference or competence in dealing with the crux and core of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Shamir himself has totally rejected the international conference and states that Israel will not withdraw from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and will continue its colonialist settlement activities. This is the position of Shamir in the Knesset. His Government will continue to

(Mr. El-Farra, League of Arab States)

expand Jewish settlements on all of Arab Israel and claim that there is no difference between the Israeli territories, that there is only one people, the Israeli people, one land, and that is Israel.

Who can say that all the statements we have heard concerning such a trend is that it is a mere distribution of roles and mere deceit to which we have become accustomed from Israeli rulers. The mere talk about an international peace conference under such circumstances is a huge illusion and the world should realize its devastating consequences.

The development of the situation in the Middle East is moving in a direction which makes it difficult to predict a future of peace in the area. The options for the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict have become very limited due to Israeli policy in the region. Israel also continues its occupation of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Syrian Golan Heights, and challenges United Nations resolutions which call for its immediate withdrawal from Lebanese territory.

The Palestinian people, since the Balfour Declaration, has sacrificed many lives, has continued to struggle, and today it faces more Israeli arbitrary practices. These, however, will reinforce its will and determination, under the leadership of its legitimate organization, to continue its struggle. As long as they are unable to exercise their right to self-determination and to re-establish their national independent State, as endorsed by the League of Arab States and the international family of nations, the Arab people, too, will remain loyal to the Palestinians until they realize their objectives.

The meeting rose at 6.55 p.m.