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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Letter dated 2 March 1971 from the Permanent Representative of Syria
to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to state the following concerning Israel's unabated measures to fully achieve its dominance of Jerusalem.

On 18 February 1971, you submitted a report to the Security Council and the General Assembly concerning the status of Jerusalem (A/8282, S/10124). Paragraph 4 of this report contains the text of two notes handed by you on 26 January 1971, to the Permanent Representative of Israel. The first of the two notes contains the following paragraph:

"In this connexion the Secretary-General would call the attention of the Permanent Representative to the Secretary-General's reporting responsibilities in regard to the status of Jerusalem under the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. These are Security Council resolutions 252 (1968) of 21 May 1968, 267 (1969) of 3 July 1969 and 271 (1969) of 15 September 1969, and General Assembly resolutions 2253 (ES-V) and 2254 (ES-V) of 4 and 14 July 1967. Consequently the Secretary-General must again request from the Israel authorities the transmission of a copy of the reported 'Master Plan' as well as detailed information on the Plan."

The second note stated:

"Aside from legal and other considerations, the works currently being carried out by Israel within United Nations premises may bring about

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irreparable physical change to these premises. Consequently, the Secretary-General, while reserving the right of the Organization to claim compensation for any ensuing loss or damage, requests that these works be suspended."

United Nations Members desirous of maintaining the rule of law were awaiting the replies of the Israeli authorities to your two notes. Instead, from 18 February up till today, numerous reports have been published in the press confirming Israel's implementation of its "Master Plan" in Jerusalem including work being carried out within United Nations premises.

To quote only one of such reports, Time magazine in its issue of 1 March, in an article entitled "Full Speed Ahead", stated:

"Israeli Housing Minister Ze'ev Sharef announced that the Government would construct 19,500 apartments for about 100,000 people in three outlying districts... The Government, Sharef said bluntly, is determined that Jerusalem remain 'an emphatically Jewish city. This is a plan with a Jewish goal. This is a Zionist exhibition'." (my italics)

The same article goes on to say:

"Mayor Kollek of Jerusalem ... insists that Jerusalem cannot wait until its status is finally settled before it constructs more housing. In an analogy for Americans, he argues: 'You don't stop urban development in Washington until you solve the black-white problem.'"

We are also informed in the same article that more than 4,000 acres of land - mostly Arab - were expropriated for housing but Arab owners have refused to accept payment because this would sanction Israel's right of eminent domain.

The Government of Israel, faithful to its policy of facing the world with a fait accompli, has chosen to completely disregard all three decisions of the Security Council and resolutions of the General Assembly concerning Jerusalem. It is sad that this Israeli cynicism should come after the last session of the General Assembly, which emphasized most solemnly the rule of law, one basic tenet of which is the non-acquisition of territories by force. Israel, driven by the arrogance of power and tyranny, has chosen defiantly to follow the law of the jungle.

The Government and people of Syria cannot keep silent on the fate of the Holy City of Jerusalem, which is being turned now by the Israeli fascists into a "Zionist exhibition".

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I have the honour to request that this letter be circulated as an official document of the Security Council and the General Assembly.

(Signed) George J. TOMEH
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
