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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 41/162 A of 4 December 1986. In that resolution, the Assembly dealt with various aspects of the situation in the Middle East and requested the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council periodically on the development of the situation and to submit to the Assembly at its forty-second session a comprehensive report covering the developments in the Middle East in all their aspects. It should be pointed out, however, that this report does not address the conflict between Iran and Iraq. It is based mainly on information available in United Nations documents, to which references are made whenever appropriate.

II. UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING ACTIVITIES

2. The activities of the United Nations peace-keeping operations in the area up to the end of October 1986 were dealt with in the report of the Secretary-General (A/41/768-S/18427, paras. 2-12). There continue to be three United Nations peace-keeping operations in the area: two peace-keeping forces, the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), and one observer mission, the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO).

(a) United Nations Disengagement Observer Force

3. UNDOF, with some 1,300 troops provided by Austria, Canada, Finland and Poland, is deployed between the Israeli and Syrian forces on the Golan Heights in accordance with the disengagement agreement concluded between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic in May 1974. A group of UNTSO observers is detailed to the Force and assists it in the performance of its tasks. The main functions of the Force are to supervise the cease-fire between the Israeli and Syrian forces and to man the area of separation established by the disengagement agreement. The mandate of UNDOF has been extended twice by the Security Council during the reporting period, the last time on 29 May 1987 for a further period of six months until 30 November 1987 (resolution 596 (1987)).

4. The activities of the Force since October 1986 are described in two reports of the Secretary-General to the Security Council, dated 12 November 1986 and 18 May 1987 (S/18453 and S/18868). As reported by the Secretary-General, the situation in the Israel-Syria sector has remained generally quiet; UNDOF has continued to perform its functions effectively with the co-operation of the parties, and there have been no serious incidents.

(b) United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

5. UNIFIL, which is deployed in southern Lebanon, was established by the Security Council on 19 March 1978, following the first Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Its terms of reference were - and still are - to confirm the withdrawal of the Israeli

forces as called for by the Security Council, to restore international peace and security and to assist the Government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area (resolution 425 (1978)).

6. The mandate of the Force has since been extended as necessary, the last time on 31 July 1987 for a further period of six months until 31 January 1988 (resolution 599 (1987)). UNIFIL has currently some 5,660 troops, provided by Fiji, Finland, France, Ghana, Ireland, Italy, Nepal, Norway and Sweden. A group of UNTSO observers assists the Force in the performance of its tasks.

7. The activities of UNIFIL and the situation in its area of operation in southern Lebanon from October 1986 until July 1987 are described in two reports of the Secretary-General to the Security Council, dated 12 January 1987 (S/18581 and Corr.1 and Add.1) and 24 July 1987 (S/18990). In addition, on 5 October 1987, the Secretary-General submitted to the Security Council a special report on two grave incidents that had resulted in the deaths of two members of the Nepalese contingent of UNIFIL (S/19175 and Corr.1).

(c) United Nations Truce Supervision Organization

8. As indicated in the preceding sections, observers of UNTSO have continued to assist UNDOF and UNIFIL in the performance of their tasks. In addition, UNTSO conducts two observation operations of its own, the Observer Group in Beirut and the Observer Group in Egypt.

9. The Observer Group in Beirut was set up by the Security Council in August 1982 following the occupation of West Beirut by Israeli troops. Since the withdrawal of the Israeli forces from the Beirut area in September 1983, the activities of the Group have been reduced and its total strength now stands at 18 observers.

10. The Observer Group in Egypt, which was established when the second United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF II) was withdrawn in July 1979, has a total strength of about 50 observers. It maintains, in addition to liaison offices at Cairo and Ismailia, six observation posts in the Sinai.

11. Since the forty-first session, a number of communications have been addressed to the President of the Security Council or to the Secretary-General on various aspects of the situation. Those communications, which have been circulated as official documents of the General Assembly and/or the Security Council, were from Ghana (S/18645), Israel (A/42/70-S/18560, A/42/94-S/18621) and Lebanon (A/42/69-S/18559, A/42/82-S/18584, A/42/116-S/18654, A/42/259-S/18831, A/42/268-S/18843, A/42/276-S/18848, A/42/281-S/18854, A/42/311-S/18886, A/42/356-S/18934, A/42/424-S/19001, A/42/470-S/19032, A/42/538-S/19111, A/42/643-S/19195, A/42/702-S/19243).

III. SITUATION IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

12. The action taken by the United Nations prior to October 1986 on the situation in the occupied territories was outlined in the report of the Secretary-General (A/41/768-S/18427, paras. 13-19).
13. The General Assembly, at its forty-first session, after considering the report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories (A/41/680), which is composed of Senegal, Sri Lanka and Yugoslavia, adopted resolutions 41/63 A to G of 3 December 1986. By these resolutions, the General Assembly called upon Israel to release all Arabs arbitrarily detained or imprisoned as a result of their struggle for self-determination and for the liberation of their territories, and demanded that the Government of Israel rescind its action against the detainees and imprisoned Palestinians and release them immediately (resolution 41/63 A); reaffirmed that the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, was applicable to the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem, and demanded that Israel acknowledge and comply with its provisions (resolution 41/63 B); demanded that the Government of Israel desist forthwith from taking any action that would result in changing the legal status, geographical nature or demographic composition of the occupied territories (resolution 41/63 C); demanded that Israel desist forthwith from certain policies and practices mentioned in the resolution and renewed the mandate of the Special Committee (resolution 41/63 D); demanded that the Government of Israel rescind the expulsion of the Mayor of Halhul and the Sharia Judge of Hebron and that of other Palestinian leaders expelled in 1985 and 1986, and that it facilitate their immediate return (resolution 41/63 E); determined that all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken or to be taken by Israel that purported to alter the character and legal status of the Syrian Golan Heights were null and void and constituted a violation of international law (resolution 41/63 F); condemned Israeli policies and practices against Palestinian students and faculties in educational institutions in the occupied Palestinian territories and demanded that Israel rescind all actions and measures taken against those institutions, ensure their freedom and refrain from hindering their effective operation (resolution 41/63 G).
14. On 8 December 1986, the Security Council adopted resolution 592 (1986) following some grave incidents in the occupied territories, during which a number of civilians were killed and wounded. The resolution reaffirmed that the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, was applicable to the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem; strongly deplored the opening of fire by the Israeli army resulting in the death and the wounding of defenceless students; called upon Israel to abide immediately and scrupulously by the above-mentioned Convention; further called upon Israel to release any person or persons detained as a result of events at Bir Zeit University in violation of the Convention; and also called on all concerned parties to exercise maximum restraint, to avoid violent acts and to contribute towards the establishment of peace. The report requested of the Secretary-General in that resolution has been distributed as document S/18532.

15. On 19 February 1987, the Commission on Human Rights adopted resolution 1987/1 by which it declared once more that Israel's decision of 14 December 1981 to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the occupied Syrian Golan Heights was null and void and without legal validity. On the same date, the Commission adopted resolution 1987/2 A and B, entitled "Question of the violation of human rights in the occupied Arab territories, including Palestine" and resolution 1987/4, entitled "Situation in occupied Palestine". Those resolutions, in which the Commission condemned Israeli policies and practices in the occupied territories, were brought to the attention of all Governments by a note verbale dated 2 July 1987.

16. The Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories held periodic meetings in pursuance of resolution 41/63 D. During the period between the meetings, the Special Committee was kept informed of developments taking place in the occupied territories; the information was gathered from a variety of sources, including oral testimony and written communications. The Special Committee reviewed this information and assessed the human rights situation in the occupied territories with a view to deciding whether any action was required. The report of the Special Committee under resolution 41/63 D has been circulated as document A/42/650.

17. During its forty-first session, the General Assembly also adopted resolution 41/181 of 8 December 1986 concerning assistance to the Palestinian people. The report requested of the Secretary-General in that resolution has been circulated as document A/42/289-E/1987/86 and Add.1 and 2. The Secretary-General has also submitted a report (A/42/183-E/1987/53) on the seminar on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories organized in pursuance of resolution 40/201.

18. Since the forty-first session, a number of communications have been addressed to the Secretary-General on various aspects of the situation in the occupied territories. Those communications, which have been circulated as official documents of the General Assembly and the Security Council, were sent by Denmark (A/42/569-S/19139), Israel (A/42/202-S/18771), Jordan (A/42/204-S/18776, A/42/230-S/18815, A/42/369-S/18951, A/42/385-S/18968, A/42/430-S/19009, A/42/439-S/19013, A/42/545-S/19118), the Syrian Arab Republic (A/42/159, A/42/173, A/42/208-S/18782) and the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (A/42/297-S/18874, A/42/318-S/18893, A/42/575-S/19150, A/42/655-S/19203). Communications were also received from the Palestine Liberation Organization and circulated at the request of Tunisia (A/42/218-S/18795, A/42/229-S/18812) and the Sudan (A/42/338-S/18914).

IV. PALESTINE REFUGEE PROBLEM

19. The Palestine refugee problem and the efforts of the United Nations to assist the refugees up to October 1986 were dealt with in the report of the Secretary-General (A/41/768-S/18427, paras. 20-23).

20. Following its consideration, at its forty-first session, of the report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) for the period 1 July 1985 to 30 June 1986, 1/ the General Assembly adopted 11 resolutions on this subject on 3 December 1986. In resolution 41/69 A, the Assembly noted with deep regret that repatriation or compensation of the refugees as provided for in paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III) had not been effected, that no substantial progress had been made in the programme endorsed by the Assembly in paragraph 2 of its resolution 513 (VI) for the reintegration of refugees either by repatriation or resettlement and that, therefore, the situation of the refugees continued to be a matter of serious concern; expressed its thanks to the Commissioner-General and to all the staff of UNRWA, recognizing that the Agency was doing all it could within the limits of available resources; reiterated its request that the headquarters of the Agency should be relocated to its former site within its area of operations as soon as practicable; noted with regret that the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine had been unable to find a means of achieving progress in the implementation of paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III), and requested the Commission to exert continued efforts towards the implementation of that paragraph and to report to the Assembly as appropriate, but not later than 1 September 1987; directed attention to the continuing seriousness of the financial position of the Agency as outlined in the report of the Commissioner-General; noted with concern that, despite the commendable and successful efforts of the Commissioner-General to collect additional contributions, this increased level of income to the Agency was still insufficient to cover current essential requirements; and called upon all Governments, as a matter of urgency, to make the most generous efforts possible to meet the anticipated needs of the Agency.

21. The other resolutions adopted by the General Assembly dealt with the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA (resolution 41/69 B), assistance to persons displaced as a result of the June 1967 and subsequent hostilities (resolution 41/69 C), offers by Member States of grants and scholarships for higher education, including vocational training, for Palestine refugees (resolution 41/69 D), Palestine refugees in the Gaza Strip (resolution 41/69 E), resumption of the ration distribution to Palestine refugees (resolution 41/69 F), population and refugees displaced since 1967 (resolution 41/69 G), revenues derived from Palestine refugee properties (resolution 41/69 H), protection of Palestine refugees (resolution 41/69 I), Palestine refugees in the West Bank (resolution 41/69 J) and the University of Jerusalem "Al-Quds" for Palestine refugees (resolution 41/69 K).

22. The situation of the Palestine refugees and the activities of UNRWA since the adoption of these resolutions are described in the annual report of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA for the period 1 July 1986 to 30 June 1987. 2/ The reports of the Secretary-General under resolutions 41/69 D, E, F, G, H, I, J and K have been circulated as documents A/42/445, A/42/507, A/42/446, A/42/480, A/42/505, A/42/481, A/42/482 and A/42/309, respectively. The report of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine under resolution 41/69 A and report of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA under resolution 41/69 B have been circulated as documents A/42/515 and A/42/633 respectively.

V. QUESTION OF PALESTINE

23. The action taken by the United Nations on the question of Palestine up to October 1986 was outlined in the report of the Secretary-General (A/41/768-S/18427, paras. 24-27).

24. At its forty-first session, on 2 December 1986, the General Assembly adopted four resolutions under the agenda item entitled "Question of Palestine". In resolution 41/43 A, the Assembly endorsed the recommendations of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People; requested the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine as well as the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights; 3/ and authorized the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations. In resolution 41/43 B, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to ensure that the Division for Palestinian Rights continued to discharge the tasks detailed in previous resolutions. In resolution 41/43 C, the Assembly requested the Department of Public Information, in co-operation with the Committee, to continue its special information programme on the question of Palestine for the biennium 1986-1987. In resolution 41/43 D, the Assembly reaffirmed its endorsement of the call for convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in conformity with the provisions of its resolution 38/58 C; endorsed the call for setting up a preparatory committee, within the framework of the Security Council, with the participation of its permanent members, to take the necessary action to convene the Conference; and requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Security Council, to continue his efforts with a view to convening the Conference.

25. The report requested of the Secretary-General in resolution 41/43 D concerning the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East was circulated as document A/42/277-S/18849. Since the publication of his report, the Secretary-General has continued and intensified his contacts with the parties to the conflict, and for this purpose he sent a mission to the area in June. The mission held talks with leaders in Israel, Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Lebanon and Egypt and with the Palestine Liberation Organization in Tunisia. In July, when at Geneva, the Secretary-General met personally with the President of Egypt and with the Foreign Minister of Israel. His discussions on this subject have continued during the current session of the General Assembly, when he has met, among others, with the President of Lebanon, the Crown Prince of Jordan, the Foreign Ministers of Egypt, Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic and with the Head of Delegation of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Consultations have also been pursued with the Security Council, in particular with its five permanent members. The discussions with the parties and the Council reconfirmed what had been reported by the Secretary-General in his report, namely, that sufficient agreement does not exist to permit the convening of the International Conference as called for in resolution 41/43 D. There was no apparent change in the positions of those of the parties and the members of the Security Council who do not regard the guidelines contained in resolution 38/58 C as an acceptable basis for the convening of a conference. These consultations also, however, confirmed that there is very wide, though not yet unanimous, support for the proposition that an international conference, under United Nations auspices, is the best way of negotiating a just

and lasting peace in the Middle East, on terms acceptable to all concerned, and that there is an urgent need for such a conference to be convened as soon as possible.

26. The report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People appears in document A/42/35. 4/

27. Since the forty-first session, a number of communications have been addressed to the Secretary-General on various aspects of the question of Palestine and have been circulated as official documents of the General Assembly and the Security Council. Those communications were sent by Japan (A/42/131-S/18699), Lebanon (A/42/115-S/18653), Yemen (A/42/152-S/18720) and Zimbabwe (A/42/79-S/18569). Communications were also sent by the Chairman or Acting Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (A/42/122-S/18682, A/42/135-S/18713, A/42/176-S/18751, A/42/278-S/18850, A/42/550-S/19122). In addition, communications were received from the Palestine Liberation Organization and circulated at the request of Kuwait (A/42/546-S/19120) and the United Arab Emirates (A/42/177-S/18752).

VI. SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

28. The action taken by the United Nations on the situation in the Middle East up to October 1986 was outlined in the report of the Secretary-General (A/41/768-S/18427).

29. At its forty-first session, on 4 December 1986, the General Assembly adopted three resolutions concerning the situation in the Middle East. In resolution 41/162 A, the Assembly reaffirmed its conviction that the question of Palestine was the core of the conflict in the Middle East and that no comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region would be achieved without the full exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable national rights and the withdrawal of Israel from all the Palestinian and other occupied Arab territories; reaffirmed that a just and comprehensive settlement of the situation in the Middle East could not be achieved without the participation on an equal footing of all the parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization; declared that peace in the Middle East was indivisible and must be based on a comprehensive, just and lasting solution under the auspices of the United Nations; considered the Arab Peace Plan adopted unanimously at the Twelfth Arab Summit Conference, held at Fez and reiterated by the Extraordinary Summit Conference, held at Casablanca, as an important contribution towards the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people through the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace; condemned Israel's continued occupation of the Palestinian and other Arab territories and demanded the immediate, unconditional and total withdrawal of Israel from all the territories occupied since 1967; rejected all agreements and arrangements that violated the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and contradicted the principles of a just and comprehensive solution to the Middle East problem; determined that Israel's decision to annex Jerusalem and to declare it as its "capital" as well as the measures to alter its physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure and status were null and void and demanded

that they be rescinded immediately; condemned Israel's aggression, policies and practices against the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories and outside these territories; strongly condemned Israel's annexationist policies and practices in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights; considered that the agreements on strategic co-operation between the United States of America and Israel of 30 November 1981 and the continued supply of modern arms and matériel to Israel, augmented by substantial economic aid, had encouraged Israel to pursue its aggressive and expansionist policies and practices, had had adverse effects on efforts for the establishment of peace in the Middle East and posed a threat to the security of the region; called upon all States to put an end to the flow to Israel of any military, economic, financial and technological aid, as well as of human resources, aimed at encouraging it to pursue its aggressive policies against the Arab countries and the Palestinian people; strongly condemned the collaboration between Israel and South Africa; reaffirmed its call for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, as specified in the Geneva Declaration on Palestine and endorsed by the General Assembly; and endorsed the call for setting up a preparatory committee to take the necessary action to convene the Conference. The other parts of resolution 41/162 deal with Israeli policies in the Syrian Golan Heights and the other occupied territories (resolution 41/162 B) and the transfer by some States of their diplomatic missions to Jerusalem (resolution 41/162 C).

30. The above resolutions have been brought to the attention of Member States, and a report of the Secretary-General including the relevant comments received from Member States has been circulated as document A/42/465 and Add.1.

31. Since the Secretary-General's last comprehensive report on this item was circulated on 29 October 1986 (A/41/768-S/18427), a number of communications have been addressed to him on various aspects of the situation in the Middle East, including, in particular, the convening of an international peace conference. In addition to those referred to in the preceding sections of this report (see paras. 11, 18 and 27), communications were received from the Permanent Representative of Belgium (A/42/151-S/18718) and the Chargé d'affaires of Denmark (A/42/401-S/18978) transmitting declarations adopted on 23 February and 13 July 1987 respectively by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the twelve States members of the European Community concerning the Middle East. By a letter dated 3 March 1987, the Permanent Representative of Kuwait transmitted to the Secretary-General the final communiqué and resolutions adopted by the Fifth Islamic Summit Conference, held at Kuwait from 26 to 29 January 1987 (A/42/178-S/18753). On 19 October 1987, the Permanent Representative of Kuwait also transmitted to the Secretary-General the text of the communiqué issued on that day by the meeting of the members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (A/42/666). Excerpts from the joint communiqué of the twentieth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, held at Singapore on 15 and 16 June 1987, were transmitted to the Secretary-General by the Permanent Representative of Thailand in a letter dated 13 August 1987 (A/42/477-S/19048). On 5 May 1987, the Permanent Representative of Zimbabwe transmitted to the Secretary-General the final document adopted at the Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Committee of Nine Non-Aligned Countries on Palestine, held at Harare on 14 and 15 April 1987 (A/42/284-S/18856). The text of the communiqué adopted by the Meeting of the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Movement

of Non-Aligned Countries, held in New York on 16 October 1987, was also transmitted to the Secretary-General by the Permanent Representative of Zimbabwe on 27 October 1987 (A/42/696-S/19237). In addition, communications were received from Israel (A/42/119-S/18660, A/42/134-S/18709, A/42/345-S/18921), Romania (A/42/342-S/18919) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (A/42/78-S/18567). A communication was also received from the Palestine Liberation Organization and circulated at the request of Tunisia (A/42/267-S/18841).

VII. OBSERVATIONS

32. Since I reported to the General Assembly last year, I have undertaken a special effort to promote the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East. I have done so in light of the widespread agreement on the part of the international community that the convening of such a conference, under United Nations auspices, offers the best chance of successfully negotiating a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israel conflict. Moreover, my decision to make a special effort this year was endorsed by leaders of all parties to the conflict. These two factors - international backing and the support of the parties - have provided an important basis for the several rounds of consultations that have been held thus far and will undoubtedly be crucial to future progress.

33. Nevertheless, the gaps between the parties remain wide. Some of those gaps reflect well-known differences about the procedural aspects of a conference. Although these procedural differences are difficult to resolve, I do not regard them as insurmountable, for they are differences between parties who accept the principle that an international conference is the only practical way of reaching a comprehensive settlement of the conflict. One may reasonably hope that, with the principle accepted, the gaps on procedure can be bridged through patient diplomacy. The major obstacle at present, however, is one of a different kind, namely, the inability of the Government of Israel as a whole to agree on the principle of an international conference under United Nations auspices. Until the Israeli Government accepts that such a conference is the best way to negotiate a peace settlement, the way forward will remain difficult.

34. Having said this, I am encouraged by the fact that the past year has seen favourable developments in the political environment, both in terms of the level and frequency of the contacts between the permanent members of the Security Council and between them and the parties. I am also encouraged by the fact that the idea of an international conference under United Nations auspices has been given high priority among the Arab parties to the conflict, and has been the subject of lively debate within Israel. These positive trends, combined with the growing international consensus in favour of the early convening of a conference, demand of us that we consolidate and build on the foundation that has so far been established.

35. Not to do so would cause increasing frustration and tension and would further aggravate a situation that is already volatile. Israel's occupation of Arab territory for over 20 years has been and continues to be deeply resented by the inhabitants. The occupation has given rise to much unrest and violence, with the result that many innocent lives have been lost. It was in the wake of such unrest

that the Security Council adopted resolution 592 (1986) on 8 December 1986. Since then there have been more violent incidents, and more lives have been lost. As I have stated repeatedly, the situation will remain unstable as long as a settlement is not reached. Meanwhile the start of a negotiating process, under United Nations auspices and acceptable to all, would create a spirit of dialogue and would be a significant step in the direction of peace and stability.

36. Forty years have passed since the General Assembly adopted its initial resolutions concerning the Arab-Israel conflict. Yet despite this long-standing United Nations involvement, and despite the numerous resolutions adopted since 1947 by both the Security Council and the General Assembly, the people of the area have been subjected to endless suffering and to five major wars. Tens of thousands of lives have been lost, and the conflict continues to be explosive, with ramifications not only for the region but for the entire international community. And at the core of this conflict lies the plight of the Palestinian people, most of whom now live under occupation or in exile.

37. We must seize the present opportunity to promote actively the search for a comprehensive settlement based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and taking fully into account the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including self-determination. This will require determination, wisdom and patience. For my part, I will maintain my special effort and continue to explore with the parties ways of advancing the process. In this endeavour I will continue to rely on the support of the Security Council, particularly that of the permanent members. As I stated in my report on the work of the Organization, the right road is the one that will lead to fruitful negotiations under United Nations auspices, and our central priority should be the achievement of a just and lasting peace, which will meet the aspirations of all the people in the region.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 13 (A/41/13 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1).

2/ Ibid., Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 13 (A/42/13 and Add.1).

3/ Report of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 29 August-7 September 1983 (United Nations publication, Sales No. F.83.I.21), chap. I, sect. B.

4/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/42/35).
