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Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Monday, 23 November 1987, at 10 a.m.

President:

Mr. FLORIN

(German Democratic Republic)

- Question of Palestine [38]

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

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

## AGENDA ITEM 38

## QUESTION OF PALESTINE

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE (A/42/35)
- (b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/42/277)
- (c) DRAFT RESOLUTIONS (A/42/L.33 to A/42/L.35)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Russian): I should like to propose that the list of speakers in the debate be closed today at 5 p.m. May I consider that the General Assembly agrees to that proposal?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Russian): I therefore request those representatives who wish to participate in the debate to inscribe their names as soon as possible.

I now call upon His Excellency Mr. Massamba Sarré of Senegal, in his capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

Mr. SARRE (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (interpretation from French): Every delegation that has participated in the general debate at this session of the General Assembly has taken the opportunity to raise the problem of Palestine and evoke the need to find a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to it. It is also worth noting that the passion and subjectivity to which we have become accustomed have given way to logic and objectivity. This new approach to the question should be a source of reassurance to us and should prompt us now to commit ourselves to working out in concrete deeds the common goal upon which we all - or almost all - agree, namely, the organization of an international peace conference

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on the Middle East. In his report on the situation in the Middle East, in document A/42/714, the Secretary-General invites us to do so, and states:

" [There is 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. ...

"... 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." (A/42/714, paras. 32, 34)

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On the basis of those considerations, considerations that are the result of a long process of various approaches, and on the basis of the purposes and principles set forth in our Charter, nothing should any longer prevent the achievement of our goal, namely, the establishment of peace in the Middle East through the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, in particular their right to self-determination and their right to independence. To those who might raise as a prior question the "right to existence" of all States in the region, I refer to paragraph 3 (f) of General Assembly resolution 38/58 C concerning the Geneva Declaration of 1983, which provides for:

"the right of all States in the region to existence within secure and internationally recognized boundaries, with justice and security for all the peoples ...".

Once again I have the honour, on behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to speak before this Assembly to report on the work carried out by the Committee in this past year in fulfilment of the mandate given it by the General Assembly and to give an assessment of the present situation with regard to our action with a view to bringing about a settlement of the question of Palestine.

The year 1987 marked the anniversary of several significant events in the history of the Palestinian people, while we are continuing to follow developments with regard to the situation in the region and to organize activities with a view to mobilizing international public opinion at all levels in support of the recommendations of the United Nations designed to bring about a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine.

The events include the celebration next week of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, which will coincide with the fortieth

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anniversary of the adoption of resolution 181 (II), by which the General Assembly decided upon the partition of Palestine into two States. As we all know, only one of those States, namely Israel, came into being, and the creation of the other, the Palestinian State, remains to be realized. Misunderstandings and lack of comprehension to which we have been witness for almost 40 years have thus far prevented the implementation of the second phase of that resolution.

Last June we observed the twentieth anniversary of the 1967 Middle East war, which ended in the occupation by Israel of the West Bank, including the eastern part of Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip and led to the denial to the Palestinian people of their right to self-determination. In a press release issued in the name of our Committee on that occasion, I launched an appeal to the international community to redouble its efforts to bring about a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, which is the primary cause of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East.

The celebration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People will provide an opportunity for Governments, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations to renew their commitment to intensify their efforts to attain the goal that our Organization has not yet achieved. It is clear that the injustice and suffering inflicted upon the Palestinian people have lasted far too long. The absence of tangible progress towards a negotiated settlement must not be considered as resignation or as the acceptance of a fait accompli.

It is in this spirit that the Committee has in the course of this year given absolute priority to the convening, at the earliest possible date, of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations, in conformity with the guiding principles laid down by the General Assembly in resolution 38/58 C of 13 December 1983. The Committee is of the firm

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conviction that this Conference is the most appropriate and timely way to bring about a just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. The Committee was convinced of this opinion by events that took place during the year and by the overwhelming consensus in favour of the Conference which emerged during various activities organized under the Committee's auspices.

As in preceding years, we organized three intergovernmental regional seminars: one in New Delhi, thanks to the kindness of the Indian Government; another in New York for the North American region; and a third, which is now being prepared and is to take place next month in Havana, at the kind invitation of the Government of Cuba, the Vice-Chairman of our Committee. The programme of conferences and meetings for non-governmental organizations has also continued; thus regional conferences were held in New Delhi and New York and an international meeting was held in Geneva, where we had the honour of hearing a responsible, positive address by President Arafat. Our Rapporteur, the representative of Malta, will provide more detailed information on these various activities when he presents the report of the Committee. I will simply say that our Committee is continuing to insist that the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East is to be the primary goal of international action.

Our Committee was encouraged by the interest shown by some influential organizations, political personalities and molders of public opinion, many of whom were from Israel and the Jewish community in North America, with regard to the settlement of the question of Palestine. The meetings of journalists organized by the Department of Public Information have continued to provide the information media with all the data necessary on the problem and with information on the recommendations of our Committee. I am happy to note that the movement is growing and that public opinion is mobilizing in favour of a negotiated settlement in

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keeping with our Committee's recommendations. Strengthened by this encouraging experience, the Committee intends to intensify its action in favour of the convening of the International Peace Conference and to make that the central element in its programme of work for the coming year. In this regard the Committee counts upon the full support of the Secretary-General and the devoted staff of the Division for Palestinian Rights and the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, who have already contributed so much to our activities.

The urgent need for concrete progress towards a peace process is rendered all the clearer by the growing tension and violence in the occupied territories and the destruction of Palestinian refugee camps, with the loss of many innocent lives. Several times during this past year, I have, in my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, brought these disturbing events to the attention of the General Assembly and the Security Council, requesting that all the parties concerned give further proof of the political will needed to accelerate the peace process advocated by the United Nations. The present situation of instability and steady worsening, which threatens to degenerate at any moment into a major confrontation, can only delay this process further.

After 40 years of war it is high time for us resolutely to commit ourselves to the peace of the brave. To be lasting this peace must not be exclusively a Palestinian one, an Arab one or an Israeli one. It has to be a peace that is both Israeli and Arab. Weapons have proved ineffectual in the settlement of all conflicts. History reminds us of this at every turn. Therefore the only objective way out for us is the full implementation of the peace plan adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 38/58 C of 13 December 1983.

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Taking comfort in the events of this year - the evident desire for a negotiated-peace process - the Committee once again calls upon all parties concerned or interested to rise above certain considerations and re-evaluate the situation in the well-understood interests of all States and peoples of the region. The peaceful settlement of this conflict by the achievement of justice and security for all on the basis of the exercise by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights is at the same time a duty and a responsibility of the United Nations, which will thereby be making a major contribution to the establishment of peace and stability throughout the region.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Russian): I now call upon the Rapporteur of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, His Excellency Mr. Alexander Borg Olivier of Malta, to introduce the Committee's report, A/42/35.

Mr. BORG OLIVIER (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People: In my capacity as Rapporteur, I have the honour to present to the General Assembly the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People on its activities and work in 1987.

During 1987, the Committee has made every endeavour to carry out its mandate on the basis of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly. It continued to keep the situation relating to the question of Palestine under review and to promote the implementation of the Assembly's recommendations for the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. It also continued to give priority to the early convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C. In chapter I of its



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report, the Committee gives a brief over-all assessment of the situation in the year under review and of the need for further efforts by all concerned.

Chapters II and III of the report describe the Committee's mandate and organization of work and are therefore procedural in content.

The action taken by the Committee during the year is described in chapter IV of the report. In section A.1 a review of the situation, the Committee expressed its increasing concern at the fact that the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories continued to deteriorate. The Committee expressed its concern at the continued Israeli policy of confiscating Arab land in the occupied territories and of expanding its settlements and at the imposition of its iron-fist policy. The Committee was also gravely concerned at the fact that Israel had continued to take administrative, economic and other measures further to entrench its control over the occupied territories, thereby impeding their autonomous development. At the same time, the Committee noted with appreciation that consensus had been reached on a programme of assistance to the Palestinian people by the United Nations system and that efforts would now turn to its implementation.

Section A.2 contains a summary of the letters addressed by the Chairman of the Committee to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council drawing their attention to events affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and urging appropriate action on the basis of United Nations resolutions. As this section reflects, on repeated occasions, the Chairman expressed grave concern at the persistence and intensification of attacks on Palestinian refugee camps in South Lebanon and at a number of serious incidents in the occupied territories, such as the shooting of Palestinian demonstrators by Israeli troops, arrests, deportations, the closing of schools and universities and the imposition of curfews in several areas.

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In addition, the Committee followed closely the activities of the Security Council on matters related to the Committee's mandate and participated in the Council's debates whenever necessary. The Security Council met at the request of members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries to consider the situation in the Israeli-occupied Palestinian and other territories, including Jerusalem. The Council, in resolution 592 (1986), reaffirmed the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, to the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem, and called upon Israel to abide immediately and scrupulously by it. The Council strongly deplored the death and wounding of defenceless students and called for the release of all persons detained.

As I have already mentioned, the Committee has continued to give the highest priority to the early convening of an international peace conference, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C. Its efforts in this respect are set forth in section A.3 of chapter IV, as well as in subsequent chapters. The Committee continued to follow closely and with appreciation the efforts of the Secretary-General in that regard.

The Committee participated, through its representatives, in 13 international conferences and meetings organized by United Nations organs, intergovernmental organizations, the Palestine National Council and others. Their resolutions and conclusions were followed by the Committee with keen interest. The Committee was greatly encouraged by the fact that there was growing sentiment and momentum in favour of its recommendations and, in particular, the recommendation for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East. The full list of all such meetings and the relevant final documents is provided in paragraphs 54 and 55 of the report.

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Section B.1 describes the activities organized by the Committee in its continuing efforts to expand its contacts with non-governmental organizations and to co-operate with them in their contribution towards heightening international awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and in creating a more favourable environment for the implementation of the Committee's recommendations. Two regional symposia for non-governmental organizations were held in Asia and North America, and an international meeting of non-governmental organizations was held at Geneva. Two preparatory meetings were also held. The meetings were attended by a much larger number of non-governmental organizations than in previous years, including several from the occupied territories and from Israel itself. In particular, the international non-governmental organizations meeting, at which the Committee had the pleasure of welcoming Chairman Arafat, was attended by a total of 270 non-governmental organizations, an unprecedented number. The meeting was also attended by several prominent political personalities, an indication of the growing international concern over this issue and of the growing support for the recommendations of the Committee.

The Committee was greatly encouraged by the fact that, in the various declarations adopted at those meetings, the non-governmental organizations reaffirmed the need for and urgency of convening an international peace conference on the Middle East, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 38/58 C and 41/43 D, and pledged further efforts by the international non-governmental-organization community to promote that objective. In this regard, the Committee was further encouraged by the commitment of the European non-governmental organizations to work towards increased support for the conference by their Governments, particularly by the States members of the European Economic Community.

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As set forth in detail in section B.2, seminars were held in the Asian and North American regions, with a Latin American seminar scheduled to take place in Cuba next month. Prominent political personalities, parliamentarians and policy-makers, as well as persons from the academic community and other experts, participating in those seminars. The Committee was pleased that, in their conclusions and recommendations, the participants in the regional seminars reaffirmed that the question of Palestine was the core of the Middle East conflict and that no comprehensive, just and durable peace could be achieved in the region without the realization by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations. The participants also reaffirmed the need for 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 C.

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Section B (3) of chapter IV contains information on the activities of the Secretariat Division for Palestinian Rights in the field of studies, research and the collection of information, and on the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, which have continued in support of the Committee's objective to mobilize the widest possible constituency.

Chapter V of the report deals with the activities of the Department of Public Information, which continued its information programme on the question of Palestine with a view to furthering the world-wide dissemination of accurate and comprehensive information on the question. The information programme included press and publication activities, radio-visual coverage, a fact-finding mission to the Middle East for journalists, and a series of national and regional journalists' encounters.

In its recommendations, contained in chapter VI, the Committee concludes that during the year under review international understanding of the question of Palestine and support for the attainment and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people have continued to grow. At the same time, the Committee expresses its most serious concern that tension and violence will continue to increase, with possible disastrous consequences for the region, unless progress is made towards a negotiated settlement of the question of Palestine. The Committee considers that a new phase has been reached which necessitates renewed and intensified collective efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting solution, and it calls for urgent positive action by the Security Council on the recommendations formulated by the Committee in its first report and on those adopted by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva in 1983. The Committee further reaffirms that the International Peace

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Conference on the Middle East, held in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 38/58 C and 41/42 D, would make a major contribution towards the realization of a solution, and it intends further to intensify its efforts towards that objective and make it the focal point of its work programme again in the coming year.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Russian): Our next speaker is the Observer of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the Head of the Political Department of the PLO, Mr. Farouk Kaddoumi. I now call on him in accordance with General Assembly resolution 3237 (XXIX), of 22 November 1974.

Mr. KADDOUMI (Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)) (interpretation from Arabic): It gives me pleasure, Sir, as I speak before the Assembly for the first time at this session, to express to you my heartfelt personal congratulations and those of the delegation of the Palestine Liberation Organization on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-second session. I am also pleased, through you, to commend your friendly country, the German Democratic Republic, which has always supported the just struggle of the Palestinian Arab people and of all other peoples struggling for freedom and independence. In addition, your country has made persistent efforts to achieve international détente and disarmament, and to maintain world peace. We are certain that your good judgement and long experience will contribute to the full success of the proceedings of this session.

I should like also to take this opportunity to convey our thanks and appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Humayun Rasheed Choudhury, for his sage and successful conduct of the work of the General Assembly at its forty-first session.

I am also delighted to commend the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, for his efforts and continued endeavours to promote peace, reduce tension

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and confirm the role of the United Nations in establishing and maintaining international peace and security.

The General Assembly is returning once again to its debate on the question of Palestine at a time that reminds us of many painful occasions. This year, 1987, marks the seventieth anniversary of the fateful Balfour Declaration of 1917; the fortieth anniversary of the 1947 General Assembly resolution pertaining to the partition of Palestine; the twentieth anniversary of the June 1967 aggression leading to the Israeli occupation of the entire territory of our homeland of Palestine; the fifth anniversary of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the Sabra and Shatila massacres of 1982. Those are difficult, painful and bitter memories; no people has ever suffered so many forced migrations, expulsions and attempts at liquidation.

The Palestinian people has, since the beginning of this century, been faced with a series of plots and acts of aggression aimed at the occupation of Palestine and the evacuation of the Palestinian people through the use of violence, terror and murder. From the beginning, the aim has been, as it still is, to negate the independent national existence of the Palestinian people, physically, morally, culturally, politically and even geographically.

In 1917, Lord Balfour, then Foreign Secretary of Great Britain, promised the establishment in Palestine of a Jewish national home, denying at the same time the fundamental rights of the people of Palestine. At that time the Palestinian people constituted 90 per cent of the population and owned 97 per cent of the land area of Palestine. From that time, British Mandate policy, based on material and moral support for illegal Jewish immigration on the one hand and on oppression of our people on the other, led to the creation of the tragedy that befell our people.

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In 1947 the General Assembly adopted its well-known resolution 181 (II), which called for the partitioning of our homeland, Palestine, and the creation there of two independent States, one Jewish and the other Arab. The State of Israel came into being, but the Palestinian State has not yet been established. That tragedy led, among other things, to the expulsion and dispersion at that time of over 1 million Palestinians. They continue to live in camps in neighbouring Arab States, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and other places. Israel has consistently rejected the implementation of General Assembly resolution 194 (III), which called for the return of the refugees to their homes. Since its adoption that resolution has been continuously reaffirmed by the United Nations.

Over the years from then until 1967 Israel continued its war against our Palestinian people, launching invasions and committing a series of bloody massacres at Qibya, Samou and Nakhalin. It took part in the tripartite aggression against Egypt in 1956. The sons of the Palestinian people who remained in their homeland have been subjected to all kinds of oppression and racial discrimination. They have been denied the right of movement, employment and education, and other basic human rights. To this day they suffer the nightmare of estrangement and alienation in the land of their fathers and forefathers.

This is the twentieth year since the Israeli occupation in 1967 of the remaining Palestinian territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. They have been 20 years of severe suffering, oppression and persecution for our people, who have been denied enjoyment of the most basic rights guaranteed by international instruments, notably the Geneva Conventions of 1949 pertaining to occupied territories. Israel has refused to accept that such instruments apply to the occupied Palestinian territories.



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Although so many years have passed, there is nothing new, apart from increased oppression and terror. The number of detainees in Israeli prisons remains constant at 5,000. The number of people who have been through Israeli prisons over these years stands at approximately 500,000, or more than 25 per cent of the population and more than 50 per cent of the adult population. The demolition of houses, administrative arrests, the expulsion of leaders and the deportation of individuals have never ceased. Universities, institutes and high schools continue to be closed down for prolonged periods, in some cases exceeding six months. Attacks on refugee camps, cities, villages and places of worship by occupation troops and armed settler gangs have become a part of daily life. Another part of the daily suffering of our people under occupation is the sight of troops opening fire on demonstrators, killing men, women and children. In addition, the confiscation of land, the establishment of settlements, the confiscation of water resources - which have been so drained as to threaten the environment and even life itself - continue.

There has also been a deliberate effort to undermine the economic infrastructure of the occupied territories and to link their economy with that of Israel. In brief, Israeli policies in the occupied territories are based on efforts to undermine the economic, political, social and even human structure of our people. The ultimate aim is further expulsions, through schemes for mass expulsion, known as "transfers", which have become the subject of common talk in Israel, notwithstanding all the repeated resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. The purpose of all this is to make Israeli annexation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip the accepted future situation.

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This year also marks the fifth anniversary of the Israeli invasion of our brother country, Lebanon, in 1982, and the siege of Beirut. The aim of that invasion was to crush our people, break its will and eliminate the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Lebanese forces of national struggle. In spite of Israel's failure to achieve those goals, the invasion resulted in tens of thousands of Palestinian and Lebanese victims and led to the total or partial destruction of scores of Lebanese cities and villages and Palestinian refugee camps. We cannot fail to recall Israel's direct responsibility for that modern-day tragedy, the massacres at Sabra and Shatila, which were perpetrated before the very eyes of Israeli troops, following the departure of the forces of the Palestine Liberation Organization from Beirut and in violation of agreements concluded in that regard. During and after the invasion, Israel met with heroic resistance and suffered such heavy losses that it was forced to withdraw partially from Lebanon.

However, it is well known that Israel continues to occupy territory in southern Lebanon and persists in interfering in the internal affairs of Lebanon and in wreaking havoc there. Israel also continues its attacks against our people and their refugee camps in Lebanon, shelling them from the sea and the air.

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We demand immediate Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese territory and an end to Israeli aggression. We demand the lifting of Israel's sea blockade and the termination of its acts of piracy. We demand also that our refugee camps in Beirut and southern Lebanon be saved and that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) be enabled to rehabilitate those camps and to provide assistance to their population.

Such is the continuing harsh suffering of our people; such is the disgusting image of Israel. Israel is an occupying Power, practising terrorism against the civilian population without discrimination. It is a State that has brought to itself and to the region war and destruction; sectarian, racial and religious disputes. Israel is a State that has allied itself with all the forces of evil in the world, for example South Africa, as well as with fallen and falling dictatorships.

Nevertheless our people has, in the face of it all, persevered in its struggle in the occupied territories, in the refugee camps and in the diaspora. Our people stood fast against all attempts at oppression, killing, dispersion and assimilation, putting up all forms of resistance, including armed struggle against the Israeli occupation, and adhering to its national Palestinian identity and its inalienable right to self-determination and to establish its State on its own land under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Those are legitimate rights recognized by the United Nations itself and exercised by all peoples which were subjected to oppression and foreign occupation. Our people has maintained that its national existence is an established fact and that its rights cannot be evaded or bypassed. Otherwise there shall be no peace or security in the entire region.

Notwithstanding the gloomy picture prevailing in Israel, which makes the chance for peace remote, it should be mentioned that besides the aspects of racism,

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fanaticism and extremism there are growing forces, though representing a small current, that have begun to join the peace camp because they recognize the gravity of the danger involved in Israel's policies and are aware that the establishment of peace depends on putting an end to occupation and achieving the rights of the Palestinian people. While the racist Government of Israel enacts legislation prohibiting those forces from exercising their legitimate right to seek peace, the Palestine Liberation Organization seeks to provide support and encouragement to those forces of peace inside Israel which courageously opposed the invasion of Lebanon, oppose Israel's occupation today, and support the right of the Palestinian people. In fact we look forward with hope to the day when those forces will become more widespread and more influential in Israeli society.

It is known that Israel would not have been able to pursue those policies had it not been for the material, political and moral support provided it by the Government of the United States of America. Perhaps one of the most outstanding obstacles to the achievement of peace in the Middle East, that is, aside from the Israeli position of intransigence itself, is this position of the United States which spontaneously, constantly and readily supports Israeli intransigence and rejection and which is hostile to the rights of the Palestinian people and to the Palestine Liberation Organization, despite successive calls to the United States of America to take a balanced position that would contribute in a positive way to the achievement of peace. The position of the United States has unfortunately reached the point of dependence on the Israeli position without paying due regard to the declared ideals and principles of the United States.

Lately, as an example of that hostile attitude the State Department of the United States decided to close down the Palestine Information Office in Washington, D.C. This is an act that is not only hostile to the Palestinian people and the

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Palestinian cause, but also to the right of United States citizens to know the various points of view.

Worse still, the legislative branch of the United States Government has for some time considered taking a new hostile step against the Palestinian people. The Senate recently passed an amendment to a bill against the Palestine Liberation Organization prohibiting it from operating in the United States. Other provisions in the bill are considered by numerous American parties to be in clear violation of the United States Constitution and the rights of citizens to free expression and the dissemination of information. It is sad indeed that the legislative body of a super-Power subjects logic and a balanced political position in its entirety to blind bias and political blackmail, making its Constitution and laws subject to the demands of Zionist pressure groups.

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The bill I referred to requires, among other things, the termination of the functioning of the Palestine Liberation Organization Observer Mission to the United Nations in New York. This is an act representing the epitome of arrogance for it is a violation of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, the Headquarters Agreement, the principles and norms of international law and other international treaties. It is even an act of aggression against the United Nations itself - against this historic achievement of the peoples of the world, an achievement which involved the sacrifice of millions of martyrs. In this regard, numerous groups in our Organization have rejected that act, particularly the Arab Group, the Islamic Group and the Non-Aligned Group. We express our sincere thanks to them and to all those who took a principled position on this matter. Those who have adopted this position constitute the overwhelming majority, just short of unanimity in our Organization. In this connection, we extend our thanks to you, Mr. President, for your position and your statements. We also thank the Secretary-General for his clear position in this regard. We hope that the international community and all our friends will continue to give us their support in the event of subsequent developments, and protect this international achievement, although we hope that the voice of reason will prevail and those actions will cease.

Peres stated before the General Assembly that there was no unanimity within the Government of Israel concerning the idea of an international peace conference on the Middle East. In fact, we cannot understand the meaning of "the idea of an international conference". It apparently means an acceptance of the idea of negotiations, from his point of view, within the framework of some international conference without specifying the political grounds or the terms of reference of the said conference. It means the demand that the Arabs offer everything without an indication of what Israel would offer. Although we note a difference between

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Peres and Shamir with regard to their policies and to the method of presentation and their position on some procedural issues related to the international conference, we discern no substantive difference in their political position, which is opposed to real peace. For the Government of Israel is unanimous in opposing the international conference as approved by the United Nations, and is unanimous in rejecting total withdrawal and in refusing to recognize the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, as well as their right to exercise those rights.

Briefly, we do not believe that, in order to attain the convocation of the peace conference, the proper attitude is to focus on procedural matters without taking into account substantive issues and the political core of the conference. We can see skills and manoeuvres in the presentation of tactical positions that relate to procedures rather than the substantive political content. This is, in fact, aimed at undermining the political essence of the conference and preventing the achievement of its objectives. It is our view that any real, positive position on the issue of the Middle East conflict and the international peace conference, as set forth in detail in United Nations resolutions, should be based on two fundamental points: first, the position on the occupation of territories, which requires total Israeli withdrawal from occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, including Jerusalem; and, secondly, the position on the rights of the people, requiring recognition of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people and of the Palestine Liberation Organization as its sole and legitimate representative. With regard to these two points, the Government of Israel, with both its wings, unanimously and totally rejects both points, whereas the United States Government refuses to recognize the national rights. On the other hand, we in the Palestine Liberation Organization were and continue to be ready to work seriously for the achievement of a just and lasting peace. We are prepared to reach a just settlement within the framework of an effective international

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conference, to be attended by all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing and with equal rights.

The five permanent members of the Security Council should participate in the conference and those States might serve as a preparatory committee for the international conference, which should be based on international legitimacy and on United Nations resolutions relevant to the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East.

Our Palestinian people have offered numerous initiatives to reach an acceptable solution leading to peace in the region. But our people never has and never will compromise its national identity or its right to establish its state on its own land, for that would simply mean an acceptance of suicide - and that is not a characteristic of peoples.



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The Arab States have on several occasions stressed their genuine desire to achieve peace in the region through solution of the question of Palestine, which constitutes the core of the conflict in the region. Perhaps one of the most prominent Arab peace initiatives was the Fez peace plan, adopted at the Arab summit meeting in 1982. It was reaffirmed at subsequent summit meetings, including the latest summit, held a few weeks ago in Amman, at which the Arabs declared their agreement to an international conference, based on international legitimacy and United Nations resolutions, as an appropriate means to achieve peace in the region. The Amman summit also reaffirmed the rejection of any solution that did not ensure total Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories and the exercise by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights.

We view with satisfaction the mounting international support for the convening of an international peace conference and for the rights of our people. In this connection we extend our thanks to the Islamic and African States, the countries members of the Non-Aligned Movement and the socialist States, particularly our friends in the Soviet Union and China, for their support. We also view with satisfaction the development of the position of the States of the European Economic Community in this regard. We continue to hope that the United States of America will reconsider its position in an even-handed manner, which would open up serious opportunities to achieve the desired peace. In this connection we cannot fail to commend the efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to bring about an international peace conference.

While expressing our confidence in Mr. Perez de Cuellar, we should indicate some reservations with regard to his recent report on the situation in the Middle East, for it has some shortcomings and omissions, which we believe to be the result

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of technical aspects of its preparation. For example, in paragraph 25 there is a reference to

"The report requested of the Secretary-General in resolution 41/43 D concerning the convening of an international peace conference ..."

(A/42/714, para. 25)

whereas, in fact, General Assembly resolution 41/43 D states that the General Assembly

"Requests the Secretary-General ... to continue his efforts with a view to convening the Conference" -

meaning the international peace conference on the Middle East - not "an international peace conference".

The Iraq-Iran war has now entered its eighth successive year, bringing destruction to two neighbouring Islamic countries members of the Non-Aligned Movement. It is dissipating their potential at all levels and causing the loss of hundreds of thousands of men and young people - something that has not been seen since the Second World War. We in the Palestine Liberation Organization have since the outbreak of that war insisted on the need for it to end. We have participated in numerous missions of good offices with that aim. We reaffirm this position and welcome the international unanimity with regard to the need for the immediate cessation of the war. That unanimity has been most prominently reflected in Security Council resolution 598 (1987). In this connection we affirm our support for that resolution and for its immediate implementation. That is the position that was emphasized at the Arab summit meeting in Amman. In addition, the need to take the necessary steps without delay is accentuated by the increasing danger that the conflict may spread and escalate in such a way as to threaten the entire Gulf region. In this regard we declare our solidarity with our brothers Iraq and Kuwait

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and other sister States of the region in their defence of their sovereignty and territorial integrity. We continue to hope that Iran will respond to international efforts aimed at ending the war and containing the bloodshed, in order to preserve vital resources and direct efforts towards the real enemies, which are benefiting from the war - imperialism, Zionism and Israel - and to protect the Gulf region as a whole from all external threats.

We appreciate the close interrelationship of the situation in the Middle East and the overall world situation. We therefore join the peoples of the world in looking forward to talks on nuclear-arms limitation between the Soviet Union and the United States of America. In this regard we would like to warn against the dangers of Israel's nuclear policy and the horrors, disasters and complications that this might bring for the region and for world peace. We also hope that the imminent summit meeting between the super-Powers will lead to a reduction in international tension and the establishment of world peace, and that it will contribute to the settlement of regional conflicts, above all the Arab-Israeli conflict.

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On the other hand, we realize that the issues of peace and freedom in the world are indivisible. Therefore, international efforts should be intensified to speed up the attainment of the independence of Namibia, under the leadership of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO). Support should be given to the struggle of the people of South Africa to eradicate the apartheid régime, which is a curse upon our age.

We stand firmly by the side of the African front-line States in their struggle against the policy of occupation, aggression and threats pursued by the racist régime of Pretoria, which is allied with Israel. We also support Cuba, Nicaragua and all the peoples of Central America and Latin America in general in the defence of their freedom and independence.

With regard to Cyprus, relevant United Nations resolutions should be implemented in such a way as to preserve that friendly country's sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and non-aligned status.

We also support efforts aimed at the reunification of Korea by peaceful means.

I cannot fail to express our thanks and appreciation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and its Chairman, our friend His Excellency Ambassador Massamba Sarré, for their work and fruitful efforts to carry out the tasks assigned them by the General Assembly. I take this opportunity to commend the excellent results of the meeting of non-governmental organizations held at Geneva last September. I would be remiss if I did not also thank the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories, and the various specialized agencies that provide assistance to our Palestinian people, particularly the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

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Peres stated in this Assembly that Israel is celebrating its fortieth anniversary this year, and that Jews, motivated by memories, suffering and the Holocaust, have returned to the homeland of their faith and the cradle of their sacred values: to Palestine. But Peres failed to say that these celebrations by Israel were taking place at the expense of the Palestinian people, itself the victim of a Holocaust no less hideous than that experienced by the Jews. He also failed to recall that sacred values know no discrimination and do not permit supporting one side by doing injustice to the other.

Peres issued a call to forget the past and seek a safe and secure life for our children and the children of Israel. Our answer is that the road to this is clear. Through its leadership, our people has agreed to participate in the International Conference to find a just and acceptable solution. That is the chance of a lifetime, and it may not yield results if Peres and others of his ilk continue to pursue their expansionist racist policy of rejecting the right of our people to life, a homeland, sovereignty, freedom and independence.

Mr. BADAWI (Egypt) (interpretation from Arabic): Once again, the General Assembly is considering the question of Palestine, as it has done for many years. Yet this year the debate is more significant than it has ever been in the past, because it is taking place 40 years after the international Organization first considered this subject, and more than 20 years after the adoption of Security Council resolution 242 (1967), which, in the opinion of the international community, is the appropriate basis for a just and satisfactory settlement, taking into account, as it must, the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people.

During all those years, the Middle East has been the scene of fierce wars and bloody military conflicts, which have taken a toll of tens of thousands of victims. There have been extended periods of antagonism and conflict,

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confrontation and intransigence, instability and the depletion of resources, aggression and displacement, and the occupation of the territories of others.

It has also been 10 years since Egypt made its historic peace initiative with a view to a final, just and lasting settlement of the Palestinian question and the Arab-Israeli conflict. That initiative was not the first one Egypt had made to put an end to the alarming situation from which the Middle East has suffered and continues to suffer. Before that historic initiative there had been other sincere Egyptian offers and proposals for reaching a just settlement before 1973. At the peak of the military conflict during the October 1973 war, Egypt restated its serious vision, and reiterated its readiness to participate in an international peace conference under United Nations auspices.

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Throughout these four decades, Egypt has striven to protect the rights of the Palestinian people. We have struggled fiercely and made great sacrifices; we have been dealt blows and have lost many of our proud sons, who have fallen as martyrs. None of this has reduced our determination; we remain committed to the Palestinians in spite of all the wounds inflicted upon us by foe, by friend and by brother.

Despite our frustration and disappointment after all these years without a just solution to restore the national rights of the Palestinian people and to settle the question of Palestine, which is at the core of the Middle East conflict, we have been following the great changes and major developments that have taken place in recent years. All of these have focused and strengthened the desire of the Arab and Palestinian parties for a peaceful settlement. To be sure, we also detect in the other party a desire, however muted, to move forward towards the establishment of peace. But the gap between the Arab and Israeli perceptions of a settlement remains.

Recently, the Arab world once again clarified its support for the proposed convening of an international peace conference under United Nations auspices, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole legitimate representative of the Arab Palestinian people. That was set out clearly in the historic final declaration of the Arab summit, which took place recently at Amman. That clear position reflects the readiness of the Arab and Palestinian peoples to negotiate with the Israeli side in talks within the framework of an international conference under United Nations auspices.

Since the General Assembly last considered the question of Palestine, in November 1986, the aim actively pursued by Egyptian diplomacy had been the convening of an international peace conference in 1987. Despite the fact that this hope has not been realized, there have been positive developments that are

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significant in terms of the effort to achieve a settlement of the question of Palestine. But, regrettably, there have also been negative developments that have harmed that effort.

Among the positive developments is that there has been wide support by the international community for the idea of convening an international conference, as made clear in the report of the Secretary-General, in which he summarizes the views of the members of the Security Council and parties concerned with regard to the convening of a conference. The Secretary-General noted that:

"in contrast with the experience of recent years, none of the Council members opposed in principle the idea of an international conference under United Nations auspices",

and that:

"in recent months there had been indications of greater flexibility in attitudes towards the negotiating process". (A/42/277, para. 3)

There is another positive element that has strengthened efforts by various parties concerned to gain a greater understanding of positions concerning a settlement. I refer to the first contacts between parties that have not directly communicated or consulted for many years, and the increased number of meetings between representatives of the Palestinians and certain influential, important elements of the Israeli party.

For Egypt's part, we have continued our efforts, through intensive contacts, towards the convening of an international conference. My country has had contacts with the Israeli side with a view to impressing upon it, on the one hand, the feasibility of the idea and, on the other, the need to try and start the phase of active negotiations to hasten the efforts to achieve a settlement.



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At the same time, negative developments have been a source of grave concern to us and to various other parties, which have made no attempt to conceal their alarm. Foremost among these is the deteriorating situation in the occupied territories in the West Bank and Gaza. In the past few weeks, those Palestinian territories have been the scene of great tension resulting from acts of oppression and killing carried out against the people of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. My country deplores those acts and demands that the occupying authorities deal with them and punish the perpetrators.

The constant process of the establishment of settlements in the Palestinian and other Arab territories has been accompanied by calls from certain quarters in Israel, which pursue policies that can only be called policies of blind extremism and a sick imagination. There is talk of the total expulsion of the Palestinians from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and of replacing the Arab population thereof with new immigrants from abroad.

While deploring those trends and condemning the policy of establishing settlements, we reiterate our view that all those practices and acts can only complicate the efforts at a settlement and increase Palestinian doubts and suspicions concerning the intentions of the other party, which, 40 years after the partition of Palestine, has gained full control over what was the Territory of Palestine under the Mandate. That control has not enabled that party to enjoy stability, peace or security for its children and other citizens.

In our view, therefore, the situation requires the emergence of new concepts in Israeli society, concepts based on the renunciation of outdated ideas of expansion at the expense of others, and on the recognition of the legitimate rights of others, mutual trust and a desire to live in peace and good-neighbourliness with the Palestinians, without threats of violence or attempts at domination.

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We are confident that many elements in the present situation indicate the real possibility of movement towards a settlement that would restore stability to Palestine and establish peace and security for all the peoples of the Middle East. The only way that this can be achieved is through the convening of the international conference and negotiations at that conference, without pre-conditions, between all the parties concerned. It is therefore essential that all peace-loving forces continue to encourage the Israeli side finally to agree to participate in that negotiating process. My country, for its part, is doing its utmost in that regard.

My country is also confident that at the appropriate time the Palestinian and Jordanian sides will be prepared to participate in the conference on the basis unanimously agreed upon by the international community as represented by the United Nations. The settlement must achieve Israel's withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied since 1967, it must guarantee the right of self-determination to the Palestinians through the participation of their legitimate representatives and it must ensure security for all the peoples and States of the Middle East, free from threats of violence or attempts at domination.

The suffering and instability have lasted for too many years. It is clearly time that we all made a serious and sincere effort to achieve a settlement that will guarantee the rights of all. Egypt will continue to shoulder its responsibilities, undeterred by difficulties and obstacles, until that noble and lofty objective, the restoration of peace and stability to the land of Palestine and to the Middle East as a whole, is achieved.

Mr. SALAH (Jordan) (interpretation from Arabic): Six days from now will be the fortieth anniversary of the partition of Palestine, in 1947, which was followed by the creation of the State of Israel. In a few months' time it will be

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20 years since Israel occupied the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights and Sinai. It is undoubtedly timely, useful and, indeed, imperative to recall certain essential facts about the question of Palestine. Such a reminder will undoubtedly help us to understand better the elements of the problem and why it is still so difficult to resolve it. I hasten to add that my intention is not to reopen wounds that have not yet healed or to complicate further an already thorny problem. I wish simply to recall past events to help us understand better the present and the prospects for the future.

At the origin of the Palestinian problem was the Zionist Movement's concept of a Jewish national homeland in Palestine and the subsequent role of Israel. The leaders of the Zionist Movement, both before and after the creation of Israel, defined the Movement and its role in a manner totally incompatible with the inalienable rights of the Arabs in Palestine, on the basis of their conviction that the presence of Jews in Palestine meant the negation of the presence of Arabs in the same region. That is why the Jewish Agency undertook to put into effect the programme for a Jewish national homeland in Palestine on the basis of interests totally incompatible with and in total denial of the presence and rights of the Palestinian Arab people in Palestine.

In terms of the development of the policy, this led to the widespread establishment of settlements, in which was practised flagrant racism. It was on that basis that from the outset the leaders of the Zionist Movement defined the nature of the Jewish national homeland and, subsequently, the role of Israel, in the light of the imperatives of colonial expansion and not on the basis of concessions and coexistence. From the first, the leaders of the Jewish Agency behaved as though Palestine were a land without people and the Palestinian people a people without a land. The first settlers were therefore surprised and shocked to

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find a Palestinian Arab people living on the land of its ancestors, a people that resisted the idea of a Jewish national homeland established thanks to the mass influx of settlers and their appropriation of land by any means available. Those settlers attempted to deny the legitimacy of the Palestinian Arab people and refused to deal with them constructively, fairly or objectively.

The Zionist Movement tried to alter the demographic structure of Palestine, just as it tried to alter the territory's Arab identity and legal status. The leaders of that Movement rejected all the proposals made by various parties, including Jordan, to grant civil and political rights to the Jewish settlers, in view of their number, while preserving the identity of Palestine and the national and political rights of the Palestinians. In these initiatives Jordan was concerned not to settle the Jewish question in Palestine at the expense of the legitimate inhabitants. However, the leaders of the World Zionist Movement rejected those proposals and categorically refused to alter their abusive, racist policies, obstinately persisting in their attempts to change the legal and demographic status of Palestine. In this way they tried to deny the Arabs the right to exist, to expel them and to turn them into second-class citizens, resorting to outside aid when necessary.

The Western world welcomed that trend for many reasons, in particular its interest in solving the Jewish problem, not to mention the fact that Western public opinion had been misled as to the true nature of the Zionist Movement, which had skilfully concealed its objectives and plans, and the way the Jews were treating the Arabs in Palestine. The purpose of this dissimulation was to find some moral justification for a plan that was essentially unjust and aggressive. That was why the Movement claimed that the Jews were bringing civilization, social justice and

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economic progress to that backward region of the world, while Jewish real estate companies proceeded to acquire land by fraud, blackmail and other illicit means, usurping Arab lands and making the territory the preserve of Jewish workers, because they prohibited the transfer or sale of those lands to anyone who was not Jewish.

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The laws enacted at that time, and still in effect, are a flagrant example of the true nature of the Zionist plan, which is based on exploitation and racism. The leaders of the Jewish movement set out to convince the rest of the world, especially the Western world, that the plan for a Jewish national homeland was viable and sure to succeed. In order to create some political justification, they depicted Arab resistance as the result of the work of a handful of local leaders who were resisting them for personal reasons and because of competition between local factions. Thus, the plan for the Judaization of Palestine was carried out by means of mass emigration and a campaign aimed at distorting the facts and usurping the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, while concealing the true objectives of the Zionists in Palestine. The campaign was also aimed at preventing the Palestinians from existing in Palestine and discrediting their resistance to the Zionist programme. This was the principle reason for the violence and bitterness and for the Arab rejection of the Zionist plan, which could not then be carried out because of the British Mandate.

After its establishment, Israel undertook to complete its plan to Judaize other Arab lands and disperse 750,000 Palestinians, who found refuge in neighbouring Arab States. Today, those refugees number 2 million, many of them under the programme of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). That campaign was carried out, according to the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, under a well-orchestrated Israeli plan largely based on a system of systematic terror - as evidenced, inter alia, by the massacres at Deir Yassin and Qibya, which the present Israeli Minister of Defense and former Prime Minister I. Rabin admitted had increased the bitterness of the Palestinian people. Between 1948 and 1967 the United Nations attempted to solve the problem of the Palestinian refugees on the basis of resolution 194 (III), of 1948, which established the right to return to

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their homes and to compensation, and the partition, resolution 181 (II), of 1947, on the future government of Palestine, a resolution since used by Israel to justify its presence by right in the area.

The Arabs responded favourably to those measures and, under the auspices of the reconciliation Committee, signed in 1949, the Lausanne Protocol, which provided for the implementation of the two General Assembly resolutions. The Arabs hoped that the United Nations and the major Powers would be able to impose a peaceful solution to the problem through the implementation of that Protocol, which Israel, to demonstrate its desire for peace, which is an essential condition of the admission of any State to membership of the Organization, signed the day before it was admitted to the United Nations. However, only a few days after its admission Israel denounced its commitment and resorted to all kinds of pretexts to reject resolutions 181 (II) and 194 (III), maintaining that, because the refugees had left the territory, the problem was exclusively an Arab problem.

Israel also declared that from an economic standpoint it did not have the infrastructure to take care of the refugees, not to mention the threat that these represented to its security. But Israel had meanwhile encouraged Jewish immigration in numbers far in excess of the numbers of Palestinian refugees. And, of course, the danger to Israel's security resulted from the inability of the refugees to return to their homes, thus turning them into the spearhead of resistance to Israel and causing the Arab States that welcomed them to resist with them. That danger is much greater than the danger that might have been posed by the refugees, who might originally have returned in the framework of a peaceful process and on the basis of mutual concessions. Israel demonstrated its intransigence over the return of the Palestinian refugees and their compensation.

Israel has refused to restore the lands it occupied by force outside the limits of the United Nations plan. Once Palestine was partitioned it was

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inevitable that the Palestinians' bitterness would increase, as would the fears of neighbouring Arab States. Here too, Israel has demonstrated its lack of concern for the sufferings of the Palestinians, that it does not recognize their rights and that it scorns United Nations resolutions, which, moreover, established those rights. Israel has shown that it intends to pursue its expansionist, aggressive policy and that it will not give up the usurped Arab lands.

All this has increased the bitterness of the Palestinian refugees and their desire to return to their homes and recover their rights. They have tried to do so by all the means available to them, first by limited resistance through political channels to keep alive their humanitarian cause. However, the Arab States refused to bow to the conditions laid down by Israel, which continued to deny the Palestinians their rights, even the right to return to their country. As for the major Powers, their interests dictated a position favourable to Israel, while the United Nations found it impossible to implement its resolutions on the subject.

In the field Israel tried to turn the situation to its own advantage by the use of force. Thus, in 1956 it participated in the Suez expedition, but an international consensus and the firm attitude of two great Powers prevented it from extending its domination and imposing its conditions on Egypt. None the less, that international consensus did not extend to the Palestinian problem and was soon swept away by the winds of the cold war which were blowing through the region at the time and which brought with them an international polarization that had negative repercussions on the Palestinian problem.

In the absence of a territorial option, political or military, and in the absence of an international consensus, the Palestinian problem remained deadlocked until the mid-1960s. The prospects of peace lessened, and Israel, the victor State, supported from outside, exploited its position and the circumstances it had itself created to its own benefit. However, the Palestinians reawakened interest.



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in their cause and in certain other regional problems, notably exploitation of the waters of the Jordan at Tabarilla. Israel returned to the charge by occupying the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Sinai and the Golan Heights in 1967.

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Once again Israel used force to deny the Palestinian refugees their rights rather than trying to understand their reasons for resorting to legitimate resistance. Israel chose to push the Palestinians and the Arabs towards the use of force instead of trying to meet them halfway. It implemented a preconceived plan to occupy other Arab lands and to control the Arab majority in those lands, driving out an ever growing number of Palestinian refugees, some of them for the second time. The Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967 placed some 1.25 million Arabs under Israeli control and caused the exile of vast numbers of refugees.

The Arabs strove unceasingly to find a peaceful solution through the full implementation of Security Council resolution 242 (1967), which had been accepted by both Egypt and Jordan. But Israel thwarted those efforts and chose to keep an iron grip on 1.5 million Arabs in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip rather than recognize the rights of the Arabs and the Palestinians. Israel has at its disposal an entire arsenal of economic, legal and administrative measures totally incompatible with human rights and the principles of international law relating to military occupation.

Before 1948 the Jewish Agency did not hesitate to use blackmail and fraud to carry out the Zionist plan; similarly Israel now uses measures of all kinds to facilitate the annexation of occupied Arab lands, drive thousands of Palestinians from their homes and deprive them of their political rights. Israel's policy has many dimensions, but its basic element is the desire to use expansion, aggression and force as the sole means of solving Israel's problems resulting from the annexation of Arab lands.

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Members know that there are official and popular organizations working secretly or openly to drive out Palestinians living in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and Syrian Arabs living on the Golan Heights. To carry out its policy of annexation Israel has armed itself with an array of measures covering all aspects of the life and activities of the Palestinians, as individuals and as a people with political rights. Israel interferes flagrantly with freedom of education and worship; it also restricts freedom of movement; it profanes places of worship; it inflicts collective punishment on Palestinians, torturing and imprisoning them, to the extent that there is not a single Palestinian who has not experienced one or other of those evils.

Even worse is Israel's colonialist policy, which takes various forms, including the establishment of new settlements and the expansion of existing ones through the massive influx of new settlers. Although this settlements policy has not fulfilled all Israel's objectives, it has had serious repercussions on peace. The settlers harass, terrorize, and threaten the lives of the Palestinians. These settlements are further proof - if such were needed - of Israel's expansionist and aggressive nature. By establishing its settlements, Israel is trying to create a new situation to make its withdrawal from the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights even more difficult.

Although the United Nations has denounced these Israeli activities and the annexation of the Arab City of Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan Heights as threats to regional peace, Israel continues its activities and persists in its annexationist measures, disregarding the will of the international community and the prospects of peace. Furthermore, this expansionist policy is accompanied by the plundering of the economy and natural resources of the area. What compounds the difficulty of the situation and increases the bitterness of the Palestinians, the Arabs in

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general and, indeed, the international community is that. Israel persists in denying this policy's devastating effects on the Palestinians, on the occupied territories and on the prospects of peace. Israel is trying, like the leaders of the Zionist Movement at the beginning of the century, to convince the world of the purity of its intentions and the importance of its plans. It is trying to mislead international public opinion, especially in the United States, where it enjoys a wide audience, as to the true nature of its presence in the occupied Arab lands and the objectives of its policy.

Israel publishes figures showing the sums spent on the settlements to make it seem that these vast sums are spent for the good of the Palestinians and on their needs. In fact they are used in a systematic attempt to plunder the natural resources of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, resources which are already meagre, especially the water resources. Israel has closed the West Bank and Gaza Strip markets to all non-Israeli products and has forbidden the products of those territories access to Israeli markets.

As in the past, Israel is trying to convince the world, particularly its allies, that this policy will lead to peace and bring the Arabs to the negotiating table by accepting the conditions dictated by the victorious occupier. Israel claims that Arab resistance is the resistance of a handful of extremists - and why not of those it calls terrorists? It claims also that it is not only possible but vitally necessary to resist that handful of extremists. Arab and Palestinian resistance was depicted in the same way by the Zionist Movement in the early days of the Zionist plan; it was claimed that it was the work of a handful of trouble-makers with specific personal interests. Today, Israel depicts the Arab resistance in the same way, claiming that it is marginal. In the view of the Zionists, the troublemakers of the past are the terrorists of the present.

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That is what Israel always claims, that in any case and no matter how much time has passed it is a matter only of a handful of trouble-makers. That is why it continues its policy of settlements in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The 1.5 million Arabs living in the occupied territories are politically unimportant to Israel; they can be considered third-class or fourth-class citizens, or terrorists who can be shot down - why not?

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Israel has once again shown that it is incapable of making the slightest concession in the settlement of the Palestinian problem on the basis of coexistence. What lesson can we draw from this brief overview of the facts? It is fitting that we should highlight the elements of Israeli policy at the heart of the Palestinian problem, which account for its persistence and our inability to find a solution. I shall mention but a few fundamental truths, since I am sure that members of the Assembly are fully aware of the background of the problem.

First, the lesson to be drawn from an analysis of the Israeli attitude towards the Palestinian problem is that the Israeli leaders still operate according to theses that guided their actions at the outset of their Zionist plan to occupy Palestine and eject its original inhabitants.

Secondly, the fundamental principle on which Israeli existence rests is denial rather than observance of human rights. At the very outset the Israelis denied the Palestinians their right to existence. Then they denied their fundamental human rights. Today they still refuse to admit their error and the wrong they have done the Palestinians. Having confiscated their land, Israel robbed the Palestinians of their rights; it still denies the sufferings it has imposed on the Palestinian people.

Thirdly, Israel does not consider Palestinians human beings who should enjoy human rights, or a people with political rights. Israel's main goal has always been to usurp the political rights of the Palestinians. But Palestinian resistance to that attitude has led Israel to violate their human rights. The Palestinians' refusal to accept the usurpation of their political rights led to Israel's depriving them of their human rights so as to force them to accept a fait accompli. The Arab States' refusal to accept Israel's expansionist policy and its

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acts of aggression against them forced Israel to continue its acts of aggression in an attempt to compel the Arabs to renounce their rights in Palestine and to abandon the Palestinians. That is why Israel today has made the Palestinians its target, for they represent a threat to Israeli security and are meeting force with force. As far as the Arab States are concerned, Israel continues to claim that their objective is to destroy it. It uses this pretext to use force against those States and to launch preventive strikes against them. That is why Israel exploits the Palestinians instead of trying to coexist with them.

Fourthly, to justify such a policy Israel and its leaders have declared that the State of Israel is permanently under seige and has no other choice but to follow that policy. However the Arabs and the whole world know full well that Israel's acts of aggression are calculated and part of a strategic plan for territorial expansion.

Fifthly, these expansionist ambitions have generated an Israeli foreign policy based on the use of force and violence; hence the surprise attack of the 1967 war, the attack against the Iraqi nuclear facility in 1981, the strike upon Tunisia in 1985, and the invasion of Lebanon three years before.

Israel has no desire for peace. One must not be tricked by Israel's declared peaceful intentions. Its military policy and all its peace proposals are nothing but a screen to conceal its desire for expansion and domination. Israel has thus far refused any proposals entailing concessions or coexistence. In the last analysis, if Israel genuinely seeks a peaceful settlement, it must adopt a peaceful policy. In the first place Israel's leaders must ponder its role in the region and the possibility of settling its problems, in particular its occupation of Arab lands and the forced exile of their inhabitants. It must redefine these problems

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and recognize the errors it has made with regard to the Palestinians. It must also recognize that it has not done the Palestinians justice and that Palestinian refugees are not an Arab or a Palestinian problem but an exclusively Israeli problem. Israel must treat the Palestinians as human beings who enjoy human rights and as a people with political rights. Denial of these rights is at the core of the Palestinian problem. Israel must recognize that the Palestinian problem cannot be solved outside Palestine and at the expense of the Arabs. It is a political problem which is at the very core of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Once Israel renounces the policy of denial it has been practising, a policy that generates bitterness among the Palestinians and Arabs and obliges them to resort to violence, it will then be possible to settle the Palestinian problem and other Israeli problems, political or moral.

Today Israel has an opportunity that may be regarded as historic. It must support the convening of an international conference on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), with the participation on an equal footing of all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization as the representative of the Palestinian people and, of course, the five permanent members of the Security Council. We hope that the States which have thus far refused to support the convening of such a conference will soon accept the idea and will no longer lend a receptive ear to Israeli allegations whose objective is to consolidate territorial gains and prolong the Arab-Israeli conflict, delaying a solution by all possible means.



Mr. BIERRING (Denmark): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 12 member States of the European Community.

The question of Palestine has been on the agenda of the General Assembly since its third session in 1948. For more than four decades it has been at the core of the continued tension in the Middle East. The prolongation of the Arab-Israeli conflict is a threat to peace and security in the region and makes it harder for peace efforts to succeed, so that attitudes tend to become more entrenched and new problems are added to existing ones.

Since the General Assembly last debated the question of Palestine, serious efforts have been made by a number of concerned parties to bring about a greater convergence of views on how to promote the negotiating process. The Twelve are profoundly concerned that in spite of these efforts there is still a lack of real progress towards a solution, and in particular that there has not been a breakthrough in the efforts to reach agreement on an international peace conference. The Twelve continue to place hope in the willingness of the parties directly involved to renew their attempts to reach a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement. It is they who have the chief responsibility for, and means of, doing so.

The views of the Twelve on the key elements which must make up a solution to this conflict are well known. Our position has been set forth in the Venice Declaration of 13 June 1980 and in subsequent statements on this issue. It is based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the following two fundamental principles: first, the right of all States in the area, including Israel, to exist within secure frontiers; and, secondly, the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, with all that that implies. Those principles must be respected by all the parties concerned, and thus by the

(Mr. Bierring, Denmark)

Palestinian people, and by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which will have to be associated with the negotiations. Thus the essence of a settlement must be a full just and lasting accommodation between Israel and the Palestinian people, so that they can live together in peace and security.

In his statement during the general debate the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark, speaking on behalf of the European Community and its 12 member States, called upon the parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict to open the doors to peace by recognizing each other's rights. The Twelve continue to believe that it is neither wise nor just for a party to seek to deny the other the rights it claims for itself. We have repeatedly stressed that Israel will obtain the security and recognition to which it has a right only by seeking a negotiated settlement and by satisfying the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people. The Twelve wish to see the Palestinian people in a position to pursue their demands by political means, and consider that the achievement of those demands should take account of the need to recognize and respect the right of all to existence and security.

The search for a solution should be carried out without recourse to violence, and in particular to terrorism. Such activities are clearly contrary to international law, and can only impede the achievement of a peaceful solution. What is required now is positive steps towards the creation of an atmosphere of mutual trust and understanding. The General Assembly can, by avoiding needlessly harsh and divisive language and by allowing a fruitful dialogue to take place, contribute directly to this end.

The solution of the problems between Israel and its neighbours should be based on the principles, enshrined in the Charter and in international law, of non-recourse to the use of force and of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force. This implies that Israel must put an end to the territorial

(Mr. Bierring, Denmark)

occupation it has maintained since the conflict of 1967 and give up its illegal policy of settlements. We reaffirm our position that any change in the status and demographic structure of the occupied territories is illegal under international law and constitutes a serious obstacle to peace efforts. Moreover, the Twelve reiterate that the Israeli policy concerning East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights is contrary to international law and therefore invalid.

The Twelve are deeply concerned over the excessively severe application of some Israeli policies in the area and the consequences for the human rights situation in the occupied territories. The provisions of Hague Convention IV of 1907 and of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 are applicable to all those territories until such time as the territorial occupation which Israel has maintained since 1967 is ended, within the framework of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement. The Twelve renew their call on Israel to fulfil its obligations as the occupying Power, pending its withdrawal, to lift restrictions on political and economic activities and, as we reiterated recently in our declaration of 14 September this year, to put an end to the illegal policy of settlements.

The Twelve have in numerous concrete ways expressed their commitment to contribute towards the achievement of a peaceful solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. An example of this is the aid which the European Community has provided to the occupied territories since 1981. In order to help improve the living conditions of the Palestinians, the Community and its member States will continue to provide economic assistance direct to the Palestinians, in order to allow the territories to enjoy the fruits of normal economic development. Furthermore, as a contribution towards their economic development, the European Community decided at the end of last year to give the occupied territories tariff-free access for all

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manufactured products exported to the Community, as well as preferential access for some agricultural products. We hope that the Palestinian population will be enabled to take full advantage of these arrangements, as agreed by the parties concerned.

Furthermore, the Community and its member States continue to play a major part in supporting the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). In addition to contributions from individual member States, the European Community has recently decided to increase its cash contribution to UNRWA's education programme to the level of 20 million European currency units (ECU), equivalent to \$24 million, for 1987, 1988 and 1989 respectively. This increase is a result of a new convention signed last July by the European Community and UNRWA, covering the period 1987-1989, under which the total value of Community aid, including food programmes, will reach 35 million ECU, equivalent to \$42 million, this year.

(Mr. Bierring, Denmark)

The measures I have just described, being essentially humanitarian in their purpose and economic in their nature, are not intended to be and can never be a substitute for determined efforts to seek a political solution to the question of Palestine, but they may nevertheless help the situation pending such a settlement. The Twelve firmly believe that a solution can be found only in accordance with the principles set out in the Venice Declaration and in subsequent statements by the Twelve, in a comprehensive, just and lasting peace achieved through peaceful negotiations. We recognize the urgency of this task. In our declarations of 23 February 1987 and of 13 July 1987 we stated that we are in favour of an international conference, held under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of interested parties, as well as any party able to make a direct and positive contribution to the restoration and maintenance of peace and to the region's economic and social development. Such a conference would provide a suitable framework for the necessary negotiations between the parties directly concerned and is at present the only formula to allow the peace process to move forward.

In his latest report to the General Assembly in accordance with resolution 41/43 D on an international conference, the Secretary-General noted the increased interest on the part of the international community in the idea of a conference that would be convened under United Nations auspices on a basis acceptable to all. He also noted, however, that views differed both on the form the conference should take and on how it should be prepared but that there appeared to be a general readiness to consider options for an acceptable negotiating formula. In this regard the Twelve have taken due note of the position of the Arab countries in favour of the proposal for an international conference, as it has been expressed at the outcome of the summit meeting at Amman.

(Mr. Bierring, Denmark)

The Twelve fully support the Secretary-General in his efforts to strengthen the resolve of those who seek a peaceful solution. The Twelve will, for their part, continue their close contacts with all the parties concerned and will do all in their power to encourage them to bring the positions sufficiently close together for an international conference to be held in order to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement in the Middle East.

Mr. LI Luye (China) (interpretation from Chinese): Today once again we are gathered at this international forum to discuss the Palestine question, which has remained unresolved for 40 long years. We cannot but point out with regret that, over the past year, there has not been visible progress in the efforts to solve the question, which has remained a burning issue confronting the international community.

The past 40 years have witnessed a series of lamentable events in the Middle East. The Israeli authorities, pursuing a policy of aggression and expansion, have occupied large tracts of Arab territory, driven the Palestinian people in their tens of thousands from their homeland and brought untold suffering to the people of other Arab countries, thus posing a threat to peace and stability in the Middle East and the world at large. In doing so, they have also done a disservice to the Israeli people. All this has caused great concern and anxiety to the people of the whole world. Therefore, to resolve the Palestine question and to restore the national rights of the Palestinian people at an early date have become the common aspiration and desire of the Arab people and other peace-loving peoples of the world.

It is clear to all that in order to achieve a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, it is imperative for the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable and legitimate national rights, in which lies the key to the solution of the Middle East question. The passing decades have not been able to shake

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the Palestinian determination to recover the lost territory and regain their national rights, a determination that is burning like a blaze in their hearts. To realize this sacred national goal, the Palestinian people, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), has waged a heroic struggle, wave upon wave, in which many of its worthy sons and daughters have bravely laid down their lives. In recent years, the Palestinian and other Arab peoples have made many reasonable proposals with a view to seeking a just and reasonable solution to the question of Palestine. The General Assembly and the Security Council have also adopted many resolutions on this question. However, supported by a super-Power, Israel has refused to implement the relevant United Nations resolutions, denied the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, stubbornly tried to exclude the PLO from the Middle East peace process and obstructed an efforts to convene an international conference on the Middle East. At the same time, the Israeli authorities have launched repeated attacks on the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, causing heavy losses in life and property. It is crystal-clear that the main obstacle to the settlement of the question of Palestine is the Israeli authorities' intransigence in their erroneous positions.

The Chinese Government and people resolutely support the just cause of the Palestinian and other Arab peoples and firmly oppose Israel's policy of aggression and expansion. It is our consistent position that Israel must withdraw from all the Arab territories it has occupied since 1967, including Arab Jerusalem, that the national rights of the Palestinian people must be restored and that all countries in the Middle East have the right to independence and existence. In our view, peaceful negotiation is the best way to a fair and reasonable solution of the Middle East question. We are in favour of the convocation of an international conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations with a view

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to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Middle East question. As the internationally recognized legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, the PLO is entitled to participate in the conference on an equal footing. We should like to urge the Israeli authorities to change their erroneous position, withdraw from all the occupied territories and recognize the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people. The Chinese Government will, as always, contribute its due share to bringing about a comprehensive and just solution to the Middle East-Palestine question, and wishes to call on the international community to make the greatest efforts to that end.



The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Russian): I call on the Observer of the League of Arab States, in accordance with the General Assembly resolution 477 (V), of 1 November 1950.

Mr. MAKSOUUD (League of Arab States): This year we are discussing and debating the question of Palestine amidst important developments and changes in the region and on the world scene.

This year marks the twentieth year of occupation of Palestinian and Arab territories and 40 years of usurpation of Palestinian national and human rights. In both instances Israel refuses to acknowledge that it "occupies" or to consider that it has "usurped". It is the Israeli refusal to admit that it occupies that has hampered the processes of achieving a lasting and comprehensive peace; and it is Israel's persistent denial that it has usurped Palestinian rights that has rendered peace in the Middle East elusive and almost unattainable.

These are not matters of subjective judgement but a consequence of objective historical conclusions.

Since June 1967 Israel has never admitted that it occupies the West Bank, Gaza and Jerusalem. In Jerusalem, which it unilaterally declared its "eternal capital", against the international will and in defiance of United Nations resolutions and international law, it has expanded the definition of Jerusalem to become inclusive of nearly 20 per cent of the occupied West Bank. Furthermore, Israel has always maintained that these occupied territories are either "liberated" - from whom? - or "administered" or "annexed". The proliferation of settlements and the beefing-up of existing ones are intended to create new facts on the ground in order to render the terms "withdrawal" and Palestinian "self-determination" meaningless and void of practical consequences. The pace of creeping annexation and the excessive use

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of military might to suppress and eliminate Palestinian rights are intended to pre-empt any international effort towards achieving a peaceful settlement in accordance with General Assembly resolutions and to render any credible peace option an exercise in sheer futility.

It is as if Israel had chosen the Palestinian people to remain disfranchised, dispossessed and discriminated against in perpetuity. In other words, the Palestinian people are to be considered and treated as human obstacles to Israel's grand design of a borderless Eretz Israel, whose objectives are to remain undisclosed until they are attained, and not subject to comment if prematurely revealed. This Zionist technique emanates from a self-righteous assertion that Israel is immune from accountability and is answerable to nobody.

This explains the systematic contempt with which Israel treats the deliberations and resolutions of the Assembly; this explains its repeated attempts at derailing all measures designed to achieve a genuine and durable peace; this explains Israel's introduction of political and intellectual terrorism every time its inhuman, illegal and immoral practices are questioned or subjected to rigorous scrutiny. Israel and its Zionist network of support have continued throughout to introduce irrelevant issues and blow them out of proportion, in order to buy more time to pursue its expansionist policies and to keep serious efforts off balance and out of focus. This has been the pattern and there are no indications that Israel is inclined to relent.

Let me recall to the Assembly how, for example, Israel maintains in the south of Lebanon an occupying force, directly and vicariously, in complete defiance of Security Council resolutions 425 (1978), 508 (1982) and 509 (1982). It does so after five years of its destructive invasion of Lebanon.

(Mr. Maksoud, League of Arab States)

Are we not all familiar with its expansive interpretation of Security Council resolution 242 (1967) whereby it has throughout the 20 years of occupation sought to obliterate the geographic and demographic character of these occupied territories? Did its so-called commitment to resolution 242 (1967) render it at any moment hesitant unilaterally to annex Jerusalem? Did its pious proclamation of allegiance to Security Council resolution 242 (1967) inhibit it from blatantly annexing the Syrian Golan Heights, or providing a protective military shield to its armed colonial settlements in the West Bank and Gaza? The answer is obvious: a clear and categoric "No". On the contrary, we have all seen how Israel's equivocal, ambiguous and double-edged statements were a deliberate cover-up for the ever bolder criminal practices of the infamous Shin Beth in the occupied territories.

What I am trying to establish is that Israel has no intention of engaging in any serious search for peace except on its own terms: a peace which ratifies its conquests, colonization and annexation. Why go into Israel's record, which is replete with policies, practices and declared or undeclared objectives, to prove the point? Suffice it to mention what Shamir said two days ago in Washington when rejecting outright an international conference sponsored by the United Nations. He said, "Such a conference will not serve the cause of peace", and then added, with characteristic arrogance, "With or without the Soviets, we believe in direct negotiations".

But these utterances remain within the realm of the expected. What articulated Israel's position best and justifies our analysis concerning its unaccountability, built-in intransigence and dogmatic posturing is Shamir's reaffirmed position, during his current visit to Washington, when he stated:

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"I don't think territorial compromise is a realistic solution for the conflict between us and the Arabs. We have to look at other ways to make peace. If we sit around the negotiating table, we will find such solutions."

I do not want to labour the point. The Assembly is fully aware of Israel's procrastination and contempt for its will and resolutions. But, for the benefit of those who still seek to persuade us that Israel can still be persuaded, but not pressured, I find the need to respond in order to clarify our position and, in addition, to rebutt untutored wishful-thinking.

When Mr. Shamir rules out "territorial compromise" as a "realistic solution", what does he expect us to negotiate? He expects the Arabs and the Palestinians to legitimize their disfranchisement, to ratify the abandonment of their inalienable rights, to nullify their national identity after, or simultaneously with, foregoing their territorial patrimony. True, he suggests that, that could be done around a negotiating table. Negotiation, in Mr. Shamir's view, is the ultimate act of surrender by Palestinians and the ultimate fulfilment of Zionist objectives. How else can we explain the latest audible and visible manifestation of Israel's pattern of behaviour and the consummate expression of Zionist dogma and methodology?

It will be argued by those "persuaders" - to be found mostly among American policy and opinion makers - that Shamir represents the hardline in the Israeli political spectrum and that the Arabs should remember that there is Peres on the other side, who advocates a sort of international conference and some form of "territorial compromise". Our response to those hard-pressed persuaders is that on the level of essence there is no distinction, and no distinction is discernible, albeit that in the projection the policies are sugar-coated and superficially marketable.

(Mr. Maksoud, League of Arab States)

While Shamir says that no territorial compromise is possible, Peres says that negotiations should not have a predetermined outcome, as he stated in the Assembly. What is the substantive distinction between the two positions? In our opinion, there is none. The net result of both policies is to transform the negotiating process into an opportunity to dictate. Both preclude the return of the occupied territories to Arab and Palestinian authority; both deny the Palestinians their right to self-determination; both adhere to a new concept of negotiation that is more a fishing expedition and a time killer and that ratifies conquest and confirms Israel's absolute hegemony.

(Mr. Maksoud, League of Arab States)

The Arab summit meeting, which met from 8 to 11 November 1987, affirmed the Arab States' assessment that the Palestinian question was the core issue in the Middle East conflict and that no peace in the region could be realized except by the liberation of all occupied territories, including Jerusalem, and the realization of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people. The Arab summit meeting supported an international conference sponsored by the United Nations with the participation of all parties concerned, including the PLO, the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing, in addition to the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. The Arab summit meeting realized that Israel was intent on preventing any peace process that might enable the United Nations resolutions pertaining to the Palestinian question to materialize. For this reason, the summit meeting decided to rectify the strategic imbalance that obtains as a result of the underwriting by the United States of Israel's strategic and military requirements. It is that commitment to rectify the strategic equation that will bring the Palestine question back into focus.

The Amman summit meeting has thus established a two-track policy to render the notion of negotiations a serious, consequential and constructive undertaking. In brief, a properly prepared, well-structured, clearly mandated United Nations-sponsored international conference, where all issues arising from the Arab-Israeli conflict would be discussed and negotiated simultaneously and on an ongoing basis with the clear objective of bringing about a just, comprehensive and durable peace. That is the outcome that the international community has spelled out in unambiguous terms, the desired outcome to achieve the peace - namely, total Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories and the right of the Palestinians to self-determination.

(Mr. Maksoud, League of Arab States)

In pursuit of that objective, the Palestinian people have to be represented by the PLO, which is not only their legal, legitimate representative, but also, as I have often described it, the framework of Palestinian peoplehood and a state of mind for the Palestinians in the absence of their state.

To shake Israel from being immersed in its obliviousness to the need to respond to international legitimacy or to comply with United Nations resolutions, to shake its lethargic sense of omnipotence, its belief that it can continue to suppress, without cost or penalty, all forms of national resistance, that it can humiliate without an inescapable rebellion, that it can practise a revolting racism without laying the ground for legitimate international outrage and the victims' revolution - for all these reasons, the urge to expedite an equation of strategic equilibrium has become a pivotal Arab priority.

This commitment to achieve a strategic balance was the principal reason for the recent absence of Egypt from the councils of the League of Arab States. In the Amman summit meeting, there was an acknowledgement of the popular situation in Egypt, where many operative parts of the Camp David accords were frozen - if not rendered inoperative. This is why, in addition to the potential role that Egypt can play in the overall aspects of our national security, freedom to restore full diplomatic relations was deemed a prerogative of sovereignty for many Arab States.

Hence, the Arab League summit meeting responded to the popular climate inside Egypt, to the potential role Egypt will have in our overall national security concerns, and yet signalled a favourable disposition to enable Egypt to resume its full functions and exercise its total leverage in the overall Arab struggle to restore the national rights of the Palestinian people. Pending this expected development, the restored diplomatic relations between many Arab States and Egypt

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is bound to render Egypt, as it has always been, sensitive to the depth of our concerns and to our well-proved conclusion that the Camp David accords were a tragic misreading of our adversary's intentions, motives and objectives. The Camp David accords were, moreover, a pathetic reliance on a unilateral United States role in crisis management in the Middle East and an inflated expectation of United States ability to be objective or even-handed, let alone able to achieve an independent judgment or policy when an issue affecting Israel is concerned.

The most recent example of what can only be called loss of independent will in the United States when it pertains to Israel is the manner in which the United States Department of State dealt with the proposed Congressional legislation to close the Palestine Liberation Organization Information Office in Washington, D.C. and the wheeler-dealing, which is taking place now between the two branches of the United States Government concerning the PLO Observer Mission to the United Nations.

It is mind-boggling that the United States Administration and Congress, after experiencing the trauma of Irangate and the Israel initiative, role and persistent pursuit of the corrupting functions of its intelligence operatives in this ordeal, should continue to tailor its Middle East policies to suit Israel's objectives.

It is equally bewildering to find the United States Administration and Congress, after the revelations of the Pollard spy case, eager to adopt without question or hesitation the agenda of Israel and its principal lobby, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC).

It is beyond comprehension when the United States accepts the Israeli scheme of tapping a reservoir of Jews in the Soviet Union to populate Israel's illegal settlements in the occupied territories, while simultaneously denying Palestinian refugees their right to return and the Palestinians their right to self-determination.



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Moreover, the forthcoming summit meeting between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev, an event of major concern in the quest for mankind's survival, was almost derailed by the plans to inject the issue of Jewish immigration to Israel as a prior condition and a litmus test for a productive summit. By the same token, the habitual disconcern for the plight of the Palestinians in the Diaspora, in refugee camps and under occupation is viewed at best as a humanitarian issue or an issue to be dealt with in the context of what Secretary of State Schultz called "improving the quality of life". It is extraordinary that facilities for Soviet Jews to immigrate to Israel should preoccupy the United States Congress and Administration, as pillars of United States policy on the Palestine question, while more than 3 million Palestinians, rooted for centuries in Palestine, should have their national human and legal rights doomed to permanent dispersal, disfranchisement and dispossession. Have narrow political obsessions numbed the moral judgment of those who almost mechanically toe the Israeli-AIPAC line? Has the big Power forgone the ambition of being the great Power that its values, principles and traditions entitle it to be?

Has the allure of perceived instant gains from those United States Congressmen and Senators so blinded their political insight that Israel and its lobby can paralyse United States policy on the Palestinian question every time the United States comes close to the brink of an objective judgment or a fair policy?

Does not the United States-Israel twinship in this General Assembly look odd to the millions upon millions of Americans who, on many issues, have acted as the constituency of conscience and the timely corrective? What this constituency has done in reversing United States policy of "constructive engagement" in South Africa can, it is to be hoped, do another yeoman's job on behalf of Palestinian rights and Palestinian justice.

(Mr. Maksoud, League of Arab  
States)

If I question the policy of the United States concerning the future of the Palestinians, it is because the United States has repeatedly shielded Israel's aggression from the sanctions that were necessary to deter it and constrain its propensity to pursue its expansionist policies. Perhaps many in the United States Administration would argue that support to Israel is not necessarily anti-Palestinian. We have often stated in response that the United States commitment to Israel is well known, but what is not understood at all is the United States permissiveness to Israel's objectives, intransigence and contempt of United Nations resolutions, whether those of this Assembly or of the Security Council. It is the discrepancy between the commitment and the permissiveness that has caused disillusionment and consternation not only among the Arab friends of the United States, but also among its Western allies and throughout the third world.

In addition, United States permissiveness towards Israel has obscured the position of many Western countries. Their judgment, which led them to support Palestinian rights without equivocation, has had at times to be excessively deferential to the idiosyncracies of the United States-Israeli equation. That has in several instances blunted their leverage in contributing towards resolving in an equitable and just manner the Palestinian question.

(Mr. Maksoud, League of Arab States)

United States permissiveness towards Israel has rendered United Nations resolutions and mechanisms devoid of effectiveness and credibility.

The recent awareness by the United States of the potential usefulness of the United Nations Security Council, demonstrated by the United States contribution to Security Council resolution 598 (1987) and United States insistence on rendering it operational, is a welcome development. We hope that such diligent pursuit of activating the United Nations machinery will be sufficiently infectious to dispose the United States to discover the usefulness of the Security Council in arranging an effective international conference to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The Amman resolutions dealt with a two-pronged challenge to Arab national security: the temporary, yet dangerous, challenge that Iran constitutes and the constant encroachment and threat to Palestinian and Arab rights that Israel constitutes. Inasmuch as the Amman summit meeting was an emergency meeting necessitated by Iran's continuous occupation of Iraqi territories, its deliberate policy of broadening the scope of its targets in the region of the Arab Gulf and its refusal to comply with Security Council resolution 598 (1987) in the sequence designed by the Secretary-General's plan, the summit meeting developed a strategy of response to this challenge by achieving a consensus among the Arab States that signals to the world that when a challenge to Arab national security is evident, all differences become subordinate to the imperatives of Arab national unity.

That the Arab-Israeli conflict was second on the agenda did not render it secondary, as Israel's wishful thinking and that of its supporters sought to convey. The Arab summit meeting reaffirmed its constant policy, namely, the strategy that was evolved in the Fez resolutions of September 1982, which constitute the Arabs' constructive contribution to the peace option.

(Mr. Maksoud, League of Arab States)

The results of the Arab summit meeting at Amman have been welcomed as a success for the resilience of the Arab consensus. It has proved an Arab dedication to genuine peace, whether in the Gulf or in the Middle East. However, commitment to peace should not be mistaken for an inclination to passivity, nor should our disposition to reconciliation be mistaken for a willingness to compromise what the international community has defined and recognized as our inalienable national rights.

The resolutions of the Amman Arab summit meeting have shown that we are all moderates when the peace option still has an opportunity to bear fruit. But if this "moderation" begins to prove that the pursuit of the peace option is futile, then what the Arab consensus has signalled is that in pursuing any alternative course all categories of adversaries will face a united Arab front.

Moderation is to be measured not by a disposition to accommodate Israeli hegemony but by our profound belief in rendering the United Nations machinery a viable instrument for achieving a just peace.

We have seen that the nature of Israeli aggression is an enduring one. We have seen the ugly manifestations of racism when the birth-rate among Arabs seemed to narrow the demographic difference. We have seen that the tenets of Jewish humanism are being subverted by Zionist revisionism and its growing influence in dethroning reason and terrorizing those who are resisting this dehumanizing process. We have witnessed how growingly intolerant Israel and its apologists are towards any recognition of Palestinian rights. The treatment of the Pope's sensitivity to the tragedy of the Palestinians and his support for their redemption and rights is but the latest evidence of trumped-up paranoia.

We have seen how, each time, serious questioning of Israel's policy is dubbed anti-Semitism. We have recently suffered a proliferation of Israeli and Zionist so-called experts on terrorism whose only task has been to depict any resistance

(Mr. Maksoud, League of Arab States)

to Israeli occupation in South Lebanon or in the occupied Palestinian territories as terrorism. We have seen how this 'expertise' has hit the nerve centres of decision-making, as demonstrated by the havoc that these "experts" wrought during the Irangate affair on the United States Administration. We have seen how some in the Western world were ready and eager to lend their names to denunciations of the General Assembly resolution that stated that "zionism is a form of racism". Have those eager beavers in the United States Congress or among the State Governors or in the Australian Parliament taken one moment to check whether the determination is validated by incontestable evidence, or is it that the Western world's guilt about its attitude to what has taken place in their midst made them parrot Israeli parlance as a means of cleansing themselves of a sense of guilt? When American Congressmen decide that the United Nations resolution is "slanderous", have they taken a moment to examine the arguments that persuaded the majority of this Assembly to adopt the resolution? Have they given any consideration to the grievances that the Palestinians have experienced as a result of systematic discrimination and persecution on the ground that they were not Jews? Have they stopped to examine the real implications of the Law of Return, which transforms the Palestinians within the Israel of 1948 into second-class or third-class subjects? Have they taken a second of time to examine the racist measures taken by the occupying authorities before affixing their signatures to carbon copies of Israeli diktat, requests and demands?

Of course none of these answers are to be expected, at least in the near future; but we will not be placed on the defensive by the avalanche of denunciations unleashed by Israel and its lobbyists throughout.

(Mr. Maksoud, League of Arab States)

The Palestine question has been a constant item of major concern to this Assembly for the past 40 years. The Palestinians cannot remain a people deprived of their national rights and identity and of a vehicle for self-determination and self-expression. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the Palestinian question should be addressed as a matter of top priority. The confidence that the League of Arab States and the Arab nation have in the ability of the United Nations to right the wrong visited upon the Palestinian people remains firm despite the justified or unjust scepticism that occasionally surfaces. We are hopeful that the United Nations will redouble its efforts to structure the international conference in such a manner that it will restore to the Palestinians their inalienable rights and to mankind the faith in the United Nations that it needs and deserves. In this manner the Palestine question will become a Palestinian contribution to an effective United Nations answer for the many ailments and problems that remain or may emerge.

The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.