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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SEVENTY-NINTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Monday, 23 November 1987, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. MASRI (Vice-President) (Syrian Arab Republic)  
later: Mr. FLORIN (President) (German Democratic Republic)

- Question of Palestine [38] (continued)

- (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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In the absence of the President, Mr. Masri (Syrian Arab Republic),  
Vice-President, took the Chair.

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

AGENDA ITEM 38 (continued)

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 Arabic): I should like to remind representatives that, in accordance with the decision taken this morning, the list of speakers in the debate will be closed today at 5 p.m. I therefore request those representatives wishing to participate in the debate to put their names on the list as soon as possible.

Mr. KARIM (Sudan) (interpretation from Arabic): In its yearly discussion of the agenda item on the question of Palestine, the General Assembly reaffirms, at each consecutive session, the support of the entire international community for the Palestinian cause and the legitimacy of the heroic Palestinian people's just, prolonged and legitimate struggle for the restoration of its occupied territories and its national rights, to return to its homeland, to exercise its right to self-determination and to establish its independent sovereign State on its national soil, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), its sole, legitimate representative.

The struggle of the Palestinian people under the leadership of the PLO has brought home to the world the unflinching resolve of those people, their steadfastness and their spirit of sacrifice. Their continued struggle, sacrifice and tenacity in defending their national identity and legitimate rights in the face of the unceasing attempts by Israel to change the demographic nature of the occupied territories and blot out the identity of their population, namely, the Palestinian Arabs, is a good example to all.

Israel's excesses, intransigence and arrogant denial of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, its daily violations of human rights in the occupied territories, blatant defiance of the international community and unjustified disregard of international unanimity, constitute a heinous crime against all mankind.

This conduct also poses a very grave challenge, which the international Organization must face squarely so as to counter the terrorist action of the authorities of the Zionist régime against people struggling for their inalienable, legitimate rights.

The world does not need to be reminded of the legitimacy of the struggle of the Palestinian people. It does not need proof of the validity of those rights or

(Mr. Karim, Sudan)

further elucidation of their cause. The documents of the world Organization are replete with resolutions which bespeak not only the solidarity of the whole world with the Palestinians in their cause but also indicate that the whole world knows the facts of this situation, the failure to solve which is a serious threat to international peace and security.

The lessons of recent history show that appeasement of fascist and nazi terrorist régimes has always led to dire consequences for all mankind. To prevent history from repeating itself, it is more than ever necessary that the international Organization show resolve and firmness in seeking a lasting and just solution to the Palestinian question in all its aspects. That question is the crux of the Middle East conflict.

The Palestinian people have reiterated, through their sole, legitimate representative, the PLO, their deep faith in and genuine desire to reach a just, peaceful and lasting solution to the question of Palestine, so that peace and stability may be restored to the region.

Thus, I reiterate from this rostrum that my country, in common with the majority of the countries of the world, agrees that the solution to the question of Palestine lies in convening the international conference on peace in the Middle East, with the participation of all the parties to the conflict, including the PLO, the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

The people of Sudan reaffirm from this rostrum their absolute solidarity with the Palestinian people in their struggle. We stand side by side with the Palestinian people and their revolution until their victory.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to express its appreciation of the valuable efforts of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the

(Mr. Karim, Sudan)

Palestinian People and of its role in increasing the awareness of the international community of the suffering of the Palestinian people and the legitimacy of their struggle.

Mr. SHAH (Pakistan): The Palestinian question is at the core of the Middle East problem, the continued exacerbation of which constitutes a grave threat not only to the stability of the region but also to international peace and security.

This year in particular has a unique significance for the Palestinian people: 70 years ago the Balfour Declaration sowed the seeds of the Palestinian problem; 40 years ago the Palestinian homeland was forcibly rent asunder; 20 years ago the remaining territory of Palestine was occupied by Israel. The chronology outlined calls, therefore, for some retrospection.

The Zionist designs on Palestine were achieved through a distortion of history, an imposition of immigration and acts of terrorism when the Israeli entity was established in 1948. For 38 years now the international community has been a witness to the systematic aggression carried out by Israel against the people of Palestine. The Zionists have not been satisfied by merely usurping the Palestinian homeland. Their ambition is to create a greater Israel, and to this end the Israeli authorities have ruthlessly pursued their policy of displacing, dispossessing and harassing the Palestinian people inside and outside the occupied territories. They seek to eradicate Palestinian nationalism and to wipe out any manifestation of the Palestinian struggle for the exercise of their inalienable right to self-determination and statehood. The Israeli authorities have embarked systematically on a course designed to change the demographic composition of the occupied territories and to alter their status and historical character, particularly of the Holy City of Jerusalem. Similar motives have fuelled Israeli

(Mr. Shah, Pakistan)

aggression and expansionist designs against the other Arab countries thereby unleashing a cycle of violence in the region.

Peace in this tormented region remains as elusive as ever. Indeed, Israel's intensified campaign of destabilization of the region for its own untenable security objectives serves to increase the sufferings of the Palestinian people and continues to endanger international peace and security. Israel persists in the mistaken belief that by unleashing an endless cycle of terror and violence it can ensure its security and establish its hegemony.

(Mr. Shah, Pakistan)

My delegation wishes to express its deep concern at the repressive measures taken by Israel in the occupied territories, the desecration of the Holy Places, and the excavations being conducted adjacent to the Dome of the Rock, which threaten the holy Al Aqsa mosque. My delegation also condemns Israel's policy of expansion and its annexation of the occupied Arab territories.

The United Nations and the international community must continue their efforts to secure a just and comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian problem and the Middle East conflict. The fundamental imperatives of such a settlement should be in accordance with the Geneva Declaration on Palestine of September 1986 and General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, which include the following elements: the Palestinian people must be enabled to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination and to establish their own independent State in Palestine; the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, must participate on an equal footing with all the parties concerned in the process of finding a settlement of the Middle East question; Israel must be obliged to end its occupation of Arab territories, in accordance with the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, and to withdraw from the territories occupied since 1967, including the Holy City of Al Quds Al Sharif; there is a need to oppose and reject Israeli policies and practices in the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, and any de facto situation created by Israel, which are contrary to international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly the establishment of settlements, as these policies and practices constitute major obstacles in the way of the achievement of peace in the Middle East; and all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, that alter or purport to alter the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, making it the capital of Israel, must be declared null and void.

(Mr. Shah, Pakistan)

It is our fervent hope that consensus will soon be achieved on the convening of an international Conference to negotiate a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East. The Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, must be enabled to participate, on an equal footing, in that Conference.

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, under the guidance of its Chairman, Ambassador Massamba Sarré, has played an important role in focusing international consciousness and attention on the Palestinian question. It must continue its work of mobilizing international opinion with a view to an early and just settlement of the problem.

The tragedy of Palestine is an injustice that is a threat to world peace. Until that auspicious day when the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are restored, it is incumbent upon the international community, particularly the United Nations, to make unflagging efforts to assist them in their noble and just struggle. Universal concern must be translated into universal action. Firm action by the Security Council, such as that prescribed under Chapter VII of the Charter, has become unavoidable as a means of inducing Israel to heed the call of reason and to respect the decisions of the United Nations aimed at promoting a just solution to this problem. At the same time, it is equally important to protect the fundamental rights of the Palestinian and Arab population living under Israeli occupation.

The valiant struggle of the Palestinian people will not be deterred by the inhuman and repressive policies of Israel. The Palestinian people have demonstrated their determination to pursue the just and noble cause of establishing their own homeland. The Government and people of Pakistan will continue to stand by their Palestinian brothers and will extend to them every possible support in their just struggle.



Mr. PEJIC (Yugoslavia): The question of Palestine is one of those problems that have preoccupied the world Organization almost since its inception. In the meantime, several generations of Palestinians, resolutely committed to realizing their legitimate rights and aspirations, have grown up in exile, denied the right to their own homeland or living under foreign occupation and domination.

The last wave of repression of the Palestinian population on territories under Israeli occupation and the continuous attacks on the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon are clear proof that Israel is continuing its attempts to legalize the situation created by occupation and annexation. The growing revolt and resistance of the Palestinians on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip clearly demonstrate the inadmissibility and limitations of these attempts and policies, regardless of the force and repression that stand behind them.

The Middle East crisis has been one of the most dangerous sources of international tension for four decades now. It is, therefore, no mere coincidence that over this long period that has seen four bloody wars it has become obvious that every postponement of the solution of this problem could have unforeseeable consequences, not only for this region but also for the overall international situation.

It is also becoming ever more obvious that the only way to achieve a lasting easing of tension in the region and the beginning of the process of a comprehensive political solution of the crisis in the Middle East - and the Palestinian problem, which is at its core - is through the implementation of the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. This implies an urgent and complete withdrawal of Israeli troops from all the Arab and Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, the realization of the legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of

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a State of its own under the leadership of the PLO, and full respect for the rights of all countries and peoples to peace and security within internationally recognized borders.

The debate conducted within the United Nations in recent years has confirmed that the international community is not prepared to tolerate any longer the situation in the Middle East caused by the Israeli policy of force, expansion and annexation, particularly its attempts to suppress the national identity and awareness of the Palestinian people.

There exists almost unanimous consent, subscribed to by non-aligned countries all along, that the United Nations should, and must, play the key, active role in the quest for a just and comprehensive solution to the problem of Palestine, which has broad political, international, legal, humanitarian and moral dimensions. This is the historic debt and the obligation of the United Nations and the international community to the tragedy of the Palestinian people.

It is therefore quite understandable that the initiative for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, launched at the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly, with the participation of all directly interested parties on an equal footing, including the PLO as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, is gaining ever broader acceptance and support.

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In this context, we have noted the statement in the Secretary-General's report that

"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, para. 34)

The realization of this initiative, after years of bloodshed and conflict, represents, in our opinion, the only realistic way to achieve a lasting and just solution of the problem of Palestine, without which there can be no stable peace in the Middle East.

It is therefore encouraging that since the last session of the General Assembly broad consultations have been launched within the Security Council and with the directly interested parties, with the aim of finding generally acceptable formulas for the convening of the Middle East conference.

Yugoslavia has fully supported all constructive efforts to ensure the convening of the international conference. Along these lines, we also support the efforts of the Secretary-General within the mandate entrusted to him by the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. We consider that what is most important in these efforts is to ensure adequate participation and representation on an equal footing of the Palestinian people in the conference, short of which no decision on its destiny can be made.

At their summit Conference in Harare, Zimbabwe, the non-aligned countries took a clear and unequivocal position regarding the international conference. The Committee of Nine of the non-aligned countries on Palestine, within the mandate accorded it on the basis of the decisions of the summit Conference in Harare and the conclusions of the ministerial meetings this year in Harare, Pyongyang and New York, has also been active in the efforts aimed at convening the conference.

(Mr. Pejic, Yugoslavia)

In this context, the Committee of Nine addressed an appeal from its meeting in Harare to all countries, international organizations and the world public to do all they could to promote and support all the efforts aimed at convening the international conference, one of whose goals is the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, particularly its right to establish its own State.

We consider that all the necessary conditions exist at this session for the General Assembly to take a decisive step forward by translating the overwhelmingly favourable climate and the support for the proposal into the early attainment of this initiative. Of course, we are aware of all the obstacles and difficulties in the way of convening the conference. We are also aware that a long road of difficult consultations and agreement-making is ahead of us.

The main reasons are clear. The hardest resistance to convening the conference comes from Israel - which does not want to abandon its ambition to impose itself as the dominant factor and arbiter in the Middle East and its attempts to dictate the conditions and outcome of the solution - and from some influential elements outside the region, whose political conceptions are such that they do not want to accept that a just solution of the question of Palestine, based on the exercise by the Palestinian people of their inalienable, legitimate rights, is the only way to achieve lasting peace in the region. It should be recalled, however, that any attempt to impose a solution that would not guarantee those rights is doomed to failure.

We believe that the debate on and support for the draft resolutions on the question of Palestine will give a fresh, strong impetus to the intensification of the efforts, contacts and consultations within the Security Council and with directly interested parties, as well as between all those that can contribute to the solution of the problem. At the same time, opposition from certain political circles in Israel and occasional stalemate should not be allowed to discourage and

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immobilize these efforts. We therefore fully support the continuance of the Secretary-General's endeavours to overcome the present difficulties and promote the idea of the international conference. In this regard, it is of particular importance that countries that can exert political influence on Israel bring pressure to bear on those elements in that country that obstruct and block the political process. For every postponement of a solution is fraught with danger, the consequences of which can hardly be perceived at this time.

Mr. ABULHASAN (Kuwait) (interpretation from Arabic): This session of the General Assembly is being held in a year that bears special historical significance for the question of Palestine, for it is the eight-hundredth anniversary of Jerusalem's liberation from the European Crusaders in the battle of Hattin, which was led by the Arab hero Saladin. It is also the seventieth anniversary of the sinister Balfour Declaration, in which a pledge was made by one who did not possess what was promised to those who did not deserve it, bartering the land of Palestine for Jewish support for the British Government, which held a Mandate over the Territory.

It is also the year that marks the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of the famous United Nations resolution partitioning Palestine, and the twentieth year since the Zionist entity occupied the rest of Palestine's territories and Holy Al Quds, and its forces marched on to occupy other Arab territories. And it is the fifth anniversary of the barbaric Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the massacres of Sabra and Shatila and the occupation of more Arab territories, whereby the conspiracy came to a head. Then world public opinion, especially in the part of the world that is free of Zionist influence, woke up to Israel's aggressive reality

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and expansionist nature, after the myth of the peaceable lamb surrounded by wild wolves collapsed and the intentions of its racist propagators were exposed.

We all know that the cause of the dispossessed, ancient nation of Palestine did not enjoy due recognition in international forums until a few years ago, after the third-world countries had rid themselves of the noose of colonialism in the 1950s and 1960s. The age of liberation and the restoration of national sovereignty to most nations dawned, and we finally hear the truth of the Palestinian question in our Organization and the various other forums of international action. Today, after all those years, while the Palestinian people are suffering under occupation and in their exile and misery, we are still faced with the arrogance of power sheltering behind the misrepresentation of history, a formidable obstacle to the recovery by a whole nation of its legitimate rights, which are recognized by the overwhelming majority of the international community.

Israel recklessly persists in its transgression and insolence before the world community, perpetuating the occupation and remaining indifferent to the numerous resolutions adopted in this regard. The illegal and inhumane practices in the occupied Arab territories do not relate to the period of the occupation or even that since the emergence of Israel; they go far beyond that, for they relate to the Zionist creed and thinking.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

Since, according to the basic philosophy of zionism, the land of Palestine is in fact the land of Israel and the Palestinian people must leave or be expelled either by force or through the gradual annexation of their lands, the Zionists committed every possible outrage and imposed every oppressive measure to make life an unbearable inferno for the people in the Arab-occupied territories in order to force them to emigrate and make room for more Jews.

As part of a studied scheme to realize their aims, the Israeli authorities practised every kind of oppression in order to transform the Palestinian identity. Those acts include the following:

First, destroying the political establishment in the occupied territories by expelling their Arab population, suppressing them, displacing them, ousting the elected heads of municipalities, disbanding their elected representative councils, and destroying Palestinian symbols and punishing those who carry a Palestinian flag or map;

Secondly, breaking the cultural and social backbone by closing universities, schools and educational institutions, banning books, imposing censorship on the press, and harassing, expelling and deporting intellectuals, writers and poets;

Thirdly, crippling the economic structure by controlling the sources of water in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and oppressing the farmers by taking control of their crops and produce. In the case of a people who are basically agricultural, as the Palestinians are, the means of livelihood are land and water, and controlling them makes life intolerable for the farmers and destroys the very basis of their livelihood.

Fourthly, terrorizing the civilian population in the occupied territories either by imposing military rule on them or by using the brute force of the police, not hesitating to attack youths and throw rocks at them. What is even more

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calamitous and horrendous is that Jewish settlers undertook to form militias to strike at, and severely penalize, the unarmed civilian population, which has no support but international covenants and laws that are being violated day after day.

These crimes and inhuman practices will continue, for the Israeli occupation authorities have still more illegal acts and practices to carry out.

Part of the blame falls on some Western circles for in the face of all that is happening in the Palestinian arena either they limit themselves to, at most, lukewarm denunciations or else they deliberately press trumped-up charges, such as branding every act of legitimate national resistance to occupation as an act of terrorism. Who could believe or take seriously anyone who ignores all the innocent Palestinians who are living under the oppression of Zionist occupation and the humiliation of its racism, or who are suffering the plight of homelessness outside the occupied Palestinian territories and the cruelty of Israeli attacks, even in their refugee camps?

Nevertheless, the continued denial of Palestinian rights, the occupation, the policies of aggression and expansion, the oppression of landowners, and reliance on brute force will neither obliterate the just Palestinian cause nor undermine its people's aspirations and their struggle for independence and the return to their lands. Nor will it frustrate the forces of international legitimacy in their determination to deal with the Palestinian problem within the framework of international law and the norms of international behaviour, beginning with the United Nations-sponsored International Conference with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole and legitimate representative, on an equal footing in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C. While strongly supporting the convening of that International Conference, Kuwait wishes to refer to the support expressed by the Arab summit



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conference held in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on 8 November 1987, for the convening of that parley within the context of the Arab nation's upholding of peaceful efforts and initiatives, seeking a just and lasting peace in the region. The proposed parley also received substantial support from the Organization of the Islamic Conference, which Kuwait had the privilege of chairing, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the socialist countries, the member States of the European Community, and the Nordic countries.

It is worth mentioning that the Islamic summit conference held in Kuwait this year stressed the need for the Security Council to adopt a new resolution ensuring the Palestinian people's established rights, including their right to return to their homeland, their right to self-determination, and their right to establish their independent State, with holy Al Quds as its capital, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, their legitimate and sole representative.

Until such a resolution has been adopted and until its purposes have been carried out, it is incumbent upon all who are peace-loving and who abide by international law to stand by the Palestinian people in their resistance to Zionist terrorism and to the continuing efforts to seize their remaining lands by force.

Mr. PITARKA (Albania): The Palestinian problem is one of the oldest questions considered by the General Assembly at every one of its sessions. Justifiably, the early solution of this problem - the realization of the sovereign right of the Palestinian people to live free and independent in their own land - has constantly been the focus of the concern of our Organization and of world public opinion.

The Albanian people and their Government have constantly followed with concern and sympathy the tragedy the Palestinian people have been going through for years, their sufferings and severe deprivations. The just cause of this dauntless and

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freedom-loving people, their struggle for liberation from Zionist and imperialist aggression, has always been quite close and comprehensible to our people. It has enjoyed and will always enjoy our solidarity and full support. This was once more reiterated in the statement made by the Foreign Minister of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania in the general debate at the current session of the General Assembly.

(Mr. Pitarka, Albania)

The very unfolding of events bears evidence that the prospects for a solution to the Palestinian question remain dismal. As long as there is no solution to the just cause of the Palestinian people that lies at the core of the Middle East conflict, as long as the Palestinian people cannot return to their homeland, there will be no peace or tranquillity in this region, there will be no solution to the Middle East problems in general. It is common knowledge that those bearing the main responsibility for this grave situation, which directly affects the destiny of an entire nation, as well as peace and security in the region, are the Israeli Zionists and the United States imperialists, who have stood and always stand in full support of and encourage the Israeli aggressive policy and criminal activity.

In overt and arrogant defiance of world public opinion, the Israeli Zionists unremittingly continue their persecutions and terror, their crimes and massacres against the Palestinian people in the occupied territories. In Lebanon, the camps of the Palestinian refugees remain permanent targets of Israeli attacks, bombardments and frenzied genocide. The Israeli prisons and concentration camps, their anti-Palestinian and anti-Arab terror, are living proof of the tragedy the Palestinian people is experiencing. The hideous massacres carried out in the refugee camps in Sabra and Shatila and in the occupied territories in general, the systematic forced deportation of the Palestinian and other Arab inhabitants from their national ancestral homes, and other criminal acts expose before the whole world the dark Israeli intentions: forced deportation and physical liquidation of the Palestinians and the creation of the great State of Israel through the annexation of the Arab lands.

It is the occasion to once again point out that Israel, completely on its own, would not have been in a position to pursue such a criminal and annexationist policy, if it were not for the all-round support and assistance from world reaction

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and imperialism, United States imperialism first and foremost. Washington's political and diplomatic manoeuvres on the alleged "peaceful settlement" of the Middle East problems, of the Palestinian one primarily, its propaganda on the "attempts" to talk Israel into the international peace conference on the Middle East and peaceful negotiations with the Arabs, deceive no one. Peoples, particularly the Arab peoples, judge from concrete deeds, from the hostile actions of United States imperialism against them. The Arab peoples and countries realize that what lies at the foundation of the actual activation of United States diplomacy is the inimical intentions and plots to impose upon them direct and separate negotiations with Israel, their old intentions to divide the Arab nation, which would thus foresake the sacred cause of the Palestinian people of creating their free and independent State.

The Albanian delegation upholds the view that the further exacerbation of the situation in the Middle East and in the Persian Gulf, as well as the tragedy and painful events that are taking place in Lebanon, aim at dealing a blow to the just cause of the Palestinian people. They have been calculated to damage and impede their struggle and that of the other Arab peoples against the Zionist and imperialist aggression, to engage the peoples and countries of that region in fratricidal wars and grave conflicts with one another and to alienate them eventually from the main objective of their struggle: the final settlement of the Palestinian question. All these have led to the creation of a dangerous situation for the Palestinian liberation movement and the cause of the Arab peoples at large.

The Soviet social-imperialists, too, bear a great responsibility for the grave situation prevailing in the Middle East and the blows that are being dealt to the just liberation struggle of the Palestinian people. As in the past, in spite of their declarations and demagogical manoeuvres to parade as friends of the

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Palestinian people and the other Arab peoples, the Soviet social-imperialists, with the rivalry and plotting activities they carry out in conjunction with the United States of America in this region, with the overt ties they maintain with Israel, which they continue increasingly to supply with new Jewish settlers for the new colonies established in the occupied Arab territories, are evermore exposing themselves as enemies of the just Palestinian cause and of the entire Middle East in general. In addition, Moscow's attempts to make its plan on the international peace conference on the Middle East more acceptable, directly relate to its endeavours and intentions to secure its partnership in the bargains being made behind the scenes for spheres of influence and hegemony in this region.

It is not the first time in the history of their interminable struggle that the Palestinian people and the other Arab peoples are faced with grave threats and dangers to their destinies. The long experience they have gained in their struggle against the Zionist and imperialist aggression and the anti-Arab schemes of the super-Powers has trained them to cope courageously with hardships and a wide variety of dangers. The Palestinian people, through countless sacrifices and hardships, are continuing their just struggle to regain the territories occupied by the Israeli Zionists. The struggle they are waging for their homeland, for preserving their national identity, led by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), enjoys the support of the fraternal Arab peoples and all the freedom-loving and peace-loving nations and peoples of the world. The initiatives undertaken by the Palestinian movement and the Arab peoples to close their ranks and strengthen their unity, are positive developments that should be welcomed and further encouraged, for, in the face of the numerous dangers and threats they have to resist, the strengthening of their unity is presently more imperative than ever to the Arab peoples.

(Mr. Pitarka, Albania)

The Palestinian cause has been and remains the cause of all the Arab people. Therefore, unity among them has not been and will never be a cause of sentiments or religious beliefs. It is based first and foremost upon their common national interests, their common struggle against every enemy, the sacred cause of the liberation of the Arab territories and upon gaining their freedom and independence.

The Palestinian people and the other Arab peoples are not alone in their struggle. On their side stand all the freedom-loving and progressive peoples of the world. The Albanian people, as a sincere friend of the Palestinian people and the other Arab peoples, have supported and will always support their just cause, the struggle for the realization of their legitimate national aspirations. We forcefully condemn the aggressive policy and criminal activity of the Israeli Zionists and the intrigues, plots and hegemonistic activity of the imperialist super-Powers in the Middle East, which greatly damage and threaten the interests of the Palestinian and the other Arab peoples as well as peace and security in the region.

In conclusion, I would stress that, in the future, the People's Socialist Republic of Albania and the Albanian people will unflinchingly side with the struggle of these people. They are convinced that the resolute and uncompromising struggle of the Palestinian people will triumph.

Mr. MERINO (Colombia) (interpretation from Spanish): On 29 November, exactly 40 years will have elapsed since the day on which the General Assembly, during what was only its second session, adopted resolution 181 (II), in which it decided on the geo-political partition of Palestine into two independent States, one Jewish and the other Arab. While the first has established itself in a geographical area of 14,000 square kilometres, the latter has never been able to take root, and its people have been sent off into a wandering existence, despite

(Mr. Merino, Colombia)

the fact that the same resolution allocated to it 11,000 square kilometres of territory. One State had formally been established, but a crisis had likewise been born. The decision of the United Nations had institutionalized confrontation and had brought about civil war.

(Mr. Merino, Colombia)

Since then, our Assembly has been struggling year after year with an item that has already produced more than 200 resolutions but has not yet produced a definitive solution to a problem which is seriously eroding the credibility of our Organization because of its inability, in this specific case, to function as an appropriate and competent instrument for the peaceful solution of a conflict that has destabilized the Middle East and seriously compromised peace in the region.

It is obvious that the Middle East crisis will continue to deteriorate as long as the international community continues to show itself powerless to endow the Palestinian people with their inalienable rights to self-determination, independence and national sovereignty; so long as thousands of Palestinians are denied the right to return to their land; so long as extensive Arab Palestinian territories remain under foreign domination.

We should support the efforts of the Special Committee and the Secretary-General to bring about a negotiated, peaceful and comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian problem. We therefore support those efforts and those of the non-aligned countries to bring about the convening of a peace conference on the Middle East in which all the parties to the conflict, without any exception, may arrive at a just, sincere and permanent peace that will consolidate the right of all peoples and States of the region to live in peace, security and good-neighbourliness, within secure and internationally recognized borders. Colombia, as a non-aligned Latin American country, calls for the faithful fulfilment of the United Nations mandate, especially as contemplated in resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) of the Security Council, which laid down the principles to be applied in the solution of the Palestinian problem.

Colombia is convinced that the definitive solution must be based on the principles of the Charter, which condemns the use of force and the acquisition of



(Mr. Merino, Colombia)

territory as the spoils of war. Only mutual recognition on an equal footing of the interests of all the parties involved will bring tranquillity and well-being to a land and peoples who, by reason of many circumstances and motives, are linked to us by blood, culture, religion and character.

Mr. AL-SHAKAR (Bahrain) (interpretation from Arabic): The question of Palestine and the question of the Palestinian people, by their nature and essence, are considered to be questions directly related to the purposes and principles of the United Nations as set forth in the Charter, in view of the role played by the United Nations in defending the right of peoples struggling to achieve their liberty, national independence and self-determination, and in laying solid and just foundations for security and peace in the world.

Despite recognition by the United Nations and the international community of the just character of the Palestinian cause, the Palestinian people continues to be deprived of its inalienable right, like that of other peoples of the world, to freedom, independence and self-determination. The crisis that this people is enduring, which is of tragic dimensions, is not an obscure or unknown problem for the United Nations. It is a question that has occupied the attention of the United Nations since its inception.

Seventy years ago, on 2 November 1917, the plot against Palestine and the Palestinian people began, with world Zionism and the colonialist States of that period, when the British Government, the mandatory Power for Palestine, drew up, in secret, the Balfour Declaration, which constituted a promise to aid the world Zionist movement to create a national homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine, without giving notice of that decision to the Palestinian people themselves. Pursuant to that Declaration, a party which did not possess gave to a party which was not entitled: the British Government gave what it did not possess, namely,

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Arab Palestine, to a people who were not the legitimate owners of that land, namely, the Zionists.

The world Zionist movement considered that Declaration a pretext for the Judaization of Palestine - its territory and its people - through the appropriation for the Jewish people of the territories expropriated from the Arab Palestinians, and through an invitation extended to Jewish people to come and settle in Palestine in place of the Palestinians, who were the original population of the country.

More than 40 years ago Great Britain placed the question of Palestine before the United Nations. On 29 November 1947 the General Assembly adopted resolution 181 (II) concerning the plan for the partition of Palestine, which led to the creation of the State of Israel at the expense of the majority of the Palestinian people, a people that was expelled and dispersed by various methods of terrorism and repression. The Palestinians then became refugees in the neighbouring Arab States and indeed in other foreign countries. Israel had thus become an aggressive colonialist base, unleashing successive wars against its Arab neighbours with a view to expansion and the Judaization of Palestine, the expulsion of the Palestinian people and the imposition of Israel's hegemony over the entire region.

Israel, by its act of aggression in 1967, succeeded in carrying out its plan to occupy the remainder of the Palestinian territory in the Gaza Strip and on the West Bank. Since its occupation of Arab territories Israel has consistently pursued an extremist and expansionist policy, by creating settlements and establishing Zionist settlers in those territories and bringing about the expulsion and exodus of the Palestinians from their territory and the confiscation of their property and the settlement of their land. The Palestinian people, living under the yoke of the Israeli occupation, continues to endure the outrages of these colonialist, expansionist and racist policies.

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The aggressive intentions and designs of Israel are not limited to confiscation of all Palestinian territory, the expulsion of the Palestinian people and aggression against neighbouring Arab States; in addition, Israel has invaded Lebanon, perpetrated aggression against Iraq by bombing the Iraqi nuclear facility, which had been placed under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards, not to mention the air raid on Tunisia. Lebanon continues to be exposed to air raids and other acts of aggression by Israel, which is still occupying part of its territory.

Today Israel, which was created on the ruins of the Palestinian nation, is carrying out, as it has since 1967, that is, for two entire decades, an official policy that definitely has the long-term and medium-term objective of uprooting the Palestinian people from their territory and occupying that territory, by destroying the social and economic structures of the Palestinians, distorting their authentic cultural heritage and eliminating their Arab character and national identity.

Because of the implementation of this arbitrary, terroristic policy, the inhabitants of the occupied Palestinian territories in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip continue to live under military occupation. This is a sombre chapter in their history - living in the shadow of the policy of the occupying Israeli authorities commonly known as the policy of the iron fist, which consists of using the procedures of deportation, administrative detention, house arrest and collective sanctions, destruction of housing, the despoliation of lands and restriction of the most elementary rights such as the right of free speech and the right of free movement, education and national economic development.

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What makes the situation even more explosive is that the Palestinians in the occupied territories are experiencing untold suffering under a repressive and terroristic occupation. What is happening in the occupied Arab territories cannot be considered temporary military occupation under international principles and norms. It is not a classical colonialist situation either, such as that experienced by the peoples of Asia and Africa. The very grave situation there is the result of a colonialist system unparalleled internationally. It is indeed a permanent planned and carefully programmed aggression typical of the cancerous settlement policy aimed at modifying the demographic structures of these territories through the progressive expulsion of their authentic owners, the systematic expropriation of their lands and their property, and the creation of settlements to be populated by foreign settlers.

I do not wish to dwell in detail on the question of Palestine in its two fundamental aspects, that is, the land and the people. These issues are well known, and the archives of the United Nations are full of the details of this painful and dangerous situation of a people, half of which has been expelled from its national territory and the other half of which is daily exposed to collective extermination under the repressive practices of Israel, without any deterrent measures being adopted to prevent the aggressor from persisting in his crime. Although the international community is becoming increasingly aware of the justice of the Palestinian people's cause and the need to settle all aspects of the problem, as may be seen from the adoption of a series of General Assembly resolutions, such as resolutions 3236 (XXIX), adopted on 22 November 1974, and 41/43, adopted on 3 December 1986, which reaffirms the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and reaffirms the urgent need to achieve the realization of their national rights by the achievement of a just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine

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including the rights of the Palestinian people to enjoy self-determination without foreign interference, independence and national sovereignty, to return to the homeland from which they were expelled, and to recover the property taken from them. Nevertheless, the achievement of all this has been impossible because of Israel's rejection of the General Assembly resolutions and its non-implementation of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

During the past 20 years the United Nations has made praiseworthy efforts to undertake initiatives for programmes and projects aimed at achieving a just and lasting solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict in order to save Palestine and avoid the imposition of a policy of fait accompli by Israel. All these efforts and international initiatives have been in vain because of the permanent and persistent refusal of Israel and its stubborn contempt for all resolutions and international laws and customs. This attitude on the part of Israel in rejecting peace, a well-known attitude that has not changed since 1967, clearly and unquestionably reveals the true intentions of Israel: to impose defeat and surrender and give the appearance of peace - which of course is not Israel's aim - thus reaffirming its aggressive and expansionist character and its hostility to peace and security in that region.

We believe that the only possible peace would be one based on justice and equity, which would guarantee the Palestinian people the exercise of their full and inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination on its Palestinian Arab territory, led by its sole, legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization.

(Mr. Al-Shakar, Bahrain)

The Arab leaders and Heads of State, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole, authentic representative of the Palestinian people, at the Fez summit meeting on 6 September 1982 expressed their willingness to work within the context of the United Nations towards the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace based on international law and the principle of the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine.

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The Arab States put forward the Fez peace plan containing eight points all of which were inspired by General Assembly resolutions and may be viewed as a solid foundation on which to build a just, honourable and peaceful solution of the question of Palestine. That Arab peace plan has been rejected by Israel, just as Israel has rejected and dismissed all other peaceful projects and initiatives since 1967 - not only because such initiatives do not guarantee Israel's full hegemony over all Palestinian territory but also because those initiatives and plans do not satisfy all Israel's designs for domination over the whole region.

Despite Israel's refusal to accept this peaceful initiative within the United Nations framework, the Arab Heads of State have expressed their dedication to international legitimacy in seeking to achieve a just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict in conformity with General Assembly resolutions and on the basis of recovery of all Arab and Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, including the Holy City of Jerusalem, the recovery of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people, and the solution of the question of Palestine in all its aspects.

In that context and bearing in mind the historic responsibility of the Arab Heads of State, the Arab Summit held in Amman, Jordan, on 11 November 1987 supported the holding of an international conference under United Nations auspices, with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole authentic representative of the Palestinian people, and the permanent members of the Security Council. That conference is viewed as the only appropriate means to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict in a peaceful, just and comprehensive manner.

We believe that today much more than in the past, the United Nations is being called upon to consolidate and support peace efforts for an international

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conference, pursuant to the recommendation of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in paragraphs 94 and 95 of its report in document A/42/35. I should like to reaffirm my country's support for the recommendations and resolutions contained in that report. We share the Committee's admiration of the unity and resilience of the Palestinian people under the leadership of its sole authentic representative, the PLO, in resisting occupation.

From this rostrum I should like to hail the resistance of the Palestinian people and the courage it has shown in the various popular uprisings we have witnessed recently in towns of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip expressing that people's opposition to occupation and to express the hope that the international community will express solidarity with that militant people and assist it by supplying it with material, political and moral aid so that it may realize its inalienable national rights.

We call upon all States, particularly the permanent members of the Security Council, not to grant financial, military or political assistance to Israel. That assistance enables Israel to persist in its occupation of Palestinian and Arab territories and to neutralize international efforts to bring about a just and lasting peace in the region.

History has taught us that peace cannot be built except on a basis of justice and equity. Peace is fragile, and if we are not careful it will be defeated. However long the occupation may last, and however grave it may be, this dark night will sooner or later come to an end, because repression cannot succeed against the determination of people to recover their legitimate rights. Proof of that may be seen in the heroic resistance in the occupied Arab territories and in the popular uprisings that are expressing the Palestinian people's dedication to their land, despite all the arbitrary and tyrannical repression imposed on them, which



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demonstrates every day the authenticity of that people, which, despite the tragedy through which it is living, continues to believe in its inalienable national rights and the inevitability of its victory. This is a unique chapter in history. We have not seen any other like in anywhere in the world.

For those reasons, my delegation hopes that the General Assembly, after having considered the question of Palestine for 40 years, will be able to adopt effective resolutions that can lead to a just and lasting solution of the Palestinian crisis and oblige Israel to submit to the international will and thus enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights.

Before concluding I should like to hail the continuing efforts of the members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People - a Committee which enhances international awareness of the question of Palestine. I should also like to hail the efforts of the Chairman of that Committee, Ambassador Massamba Sarré of Senegal, and to express the hope that very soon the Palestinian people will obtain its legitimate inalienable national rights in its territory, in its homeland, enabling it thus to build an independent State under the guidance of the PLO, its sole legitimate representative.

Mr. KIKUCHI (Japan): Throughout the history of the United Nations much of its attention has been focused on the complex problems and tumultuous events in the Middle East region. Most recently, the extremely tense situation surrounding the Iran-Iraq conflict has been at the centre of international concern. While it is not my intention to downplay the urgent need to find an early solution to that tragic conflict, I believe that we must be careful not to allow it to distract us from other long-standing but nevertheless pressing issues in the region. Foremost among those issues is, of course, the question of Palestine.

(Mr. Kikuchi, Japan)

Over the years Japan has consistently maintained that as the Palestinian issue lies at the core of the Middle East peace problem its solution is of crucial importance. One of the fundamental questions regarding the Palestinian situation is whether the international community is in fact truly committed to the principle of equal rights and self-determination of all peoples under the United Nations Charter. What is at issue is not only the political and economic interests of the peoples in the region but also their fundamental human right to live in peace and security. It would be both dangerous and absurd to think that the legitimate desire of the Palestinian people for self-determination could be ignored indefinitely, and it would just as mistaken to think that the right of the Israeli people to live in peace and security can be denied. If one's own rights are to be fully recognized and respected, then one has also to recognize and respect the rights of others.

Although prospects for an early settlement of the Palestinian question remain dim, the international community must be steadfast in its efforts towards the achievement of peace in the Middle East. I should like to take this opportunity to reiterate the position of the Government of Japan on the Middle East as a whole. I do so in the belief that this position can serve as a useful basis for international efforts to attain a just and lasting peace in the region.

First, peace in the Middle East must be just, lasting and comprehensive.

Secondly, such a peace should be achieved through the early and complete implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and through recognition of and respect for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination, under the United Nations Charter.

Thirdly, each and every path towards realization of such a peace must be explored with careful consideration being given to the legitimate security

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requirements of the countries in the region and to the aspirations of all the peoples of the region, including the Palestinian people.

Fourthly, Japan is of the view that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) represents the Palestinian people. Thus, in order to advance the cause of peace in the Middle East, Japan believes that it is essential that Israel and the PLO recognize each other's position and that the PLO participate in the peace process.

For any peace effort to be fruitful it is essential that the parties concerned show their readiness to enter into negotiations and to demonstrate flexibility as to the negotiation process. In turn, it is the responsibility of the international community to ensure that such forthcoming attitudes are neither ignored nor denigrated, but rather that they are encouraged to develop into a full-fledged peace process based on broad international support.

In this regard Japan supports the idea of establishing an international framework for a peaceful settlement. As long as it truly helps facilitate the peace process, Japan is open and flexible as to its modality. Accordingly my delegation last year voted in favour of resolution 41/43 D, which, among other things, called for convening an international peace conference on the Middle East.

To be sure, there are wide differences of opinion with regard to this resolution and many obstacles to its implementation, but I am heartened to note in the Secretary-General's report that, in contrast with the experience of recent years, none of the Security Council members opposes in principle the idea of an international conference under United Nations auspices. On this occasion I wish to express Japan's appreciation to the Secretary-General and assure him of its continued support in his efforts to establish a peace process that will lead to a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

(Mr. Kikuchi, Japan)

Israel's dogged policy of establishing settlements in the occupied territories is an obstacle to any effort to achieve peace. Japan cannot condone that country's actions to change unilaterally the status of the occupied Arab territories, such as its annexation of East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights.

The recurring clashes between the Palestinians and the Israeli authorities in those territories are a source of serious concern to us. While each clash may arise from a specific set of circumstances, we must point to the underlying cause of those difficulties, namely, the continued occupation by Israel of Arab territories.

While it does not in any way sanction Israel's occupation of those territories, my Government strongly appeals to Israel to make special efforts to protect the human rights of the Palestinian people in full accordance with the Fourth Geneva Convention. Japan also calls upon Israel to demonstrate its sincere desire for peace by adopting a fair and just attitude in its administration of the territories under its occupation.

Japan has been making efforts to foster conditions that will lead to a peaceful settlement of the problem. It is in this context that my country supports the idea of convening an international conference. Perhaps a more tangible aspect of Japan's efforts is the support it extends to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which is playing a dual role in responding to the needs of the Palestinian people and in promoting regional stability. In addition to the contributions in cash and food that it has been extending to UNRWA since 1965, Japan started in 1985 to extend technical assistance as well. It has also been co-operating with UNRWA on its project to construct the Jerash Elementary Preparatory School in Jordan.

(Mr. Kikuchi, Japan)

We have witnessed too many examples of countries trying to resolve their disputes by resorting to military means, but history has repeatedly shown that any solution imposed by military force never lasts. This holds true especially in the Middle East, where we have seen the outbreak of one conflict after another. All the parties concerned should learn from history and be prepared to work towards a peaceful solution through negotiations.

No party should ever relinquish the goal of peace. I am convinced that among all the parties concerned there are those elements which are ready to enter into peace talks; it is our collective responsibility to encourage those elements to speak out and call for the commencement of negotiations.

In closing I should like to urge all the peoples of the Middle East to look to their rich and centuries-old traditions to find the wisdom that will lead them to a peaceful solution. The Palestinian people, in particular, have a great potential to contribute to regional stability and prosperity. It is my earnest hope therefore that they will soon attain their inalienable right to self-determination and become a genuine stabilizing influence in the region.

Mr. OUDOVENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): The year 1987 will undoubtedly go down in the history of the struggles of the Arab people of Palestine for its rights as a sort of anniversary year, more specifically a year of bitter anniversaries. There are certain dates in the history of the Palestinians which have been landmarks and turning points in their destiny. These are not simply historical milestones but scars on the body of that people.

Forty years have elapsed since the Palestinian people was deprived of its right to self-determination and national independence, as recognized by the United Nations. Twenty years have passed since Israel occupied the Palestinian lands in the West Bank of the Jordan, the Gaza Strip and the Syrian Golan Heights, and more than five years have passed since Israel occupied South Lebanon. And lastly, it should be recalled that the so-called Balfour Declaration, which cost the Palestinians so dearly, was issued 70 years ago.

On the land occupied in 1967 there is savage and rampant terror, repression and persecution. One comment on this has been made by Professor E. Leibovitz of the Hebrew University at Jerusalem, who can hardly be accused of lack of patriotism:

"What happened in June 1967 transformed Israel into a conquering Power, into an instrument for the harsh domination of another people . . . . In the territories occupied in 1967, Israel is a colonial Power. It is dominating another people by military means."

Indeed, it is true that much blood and many tears have been shed by the Palestinian people during the past few decades. However, the Palestinians are a resilient people and no repression can stop their national liberation struggle, in the vanguard of which stands the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). This

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people, continuing in various ways its just struggle against Israeli occupation despite everything which it has suffered because of the policies of Israel's Zionist ruling circles, supports efforts aimed at achieving a political resolution to the Palestinian problem, which would help to eliminate a source of tension in the Middle East.

Despite wide international support for the cause of the Palestinian people and the efforts of the United Nations to put an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Palestinian problem continues to be a running sore. As I stated previously, this problem has been dealt with in our Organization for almost 40 years now, and whole generations of people have been born and have grown up in the Middle East within earshot of the sinister rumblings of war. The human lives which the Arab-Israeli wars have cost and the material damage beyond accurate calculation which has been caused to the peoples of the Middle East - and most of all to the long-afflicted people of Palestine - are truly immeasurable.

Those responsible for the fact that the Middle East conflict remains unsettled are by no means anonymous. Foremost among them is Israel, which for many years now has been pursuing an aggressive, expansionist policy towards the Arab States and peoples, continuing to occupy unlawfully the Arab lands it seized in 1967 and obstinately resisting the restoration and realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and other Arab countries have become victims of Israeli expansionism at various stages.

The official statements and the actual deeds of the Israeli authorities have frequently indicated their clear intention to annex the territory of the West Bank of the Jordan and the Gaza Strip. Hand in hand with the economic blood-letting of Palestinian lands and the unlawful changing of their legal status, demographic structure and historical character, Israel has been systematically carrying out an

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"iron fist" policy, which, as is rightly pointed out in the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, now before the present session of the General Assembly, is pursued:

"by Israel, the occupying Power, in the occupied territories, in an effort to curb popular sentiment and activities in opposition to the occupation and in support of the PLO. Demonstrations and protests which spread throughout the territories ... were met with armed force by Israeli troops on repeated occasions ..." (A/42/35, para. 22)

In the lands expropriated by the occupiers, Israeli settlements have grown up in a dense network. Israel is trying to preclude the very possibility of returning the West Bank of the Jordan River and the Gaza Strip to their legitimate owners and is bent upon depriving the Palestinian people of the inalienable right to live on the land of its forefathers.

Israel's senior partner in the "strategic alliance" bears equal responsibility for the failure to solve the Palestinian problem. It is the diplomatic and political protection of the United States that provides Israel with a reliable shield. And by the way, we have an opportunity to observe this political symbiosis in action at every session of the General Assembly. Furthermore, the generous military, economic and financial assistance Israel receives has given it the material capability to pursue its policies in the Middle East and beyond.

Another aspect which has a considerable negative effect on efforts to reach a speedy solution to the Palestinian problem is the general state of military and political tension in the area. The continuing Iran-Iraq war is cause for concern and justifiable alarm.

The Palestinian problem has been awaiting settlement for a long time. The humiliations and privations which have fallen to the lot of the Palestinian people



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force us all to look at this problem differently. And mere words of regret about what is happening to the Palestinians in today's world and about the role which is played in the Middle East by the State of Israel, or irrelevant expressions of sentiment, will not do any good here. The only thing that can help is practical collective effort aimed at a political and comprehensive solution to this difficult problem, taking account of the fundamental interests of all the peoples in the region.

Today no one can doubt the objective fact that the absence of a political solution to the Palestinian problem, the crux of the Middle East problem, is the reason for the continuing tension in the Middle Eastern region as a whole, and since this tension has become particularly intense, it constitutes a threat to international peace and security. Finding a just solution to the Palestinian problem means enabling the Palestinian Arabs to enjoy their inalienable rights to return to their homes and to exercise self-determination without outside interference, and to create their own independent State, in accordance with the well-known decisions of the United Nations.

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It is perfectly obvious that the Arab people of Palestine has legitimate reason to demand to be allowed to participate in any negotiations which affect either the question of Palestine itself or the Middle East settlement as a whole. This means participation by the PLO as the sole, legitimate representative of the Arab Palestinian people in a Middle East settlement, on an equal footing with other concerned parties, at all stages of such negotiations.

Growing international support for the struggle of the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights has been accompanied by a growing awareness on the part of world public opinion of the crux of this difficult and complex political problem, which, I repeat, can be resolved only by collective efforts with the participation of all concerned parties.

Today, it can be noted with gratification that there is wide international understanding of the fact that the real way to achieve a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East is the immediate convening of an international conference. This idea was supported by the Secretary-General in his report on this item, which states:

"I am encouraged by 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". (A/42/277, para. 6)

Clear evidence of this is also to be found in the course of the discussion of this item at the current session of the General Assembly. Particularly important in this connection are the results of the Arab Summit Conference held at Amman, whose participants unanimously confirmed their support for the idea of convening a plenipotentiary international conference.

Year after year, the representatives of certain States, speaking from this rostrum, have listed the existing and potential obstacles to convening an international conference to settle the Middle East problem and the question of

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Palestine. Is it not time for us to get down to clearing away the political obstructions along the path to a Middle East settlement? We must do this in a concerted way, with patience, tact and an ability to take into account and respect each other's views and legitimate demands and to speak the same political language.

As Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev in an article widely publicized on the international scene, entitled "The realities and guarantees for a secure world", said that in order to regulate conflicts:

"it is necessary to make wide use of every means for the peaceful settlement of disputes and disagreements between States, to offer good offices and mediation".

The Ukrainian SSR has firmly and consistently taken the side of the Arab people of Palestine in its efforts to exercise its inalienable rights. This is a position of principle which has also been reflected in the diplomatic support we have given the just aspirations of the Palestinian people in the United Nations, in its organs and specialized agencies and in various international forums.

An important mission in reaching a solution to the Palestinian problem has also been entrusted to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. The Ukrainian SSR has been a member of the Committee since it was first founded and has been an active participant in the many-faceted work of that body to acquaint international public opinion with the essence of the Palestinian problem and to mobilize efforts aimed at achieving a comprehensive Middle East settlement and establishing a lasting peace in that part of the world.

We value highly the work done by Ambassador Massamba Sarré, the Permanent Representative of Senegal, who is the Chairman of the Committee. Today the Committee does wide-ranging and useful work with non-governmental organizations of

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various States Members of our Organization with a view to mobilizing the public in those countries to support the efforts being made to resolve the Palestinian problem and acquainting them with the undistorted facts about the Arab Israeli conflict. Growing interest is being given to seminars and regional symposia held by non-governmental organizations on the question of Palestine, and the work of the Committee is being given wider coverage by the media in various countries, which undoubtedly indicates a growing interest in the question of a Middle East settlement in general, as well as serious concern about the fate of the millions of Palestinian Arabs.

The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR believes that a valuable contribution to drawing up the principles for solving the Palestinian problem and taking practical steps to that end is to be found in the Committee's recommendations, which were approved by the General Assembly at its last session.

In the present circumstances, the time is ripe to initiate the careful and painstaking work of preparations for an authoritative international conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all concerned parties, including the PLO, on an equal footing.

In this connection, as we see it, the mandate of the Committee enables it to intensify the work of helping to realize the idea of creating, within the framework of the Security Council, the preparatory machinery for convening an international conference on the Middle East. We also believe that a possible step in that direction might be the holding of special meetings of the Committee in order to consider specific political aspects of the present Middle East situation and to discuss thoroughly the possible practical steps for carrying out the appropriate preparatory work in the framework of the Security Council. The preparatory work for the conference would also help increase confidence, mutual understanding and

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co-operation among all interested parties for the settlement of the Palestinian problem and the entire range of difficult elements which make up the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Our delegation urges giving a new practical dimension to efforts aimed at resolving the Palestinian problem and embarking on a constructive dialogue, preparing and subsequently increasing confidence-building measures between the parties to the conflict, and seeking mutually acceptable and exclusively peaceful solutions to these problems.

For its part, the Ukrainian SSR declares its readiness to make whatever contribution it can to these efforts of our Organization.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Russian): In accordance with General Assembly resolution 33/69 (XXX) of 10 October 1975, I now call on the Permanent Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Mr. ANSAY (Organization of the Islamic Conference): Once again the General Assembly has taken up the question of Palestine - a question that the United Nations has had before it from the very inception of the Organization. Almost 40 years have gone by since the emergence of the Middle East conflict. Those long years have witnessed the suffering of the Palestinian people and its just struggle for self-determination, national independence and the establishment of a State of its own. But the international community has not yet been able to redress the injustices suffered by Palestinians since their lands were taken away and most of the inhabitants themselves driven out of their own country. Nevertheless, in the face of almost insurmountable difficulties, the people of Palestine has kept up its just and heroic struggle for its legitimate rights of self-determination, freedom and national dignity.

(Mr. Ansay, Organization of the  
Islamic Conference)

The Palestinian question is at the core of the Middle East problem, and at the heart of the Palestinian question lies the problem of Al-Quds Al-Sharif, the continued exacerbation of which constitutes a grave threat not only to the stability of the region but to international peace and security as well.

For the Organization of the Islamic Conference the cause of Palestine and Al-Quds Al-Sharif is the prime cause of the entire Muslim Ummah, because of its justness and the existence of the first Qibla and Third Islamic Holy Shrine under illegal occupation by Israel.

(Mr. Ansay, Organization of the  
Islamic Conference)

For more than four decades Israel's policies of expansionist aggression, ruthless oppression of the Palestinian people, provocative defiance of the will of the international community and intransigent flouting of all norms of international law have been the single source of unabated violence, tension and war in the Middle East. The ultimate designs of these policies are as transparent as they are futile, namely, the permanent usurpation of the fundamental rights of the Palestinians and the liquidation of the Palestinian cause.

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

In this connection the reports of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories, among many other United Nations documents, reveal the real image of the atrocities committed by the Zionist authorities in occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories. At this juncture I must also express my organization's appreciation and gratitude for the contribution made to our cause by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian people, under the able guidance of its Chairman, Ambassador Massamba Sarré. The value of its latest report before us speaks for itself.

It must be fully realized that it will be impossible to solve the problem of the Middle East as a whole without the creation and establishment of an independent

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sovereign Palestinian State and it will be equally impossible to achieve a solution to this complex problem if the Palestinian people are ignored in negotiations of any kind. It is inconceivable to assert that any meaningful negotiation on the question of Palestine could be held without the full participation of the genuine representatives of the Palestinian people, their sole and legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

It is most regrettable that important peace initiatives and efforts by the international community and the flexibility demonstrated by the Arab States and the people of Palestine in their search for a comprehensive and lasting settlement in the Middle East have evoked no responsive chord in Israel. Israel has rejected and systematically destroyed all peace initiatives and continues single-mindedly to pursue its aggressive, expansionist and annexationist policies.

The elements of a comprehensive, just and durable peace in the Middle East, despite their denial by Israel, are well known. They have been enunciated in a number of peace proposals.

The Fez Peace Plan of 1982, which was fully endorsed by the Organization of the Islamic Conference at the level of its summit meetings, contains these elements of a comprehensive, just and durable peace for the Middle East. They were also identified by the United Nations and include the following elements: first, restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to return, to exercise self-determination and to have a sovereign homeland; secondly, the withdrawal of Israel from all occupied Arab and Palestinian territories, including the Holy City of Jerusalem; and, thirdly, recognition of the right of all States in the region to their existence within secure and internationally recognized boundaries, with justice and security for all people.



(Mr. Ansary, Organization of the  
Islamic Conference)

The position of the Organization of the Islamic Conference regarding the Question of Palestine is well known. The Fifth Islamic Summit Conference, held in Kuwait from 26 to 29 January 1987, reaffirmed inter alia its adherence and total commitment to the following principles: First, the Palestine question, the foremost cause of the Muslims, is the core of the Middle East problem. Secondly, the Palestine question and the Middle East problems must be dealt with and solved as an indivisible whole; therefore, there can be no partial solution or a solution that involves only some of the parties to the conflict or covers only some of the causes of the conflict to the exclusion of others; nor is it possible to establish a partial peace, for peace must be comprehensive for all parties. Thirdly, a just peace in the region can only be based on the complete and unconditional withdrawal of Israel from all the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories and the recovery of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people, which include: their right to their homeland, Palestine; their right to return to their homeland and to recover their possessions as guaranteed in United Nations resolutions; their right to self-determination without any external interference; their right freely to exercise their sovereignty over their national land and its natural resources; and their right to establish their national independent sovereign State in Palestine, with Al Quds Al Sharif as its capital, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Fourthly, the city of Al Quds Al Sharif, the capital of Palestine, is an integral part of the occupied land of Palestine. Israel must therefore withdraw totally and unconditionally from it and restore it to Palestinian sovereignty. And, fifthly, the Palestine Liberation Organization is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. It alone is fully entitled to represent this people and to participate independently and on an equal

(Mr. Ansay, Organization of the  
Islamic Conference)

footing in all international conferences, activities and forums dealing with the Palestine question and the Arab-Israeli conflict, in order to recover the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people.

The Fifth Islamic Summit also reaffirmed the commitment of its member States to the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East under the aegis of the United Nations, with the participation of all the parties concerned in the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization on an equal footing with them, as well as all the permanent members of the Security Council, with a view to implementing the relevant United Nations resolutions and the convening of a meeting of a preparatory committee.

The Co-ordination Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Organization of the Islamic Conference held recently in New York, on 1 October 1987, reaffirmed once again the unequivocal support and commitment of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to the Palestinian cause. The final communiqué issued by that body expressed inter alia the adherence of the Muslim world to the holding of an international peace conference on the Middle East in conformity with United Nations General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, with the participation, on an equal footing, of all parties directly concerned including the Palestine Liberation Organization.

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

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.