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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
DECLARATION ON THE STRENGTHENING OF
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

SECURITY COUNCIL
Thirty-fifth year

Letter dated 21 November 1980 from the Permanent Representative of
Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In my letters to you and to the President of the Security Council over the last year, I have had frequent occasion to observe that the organization which calls itself the PLO is a criminal group which serves as a tool of international terrorism.

I have also had occasion to note that in all its activities the PLO serves the interests of those who are implacably opposed to peace in the Middle East. Those rejectionists, both in the Middle East and beyond, seek to destabilize the region, and see in the PLO a convenient tool for their purposes.

The PLO's role as a linchpin of the "terrorist international", and the Soviet Union's use of it - directly or through various proxies, such as East Germany - as an instrument to advance Soviet foreign policy objectives in the Middle East as well as its subversive interests elsewhere, was exposed in an authoritative article published in The New York Times Magazine of 2 November 1980. Its author, Mr. Robert Moss, is a lecturer at the Royal College of Defence Studies in London.

Mr. Moss convincingly documented the support and training which the Soviet Union gives to PLO terrorists, and the services which the PLO renders in return in order to further Soviet interests in places as far removed from the Middle East as Europe and Australia, with all that this implies as a threat to international peace and security.

I attach excerpts from that article, and I have the honour to request that they, together with this letter, be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 26 and 50, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Yehuda Z. BLUM
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Israel
to the United Nations

ANNEX

Excerpts from Article by Robert Moss in the New York Times Magazine of
2 November 1980

"The Palestine Liberation Organization (P.L.O.)... which is openly supported by the Soviet Union, must be counted a terrorist organization - even if some prominent Western politicians choose to express the view that it is not.

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"At a secret meeting of Warsaw Pact leaders held in Prague in August 1973, Soviet leader Leonid I. Brezhnev paid tribute to the role of the "national liberation" movements in changing the "correlation of forces" in favor of "socialist countries." His speech - the contents of which became known to the British and American Governments through leaks by East European delegates - suggested that the Soviet Union is seeking to exploit terrorism as a calculated instrument of foreign policy. Since Brezhnev made his speech, the Soviet Union has notably increased its support for one national liberation movement, the P.L.O., which has become a coordinator of many international terrorist groups as well as a revolutionary vanguard in the Middle East.

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"Although precise figures are impossible to obtain, the number of recruits from the Arab world, Africa, Latin America, Western Europe and the Far East who have received instruction in the Soviet bloc in guerrilla warfare, sabotage, street fighting, assassination techniques and undercover operations is thought to total many thousands. Since 1974, according to P.L.O. defectors, more than 1,000 Palestinians alone have been trained in Soviet-bloc camps. Courses at the Soviet military academy near Simferopol have been attended by groups from rival wings of the P.L.O., including Al Fatah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (P.F.L.P.) and the Palestine Liberation Front (P.L.F.). Zehdi Labib Terzi, the P.L.O.'s United Nations observer, said in a 1979 interview that "the Soviet Union, and all the socialist countries...open up their military academies to ...our freedom fighters."

"Some recruits are selected from the stream of foreigners invited to attend the Patrice Lumumba People's Friendship University, under the supervision of the International Department of the Communist Party's Central Committee.

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"The most famous alumnus of the Patrice Lumumba University is the Venezuelan terrorist Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, alias "Carlos"...

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"By his own account, Carlos was expelled from Patrice Lumumba for loose living and indiscipline. However, West European intelligence sources maintain that this story was a blind, intended to camouflage the fact that Carlos had been recruited by the K.G.B. as a link man with international terrorist groups, especially the P.F.L.P.

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"Carlos achieved international notoriety after a series of operations - including the attempted murder of a prominent Jewish businessman, Joseph Edward Sieff, in London in December 1973 and rocket attacks on El Al aircraft at Paris's Orly Airport in 1975 - that culminated in the kidnapping of oil ministers from the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries in Vienna in December 1975. The French security service (D.S.T.) turned up evidence of the involvement of the Cuban intelligence service (D.G.I.) with the Carlos ring in Paris. This led to the expulsion from France of three D.G.I. officers operating undercover as cultural attachés at the Cuban Embassy. The D.S.T. also named a fourth Cuban intelligence officer in London who had allegedly served as a "control" for the Carlos team there.

"There are other examples of terrorists trained in the Soviet bloc who have mounted attacks in Western Europe. In September 1975, Dutch police arrested four Syrians who belonged to a team that had planned to hijack a train carrying Soviet Jews; the Syrians confessed that they had been trained at a camp outside Moscow.

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"Most weapons used by international terrorists originate in the Soviet bloc... The P.F.L.P. has used Soviet-made heat-seeking Strela anti-aircraft missiles (SAM-7's) in a series of unsuccessful attempts to attack civilian airliners.

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"Soviet-bloc countries have also made direct deliveries of arms to terrorist organizations. Zehdi Terzi has revealed that the P.L.O. receives "direct consignments" of arms and explosives from the Soviet Union. The inventory of Soviet-made weapons now in the possession of the P.L.O. includes T-34 and T-54 tanks, as well as medium artillery. According to Western intelligence sources, an agreement to maintain a direct arms pipeline was reached

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during the visit of Yasir Arafat, P.L.O. chairman, to Moscow in March 1979.

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"Evidence of Soviet-bloc involvement in providing operational intelligence - the selection of targets - for terrorists comes from the case of Panaiyotis Paschalis, a Greek Cypriot arrested by the Israeli security service as an East German agent in Tel Aviv on January 19, 1978. Paschalis, a photo-journalist accredited to a Cypriot Communist newspaper and to East German television, told the Israelis that he had been sending exhaustive photographic dossiers on potential targets to Nicosia, Cyprus. From there, according to Paschalis (whom Israeli sources believe was a principal agent), the material was dispatched to East Berlin for inclusion in the central archives of the East German Ministry of State Security (M.f.S.), which uses the state television company as a front for espionage.

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"The details of Paschalis's case lend credence to allegations by a number of Western intelligence sources that the Soviet Union has assigned the M.f.S. wide-ranging responsibilities in channeling intelligence support to international terrorists. On April 24, 1979, West German police arrested a seven-man P.L.O. hit team in West Berlin. The leader of the squad was Ali Shalbiya, a key lieutenant to the P.L.O.'s intelligence chief, Abu Iyad. Within days, two more P.L.O. squads were intercepted as they attempted to cross the Austrian and Dutch borders. Under questioning, the Palestinians confessed that their mission had been to blow up fuel depots and other major industrial installations in West Berlin. Senior officials in West Germany's Office for the Protection of the Constitution believe that the M.f.S. provided operational data for this abortive raid, as well as for other strikes against targets in the Federal Republic. (Last fall, West German security discovered that the M.f.S. was playing host in East Berlin to a P.L.O. team, code-named "Force 17").

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"As the role of East Germany suggests, the Soviet Union delegates much of the sensitive work of providing liaison with terrorist groups to proxies. Most of the East European secret services, like the M.f.S., operate under complete Russian control; other surrogates, though not always so compliant, are equally valuable. The most important of these are Cuba, the radical Arab states and the ubiquitous P.L.O.

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"The close ties that now exist between Moscow and the P.L.O. date from the summer of 1974, when Yasir Arafat visited Moscow as an official guest. Today, regular liaison between Moscow and the P.L.O. leadership is assured through the Soviet Embassy in Beirut, which provides cover for the most important K.G.B. station in the Middle East. (Of the 88 accredited Soviet diplomats in Beirut, 37 have been identified by Western intelligence sources as K.G.B. or G.R.U. officers.) The key link man between Moscow and the P.L.O. is Aleksandr Soldatov, the Soviet Ambassador, who arrived in Lebanon in September 1974.

"Working closely with Yasir Arafat, Soldatov has succeeded in building a trustworthy "Soviet lobby" inside the P.L.O., whose leadership is divided among rival factions, some of them more sympathetic to the Islamic fundamentalists of the Moslem Brotherhood, the conservative monarchies of the Persian Gulf or to the Chinese than to the Soviet Union. Defectors from the P.L.O. and high-level prisoners interrogated by the Israelis have revealed that Arafat currently meets with Soldatov on an average of once a week, and confers with the Soviet Ambassador before authorizing any major terrorist operation or political maneuver. Western diplomats who have monitored Soldatov's activities in Beirut found that, in the space of six weeks earlier this year, the two men had at least seven lengthy consultations. According to intelligence sources, during one meeting, on March 15, Arafat reported on the results of a visit that the P.L.O. intelligence chief, Abu Iyad, had just made to Kuwait, Aden and Yemen. These sources say that Abu Iyad had investigated the prospects for expanding covert P.L.O. activity among the Palestinian communities in the Gulf area. P.L.O. cells in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf emirates are subordinate to the organization's operations department in Beirut, which is headed by Abu Jihad. Western intelligence sources believe that Abu Jihad's departure on a secret visit to Moscow two days after the March 15 meeting between Arafat and Soldatov was connected with a plan to increase efforts to destabilize the conservative Arab monarchies of the Gulf.

"Vladimir N. Sakharov, a Middle East specialist who defected from the K.G.B. in 1971, has described the increasing Soviet investment in subversive operations in the Arabian peninsula. While based in Sana, Yemen, Sakharov served as translator at meetings between K.G.B. officers and "top operatives of insurgent groups operating on the Arabian peninsula and in the Persian Gulf emirates." He has also reported that some of the terrorists who participated in the professionally organized seizure of the Grand Mosque in Mecca last November - an attack that rocked national and

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international confidence in the stability of the Saudi royal house - were "among those (he) had heard mentioned as part of the Soviet sponsored People's Front of the Arabian Peninsula." West European intelligence sources have disclosed that some of the Mecca insurgents (whose battle plan called for subsequent uprisings in Medina, Taif and Riyadh) had been trained by Cuban and East German instructors at a camp near Lahej in South Yemen, where the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine has taken its recruits in the past. Soviet interest in the P.L.O. as a revolutionary vanguard in the Gulf is heightened by its failure to date to form an effective Saudi Communist Party; one was set up in 1975, but it has remained semidormant.

"The P.L.O. currently enjoys close ties with some of the Iranian revolutionary leaders who rose to power with the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. One of the most intriguing delegates at the Fatah conference in Damascus at the end of May, for example, was Arbas-Agha Zahani whose nom de guerre is Abu Sharif. He was then the head of the Ayatollah's Revolutionary Guards, or Pasdaran Enghelab, a post he resigned in a power play in June that was designed to weaken the position of the relatively "moderate" President Abolhassan Bani-Sadr.

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" Abu Sharif's links with Arafat, Abu Jihad and other key figures in the P.L.O. leadership date back to the early 1970's, when he attended a guerrilla training course at a Fatah camp in Lebanon. After the downfall of the Shah...a special P.L.O. unit, whose members had received intelligence training in the Soviet Union, was dispatched to Teheran to assist in rooting out "counterrevolutionaries." Abu Sharif repaid his personal debt to the P.L.O. by successfully lobbying - with the backing of, among others, one of the Ayatollah's grandsons - for a big Iranian contribution to the Palestinian war chest and for the dispatch of more than 200 Iranian "volunteers" to fight with the P.L.O. in southern Lebanon.

"The current head of the P.L.O. network in Iran is Hani al-Hassan, alias Abu Hassan, a Jordanian citizen who belongs to Arafat's inner circle of advisers. Before he was sent to Teheran, Abu Hassan served as deputy chief of Fatah's security department.

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"...Abu Hassan's activities in Teheran have served the Soviet Union well. On October 12, 1979, a senior P.L.O. delegation, including Abu Jihad, Abu Walid (who is in charge of "special operations") and Col. Husni Ghazi al-Hussein, arrived in Teheran. Iranian officials who have fled the country claim that this P.L.O. team, in a series of meetings with Iranian revolutionary leaders arranged by Abu Hassan, proposed the assault on the United States Embassy that took place on November 4. It is impossible to prove or disprove this report in the absence of further details. But Western European intelligence sources report that Abu Hassan was one of the counselors who urged Khomeini to reject any prompt resolution of the embassy occupation, and that the original assault force included several Iranians who had been trained at Palestinian camps in Lebanon. In any case, the prolonged embassy crisis serves Soviet interests by helping to divert the attention of Iran's Moslem revolutionaries from the repression of their co-religionists in neighboring Afghanistan, and to steer Khomeini's revolution in a vehemently anti-American direction.

"After the outbreak of the Iraq-Iran war in September, the P.L.O. continued to lean toward the Iranians, raising the possibility that the Palestinians might cause trouble for some of the Arab states, notably Jordan, which had sided with Iraq. (There are some 1,127,000 Palestinians in Jordan and 180,000 in Saudi Arabia.)

"The usefulness of the P.L.O. to the Soviet Union extends far beyond the Middle East. At Fatah and P.F.L.P. training camps in Lebanon, Syria, South Yemen and Libya - where many Soviet-bloc instructors can be found - there is a steady intake of insurgents from places as far afield as the Netherlands and Australia.

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"The relationship of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine with underground revolutionary groups in Italy extends beyond use of the Italians' transit facilities and logistical backup for Palestinian operations. On November 7, 1979, Italian police stopped a speeding car on a highway along the Adriatic coast. They found that the occupants of the vehicle, both members of the Red Brigades, were carrying two SAM-7 missiles. The weapons had originated with the P.F.L.P., which had smuggled them into the country on board a small Syrian-crewed ship, the Sidon. Italian security experts believe that the captured SAM-7's were destined for use against Italian political targets, even though the P.F.L.P. put out a statement claiming the arms were being transported elsewhere. This would fit in with the conclusion of West German investigators that the murderers of Italy's Prime Minister Aldo Moro had Palestinian connections."
