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REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
QUESTION OF PALESTINE

SECURITY COUNCIL
Thirty-sixth year

Letter dated 13 April 1981 from the Permanent Representative of
Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions of my Government, I would like to draw your attention to the following:

The Israeli cabinet approved on 29 March 1981 a plan to start the construction of a Mediterranean-Dead Sea canal and tunnel project designed to produce hydroelectric energy.

The position of my Government in this regard is put forward as follows:

The proposed site of the canal's terminal on the Mediterranean is within the Gaza Strip area which has been under Israeli military occupation since June 1967. Besides, a part of this canal will run through the Gaza Strip. In the light of Egypt's historical responsibilities vis-à-vis the Gaza Strip as recognized by the United Nations, Egypt views this matter seriously and is deeply concerned at the grave political and economic consequence this project would create. Accordingly Egypt strongly objects to this project on the grounds that it constitutes:

1. A violation of the principles and provisions of Security Council resolution 242 (1967) of 20 November 1967, which stipulates the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territories by war, and calls upon Israel to withdraw from occupied Arab territories;
2. A flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, 1/ which emphasizes that the occupation of territory is essentially

* A/36/50.

1/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 75, No. 973, p. 287.

a temporary de facto situation, which cannot in any way imply any right whatsoever for the occupying power to dispose of the territory or any part thereof;

3. A violation of a series of General Assembly resolutions which call upon Israel to desist from any act that would change the physical character, geographic and demographic composition or the legal status of the occupied territories or part thereof, and also a violation of the principle enunciated by the General Assembly on the right of all peoples to sovereignty over their natural resources, and in particular the General Assembly resolutions on the right of the Palestinian people to sovereignty over their national resources, the last of which is resolution 35/110 of 5 December 1980.

The Israeli Cabinet's decision to proceed with this project, while parts of it start and pass through the Palestinian occupied territory, underscores an Israeli intention to annex at least those portions of the Palestinian territories through which the canal is to pass.

Israel's decision to construct the canal, thus creating a de facto permanent Israeli presence, is destined and bound to predetermine unilaterally the final status and future of the Gaza Strip in total disregard of the genuine interests of the Palestinian people and in outright denial of their inalienable right to self-determination and sovereignty over their national resources and wealth.

The construction of this project on the occupied Palestinian territories would again entail further illegal measures such as the acquisition of territories, confiscation of properties, depopulation of whole areas and establishment of new settlements inside the Gaza Strip.

Furthermore, it is obvious that the canal project will entail grave regional economic damages, since it will empty into the Dead Sea with certain detrimental effects on the Sea, its chemical balance and resources.

Instead of acting in good faith and in conformity with legally-binding commitments, the Israeli Cabinet's decision is an added manifestation of the practice of obstructing the creation of a favourable atmosphere under which peace momentum could be maintained and which is conducive to a comprehensive peaceful settlement for the Middle East crisis, the core of which is and remains the fulfilment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, particularly their right to self-determination and sovereignty over their national wealth and resources.

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I should be grateful if you would arrange to circulate this letter as an official document of the General Assembly, under items 12 and 31 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) A. Esmat Abdel MEGUID
Permanent Representative of the
Arab Republic of Egypt to the
United Nations
