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**1993<sup>rd</sup>** MEETING: 25 MARCH 1977

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## NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

Documents of the Security Council (symbol S/. . .) are normally published in quarterly *Supplements of the Official Records of the Security Council*. The date of the document indicates the supplement in which it appears or in which information about it is given.

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## 1993rd MEETING

Held in New York on Friday, 25 March 1977, at 3 p.m.

*President:* Mr. Andrew YOUNG (United States of America).

*Present:* The representatives of the following States: Benin, Canada, China, France, Germany, Federal Republic of, India, Libyan Arab Republic, Mauritius, Pakistan, Panama, Romania, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Venezuela.

### Provisional agenda (S/Agenda/1993)

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. The situation in the Middle East:  
Report of the Secretary-General submitted under General Assembly resolution 31/62 concerning the Peace Conference on the Middle East (S/12290 and Corr.1)

*The meeting was called to order at 3.35 p.m.*

### Adoption of the agenda

1. The PRESIDENT: I would like to recall that during the course of consultations in which all Council members participated, on 15 March, it was agreed that the Council would take up consideration of the report of the Secretary-General on the Peace Conference on the Middle East at an appropriate time. The request of the representative of Egypt, dated 23 March, for a meeting of the Council on 25 March is now before the Council [S/12306]. If I hear no objection, I shall consider the agenda adopted.

*The agenda was adopted.*

### The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General submitted under General Assembly resolution 31/62 concerning the Peace Conference on the Middle East (S/12290 and Corr.1)

2. The PRESIDENT: Letters have been addressed to the President of the Security Council by the representatives of Egypt, Israel and Jordan, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the question inscribed on the agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite the representatives of the States I have just mentioned to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in conformity with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure.

*It was so decided.*

3. The PRESIDENT: The representative of Egypt has addressed a letter to me as President of the Council which reads as follows:

“With reference to the Security Council meeting to discuss the situation in the Middle East in the light of the report of the Secretary-General, I kindly request the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the debate of the Council in accordance with the previous decisions of the Council in that respect.”

4. It is my understanding that this proposal is not being put forward under rule 37 or rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Council but that, if it is adopted by the Council, the invitation to the Palestine Liberation Organization to participate in this debate will confer upon it the same rights of participation as those conferred on a Member State when it is invited to participate under rule 37.

5. Does any member of the Council wish to speak in connexion with this proposal?

6. As that is not the case, I shall speak now in my capacity as the representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

7. I wish to state that my Government is not able to agree to the proposal to invite the representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization to participate in the debate of the Council with the same rights of participation as a Member State. We thought the terms of the Council's invitation were inappropriate on past occasions and want to repeat our opinion. For this reason we wish the proposed invitation put to the vote.

8. Resuming my role as PRESIDENT, I shall now put to the vote the request to extend an invitation to the Palestine Liberation Organization to participate in the discussion, on the understanding I have indicated.

*A vote was taken by show of hands.*

*In favour:* Benin, China, India, Libyan Arab Republic, Mauritius, Pakistan, Panama, Romania, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Venezuela.

*Against:* United States of America.

*Abstaining:* Canada, France, Germany, Federal Republic of, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

*The proposal was adopted by 10 votes to 1, with 4 abstentions.*

9. The PRESIDENT: In accordance with the decision just taken and the practice followed on previous occasions, I now invite the representative of Israel and the representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization to take places at the Council table.

*At the invitation of the President, Mr. C. Herzog (Israel) and Mr. Z. L. Terzi (Palestine Liberation Organization) took places at the Council table.*

10. The PRESIDENT: In view of the limited number of places available at the Council table, I invite the representatives of Egypt and Jordan to take the places reserved for them at the side of the Council chamber, on the usual understanding that they will be invited to take a place at the Council table whenever they wish to address the Council.

*At the invitation of the President, Mr. A. E. Abdel Meguid (Egypt) and Mr. H. Nuseibeh (Jordan) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council chamber.*

11. The PRESIDENT: The report of the Secretary-General on the Peace Conference on the Middle East was submitted on 28 February under General Assembly resolution 31/62 and is reproduced in document S/12290 and Corr.1. The Council has also received a letter dated 7 January from the Secretary-General, transmitting the text of that resolution and drawing attention to paragraph 3. The letter is reproduced in document S/12272.

12. Members of the Council will recall that when we met in informal consultations on 15 March, it was agreed in principle that, at an appropriate stage, the Council would consider the Secretary-General's report. I understand that the Secretary-General is prepared to present his report to the Council. I therefore call on the Secretary-General.

13. The SECRETARY-GENERAL: The Council has before it my report of 28 February, submitted under General Assembly resolution 31/62, concerning the Peace Conference on the Middle East.

14. The importance which all concerned attach to the convening of the Peace Conference on the Middle East in conditions conducive to its ultimate success is underlined by all the meetings and discussions, in various places and between various parties, concerning the possibility of resuming the negotiating process in the Middle East. While it is, I believe, the general wish that the Conference should be convened at the earliest possible date, it is also fully realized on all sides that certain problems must be overcome before that is possible.

15. In that connexion, I have already indicated that certain changes of attitude on all sides are desirable. I remain hopeful that the diplomatic efforts now under way will contribute to such changes. Obviously, basic changes in seemingly intractable problems, such as those in the Middle East, will be necessarily slow and painful. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that we should not be discouraged when progress is slow; we should persevere with all the energy at our command. I note that recent statements on the Middle East problem by the Co-Chairmen of the

Conference contain elements that may further the negotiating process. It is, I believe, also a matter of general agreement that, in order for the Conference to succeed, the necessary groundwork must be laid. I hope that my report will prove useful to the members of the Council in their discussion of this vitally important matter.

16. I should like to emphasize once again the absolute necessity of seizing the present opportunities and taking advantage of the prevailing climate for making definitive steps forward towards a settlement of the Middle East problem. I remain firmly convinced that neither the parties in the Middle East nor the international community as a whole can afford a continuing stalemate. It is therefore essential that we redouble our efforts in assisting the parties to create conditions favourable to the resumption of the negotiating process. Failure to do so may well result in a drift away from the arduous search for a just and lasting settlement in the Middle East. For my part, I shall continue my contacts with the parties and the two Co-Chairmen, in order to make progress in the attainment of the desired results.

17. I am sure that the members of the Council share my preoccupations and will do their utmost to assist in the general effort to make possible the convening of the Peace Conference on the Middle East in conditions in which it can engage in constructive negotiations with a real chance of achieving progress.

18. The PRESIDENT: I have just received a letter from the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic in which he asks to be invited to participate in the discussion on the question now before the Council. I propose, therefore, with the consent of the Council, to invite him to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the usual practice and in conformity with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure.

19. As there is no objection, I invite the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to take a place at the side of the Council chamber, on the usual understanding that he will be invited to take a place at the Council table whenever he wishes to address the Council.

*At the invitation of the President, Mr. M. Allaf (Syrian Arab Republic) took the place reserved for him at the side of the Council chamber.*

20. The PRESIDENT: The first speaker is the representative of Egypt. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

21. Mr. ABDEL MEGUID (Egypt): Mr. President, I hope it is a good omen that the Security Council is meeting today under your presidency to debate the important issue of the Middle East in the light of the report which the Secretary-General has just introduced.

22. As Co-Chairman of the Peace Conference on the Middle East, your country has a special responsibility and its efforts to advance the process of negotiation are well known to all of us. The present time is propitious for

initiating real progress in the right direction, towards a genuine peace and stability in our area, and not mere movement. The role of both Co-Chairmen, the United States of America and the Soviet Union, should be to further progress towards that goal. Let us all hope that the opportunity now afforded us is not missed, as were others before it.

23. Needless to say, the presence of the representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization is a manifestation of the preoccupation of the Council with the important and overriding fact that the participation of the representative of the Palestinian people is essential in any debate concerning the situation in the Middle East. During the last 15 months, the Council has been wisely consistent in this policy of inviting the representatives of that valiant people to participate in its debates.

24. In its historic resolution 31/62 of 9 December 1976, the General Assembly affirmed its determination to strive for peace in the Middle East by calling for the early convening of the Peace Conference under the auspices of the United Nations and the co-chairmanship of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America. That resolution was indeed historic, particularly so, since 122 Member States supported it. As might have been expected, Israel chose to oppose that significant resolution in order to demonstrate two things: first, its usual defiance of the United Nations and the will of the vast majority of the Members and, secondly, its defiance of the peace process in the Middle East itself. I shall dwell on this particular point later.

25. Aware of the explosive situation in the area, the General Assembly expressed its grave concern at the lack of progress towards the achievement of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, at the same time emphasizing that any relaxation in the search for a comprehensive settlement constituted a grave threat to the prospects of peace in the area as well as to international peace and security. The Assembly then asked our distinguished and able Secretary-General to resume his contacts with all the parties to the conflict and the Co-Chairmen of the Peace Conference, in accordance with his initiative of 1 April 1976 [see S/12210 of 18 October 1976, para. 8], in preparation for the early convening of the Conference, and to submit to the Council, not later than 1 March 1977, a report on the results of his contacts and on the situation in the Middle East.

26. The Secretary-General went to the area, where he contacted the parties, namely, Egypt, Syria, Jordan, the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel. He also contacted the Co-Chairmen of the Peace Conference and prepared a detailed and comprehensive report on those contacts and his conclusions. That report was duly presented to the Council in document S/12290 and Corr.1. Let me take this opportunity to express Egypt's thanks and appreciation to the Secretary-General for his tireless efforts to push forward the cause of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East and his pledge to continue those efforts.

27. His strenuous efforts are supported by all peace-loving countries of the world, and they demonstrate the importance attached by the United Nations over a period of

almost 30 years to the Palestine question and the serious situation in the Middle East. In fact, the Secretary-General was very conscious of the seriousness of the situation in the area when, before his trip to the Middle East, he declared that if the present circumstances were not correctly exploited, war could easily break out in the area. He is also correct in the assessment of the seriousness of the situation he gives in his report. He says:

“... there is, I believe, an increasing consciousness in the area that an opportunity now exists to resume negotiations in a meaningful way and that, if this opportunity is not seized, there are grave dangers that the situation will deteriorate once again, with incalculable consequences not only for the Middle East but for the international community as a whole.” [S/12290 and Corr.1, para. 19.]

28. In paragraph 3 of its resolution 31/62, the General Assembly also requested the Security Council to convene subsequent to the submission of the Secretary-General's report in order to consider the situation in the Middle East in the light of that report and to promote the process of establishing a just and lasting peace in the area. Consequently, it was natural for the Council to decide to convene to discuss the situation in the area in the light of that important report. In doing so, the Council has demonstrated its prime responsibility as the guardian of peace and security in the world.

29. I should like here to emphasize the importance my Government attaches to that resolution, which led it to extend to the Secretary-General all possible help and co-operation to ensure the success of his mission. As the Secretary-General mentions in his report, it invited him so that he could resume his contacts in the area itself. In fact, the Arab side—Egypt, Syria, Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organization—were very firm in emphasizing to the Secretary-General their desire to achieve a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

30. Is this genuine quest for peace reciprocated by Israel? Certainly not. Israel, as usual, has relied on its outmoded tactics of procrastination. It has even declared, through its Minister for Foreign Affairs, that the United Nations and its Secretary-General have nothing to do with the quest for peace in the area. Thus it has started to put obstacles on the road to convening the Peace Conference by creating procedural difficulties concerning the participation in this Conference of the main party, the Palestinian people.

31. The logical consequence of what I have said—a consequence in which Egypt believes and which is recognized now by the vast majority of countries, if not by almost all of them—is that the rights of the Palestinian people are no less important than the rights of all the other peoples in the area and should be acknowledged and guaranteed. It would therefore follow that they should also be given the opportunity to express their legitimate demands on an equal footing with the other peoples in the area, in order that all—I repeat all—the peoples of the area may live in peace and security.

32. It is apparent now that the entire world is fed up with these Israeli manoeuvres which have only one aim in mind:

to prevent peace from prevailing in the area. Is Israel the guardian of the Palestinians to choose the representatives for those valiant, courageous and patient people? It tried once before, in elections in the West Bank, but the Palestinian people who live in the occupied territories, under the most brutal occupation in recent history, demonstrated clearly who was their true representative: the Palestine Liberation Organization. The daily demonstrations of the people of the West Bank and Gaza in favour of the Palestine Liberation Organization are clear proof of this support. Do they not provide enough proof to Israel to make it change its policy if it really wants to live in peace in the area with the people it has persecuted so much in the past? But no; Israel has always been true to its tradition. It wants to sweep under the carpet the core of the whole problem: the fate of 3 million Palestinians who have suffered so much and so long, living in miserable conditions in tents and refugee camps for more than a quarter of a century.

33. The Council last met on this question in November 1976 and any review of the events of these last months proves beyond any doubt that it is Israel's persistent policy to consolidate its occupation of the Arab territories, to exploit and plunder their natural resources, to establish more Israeli settlements and expel large segments of the population of these territories. This is in addition to its shameful record of violating every aspect of human rights there. The latest innovation applied by the occupying forces is the so-called taxes, including value-added taxes, which are collected by force from the inhabitants under the threat of confiscation of what little they still own. The proceeds are not spent on services in the occupied territories but are channeled directly to the Israeli treasury for financing Israeli settlements and other expansionist projects in these territories.

34. The Security Council itself was very conscious of these facts when it unanimously expressed on 11 November 1976, and I quote from the consensus,

"its grave anxiety and concern over the present serious situation in the occupied Arab territories as a result of continued Israeli occupation" [*see 1969th meeting*].

This occupation has led even some Israeli politicians to conclude that it is abnormal and hostile—even Mr. Shlomo Avineri, the Director-General of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who stated recently that it would be wrong for Israel to ignore the intensely provocative effect of its occupation of the areas. It was a fact, he said, to be faced, whatever one's political views regarding an ultimate settlement. It is unnecessary to say here that Israeli acts contradict completely what Mr. Avineri said.

35. I shall not dwell at length on the other parts of this unanimous decision taken by the Council; suffice it to mention here that the Council was very firm when it called upon the Government of Israel to ensure the safety, welfare and security of the inhabitants and to comply strictly with the fourth Geneva Convention.<sup>1</sup> Specifically, the Council

<sup>1</sup> Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949.

strongly deplored the measures taken by Israel in the occupied territories which altered their demographic composition or geographical character, and in particular the establishment of settlements. Such measures, the Council decided, had no legal validity and could not prejudice the outcome of the efforts to achieve peace and therefore constituted an obstacle to peace.

36. It is very obvious that Israel has not heeded this unanimous decision of the Council or any of the resolutions previously adopted by this body. On the contrary, it has intensified its efforts and policies of repression in the occupied territories. An example of special brutality is the treatment of the thousands of Arab prisoners in Israeli concentration camps, which are called prisons. Most of these people have been arbitrarily arrested, tortured and put in prison without a trial. This, of course, conforms with Israel's own conception of law in the occupied territories. The records of the International Red Cross, Amnesty International, church organizations and the United Nations itself are full of cases verifying this barbaric Israeli policy. The fate of these prisoners was recently brought to the notice of the civilized world, when they went on a hunger strike to draw attention to the miserable treatment they were receiving in Israeli prisons. *The Washington Post* of 20 March described at length the inhuman conditions in which more than 3,000 Arab prisoners were suffering in Israeli prisons and said that, in one prison alone, at Ashkelon, no fewer than 350 detainees were condemned to life sentences.

37. A ridiculous argument was presented by Israeli authorities and published by the Israeli paper *The Jerusalem Post* on 7 March. It quoted an Israeli prison official who had said that "security prisoners"—that is the terminology Israel uses for these people—on hunger strikes around the country were being fed through tubes and that this method was carried out with the consent of the prisoners themselves. But even this Israeli governmental newspaper found such a story too much to swallow, and it said the Israeli official could not explain why the prisoners preferred tube feeding to eating normally. I wonder whom the Israeli Government is trying to fool? I do not know.

38. The Commission on Human Rights, on 10 February 1977, expressed its dismay at that Israeli policy and sent a telegram to the Israeli Government<sup>2</sup> in which it called upon it to refrain from the ill treatment of detainees. The Commission also adopted a resolution<sup>3</sup> condemning the policies and practices of Israel in the occupied Arab territories and deploring Israel's continued violations of the basic norms of international law. This dismal picture should concern all who champion the cause of human rights in the world.

39. Among the Israeli policies condemned by the Commission on Human Rights were territorial annexation and the establishment of settlements in the occupied territories. The Security Council decided last November [*ibid.*] that those particular measures, among others, "which have no legal validity and cannot prejudice the outcome of the

<sup>2</sup> *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Sixty-second Session, Supplement No. 6*, chap. XXI, sect. B, decision 1 (XXXIII).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, sect. A, resolution 1A (XXXIII).

search for the establishment of peace, constitute an obstacle to peace”.

40. That deliberate and reckless Israeli policy could only lead to one conclusion: that Israel has no intention of reaching a peaceful settlement, that it wants to expand and annex Arab territory and that it does not care about what the entire world thinks about such a dangerous policy. Does Israel wish to establish an empire in the Middle East? *The Jerusalem Post* of 7 February boastfully described occupied Sinai as a “kingdom in Sinai, Israel’s desert kingdom”.

41. The Egyptian Government considers that the continuation of such Israeli policy is bound to jeopardize the progress for peace and will have very serious ramifications for the potential achievement of peace. It was for this reason that my Government drew the attention of the Security Council several times to this dangerous situation, most recently in the statement on 16 February by Mr. Ismail Fahmy, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt, which was published as Council document S/12287. Foreign Minister Fahmy referred to the Israeli plan of establishing a belt of settlements in the north-eastern part of the Sinai, including a full-fledged city called Yamit, and the eviction by force of several thousand Arab families to permit the establishment of those Israeli settlements. As I mentioned during a previous meeting of the Council [1966th meeting], Israel intends to bring settlers, mainly from South Africa, to live in Yamit and other settlements. There is no need for me here to stress the close co-operation, in military and other fields, between the racist régimes of Israel and South Africa, simply because both of them boast about such co-operation and consider it a model of relations between two similar régimes. Those identical policies led Mr. Oded Lifshitz of the kibbutz Nir Or to declare to *The New York Times*, in commenting about Israeli settlements in Sinai and the eviction of inhabitants from their homes, that such a situation “makes us something like Rhodesia”. How correct he is! The only difference is that Israel is doing it on a larger scale and in the territories of three States Members of the United Nations. Obviously it is the teacher and South Africa is the good pupil.

42. Mr. Fahmy, in his statement, emphasized again that Egypt would not stand idle in the face of this Israeli policy of challenging international law and agreements, of obstructing peace and trying to sabotage the attainment of that peace. He added that it remained Egypt’s firm stand that such measures would not give Israel any rights whatsoever, whatever the circumstances. Israel would bear all the consequences of its policy. In the end it would be forced to remove all those settlements, as well as all the changes it had introduced in the occupied Arab territories.

43. Consequently, Egypt considers any help given to Israel, from any source or any country, to establish settlements or to exploit and plunder the natural resources of the occupied territories, as for example, by drilling for oil in the Sinai, to be a hostile act against Egypt, and we shall define our policy with regard to such help accordingly.

44. The Israeli Government, from time to time, attempts to deceive the outside world with false statements and by casting a smoke-screen to try to make us believe that it is

opposed to the establishment of certain settlements. But such a screen usually clears very quickly and the whole world can see for itself that this Israeli policy is based on a deliberate plan prepared by a special committee on settlements in the occupied territories, formed inside the Israeli Cabinet itself. That Cabinet only recently approved a plan for the creation of more new settlements deep in the heart of the West Bank and other parts of the occupied territories. Even Mr. Allon went to the extent of declaring, on Israeli radio, on 4 March 1977, that he supported the resolution of the ministerial committee for settlement affairs, and considered that such settlements were in what he termed “the category of the minimum border modifications important to Israel’s tactical security”.

45. The leader of the Israeli Gush Emunim movement, which wants to establish what it calls “Greater Israel”, was more precise than Mr. Allon, when he said at the beginning of this month that new settlements were to be established, with Government approval, within a month, and that the present Israeli Government and any new Government which might come to power after the 17 May elections would have to permit Jews to settle anywhere they wished. He spelled out the Israeli notion of peace by saying “The idea that the Government can barter away our birthright to the land of Israel for peace with the Arabs is an illusion”.

46. The hypocrisy of the Israeli position on this issue even went so far as the claim of the Israeli Prime Minister, on 10 January 1977, that settlements strengthened the peace bid. These “semantic acrobatics” cherished and used very often in the Security Council and in other organs of the United Nations by the representatives of Israel, cannot succeed in convincing anyone about the validity of Israeli policy. The President of the World Jewish Congress, Mr. Nahum Goldman, was right in criticizing Israel for overestimating the value of propaganda and public relations in putting its case to the world. He continued by saying that the decisive thing in influencing world public opinion was the character of Israeli policy; if that policy was criticized by most States, the best propaganda was useless.

47. Some other courageous Jews are starting to rethink their old attitudes, like Mr. Arthur Waskow, a fellow of the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, who published an open letter to an Israeli, in which he said:

“It used to be that most of us thought it was irresponsible to criticize Israeli policy, especially in public. But more and more of us are feeling that it is irresponsible now not to criticize. Your Government has lost touch with reality. Holding the West Bank and Gaza and insisting that no Palestinian State can emerge there is a policy that means permanent war.”

48. Perhaps none other than Mr. Terence Smith, who spent several years in Israel as *The New York Times* correspondent, could at first hand correctly describe the Israeli stand. On 5 February he said:

“Israelis realize their image has suffered abroad, but they do not seem to understand why. The reaction of some is to insist that the world is out of step with Israel rather than the other way round. Many Israelis perceive

this shift in their geopolitical situation, but that perception has not yet led to a revised national policy towards the territories, negotiations or concessions. The Government is still following the basic outlines of its pre-war policies. The differences between Rabin's strategy and that of former Premier Golda Meir are differences of nuance and style, not of substance. The post-war realities have not hit home sufficiently to stimulate a fundamental reassessment of Israeli policy or the drawing up of a comprehensive peace plan that could become the backbone of a new negotiating initiative."

49. That is the essence of the Israeli position, and I do not need here to elaborate on it further because it is obvious now to everyone.

50. How should the Council deal now with this explosive situation in the Middle East? How should it handle the report of the Secretary-General? Is it conceivable that the Council, the prime organ responsible for world peace and security, will allow Israel to continue in its policy of annexation, occupation, exploitation, plunder and disregard for basic and fundamental human rights—a policy which could easily lead the area, if not the world, to war and destruction—or will the Council shoulder its responsibility and show firmly to Israel that it will not permit such a policy to continue unhindered? Should the world accept the stalemate on the road to peace because of Israeli procrastination, tactics and manoeuvres or should it press for progress and movement towards negotiations and peace?

51. All these questions are now addressed to the Council, which has to act, first of all, to promote the process towards the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the area as envisaged in General Assembly resolution 31/62. That just and lasting peace should include primarily the Palestinian people. I have no need here to emphasize again that Egypt is engaged in the quest for a just peace with the same determination with which it is working for the liberation of all the occupied Arab land. Secondly, the Council must show clearly to Israel that it can no longer condone Israel's disregard for its resolutions and decisions, the most recent having been adopted on 11 November 1976 [1969th meeting].

52. It is also of paramount importance, in our view, that the Council should call for the prompt convening of the Peace Conference on the Middle East with the participation of all the parties. It is a suitable means of placing each before his responsibility. That is a forum which was established by the United Nations itself through the Security Council and whose role has been emphasized on several occasions by the General Assembly. Since the Conference is under the auspices of the United Nations, the Council should ask the Secretary-General to continue his active role and his contacts with the Co-Chairmen of the Conference and all the parties for the prompt convening of the Conference with a view to achieving a just and lasting settlement.

53. The challenge of peace is now at Israel's doorstep. Israel has to respond to this challenge and not resort to tactics and manoeuvres. The world also, as represented in

this Council, should be faced with its responsibilities. Mr. George Ball, a former American Under-Secretary of State, hit the point in his article published just a few days ago in the April issue of *Foreign Affairs*, under the title "How to save Israel in spite of herself". The title is self-explanatory. Mr. Ball did not say: "How to save Egypt in spite of herself". In that article he said:

"Time is clearly not working on Israel's side; she cannot indefinitely withstand the internal strains and stresses endemic to a garrison state without irreparable harm to her social and economic fabric . . .

"The uncertain future of an embattled Israel and the lack of economic security in a garrison state have meant that recently even some Sabras have been leaving the country, while last year total emigration exceeded immigration . . . Beleaguered Israel is no longer the same land of bright promise it was a few years ago; in spite of strenuous efforts to encourage immigration, 60 percent of the Jews permitted to leave the Soviet Union for Israel last year never arrived there but moved by way of Vienna to such Western countries as the United States, Canada, and France."

54. Therefore, it seems imperative for the world, and specially the Security Council, to push Israel to peace and to the Peace Conference not only "to save Israel in spite of herself", as Mr. Ball suggests, but also to spare the area and the world the destruction sown by Israel, because past experience has shown that it resorts to conquest and military adventures whenever it is faced with a crisis.

55. The Council should now assert its authority and shoulder its prime responsibility for peace and security in the world. It should not fail the peoples of the area and the world. *Egypt is ready for peace—for genuine peace.* Should the Council fail in this endeavour, a great threat will confront not only the Middle East but the whole world. I am optimistic that the Council will rise to the challenge and do its utmost to promote the process of peace in our area.

56. The PRESIDENT: The next speaker is the representative of Jordan. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

57. Mr. NUSEIBEH (Jordan): Mr. President, as this is the first occasion on which I have spoken for Jordan in the course of your presidency of the Council, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you, both as President and as Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations. Your dedicated and uninhibited commitment to the cause of human rights and justice is a source of inspiration to all of us and not least to our people as they continue their prolonged and seemingly endless journey towards a vindication of those same human rights with which God has endowed every people, which the United Nations has sanctified, but which, alas, our people have been brutally and totally denied. Is there any people on the face of this planet, other than the Palestinian people, that is blatantly and unabashedly denied not only the cherished human rights about which we all talk but even the right to a home, to a homeland, to a sense of belonging



in what has been their ancestral homeland since time immemorial?

58. The mere fact of uprooting and dispersal is *ipso facto* not only a denial of elemental human rights in the conventional sense, but also an act of dehumanization in a total sense against a victimized segment of the human race in relation to which the Security Council stands, or should stand, as an unwavering guardian.

59. I do not wish to indulge in sermons. We have already gone far beyond such civilized academic exercises which Jordan with its abiding and inseparable ties to its Palestinian brethren regards, with deep sadness, as a luxury which the Palestinians cannot afford.

60. The Secretary-General, whose commendable, objective and analytical report is the subject of the Council's debate, has carried out extensive and intensive exchanges of views with all the leaders of the countries and peoples directly involved. In an understandably frustrating exercise, trying to resolve the jigsaw puzzle presented by the convening of the Peace Conference at Geneva, the Secretary-General has forthrightly alerted the Council to the banal fact that what is ostensibly procedural is in fact substantive and that, if the Conference is not to be bogged down even before it leaves the ground, there must be changes in attitude on all sides. The Secretary-General deserves our gratitude for cutting through the dilly-dallying which has been the hallmark of decades of sterile obscurantism, of taking cover behind procedure, semantics, slow fox-trot steps and what-have-you to evade and delay and justify inaction.

61. The paper on which all Security Council and General Assembly resolutions are printed has turned yellow with the passage of time while those who have it in their power to act are unwilling to put sinews into their resolutions and the Charter. What could an unsupported Ambassador Jarring alone do—just to cite one example—but ping-pong between Middle East capitals, conducting a dialogue of the deaf? It is comforting that the Secretary-General is fully aware of the sordid and sterile momentum of the past and is advising the Council and, in particular, the sponsors and Co-Chairmen of the proposed Geneva Conference, in so many words, to act and act quickly, because, as he says in the report:

“there is, I believe, an increasing consciousness in the area that an opportunity now exists to resume negotiations in a meaningful way and that, if this opportunity is not seized, there are grave dangers that the situation will deteriorate once again, with incalculable consequences not only for the Middle East but for the international community as a whole” [*S/12290 and Corr.1, para. 19*].

The conclusion reached by the Secretary-General is—and I believe the Council agrees with me—beyond controversy. I would add only one salient dimension to the reasoning that has led to that conclusion. The report states:

“It is vital that we catch the prevailing spirit of moderation and realism before it evaporates and assist the parties to channel that spirit into the arduous process of negotiation.” [*Ibid., para. 22*].

The pivotal dimension which I feel in duty bound to add and which I must reiterate over and over again is indicated by the fact that time is not standing still and that, while within the framework of the Security Council and the United Nations as a whole the situation is stalemated, it is far from being so in the occupied territories.

62. There is an unbridgeable dichotomy between what is happening in, or rather to, the occupied territories and their people and the quest for the peace which we are striving to bring about. To put aside procedural and other niceties and come directly to the point, here is what is happening. One party to the conflict, namely Israel, has managed between 1948 and 1967 to seize the whole cake. The Arab side, and in particular the Palestinians, are saying restore to us a slice of that cake, otherwise we will starve and no one takes starvation lying down. The Israelis, by playing for time, are devouring systematically and wilfully that very slice which the world community is earmarking as a homeland for the Palestinians. The process of devouring has already assumed such massive proportions, particularly in the West Bank, Gaza and Jerusalem, in matters concerning which I am particularly well versed, that there will be little left but crumbs—in the quantitative sense, because to us every inch of territory is hallowed and transcends evaluation.

63. A very knowledgeable statesman, who knows the country and its people inside out and who is not a stranger either to the Council or to its famed resolution 242 (1967), agreed with me a mere two weeks ago, having just returned from a visit there, that in a year or two, and quite apart from the awesome suffering of the people under occupation, there will indeed be very little left to talk about. Jerusalem and its environs are already completely encircled by concrete.

64. The Secretary-General's reference to the prevailing mood of moderation should therefore not be understood as a subjective, temperamental attitude. It is directly and intimately related to the objective situational premises within which it has materialized. It is only logical that it cannot persist if the fundamental premises are basically altered.

65. Every week, my Government, which monitors developments thoroughly in the West Bank, sends to the Jordanian Mission a thick stack of documents, reports, statements and decisions pertaining to what is happening in the occupied territories. I must confess that it is not easy to read those documents because they are too gruesome, depicting as they do a process of slow death, territorial, cultural and national genocide perpetrated without let or hindrance upon the occupied territories and their people. The mood of the inhabitants is best described in an article published in *The New York Times Magazine* a few weeks ago by Mr. Sheehan, a very knowledgeable man on the subject. He cited a dialogue which he said had occurred between God and a West Banker. The West Banker asked God when He thought the United States would resolve some of its more acute problems. God replied that they should do so in five years. The West Banker then asked when would the USSR achieve its cherished goals, and God gave a more extended but specific timing. The West Banker followed this with a final question: “When will the Israelis

withdraw from our territories?" God wept and said "Not in your lifetime nor in mine".

66. The fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, to which all of us including Israel are signatories, was specifically designed to protect the *status quo ante* in territories which fall victim to occupation. It is a binding convention under international law as well as under innumerable Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. And yet, disdain of the Convention has been abundantly more conspicuous than observance or respect, even in instances of symbolism which, to the uninitiated, seem innocuous, but which strike bitter and deep roots into the whole process of peace-making.

67. With your permission, Mr. President, I should like to circulate an advertisement issued by the Israel Government Tourist Office in New York and carried by *The New York Times Magazine* of 13 March, by the 14 March issue of *Time* and heaven knows by how many other nationally-read publications. We do not, or cannot, keep track of all of them. As you will clearly see, the whole city of Jerusalem, both old and new, is dwarfed and cramped, by one configuration dominating the panorama, and parallel to it, stuck to the wall encompassing the monument and almost equal proportionately to it, is the name Israel in big capital letters.

68. Now I do not know whether any amongst us is not familiar with the monument I am talking about. There is no name or identification of it in the advertisement. The only thing in writing describing the area I am talking about is: "And, finally, you'll feel the spiritual beauty of Israel when you enter Jerusalem. A city so ancient, it would still seem like home to David and Solomon".

69. Is this plagiarism? Is it outright distortion or is it something more ominous? I can well understand an Israeli Government advertisement giving pride of place to the Knesset or even to the Wailing Wall. But to select the first Qibla of Islam, the Noble Sanctuary, the Dome of the Rock, in the Haram Esh-Sharif sanctuary as representing Israel is genocide of an authentic civilization and a new peak of distortive misinformation.

70. The Mosque of the Dome of the Rock has been, for over 1,300 years, a pivotal centre of Islamic devotion. It is as magnificent a monument to the glory of God, as one Western writer has rightly described it, as can be seen anywhere in the world. It was built in the reign of the Umayyad Caliph Abdul Malik ibn Marwan in the seventh century A.D. and for seven years substantial portions of Egypt's revenues were spent on its construction and embellishment. Generation after generation of craftsmen, artists and calligraphists painstakingly spent countless years of skills and revenues on it from the reign of the Umayyads through 14 centuries, most recently in the restoration undertaken by the Government of Jordan, financed by the Government of the late King Faisal of Saudi Arabia and completed in 1964. I attended that ceremony of completion. They can steal our properties but not our soul and our creative and spiritual heritage. I have requested copies of an illustrated book by Alistair Duncan entitled *The Noble Sanctuary; portrait of a Holy Place in Arab Jerusalem*,<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> London, Longmans, 1972.

which I hope to present to every member of the Council as soon as it is procured. Unfortunately we only have one copy here at hand.

71. I hope that what I have said will not be construed as a digression from the main theme of the Council's debate on the Secretary-General's report relative to the early reconvening of the Peace Conference, for that is at the heart of the whole issue, in the considered judgment of the Jordan Government, and indeed, should be no less so in the considered judgement of the Council itself.

72. Even if we were to assume, perhaps optimistically, that the so-called procedural issues could be overcome and if the Geneva Conference were to be resumed sometime this year, no one here could prophesy how long the negotiating process would take—one year, two years or even more. It is anybody's guess, even though we believe that, if Israel were in earnest about achieving peace, it should not take more than a month to round it up successfully, and particularly if the parties to the Conference went there guided by United Nations resolutions and maps which delineated the major prerequisites of peace. Otherwise we shall find ourselves floating in the uncharted arena of outer space, with a modest beginning but with infinity as the end.

73. Mindful of this, and pending the achievement of a just and viable peace which I hope will not take us to infinity, my Government urges the Security Council, in the strongest possible terms, not to abandon the occupied territories and their people as a free-for-all grazing ground, and presents the following proposal for the Council's consideration and, we hope, adoption. It is consonant with the unanimous and categorical resolutions of the Council over the past decade, at least in its objectives, though not in the instrument for the implementation of those objectives. I propose that the Council should set up a three-man monitoring team from amongst members, with a small but adequate staff and in conjunction with the Secretary-General, to be installed at what is known as Government House at Jerusalem and which at present belongs to and houses the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization. The duties of the monitoring team—this has nothing to do with electronic surveillance, all it needs is paper and ink—would be to oversee the strict observance of the fourth Geneva Convention in the occupied territories, and to report monthly to the Council on any and all violations of the integrity and inviolability of the territories and the people.

74. In the past, Israel has objected to the presence of United Nations commissions mainly on the grounds that some or all of their members were either hostile to Israel or did not have diplomatic relationships with it. To make it more palatable to Israel, and to avoid objections to such legitimate, modest and indispensable surveillance and reporting, the Council could select, in its own wisdom and discretion, members which maintain such diplomatic relationships and which could in no way be accused of being hostile to Israel. I have in mind, for example, the United States, the United Kingdom and France. It is really none of my business to suggest what combination of members should constitute the proposed monitoring commission, nor am I, in putting forward these suggestions, making any value judgements, indicating preferences or casting asper-

sions. I am simply emphasizing that, as the occupied territories have not had the benefit of a custodian or protecting State—I forget the exact legal terminology—as should have been the case years ago, as there is no machinery whatsoever to protect the unprotected, and since Security Council resolutions have gone unheeded over the past decade, it has become incumbent upon the Council to have a direct presence in the occupied territories.

75. It may not be out of order here to quote from the Israeli newspaper *al-Anbaa'*, an Arabic-language daily. In its issue of 4 February, it quoted a spokesman for the Israeli prisons department as saying that, as of January of this year, the number of prisoners totalled 5,852, including 3,000 imprisoned on security grounds, watched over by 1,600 prison guards—a ratio of one to every three prisoners. I think it a waste of money to have such a ratio, but that is not my business. The spokesman added that the number of prisoners and detainees was increasing and that the space allotted to each prisoner was 1.2 square metres, while in the Hebron prison it was a mere nine tenths of a square metre. The spokesman explained that throughout the world the average space allotted to a prisoner was 8 to 9 square metres. No wonder the prisoners in the occupied territories so frequently go on hunger strikes.

76. If anyone thinks that what I am proposing is not directly and most profoundly linked with the peace-making process with which all parties concerned have indicated to the Secretary-General they are eager to proceed, then I respectfully and most categorically disagree for the reasons I outlined earlier in my statement.

77. In his report the Secretary-General has informed the Council that the most immediate obstacle in the way of reconvening the Geneva Conference is the question of Palestinian representation. The Arab States concerned, including Jordan, have insisted that the Palestine Liberation Organization is the legitimate spokesman for the Palestinians because the proposed overall settlement—and we are, I take it, not talking about *ad hoc* arrangements but about real peace—will inevitably decide the fate of the Palestinian people and their offspring for generations to come. The Israelis insist that they will have nothing to do with the Palestinians and that the only place they are willing to meet them, to quote from a recent statement by

Prime Minister Rabin, is on the battlefield. Now, while making allowance for Mr. Rabin's predicament in view of the forthcoming elections, does not the Council find that statement to be dangerously war-mongering and ill-advised, proclaimed as it is on the threshold of what we all look forward to as a new negotiating effort to achieve a just and lasting peace?

78. Let us stop sabre rattling and get down to the more rewarding business of peace making on a viable and just basis, that of United Nations resolutions. We fully understand that the Israelis are allergic to the Palestinians, but they should bear in mind that it is the Palestinians who are now and will continue to be their next-door neighbours, and that peace means, above all, good neighbourly relations. Indeed, if I were an Israeli—and I am saying this in all seriousness—I should insist on rather than refuse Palestinian participation and agreement, in order that peace may be real and lasting. How would it sound to the Ambassador of Israel, or to the Security Council for that matter, if I were to say that the Arabs were willing to negotiate for peace provided the Israeli negotiator were Mr. Shimon Peres and not Mr. Rabin, or Mr. Avneri and not Mr. Menachem Begin? Would not that constitute an unacceptable interference in Israel's internal affairs? And Israel claims to be the foremost democracy in the Middle East! The Arab States have said that the Palestinians, *per se*, should represent themselves, and it is the elemental right of all peoples, including the Palestinians, to choose whomever they wish to speak on their behalf.

79. As for Jordan, which has abiding ties with its Palestinian brethren, its relationship with the Palestinians is an intra-family affair, and the form of linkage between them will be decided in a family atmosphere by the mutual consent and agreement of the people on both banks of the River Jordan, and I am sure both know what is best for them.

80. My final remark is to reiterate a statement which His Majesty King Hussein has been making all along in the aftermath of the 1967 war, because it pertains to the crux of the issue: Israel can have peace or retain the occupied territories, but it cannot have both.

*The meeting rose at 5 p.m.*

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