



SECURITY COUNCIL OFFICIAL RECORDS

THIRTY-SECOND YEAR

2051st MEETING: 30 NOVEMBER 1977

NEW YORK

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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.

The resolutions of the Security Council, numbered in accordance with a system adopted in 1964, are published in yearly volumes of *Resolutions and Decisions of the Security Council*. The new system, which has been applied retroactively to resolutions adopted before 1 January 1965, became fully operative on that date.

2051ST MEETING

Held in New York on Wednesday, 30 November 1977, at 10.30 a.m.

President: Mr. Mansur R. KIKHIA
(Libyan Arab Jamahiriya).

Present: The representatives of the following States: Benin, Canada, China, France, Germany, Federal Republic of, India, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, 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/2051)

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. The situation in the Middle East:
Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (S/12453)

The meeting was called to order at 11.25 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East:

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (S/12453)

1. The PRESIDENT: I should like to draw the attention of members of the Council to the following documents: the first, document S/12453, is the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) covering the period 24 May to 23 November 1977; the second is the draft resolution issued under the symbol S/12459.

2. The Secretary-General has expressed the wish to make a statement concerning his report. I invite him to address the Council.

3. The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I do not have much to add to what is stated in my report on UNDOF for the period of the past six months. I wish, however, to inform the Council that I have been informed by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic of its assent to the extension of the mandate of UNDOF for a further period of six months. The Government of Israel has also conveyed to me its agreement. I wish to express my appreciation to the Governments concerned for their spirit of co-operation in this regard.

4. Although the past six months has been a period of quiet in the Israel-Syria sector, I do not need to emphasize that

the main elements of the Middle East problem remain unresolved and that the situation in the area will continue to be unstable and potentially dangerous unless real progress can soon be made towards a just and durable settlement.

5. I wish to take this opportunity, therefore, to express the hope that, despite the difficulties involved, it will be possible to reconvene the Geneva Peace Conference in the near future and that substantial progress can then be made. In this connexion, I would hope that recent developments would assist in attaining the desired goal of a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East problem. I can assure the Council that in the meantime the Force will continue to do its utmost to maintain quiet in the area in accordance with the terms of the Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces [S/11302/Add.1 of 30 May 1974].

6. The PRESIDENT: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

7. I take it that the members of the Council are now ready to vote on the draft resolution in document S/12459. There being no objection, I shall now put the draft resolution to the vote.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

The draft resolution was adopted by 12 votes to none.¹

Three members (Benin, China and Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) did not participate in the voting.

8. The PRESIDENT: In connexion with the adoption of the resolution on the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, I have been authorized to make the following complementary statement on behalf of the Security Council regarding the resolution just adopted:

“As is known, the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force [S/12453] states, in paragraph 32, that ‘the present quiet in the Israel-Syria sector should not obscure the fact that the main elements of the Middle East problem remain unresolved and that the situation in the area will continue to be unstable and dangerous unless real progress can soon be made towards a just and durable settlement of the problem in all its aspects’. This statement of the Secretary-General reflects the view of the Security Council.”

¹ See resolution 420 (1977).

Further, I have been asked by the delegations of Benin, China and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to say that, as they have not participated in the vote on this resolution, they take the same position with regard to the statement which I have just read out on behalf of the members of the Council.

9. Mr. CHOU Nan (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): During the debate on the question of Palestine at the plenary meeting of the General Assembly on 29 November,² the Chinese delegation already expounded in a comprehensive way the basic position of the Chinese Government on the current Middle East question. We are not going to repeat it here.

10. In view of the fact that the draft resolution circulated as document S/12459 mainly concerns the question of the United Nations Force, on which we have always held a different position of principle, the Chinese delegation did not participate in the vote on the draft resolution.

11. Mr. KHARLAMOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Security Council has just adopted a resolution renewing for a period of six months the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force in the Israel-Syria sector. As the Soviet delegation has already repeatedly stated, the question of renewing the mandate of this United Nations force is bound up with the problem of a Middle East settlement. This can be seen from the resolution, which calls upon the parties concerned to implement immediately Security Council resolution 338 (1973). This also follows from the agreed statement of the Council, which you, Mr. President, have just read out:

“The present quiet in the Israel-Syria sector should not obscure the fact that the main elements of the Middle East problem remain unresolved and that the situation in the area will continue to be unstable and dangerous unless real progress can soon be made towards a just and durable settlement of the problem in all its aspects.”

This is the logical consequence of the warning contained in the report of the Secretary-General, which states in paragraph 32 that, unless progress can be made towards an early resumption of the Geneva Peace Conference and a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Middle East problem, “there will . . . be a growing and serious danger that the situation will deteriorate once again”.

12. The position of the Soviet Union on questions relating to the elimination of the explosive hotbed of tension in the Middle East and the attainment of a comprehensive peace settlement in that part of the world is well known to the members of the Council. It has been stated repeatedly and exhaustively, and with complete clarity, by the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Comrade Brezhnev. It was stated again here at the United Nations on 27 September by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, Comrade Gromyko.³ The delegation of the USSR

² *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-second Session, Plenary Meetings*, 85th meeting.

³ *Ibid.*, 8th meeting.

to the current session of the General Assembly has had an opportunity to set out in detail the Soviet position on the whole range of questions relating to a Middle East settlement and on individual aspects of those questions. Hence, at this time we shall limit ourselves to confirming the following fundamentally important points.

13. The course of events in the Middle East in recent years provides convincing evidence that there cannot and will not be peace in that part of the world until the causes of the Middle East conflict are removed—that is, Israel’s occupation of Arab territories and its denial to the Arab people of Palestine of their inalienable rights—and until the independent existence and the security of all the peoples and States in that part of the world are guaranteed.

14. The Soviet Union has always believed and continues to believe that only a comprehensive settlement can guarantee a fundamental change of direction in the Middle East towards peace. Such a settlement must provide for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from all the Arab territories occupied in 1967, for a guarantee of the inalienable rights of the Arab people of Palestine, including their right to self-determination and to the establishment of their own State, for a guarantee of the right of all the States directly involved in the conflict to an independent existence and security, and the provision of appropriate international guarantees to such States. These principles, taken together as an indivisible whole, take due account of the lawful rights of all the parties directly involved: the Arab States, the Arab people of Palestine and the State of Israel.

15. Only someone who for the sake of his own narrow interests is trying to perpetuate the dangerous situation in the Middle East, could object to such a comprehensive political settlement or impede its attainment. Experience has shown that any kind of partial or separate agreement cannot lead to a solution of the Middle East problem. Furthermore, we are fully justified in believing that such partial or separate agreements, putting to one side the key questions involved in a Middle East settlement, serve only to complicate even more the situation in that part of the world.

16. Yesterday, 29 November, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, Comrade Gromyko, at a luncheon in honour of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic, Mr. Khaddam, stated:

“Those who, situated either close to or far from the Middle East region, are taking steps which create difficulties even in relation to the convening of the Geneva Conference assume a grave responsibility.”

Adhering firmly to the policy of seeking a radical improvement in the situation in the Middle East, the Soviet Union has repeatedly stated that the path to the attainment of that goal cannot circumvent the Geneva Conference. On the contrary, that path lies through the Conference. The speedy resumption of whose work is urgently required. However, as was stated yesterday by Comrade Gromyko:

“We can say today that the Conference has been placed in a more difficult position than before and the dif-

facilities have been increased, including the difficulty of convening the Conference.”

17. Today the delegation of the Soviet Union would like once again to draw attention to the great significance of the joint Soviet-American statement on the Middle East. That statement, as members know, includes the agreed views of the two Co-Chairmen concerning the fundamental principles of a comprehensive political settlement in the Middle East.

18. The Soviet Union has not objected to this latest renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force in the Israel-Syria sector, in view of the fact that the Syrian Government has agreed to this renewal of the mandate. However, the delegation of the Soviet Union feels that it must state once again that the stationing of the United Nations Force in the Middle East is a strictly temporary measure and must not serve to delay a comprehensive settlement in that part of the world.

19. The Soviet Union wishes also to confirm once again its firm position that the maximum economy must be practised in the maintenance of the United Nations forces in the Middle East and that the forces must be kept as small as possible. In no case must there be any increase in expenditures on the United Nations forces in the Middle East—UNEF and UNDOF—over the amounts approved by the Security Council and the General Assembly.

20. The Soviet Union expresses the hope that the renewal of the UNDOF mandate will be used for a businesslike, constructive and realistic search for a Middle East settlement within the framework of the Geneva Peace Conference.

21. Mr. LEONARD (United States of America): We are pleased to join with other Council members in renewing the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force in the Golan Heights for an additional six months. We are gratified to note that both Israel and Syria have signified their continuing confidence in UNDOF by agreeing in advance to this extension. They are, of course, even more acutely aware than any of us here of the quiet but highly effective role which UNDOF and its companion United Nations operations, UNEF and UNTSO, are playing in the Middle East. Amidst the intense diplomacy of the past six months, UNDOF has kept its vigil on the Golan Heights, contributing an element of stability to the region and providing important reassurance to the parties and to the international community. Its effectiveness can be measured by the lack of attention it draws to itself, thus permitting the energies of the parties and of the international community to be directed away from the battlefield and into peaceful negotiation.

22. We are grateful to Major-General Hannes Philipp and to the officers and men who are serving so capably under his command. We also pay a tribute to those Governments which have contributed forces to this important international service. And finally, Mr. President, may I express my appreciation to you and to the Secretary-General for your constructive efforts which have helped to make possible our action today.

23. Miss LOPEZ (Venezuela) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Venezuela understands the importance of the role played by the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force in the maintenance of peace in the Middle East and realizes that its presence has prevented confrontations, thus preserving peace in the region and making it possible for the cease-fire to be maintained since the Force was created in May 1974. Because we believe in its usefulness, we have supported the draft resolution submitted to us. However, we would not wish the adoption of this kind of measure to become routine for the Security Council. We believe that the Force is a palliative, not a final answer, and that it should in no way postpone or delay the solution of the substantive problems relating to the Middle East. Therefore, efforts directed to the attainment of a lasting peace in the region should be continued and intensified.

24. In that connexion, we advocate a dialogue between all the parties concerned, the flexibility of the parties in any negotiation and a settlement of the question by peaceful means based on justice and equality. Consequently we express the hope that, as we come closer to a definitive solution of the problem in general, we will not have to return to the Security Council to renew the Force's mandate.

25. We know that the difficult and complex elements relating to the Middle East question remain unsolved and that the situation in the area will continue to be unstable unless a just and durable solution that takes into account the interests and aspirations of all the parties involved is achieved.

26. We hope that the Geneva Conference will take place with the participation of all the parties concerned and that promising paths leading to a general solution will be opened up, so that all the inhabitants of the Middle East—who in the last analysis are those who have to bear the consequences of instability and confrontation in the region—may live together in a climate of peace and understanding.

27. We would not wish to conclude this statement without expressing our gratitude to the Secretary-General for his initiative in constantly seeking a solution of the Middle East question and we wish to assure him that he has the full support of the Government of Venezuela in the task of trying to reconcile extreme positions.

28. Mr. DATCU (Romania) (*interpretation from French*): The Romanian delegation, as in the past, has voted for the draft resolution in which the Security Council has just renewed the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force. We gave our support to this important decision because we were convinced that the presence and activities of UNDOF represent a specific contribution by our Organization to the maintenance of favourable conditions for the peaceful settlement of the Middle East conflict.

29. On this occasion I should like to state that the maintenance of the United Nations troops in the region should not be seen as an end in itself, but as a temporary measure which will enable the countries concerned to begin and to conclude serious negotiations with a view to solving this conflict once and for all.

30. The decision of the Syrian Government once again to accept the renewal of the mandate of the Force which, of course—as we should not forget—is located on Syrian territory, is yet another proof of its determination to work for peace in the region.

31. The Romanian delegation wishes to extend its sincere thanks to the Secretary-General for his report on the work of UNDOF, as well as for his positive and tireless efforts to establish the political framework for the solution of the conflict on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions. We are convinced that he will persevere in this constructive direction with the dynamism and objectivity which are characteristic of him and that in so doing he will enjoy the unreserved support of our whole Organization.

32. As you have said, Mr. President, we too support the conclusions of the Secretary-General and, at the risk of repeating what has already been said, I wish to quote his words:

“The present quiet in the Israel-Syria sector should not obscure the fact that the main elements of the Middle East problem remain unresolved and that the situation in the area will continue to be unstable and dangerous unless real progress can soon be made towards a just and durable settlement of the problem in all its aspects.” [S/12453, para. 32.]

33. We hope that the intense efforts that are being made at various levels to attain that goal will make it possible for the Geneva Peace Conference to resume its work, with the participation of all the parties concerned, with the aim of achieving a comprehensive settlement of the conflict.

34. Today more than ever before, it is the duty of the United Nations and of the Security Council to stimulate the conscientious and tireless search for ways which can lead to peace and to play a more active and effective role to that end. We share the view of those—and there are many of them—who think that there is now a greater chance of beginning true negotiations and thus setting in motion the diplomatic process leading to a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict. We should not allow such an opportunity to elude us, whatever the difficulties that still have to be overcome. As we have said elsewhere, we must explore every possibility, miss no chance and spare no effort to achieve the peace which is so ardently desired by all the peoples of the region.

35. Romania is in favour of a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict through negotiation. The just and lasting peace that would result should include a withdrawal of Israel from all the Arab territories occupied in the 1967 war, the solution of the problem of the Palestinian people in keeping with its legitimate aspirations, including the establishment of a free and independent Palestinian State, and the guarantee of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and the right to free and independent development of all the States in the region.

36. We hope that all the parties directly involved will take advantage of this latest renewal of the UNDOF mandate, as well as of that of UNEF which was decided last month, to

take the decisive step, which has for so long been awaited by the international community, towards the start of the negotiations requested in Security Council resolution 338 (1973). We, the members of the Council, have met here to encourage them and help them in a constructive way, because there is really nothing that can effectively take the place of negotiations between the parties concerned.

37. Mr. HOSSEN (Mauritius): The Mauritius delegation was pleased to vote in favour of the draft resolution extending the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force for a further period of six months.

38. We have carefully studied the report of the Secretary-General and we cannot but agree with his assessment that the situation in the Middle East continues to be unstable and dangerous. We also fully subscribe to the view that the main elements of the Middle East problem have to date remained unresolved, thereby creating an atmosphere of tension and unwarranted suspicion.

39. We are happy to note that there has not been any major incident in the Golan Heights during the past six months and that the Force has lived up to the responsibilities entrusted to it. We further share the views expressed regarding the importance of such a peace-keeping force. However, we do not believe that its stationing should be perpetuated because we hold the view that it was not the intention of the Security Council, at the time the Force was set up, that it should gradually become permanent. Such arrangements cannot and should not be allowed to become a substitute for peace. Real and meaningful peace can only be achieved when the legitimate rights and security of all the peoples of the region are ensured and guaranteed.

40. Although we voted for the renewal of the mandate of the Force, we are sad that we have had to meet once again for this purpose. In fact, the Council has for the last three years been engaged, on no less than six occasions, in this particular exercise, in spite of the clear decision contained in the various resolutions adopted, which calls upon the parties concerned immediately to implement resolution 338 (1973). We should therefore like to urge the two Co-Chairmen of the Geneva Peace Conference to co-operate for the early convening of the Conference in order to set up the negotiating process for the establishment of just and lasting peace in the Middle East. In this connexion, we firmly believe that a just and lasting settlement of the Middle East problem can only be arrived at when Israel withdraws from all occupied territories and when the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to exist as a sovereign nation are fully recognized and implemented. In the same breath, we should like to state once again that Israel, too, has a right to exist as an independent, sovereign State within secure boundaries.

41. Finally, I should like to convey to you, Mr. President, my delegation's congratulations on the skilful manner in which you conducted the debates during this month.

42. Mr. BYATT (United Kingdom): My delegation was pleased once again to join with other members of the Council in voting in favour of the resolution which we have just adopted renewing the mandate of the United Nations

Disengagement Observer Force for a further six months. We believe that the role which the Force has played over the last three and a half years in maintaining the cease-fire and supervising the Disengagement Agreement, but above all in providing the necessary climate of confidence in the area in which efforts towards a just and lasting settlement can be carried forward, remains a very important one at the present time. We agreed, therefore, with the recommendation of the Secretary-General that the mandate of the Force should be extended for a further six months.

43. We have followed with keen interest the, at times, intensive diplomatic efforts that have taken place over the last few months aimed at an early resumption of the Geneva Conference and, particularly, the very important developments of the past few weeks. We believe that these could provide a real opportunity to make progress towards the achievement of a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East. It is of the greatest importance that such an opportunity should not be let slip. As the Secretary-General states in his report, the present quiet in the area should not deceive one into forgetting that the main elements of the Middle East problem remain unresolved and that the area will continue to be unstable unless real progress can be made soon.

44. As we have warned on previous occasions, the presence of UNDOF cannot be prolonged indefinitely, nor can it act as a substitute for true peace, or be allowed to provide a cover for a continuation of the stalemate. The time provided by the renewal of the mandate must therefore be used to good effect.

45. Once again I should like to place on record our profound gratitude to the Secretary-General and to his staff, to the Commander of the Force, Major-General Philipp, and to the members of the Force, for the way in which they have carried out their tasks over the past few months. I also wish to express our thanks to those countries which have continued to provide contingents of troops, sometimes at considerable cost to themselves. The role played by the Force is a difficult and, as we see from the Secretary-General's report, at times a dangerous one, but it is also of the greatest importance. The skill and efficiency with which it has continued to fulfil this role over the past three and a half years does lasting credit both to it and to the United Nations as a whole.

46. Mr. BARTON (Canada): Sir, since this will be the last time this month that the Council will meet, I should like to take this opportunity to express admiration for the manner in which you have conducted our deliberations. As President, you have guided us carefully through difficult negotiations, and we are grateful.

47. My country, I think, is the only one on the Council which is represented on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, and I am sure you will understand if the statement that I make is perhaps cast more in the direction of the interests of the Force than some of the others.

48. When I visited it this last spring, I must say that I was tremendously impressed with the efficiency and high morale of the Force, which has been carrying out its tasks

on behalf of us all by supervising the cease-fire called for by the 1974 Disengagement Agreement between Israel and Syria. The report of the Secretary-General clearly indicates that the Force has continued to perform during the past six months at the same high standard as in the past. It does so under difficult and sometimes dangerous conditions, and we can only hope that it is contributing not only to the maintenance of peace but to the preconditions for a peaceful settlement. I might add for the benefit of those who made the observation that I can also assure them that it is performing with the utmost economy and efficiency.

49. A peaceful settlement can only be obtained if there is sufficient political will on both sides to work out an acceptable agreement. In May this year [2010th meeting] I expressed our concern at the lack of tangible signs of progress towards a peaceful settlement since UNDOF was established following the 1974 Disengagement Agreement. Today, we perceive a glimmer of hope for a peaceful settlement in the Middle East. If that hope were realized, the world would become a less dangerous place for us all. We therefore appeal to all the parties concerned to show the necessary flexibility and imagination to follow a path which may lead to peace rather than to further hostilities.

50. There is one observation in the Secretary-General's report on which I would like to make a special comment. On 16 November 1977, two members of the Iranian battalion came under fire from the Israeli side of the A line. Both men were wounded. It is a serious matter that Members of the United Nations should be fired upon—a matter which should be of concern to every Member State. We are aware that accidents can happen, but when they happen in our national forces the persons responsible are court-martialled and receive suitable punishment. We support the strong protest lodged by the Secretary-General in this case and trust that the Israeli authorities will carry out a thorough investigation and take appropriate action.

51. We also note that the report indicates—as did last October's report on the United Nations Emergency Force [S/12416]—that only limited progress has been made on achieving full freedom of movement for all UNDOF contingents. I should like to reiterate the comments I made during the UNEF debate [2035th meeting] to the effect that we consider freedom of movement to be essential if a peace-keeping force is to do its job properly, and we therefore fully support the Secretary-General's continued efforts in this regard.

52. My Government has authorized me to announce our willingness to continue participating in UNDOF at approximately our present strength for the period of its renewed mandate, and I am sure our troops look forward to continuing their efforts in the Force with the contingents from Austria, Iran and Poland in the cause of peace.

53. Before I close, I should like to express our appreciation to Major-General Philipp and the officers and men of UNDOF and to the Secretary-General and the members of his staff both here and at Jerusalem, who make UNDOF such an effective peace-keeping force.

54. Mr. LEPRETTE (France) (*interpretation from French*): In my delegation's view, the renewal of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force in the Golan gives proof of much wisdom. While it is clear that the decision the Council has just taken, thanks to the agreement of the parties concerned, does not touch on the substance of the problem, it is no less obvious that it constitutes a necessary element for preserving the chances of achieving a peace settlement through peaceful means.

55. As is recalled by the Secretary-General in his report, intensive efforts have been made at various levels over the last few months to achieve that objective, with the resumption of the Geneva Peace Conference as the first stage. The French Government expresses the hope that those efforts and the various accompanying initiatives will make it possible to arrive at an over-all, just and lasting settlement of the Middle East conflict.

56. That over-all settlement, which is a necessity, should in our view, I need hardly recall, be based on the evacuation of the territories occupied by Israel in 1967, recognition of the right of the Palestinians to a homeland and recognition of the right of all States of the region to live in peace within secure, recognized and guaranteed boundaries. It is in this context that we express our satisfaction with the maintenance of the United Nations Force, which is an indispensable instrument of peace in the present circumstances.

57. In conclusion, I should like, on behalf of my Government, to pay a tribute to the Secretary-General and his collaborators for the manner in which they have discharged the delicate and difficult tasks entrusted to them. I also wish to thank those Governments which have provided contingents of troops for the Force and to express the gratitude of the French authorities to the Commander of the Force, the members of UNDOF and its civilian personnel. They are all making an exemplary contribution to the accomplishment of the United Nations mission of peace,

58. Finally, Mr. President, I should like to thank you for the role you have played in making possible the satisfactory conclusion of this debate.

59. Mr. AKHUND (Pakistan): The Security Council has just approved the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force for a further period of six months. My delegation was pleased to vote in favour of this decision.

60. We note with satisfaction from the Secretary-General's report that the Force has continued to discharge its functions effectively and has received the co-operation of the parties concerned. My delegation would like to join other delegations in extending appreciation to the members of the Force for the devotion and exemplary efficiency with which they have discharged their duties under the command of Major-General Philipp.

61. The Secretary-General's report also mentions that in the supervision of the observance of the cease-fire between Syria and Israel no complaints have been received by either party and that the area has remained quiet during the

period. This is a measure of the effectiveness of the Force. It is also a demonstration of the devotion to peace and the commitment to a peaceful settlement of Syria, on whose territory the Force is stationed. It is fitting that we express our deepest and most sincere appreciation to the Syrian Government for agreeing to another extension of the mandate.

62. However, as the Secretary-General has noted in his report, the present quiet in the Israel-Syria sector should not obscure the fact that the main elements of the Middle East problem remain unresolved and that, unless genuine progress can be achieved towards a just and lasting peace in the region, the situation in the area will continue to remain volatile, unstable and potentially dangerous. This assessment was contained in the statement which you, Mr. President, read out on behalf of the Council members. The Council cannot remain satisfied with merely a periodic renewal of the mandates of UNDOF and UNEF. The Council and the parties concerned have a definite responsibility to move towards the goal of peace and to strive vigorously in pursuit of that goal. My delegation greatly appreciates the role the Secretary-General has played and continues to play in trying to bring the parties together, and we commend the discreet but intensive efforts he has made in that direction.

63. My delegation has expressed its views on the Middle East conflict on a number of occasions in the Security Council as well as in the General Assembly. Speaking before the Assembly a week ago, the leader of the Pakistan delegation said:

"Time is of the essence for peace in the Middle East today. Unless tangible movement is made towards a just and equitable settlement, the threat to peace and security in the region will become imminent."⁴

64. The basic elements for achieving a just, durable and comprehensive peace in the Middle East—and I emphasize the three characteristics of justice, durability and comprehensiveness—are the withdrawal of Israeli forces from all Arab territories occupied since 5 June 1967, recognition and implementation of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people through the establishment of a State of their own in Palestine, and recognition of the right of all States of the region to exist in peace. These three elements are interconnected and have received the endorsement of the international community. It is the view of my delegation that the situation in the Middle East has reached a crucial stage. The attainment of a just and durable peace on the basis of the three foregoing elements seems to be within reach. Yet there is great danger that the momentum towards peace may be lost and the people of the region may once again be drawn into war—a war they do not want, which would solve nothing for them and which could produce disastrous political and economic consequences for the rest of the world.

65. In his report, the Secretary-General has rightly observed that an early resumption of the Geneva Peace Conference would be a first step towards a comprehensive

⁴ *Ibid.*, 82nd meeting, para. 224.

just and lasting settlement of the Middle East problem. Only the other day, the General Assembly, by an overwhelming majority, endorsed the need for a very early reconvening of the Conference [resolution 32/20]. The success of negotiations, however, can be ensured only if the parties concerned clearly demonstrate their commitment to the three basic principles for a settlement that have been endorsed and upheld by the international community.

66. On behalf of my delegation and my country, I should like to express the fervent hope that all concerned will act with the vision and statesmanship which the challenge of the present situation demands.

67. In conclusion, I take the opportunity on this last day of your presidency of the Council, Mr. President, to express to you my delegation's appreciation of the manner in which you have guided our deliberations. The Council has indeed been fortunate in having a man of your skill and broad understanding as President during a month in which it has had to deal with so many very difficult and delicate problems.

68. Mr. HOUNGAVOU (Benin) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation's position on the resolution the Council has just adopted is in keeping with its stand in the past.

69. With regard to the Middle East crisis as a whole and its various aspects, I should like to reaffirm that the People's Republic of Benin supports the just cause of the Arab peoples and is working for a just and lasting settlement in the region. The People's Republic of Benin still thinks that peace in the Middle East—peace for all peoples there—is indivisible and global. This indivisible and global peace will be achieved first of all by the enthusiastic participation of all the parties to the conflict in a peace conference which should lead to Israel's unconditional withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories and then by the solution of the central problem in the crisis, which is the Palestinian question.

70. Before concluding, Mr. President, I should like to express my delegation's appreciation to you for the skilful and militant way in which you have guided our work during this month of November.

71. Mr. JAIPAL (India): We observe from the report of the Secretary-General that UNDOF has continued to perform its functions effectively and efficiently and that, during the last six months, the situation has remained generally quiet and free of incident, except for the one incident referred to by the representative of Canada. This is a tribute not only to the restraint exercised by the parties concerned but also to the vigilance and efficiency of the Force, under the command of Major-General Hannes Philipp. We join with other delegations in expressing our thanks to Austria, Canada, Iran and Poland, which have provided the peace-keeping contingents of some 1,200 military personnel.

72. We wish also to place on record our deep appreciation of the efforts made by the Secretary-General in carrying out his mandate. We share the Secretary-General's assess-

ment that the main elements of the Middle East problem remain unresolved and that the situation will continue to be unstable unless progress is made towards a comprehensive peace settlement. The framework for such a settlement has been laid down in the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. The Secretary-General himself has a role to play and has taken well-meaning and helpful initiatives from time to time, and has also acted, most recently, to promote the implementation of Council resolution 338 (1973). We commend the Secretary-General's efforts for peace and we expect the parties concerned to respond positively with a sense of responsibility and realism.

73. We should like to take this opportunity to reiterate our views on peace-keeping, which we have expressed in the past. UNDOF was established in May 1974, and its current cost is of the order of \$1.7 million per month. This scale of expenditure itself may not be much in relation to the imperatives of peace, but we must avoid giving the impression that the renewal of the mandate of UNDOF is a routine or automatic exercise. It is not fair to the United Nations, or indeed to those countries that provide contingents for the peace-keeping force, to expect them to remain indefinitely on duty, with no prospect of a peace settlement. The purpose of stationing the Force is not to enable any party to freeze the *status quo*, and we should certainly not allow such a situation to develop. I do not see why, after three and a half years, the parties concerned should not be expected to keep the peace themselves without the necessity of an expensive United Nations force. We would expect the parties concerned to exercise the utmost restraint themselves and to move in the direction of responding positively to any peace initiatives that may be taken by the Secretary-General in pursuance of the implementation of resolution 338 (1973).

74. Subject to these general observations, I should like to explain that my delegation voted in favour of extending the mandate of UNDOF for another six months on the clear understanding that we expect the parties concerned, and also the two Co-Chairmen of the Geneva Peace Conference, to make real progress towards a realistic and comprehensive peace settlement in terms of resolution 338 (1973).

75. Lastly, Mr. President, I wish to convey to you my delegation's congratulations on your skilful performance as President. You have brought us safely through an uncertain and difficult month, and we are grateful to you for your leadership and guidance, which I have not found as militant as did my colleague from Benin.

76. Mr. VON WECHMAR (Federal Republic of Germany): My delegation gladly joined in the vote in favour of the resolution just adopted, renewing, on the recommendation of the Secretary-General, the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force for another period of six months. My delegation notes with satisfaction that the parties to the conflict have accepted the continuation of UNDOF's presence and have thereby made the extension of its mandate possible.

77. It is the understanding of my delegation that the continued presence of UNDOF is meant to provide the

parties with an opportunity to achieve progress towards a peace settlement. It has been noted in the Council time and again that it cannot be the purpose or justification of UNDOF to serve as a substitute for a peace settlement, that is, for the long-overdue implementation of resolution 338 (1973).

78. My delegation sincerely hopes that the intensive efforts which have been undertaken this year by many parties, including those directly involved in the conflict, to promote an early resumption of the negotiating process will bring us closer to the goal of establishing a just and durable peace in the Middle East. My delegation has carefully noted the reference made in this respect by the Secretary-General in paragraph 30 of his detailed and thoughtful report. My delegation also fully shares the Secretary-General's assessment in paragraph 32 of his report, noting:

“The present quiet in the Israel-Syria sector should not obscure the fact that the main elements of the Middle East problem remain unresolved and that the situation in the area will continue to be unstable and dangerous unless real progress can soon be made towards a just and durable settlement of the problem in all its aspects.”

In expressing his hope for the success of the various peace efforts under way, the Secretary-General rightly concludes by stating his concern:

“Failing such a development, there will, I fear, be a growing and serious danger that the situation will deteriorate once again.”

79. It is imperative at this crucial juncture that all parties should act in a constructive, realistic and conciliatory manner in order to prevent a tragic set-back in a development that has, during recent months, pointed to more hope of substantial progress than in any previous period of UNDOF's existence.

80. I should like to conclude my brief statement by expressing our admiration and gratitude to the Commander, the officers and men of UNDOF and its civilian staff, as well as to the UNTSO military observers assigned to UNDOF, for their outstanding performance. I should also like to express once again our sincere appreciation of the inspired and devoted efforts undertaken during the last six months by the Secretary-General and his staff. My delegation, finally, reiterates its gratitude to all countries contributing contingents to UNDOF. I also wish, Mr. President, to congratulate you on your successful efforts in bringing about this latest renewal of UNDOF's mandate.

81. The PRESIDENT: There are no other speakers inscribed on my list. I shall therefore now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the LIBYAN ARAB JAMAHIRIYA.

82. The position of the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in regard to the issue on our agenda is clear and has been presented repeatedly in the Council. We remain convinced that Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), upon which the presence of the United Nations

Disengagement Observer Force is based, are irrelevant to any just solution to the Middle East problem and to the Palestinian question.

83. Over 10 years have passed since the adoption of resolution 242 (1967). The basic situation and the perceptions and understanding of the vast majority of the world's peoples in regard to the Palestinian question have changed radically in the last 10 years. The right of the Palestinian people to their freedom, to self-determination and to return to their homes and properties is increasingly recognized by the international community. Various General Assembly resolutions adopted in the last few years by overwhelming majorities have affirmed those rights and have condemned the racist Zionist and imperialist forces that are responsible for the deprivations that the Palestinian people have suffered over the last 30 years. Those resolutions of the Assembly, and especially resolutions 3236 (XXIX), 3237 (XXIX), 3375 (XXX), 3376 (XXX) and 31/20, reflect the new realities and the new understanding of the real issues. Those resolutions recognize the profound and important changes that have taken place and in essence they call for a review of the entire question. It is for those reasons that my delegation did not participate in this debate or in the vote on the resolution just adopted.

84. I should like on this occasion to express our appreciation of the active, objective and dynamic role of the Secretary-General, especially in these difficult times, in relation to the problem of the Middle East and the problem of the Palestinian people.

85. I should also like on this occasion to mention the indefatigable support of my people for our Syrian Arab brothers in their fight against the Zionist aggression and against the Zionists and their allies, the imperialists.

86. Now I resume my function as PRESIDENT of the Council.

87. As this is the last meeting for the month of November, I wish to express my appreciation to the members of the Council for their co-operation and assistance. I should also like to express my thanks and appreciation to the Secretary-General and his staff for their co-operation and assistance to me, as President of the Council, and to my delegation as a member of the Council.

88. We can reasonably assume that this Council meeting will be the last during the month of November—although the unpredictable and surprising are not uncommon in today's world. But in the hope that this is November's last meeting, my delegation wishes at this time to express its thanks and appreciation to those who helped us in our work; I should especially like to mention those who are in the booths, behind the scenes, and the army of technicians, editors, those of the Secretariat who really assisted us in our work as a member of the Council for two years and as President of the Council this month. I cannot say “goodbye until the next time”, because our next turn will be 25 years from now. But I hope that, in 25 years, the Security Council will still be here, in better health, in better shape, more democratic and more efficient.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.

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