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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SECURITY COUNCIL  
Thirty-first year

Letter dated 9 January 1976 from the Permanent Representative  
of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United  
Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I should be grateful if you would circulate as an official document of the General Assembly and the Security Council the attached statement by the Soviet Government on the Middle East, dated 9 January 1976.

(Signed) Y. MALIK  
Permanent Representative  
of the Union of Soviet Socialist  
Republics to the United Nations

\* For information concerning the new system of numbering General Assembly documents, see A/31/INF/1.

ANNEX

Statement by the Soviet Government on the Middle East

The attention of all those concerned for the strengthening of international peace and security and the deepening of the relaxation of international tension has again been drawn recently to the question of a settlement of what is one of the most complex and dangerous conflicts, the conflict in the Middle East. This is because the development of events in the Middle East is still fraught with great dangers.

On the one hand, more favourable conditions are now being created for the achievement of an over-all political settlement in the Middle East. As was shown, in particular, by the recent discussions on this question in the United Nations General Assembly, there is a much better and wider understanding of the essence of the Middle Eastern conflict and the ways and means of settling it. Now an overwhelming majority of States believe that in order to establish a just and lasting peace in the Middle East it is necessary to solve three basic problems which are organically linked with each other.

Israeli troops must be withdrawn from all Arab territories they occupied in 1967; the legitimate rights of the Arab people of Palestine, including its inalienable right to create its own State, must be ensured; the security of all Middle Eastern States and their right to independent existence and development must be guaranteed.

It is especially important that the recognition of the need to resolve the Palestine problem in the framework of a Middle East settlement is increasingly gaining ground. Such recognition was clearly reflected in the latest resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly, which clearly stated that the Arab people of Palestine is one of the principal parties to a Middle East settlement, and the Palestine Liberation Organization is its legitimate representative. The participation of PLO in the consideration of all aspects of a settlement has now been confirmed by the practice not only of the General Assembly but also of the Security Council; both of these bodies have specially invited the Palestinians to participate in their work.

The proposal for resumption of the functioning of an international machinery which was created expressly for settling the Middle Eastern conflict, the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East, is receiving broad support. The overwhelming majority of States firmly hold that all the parties directly concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, should participate in the Geneva Conference from the very start and on the basis of equal rights.

On the other hand, Israeli ruling circles continue stubbornly to oppose any real progress towards settlement. They do not want to return the occupied lands

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to their lawful owners, and they refuse to recognize the legitimate national rights of the Arab people of Palestine. The Israeli authorities are driving the Arab population from its native lands and ostentatiously creating their own settlements there. The territory of Lebanon has become the target of armed Israeli raids. Armed clashes inside that country are continuing, largely provoked from outside by the forces that are striving to maintain a tense situation in the Middle East.

Certain States that have long encouraged Israel's aggressive policy are also continuing to sabotage the process of over-all political settlement in the Middle East. They continue striving to bypass the Geneva Peace Conference and are seeking separate arrangements that fail to deal with key problems of the settlement. They clearly hope to find weak links among the Arab countries, to disunite the Arab States and subject them to their own influence and control.

This is a risky and hopeless policy. It cannot lead to a settlement and the establishment of a lasting peace in the Middle East. It can only further aggravate the situation and increase the danger of new military explosions in the region. It is high time for those who continue to follow this policy to understand that it only enhances the determination of the Arab countries and the Arab peoples to strengthen the unity of their ranks and their defences.

The situation in the Middle East is to be discussed in the United Nations Security Council shortly. If all the members of the Security Council, particularly the States which are permanent members of the Council, display political responsibility and a genuine interest in ending the dangerous situation in the Middle East and ensuring conditions for the peace and security of all States in the region, the Security Council will be able to make an important contribution to a positive development of events.

The Soviet Government believes that the Security Council must base its discussion of the situation in the Middle East on its well-known resolutions adopted after the 1967 war and the 1973 war respectively and also should fully take into account those decisions of the United Nations General Assembly which relate directly to this question.

The main result of the Security Council's discussion of the situation in the Middle East must be the creation of the necessary conditions for the resumption and effective work of the Geneva Conference.

With broad international support, the Arab countries are showing readiness to reach a Middle East settlement on a reasonable basis. This position should be evaluated on its merits. But the Arabs have a right to expect that the other side will also, at long last, display a sense of realism.

The present situation in the Middle East urgently demands the further intensification of efforts by all those who truly want the peoples of that region to find peace and confidence in the morrow.

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As to the Soviet Union, its policy on the question of a Middle East settlement is well known and will continue to be principled and constructive. Supporting the just cause of the Arab countries and peoples which are upholding their legitimate rights, the Soviet Union will do all in its power, in the Security Council and elsewhere, to promote the earliest attainment of an over-all political settlement in the Middle East.

Moscow, 9 January 1976

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