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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SECURITY COUNCIL
Thirty-first year

Letter dated 20 February 1976 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i.
of the Permanent Mission of the United States of America to
the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the following message from Secretary of State Kissinger:

"Dear Mr. Secretary-General:

I have your letter of 27 January, sent to me in my capacity as Co-Chairman of the Peace Conference on the Middle East. 1/ As you know, I always appreciate having your views on the situation in the area.

You can be sure that I share your sense of the urgency of pursuing the goal of a peaceful settlement in the Middle East. Our just concluded discussions with the Prime Minister of Israel, Mr. Rabin, have been helpful in our consideration of further diplomatic activity, and we expect to be consulting with all the parties in the weeks ahead.

The United States does not believe that stagnation is acceptable or inevitable. We are determined to continue our efforts towards meaningful negotiations.

We believe, however, that there would be no chance of further progress if the negotiating framework, painfully erected over a period of years, were

* A/31/50.

1/ The Secretary-General, in maintaining contacts with the Co-Chairmen of the Peace Conference on the Middle East, sent identical letters to them on 27 January 1976 in which he inquired about their thinking on ways of making progress towards a solution of the Middle East problem.

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disrupted. This framework, erected fundamentally around resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), is sufficiently flexible, as we have previously noted, that it can provide the basis for working out fair and durable solutions to all of the issues involved, including the issues of withdrawal from occupied territories, of the termination of states or claims of belligerency, of reciprocal obligations to peace, and of the right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries. As you are aware, the United States has also repeatedly affirmed its recognition that there will be no permanent peace unless it includes arrangements that take into account the legitimate interests of the Palestinian people.

We recognize the need for a degree of flexibility on the particular procedures through which the momentum of practical progress in the negotiating process may be maintained. We have agreed that a resumption of the Geneva Peace Conference after careful preparation would serve the goal of achieving such progress. As a practical way of proceeding, we have proposed a Preparatory Conference of those who have participated so far in negotiations looking towards a settlement within the Geneva Conference framework. The United States is also prepared to consider holding bilateral consultations with the USSR in advance of such a Preparatory Conference.

I will keep in close touch with you as our efforts proceed.

With warm regards,

Henry A. KISSINGER"

I should be grateful if Your Excellency would direct that this letter be circulated as an official document of the Security Council and of the General Assembly.

(Signed) Albert W. SHERER, Jr.
Ambassador