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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SECURITY COUNCIL
Thirty-first year

Letter dated 7 October 1976 from the Acting Chairman of the
delegation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to
the General Assembly addressed to the Secretary-General

I should be grateful if you would circulate as an official document of the General Assembly, under item 29 of the agenda of the thirty-first session, and of the Security Council the attached text of the Proposal by the Soviet Union concerning a settlement in the Middle East and the Geneva Peace Conference.

(Signed) A. DOBRYNIN
Acting Chairman of the
USSR delegation
to the thirty-first session
of the General Assembly

ANNEX

Proposal by the Soviet Union concerning a settlement in the
Middle East and the Geneva Peace Conference

Among the complex international problems requiring a solution in the interests of the preservation and strengthening of peace, the problem of a Middle East settlement is particularly acute. The red-hot tension in the Middle East is not abating. The situation in this region is extremely precarious and unstable. At any moment there may be a new military outburst there.

The peoples of the Middle East countries are living in a state of uncertainty, under a permanent threat to their security. They are being prevented from devoting their efforts to peaceful construction and the improvement of living conditions. Attempts are being made to keep the Arab people of Palestine in the position of an exiled people.

The entire course of events in the Middle East in recent years demonstrates one fact: there cannot and will not be peace in this region until the causes which gave rise to the Middle East conflict have been removed: the occupation of the Arab territories by Israel, the denial of their inalienable rights to the Palestine Arab people and the continuing state of war. It is impossible to hope that it will be sufficient to eliminate any one particular individual hotbed of armed conflict in order to restore peace in the Middle East.

The tragic events in Lebanon provide a very clear confirmation of all this. The Lebanese crisis could not have arisen if a comprehensive political settlement had been achieved in the Middle East. There is another undeniable fact: if there had been such a settlement, or if serious efforts had been made to achieve one, it would have been easier to find a solution to the problems rending this small Middle Eastern country.

Only those who are trying for their own narrow ends to preserve the existing situation in the Middle East can oppose a broad political settlement or work against its achievement.

It is the conviction of the Soviet Union that the situation in the Middle East requires urgent measures capable of achieving a change from war to peace there.

The Soviet Union has already proposed a resumption for this purpose of the work of the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East. This is precisely the forum which has been recognized as being politically acceptable by all the interested parties.

Concerned about the dangerous course of events in the Middle East, the Soviet Union now again appeals to all the parties directly involved in the Middle East conflict and to all the participants in the Geneva Peace Conference to resume the

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work of the Conference. The Soviet Union, for its part, would be prepared to take part in the work of the Conference in October-November 1976.

The experience of international negotiations and conferences has shown that an important factor in their success is the precise definition of the range of issues to be discussed by the parties. When these issues are spelt out and placed before the participants in the negotiations, the prospects for achieving the necessary understanding also become clearer.

In an attempt to expedite the achievement of a Middle East settlement and for this purpose to promote the resumption of the work of the Geneva Peace Conference, the Soviet Union submits for the consideration of the participants the following proposal for the agenda of the Conference:

1. Withdrawal of Israeli troops from all the Arab territories occupied in 1967.
2. Realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestine Arab people, including their right to self-determination and the establishment of their own State.
3. Preservation of the right to an independent existence and to security of all the States directly participating in the conflict: the Arab States bordering on Israel, on the one hand, and the State of Israel, on the other, and the granting to them of appropriate international guarantees.
4. Cessation of the state of war between the Arab States concerned and Israel.

In the opinion of the Soviet Union, this proposed agenda covers all the key aspects of a settlement. It takes into account the legitimate rights and interests of all the parties directly involved in the conflict - the Arab States, the Palestine Arab people and the State of Israel.

With regard to the organization of the work of the Geneva Peace Conference, the Soviet Union has already expressed the view that it should be conducted in two phases. The Palestine Liberation Organization should naturally participate in the work of the Conference from the very beginning and with equal status.

In the first, preparatory phase, final agreement could be reached on the agenda of the Conference and the procedure for considering the specific aspects of a settlement could be determined. In the second, fundamental phase, efforts would be concentrated on arriving at an understanding on the substance. The Conference should conclude with the adoption of a final instrument (or instruments) in the nature of a treaty.

The Soviet Union is convinced that a real possibility exists of eliminating the underlying causes of the Middle East conflict and agreeing on a comprehensive settlement. To this end, it is prepared to press on with the work, together with all the other participants in the Geneva Peace Conference.