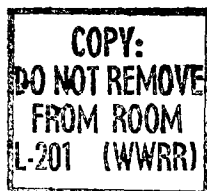


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Chairman: Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 60: UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST:

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER-GENERAL (A/36/13)
- (b) REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (A/36/615)
- (c) REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE (A/36/529)
- (d) REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/36/385 and Add.1, A/36/558, 559 and 593)

1. Mr. EL-FATTAL (Syrian Arab Republic) said that since the adoption of General Assembly resolutions 194 (III) and 302 (IV) there had been a debate at every session on the subject of relief for those Palestinian refugees who had been expelled from their homes by Israel in accordance with a plan drawn up before the establishment of the Zionist entity whose implementation had led to the emptying of Palestine of its Arab inhabitants, who were in the majority, and their replacement by foreign Zionist settlers. The situation was clearly one of settler colonialism in the full meaning of that term. It was, however, the subject of return that was basic to the Committee's work, in accordance with paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III), and that of relief for the refugees, which was only a means of helping them to bear the misery and poverty imposed upon them until such time as they could exercise their right of return.

2. His delegation noted with regret that international aid for the provision of a minimum of services continued to be a subject for haggling and a means of bringing pressure to bear with the aim of closing the subject of return. The matter was approached as though it was a struggle between those who desired some little good for the refugees and those, even though they made financial contributions, who were intent on depriving the refugees of those rights left to them, including the right of return, with the aim of covering up the crimes of the Zionists.

3. It was clear from the report of the Commissioner-General and the report of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine that, in spite of wide international recognition of their rights, the Palestinians were threatened with the deprivation of those educational services which helped them liberate themselves from ignorance and poverty, and with total neglect as far as the implementation of those resolutions concerning the exercise of their right of return was concerned. The report of the Conciliation Commission embodied an evasion of responsibility for honest and serious action to promote their return. His delegation appreciated the statement made by the Commissioner-General on the previous day, in which he had linked the concept of relief with that of return, in saying that UNRWA was for the Palestinians a symbol of their rights under resolution 194 (III) and of their Palestinian identity. It was truly saddening to have to stand before the General Assembly year after year in order to beg for

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(Mr. El-Fattal, Syrian Arab Republic)

bread, flour, medicines and education for the Palestinian people and to make appeal after appeal to those western States responsible for the plight of the refugees which profited and flourished from the continuation of the Middle East crisis.

4. The apparent financial crisis affecting UNRWA was in essence a political struggle between those working sincerely for the return of the refugees and those who were doing all in their power to deprive them of their rights in order to support the Zionist entity planted in the heart of the Arab nation in order to protect colonialist and imperialist interests. The Zionists believed that depriving the refugees of education would be of assistance in obliterating their personality and their rights, just as they had believed in the past that prolonging the period of relief and works would bring about the integration of the Palestinian personality into the societies of those States to which they were expelled. His delegation had inferred from the statement of the Commissioner-General that the financial crisis had as its objective the liquidation of refugee society in order to put an end to the right of return. Although the United States of America contributed the greater part of the UNRWA budget, that generosity was specious and misleading, since it had supplied Israel with all means of livelihood and of aggression.

5. The Camp David accords represented a new attempt to advance the great conspiracy against the right of the Palestinian people to return. The so-called "framework for peace in the Middle East" had called explicitly for Egypt and Israel to work together and with other interested parties to elaborate agreed measures for the speedy and permanent solution of the refugee problem and had completely ignored the right of return. The Camp David accords had gone so far as to limit the right of persons displaced in 1967 to return to the occupied territories by granting Israel the "right" to prevent the return of any person whose presence it found undesirable. Naturally, Israel would prevent the return of the majority as long as its policy was based upon settlement and the appropriation of Arab land.

6. The right of return of refugees and displaced persons was an absolute and universal right and was protected by the principles of international law and the resolutions of the United Nations. All the provisions of the Camp David accords, without exception, were opposed to those of the United Nations Charter and in violation of universally recognized humane principles, in particular the right of an individual to return to his homeland.

7. It was not surprising that UNRWA should be threatened with imminent bankruptcy since that allowed the enemies of the Palestinian people to pursue their conspiracies based upon the separation of the refugee from his homeland. The deprivation of his right of return and the transformation of an international responsibility into one to be borne by the host countries so that the refugee problem should become an internal Arab problem. The theory of "self-rule" or "administrative rule" was legally, politically and ethically invalid, and the parties to the Camp David accords were attempting to impose it upon the Palestinian people in order to destroy the basis of the Palestinian cause. Using that twisted logic, the rulers of Egypt had conceded the perverse and inhumane Zionist belief that Jews in all parts of the world were "refugees" and that they therefore enjoyed the right of return whenever they chose to exercise it.

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8. Mr. SHEHATA (Egypt), rising to a point of order, said that the item under consideration was agenda item 60, and that there would be ample time for comment on the Middle East and on the question of Palestine before the plenary meetings on those matters. His delegation would not tolerate comment on the leadership of its country by the representative of Syria. It was ready to exchange polemics if the meeting was to take that form, but would prefer not to do so. Those unable to join the peace process had to be satisfied with such exercises in futility. He reserved the right of his delegation to comment further on the matter.

9. Mr. EL-FATTAL (Syrian Arab Republic) said that since the representative of Egypt had previously admitted that Palestine was the core of the Middle East problem, his interruption was difficult to understand. His own reference to the rulers of Egypt was above reproach; all States had rulers.

10. Mr. SHEHATA (Egypt), rising to a point of order, said that his delegation would permit no reference to its political leadership. If the meeting was to consider the agenda item before it in a substantive manner, his delegation was prepared to make a positive contribution. If, however, the debate was to be transformed into a propaganda exercise, his delegation would not allow it to continue even if that was to lead to the suspension of the meeting.

11. The CHAIRMAN appealed to the representative of Egypt to bring up those points when speaking in exercise of the right of reply, which he had already requested. Members of the Committee should reciprocate by observing the right to speak and should bear in mind that each had the right of reply.

12. Mr. EL-FATTAL (Syrian Arab Republic) said that both Egypt and Israel were parties to the situation under discussion. A delegation could not be prevented from mentioning Egypt or its rulers; that the representative of Egypt had attempted to do so meant that Egypt had abrogated the Camp David accords. If that was so, then that delegation should say so and he would not speak about Egypt. He was not speaking to Egypt alone, but in an international forum and therefore had the right to mention that country. The Committee must conduct its work with frankness. One delegation could not be allowed to delay its work or to try to deprive another delegation of the freedom of speech. He appealed to the Chairman not to allow further interruptions. The subject was of the utmost importance, dealing as it did with peace in the region. The Palestinian refugees had lost patience with Egyptian and Israeli dictatorships, and he wished to speak for them and for his own people.

13. The rulers of Egypt had admitted the right of return with respect to Jews at a time when the right of the Palestinian Arabs, forcibly expelled from their homes by Zionist terrorism, had become a subject for haggling and arbitrariness.

14. The report of the Commissioner-General had contained an appeal to the General Assembly to take renewed steps to ensure the continuation of the work of UNRWA, in particular its educational programmes; a warning that the collapse of the Agency would lead to disaster for the Palestinian refugees, the host Governments and peace and stability in the Near East; and an announcement to the General Assembly of the total rejection on the part of the host countries of the

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(Mr. El-Fattal, Syrian Arab Republic)

suspension of the educational programme or any other services and of any suggestion that they should take on responsibility for the schools. The international community had the obligation to ensure the continuation of UNRWA until such time as a comprehensive solution to the Palestinian problem was found, and the funding of its services remained an obligation of the international community as a whole. Any attempt on the part of UNRWA to evade its responsibilities would be considered a plan for the integration of the refugees in the host countries.

15. His delegation agreed with the Commissioner-General on the dangers which would attend any suspension of the activities of UNRWA and on the necessity for the General Assembly to establish new principles for its financing. The General Assembly should, as a first step, cover the deficit of about \$80 million in the Agency's budget for 1982 from the regular budget of the United Nations. Those countries which had been responsible for creating the refugee problem, in particular those Western countries profiting from the Middle East crisis, had not met their obligations with respect to the difficulties faced by the Agency. If the deficit should recur, there would be no alternative at a subsequent stage to considering the absorption of the UNRWA budget into that of the United Nations. His delegation requested the Secretary-General to submit a study on that matter as a step towards ensuring a stable income for UNRWA.

16. The Arab delegations were of the view that the yield from the property of the Palestinian refugees exploited by Israel for the past 33 years should be placed in a special fund under the supervision of the Secretary-General. Such a fund would be more than sufficient to preserve the dignity of the Palestinian people, today treated like an impoverished dependent on the international community.

17. It was one of the ironies of fate that UNRWA should be on the brink of bankruptcy at a time when American-made aircraft given to Israel were engaged in sowing death and destruction in refugee camps. The cost of a single Israeli aircraft would suffice for the education of all refugee children for an entire school year.

18. The Commissioner-General had recalled the General Assembly to its duty by requesting that it take steps to reconcile international responsibility for Palestinian refugees with the insufficiency of present and anticipated voluntary contributions to bridge the financial gap. Doubtless, the General Assembly would comply with that appeal and would find the means to extricate UNRWA from its financial dilemma, which would, if continued, lead to a new disaster in the region.

19. Mr. HUMFREY (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the ten member States of the European Community, expressed deep appreciation for the dedication with which the Commissioner-General and his staff had continued to carry out UNRWA's mandate, which had just been renewed for a further three years. UNRWA's new mandate had begun at a time when the Agency was facing a financial crisis of unprecedented proportions to which solutions were urgently needed.

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(Mr. Humfrey, United Kingdom)

20. The problems of the Palestine refugees could be solved only within the political framework of a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Ten had demonstrated their continuing determination to work towards such a settlement on the basis of the Venice Declaration of 13 June 1980. In the meantime, however, they were fully aware that UNRWA played a vital role in the life of the Palestinian people. The extent and value of its services, particularly in education, were abundantly clear to anyone who visited the area. Indeed, its great humanitarian contribution had been an important stabilizing factor in a sorely troubled region. If the international community wished to secure the continuing effectiveness of UNRWA, however, it must act urgently to resolve the Agency's grave financial situation. The Commissioner-General had indicated that, unless additional funds were forthcoming, he might be forced to reduce expenditures as early as the beginning of 1982. The Ten believed that the Commissioner-General had a responsibility to prevent the Agency from going bankrupt and that the necessary funds must be found as soon as possible.

21. The Ten did not believe that UNRWA's present voluntary system of financing was inappropriate in itself, but rather that the response from the international community had been inadequate. They, for their part, had again increased their over-all contribution, in the form of both individual national contributions and contributions through the budget of the European Community, with the result that that contribution represented over one third of total pledges in 1981. A number of other countries had also increased their contributions in 1981, but the circle of countries contributing adequately was still too limited. A number of countries with the means to contribute had not done so, despite their expressions of concern for the plight of the Palestinian people. The Ten appealed to all Member States to demonstrate their concern by responding urgently and providing UNRWA with the necessary financing as soon as possible.

22. The Ten were disturbed to learn that, once again, the Agency's activities in Lebanon had been seriously affected by the hostilities there. They were deeply concerned at the situation in that country and were anxious to see peace restored. They therefore appealed to all those responsible to exercise restraint and to enable UNRWA to carry out its programmes without hindrance.

23. The Ten were also concerned at the difficulties encountered by UNRWA and its staff in other areas of the Agency's operations, including instances of arbitrary arrest and detention without charge or trial, the demolition of refugee shelters and the failure to secure certain privileges and tax exemptions for UNRWA. They called on all parties concerned to ensure that the Agency and its staff were treated in a manner befitting UNRWA's mandate. At the same time, they were gratified that the Commissioner-General intended to reunify UNRWA's headquarters in the Near East as soon as was practicable.

24. Finally, the Ten hoped that the international community as a whole would show the necessary political will to contribute generously to solving UNRWA's financial crisis so that it could continue its operations effectively and preserve the well-being of the Palestine refugees.

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25. Mr. ORN (Sweden) observed that UNRWA's current crisis was not like those it had overcome in the past; the Agency was now on the verge of collapse. A year ago, the General Assembly had decided without a single negative vote to extend UNRWA's mandate, demonstrating conclusively that all States wished its programme to continue. There was no doubt that until a comprehensive, just and lasting peace was achieved in the Middle East, the Agency must continue with its work. Yet those same States that had voted to extend UNRWA's mandate had not, collectively, provided the funds necessary to maintain even a minimum of the services included in the Agency's programme, and the Commissioner-General had taken a major financial risk in order to avoid the tremendous political risk of terminating the Agency's activities.

26. Even if immediate disaster was averted, however, and the Agency's programme did continue, UNRWA would remain in perpetual crisis until its financing was placed on a more stable footing. The non-recurrent expenditures that had been so severely cut back represented a mortgage on the future and could not be deferred for much longer. Repeated threats of school closures and staff dismissals placed intolerable strains on the refugees, the host Governments and the Agency itself. The Commissioner-General and his staff, who were now obliged to devote a great deal of their energies to solving acute financial problems, should be allowed to engage more fully in the work entrusted to them.

27. As one of UNRWA's largest contributors, Sweden would continue to give it substantial support and would also support fully any arrangement to put the Agency's financing on a more stable footing. It had for many years been advocating not only new and more effective procedures for financing the Agency but also more equitable burden-sharing, and it regretted that action to remedy UNRWA's financial plight had not seemed possible until the Agency was on the verge of bankruptcy. He hoped that remedial action would not come too late and that all donors would join in an effort to place UNRWA on a stable, predictable financial footing.

28. His delegation was deeply concerned that there had been no improvement with regard to the detention of UNRWA staff members and the restrictions imposed on staff members' travel, and it hoped that all parties concerned would help to eliminate those problems.

29. There was universal praise for the quality of UNRWA's programmes and recognition of their importance for the situation in the Middle East. The Commissioner-General had, with the utmost difficulty, avoided taking any irrevocable steps to deal with the Agency's lack of financial support, thereby providing the General Assembly with an opportunity to act before it was too late. Member States must live up to their responsibility and each shoulder a reasonable share of the burden.

30. Mr. MAIMBO (Zambia) observed that, since its establishment in 1949, UNRWA had worked with total dedication, often under extremely adverse conditions. He wished to express appreciation to the Commissioner-General and his staff, the Conciliation Commission for Palestine and the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA for their tireless efforts to alleviate human misery and distress.

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(Mr. Maimbo, Zambia)

31. The Agency and its mandate were closely related to the over-all political situation in the Middle East and would continue to be so until a just and lasting settlement acceptable to all parties was achieved. Until such a settlement became a reality, the Agency must therefore be allowed to continue its work. The Agency's financial situation had become critical because a handful of countries continued to bear its financial burden. All States had a responsibility to heed the appeals of the Commissioner-General and contribute generously to the Agency. In that connexion, he wished to pay a tribute to those Middle East countries which were providing a temporary home for the refugees and attending to their welfare.

32. The plight of the Palestine refugees was similar to that currently being experienced by the people of Namibia, many of whom, since taking up arms to fight for their country's independence, had been displaced, imprisoned or killed in the struggle. Many more were now refugees in neighbouring countries and required immediate relief from the international community.

33. The core of the Middle East conflict lay in the continued denial of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The Palestinians, like all other nations, were entitled to a State of their own and to the full exercise of their right to self-determination and independence. In the interests of peace in the Middle East and of the Palestinian people, his delegation called on Israel to withdraw from all the Arab lands occupied by force since 1967, to co-operation with the United Nations in implementing the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council, which provided a realistic framework for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, and to agree that the Palestinian people had a right to return to Palestine.

34. His delegation would continue to support UNRWA's work until the Middle East conflict had been satisfactorily resolved and lasting peace had returned to the region.

35. Mr. JAMAL (Qatar) said that in spite of the continuous efforts of all those concerned to overcome the difficulties obstructing the work of UNRWA in the host countries and, in particular, the occupied territories, its financial crises became worse every year and its tasks more difficult as a result of the basic problem, that of the Palestinian refugees, remaining unresolved.

36. The problem of the Palestinian refugees had been discussed in the Committee every year since the establishment of UNRWA without any tangible progress being made towards a just and permanent solution. Any attempt to solve the problem in isolation from its political aspects, such as the attempt to regard it merely as a humanitarian issue, was bound to fail. It was an indisputable fact that the problem had arisen from the insidious Zionist advance beginning with the usurpation of three quarters of Palestine in 1948 and the expulsion of most of its Arab population and leading to the occupation of the remainder of Palestine in 1967, the expulsion of 250,000 of its inhabitants, the appropriation of their land and property and the establishment of settlements in the occupied territories. Israel, however, had not been content with that but had continued its savage attacks on Palestinian refugees in south Lebanon and in Beirut. Israel was responsible for

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(Mr. Jamal, Qatar)

the plight of the Palestinian refugees, had violated the conditions of its admission to the United Nations and had refused to comply with resolutions of the United Nations on the right of the Palestinian people to return to its homeland.

37. The report of the Commissioner-General was a warning to the international community of the possible curtailment of basic and vital services to the Palestinian refugees. His country was fully aware of the difficult task performed by UNRWA, which became heavier with each vicious attack by the Israelis against the Palestine refugees. His delegation believed that as long as Israel refused to allow the return of the refugees and as long as the United Nations remained incapable of convincing Israel and its allies of their special responsibility for making up the financial deficit of UNRWA, it was incumbent on the United Nations itself to assume some of the financial burdens of the Agency and to transfer to it some of the surpluses from the budgets of other agencies and activities within the United Nations system. It was the view of his delegation that the Special Political Committee should place the funding of UNRWA on a more stable basis than that possible through its dependence on supplementary voluntary contributions from a limited number of Member States. Any reduction in such contributions had negative repercussions on food, education and housing services to Palestinian refugees.

38. The deficit for 1981 was \$45 million and that projected for 1982, \$80.3 million. It could be inferred from those figures that the financial crisis was becoming worse and more deeply entrenched, and UNRWA had, therefore, been forced to make cuts in a variety of areas other than education. The report of the Commissioner-General had warned that the resources of the health programme had been reduced to a minimum and that it was not possible to reduce them further. UNRWA had had recourse to a policy of reducing expenditure on relief services in order to preserve the educational programme. The Commissioner-General had requested that contributions in kind for the relief programme should be converted into liquid assets in order to be allocated to education. His delegation, while appreciating the concern of UNRWA for its educational programme, was of the view that that policy would ultimately lead to a reduction in the basic services of UNRWA, which were those concerned with relief, and to the Agency's being restricted to the educational programme alone. Such an outcome would constitute an evasion of the international community's responsibility towards the Palestinian refugees. His delegation therefore supported the position of the Jordanian and Syrian Governments, which was that the international community was obliged to ensure the continued functioning of UNRWA until such time as a comprehensive solution to the Palestinian problem had been found and that, consequently, responsibility for the funding of UNRWA was incumbent upon the international community as a whole.

39. With regard to the report of the Conciliation Commission (A/36/529), which the General Assembly, in resolution 35/13 A had requested to exert continued efforts towards the implementation of paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III), in which the General Assembly resolved that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return. The report of the

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(Mr. Jamal, Qatar)

Commission emphasized that events since 1967 had rendered an already complex situation increasingly complex. That showed that the international community had so far been unable to impose its will on the Israeli entity, which was flouting the resolutions of the United Nations. On 20 August 1981, its representative had addressed to the Secretary-General a note verbale in which it had asserted that it had been the first country in the Middle East to give true assistance to the refugees. That was indeed making a mockery of the United Nations.

40. Although it was the responsibility of the international community to finance UNRWA, the Arab oil States were contributing a large amount to cover the deficit. They feared, however, lest the burdens of UNRWA should gradually be transferred to those States and the other Arab host States. It should be pointed out also, that the international community's contribution to the financing of UNRWA was negligible compared with the aid and contributions received by "Israel" from the United States and other sources.

41. The Commissioner-General of UNRWA mentioned in his report that the level of the services provided to the Palestinian refugees was below the acceptable minimum and that any reduction of those services would lead to the collapse of the Agency. Furthermore, the growing and repeated deficit in the budget arose not so much from any improvement in services as from monetary inflation. He therefore proposed that the contributions of States to the budget of UNRWA should be a fixed percentage and not a set amount, so as to offset inflation.

42. The State of Qatar had contributed half a million dollars to the budget of UNRWA in 1981, in addition to its annual regular contribution, as an affirmation of its belief in the principle of participation in the international responsibility for and commitment to the Agency. At the same time, Qatar believed that the time had come for the international community to realize that the problem of the Palestinian refugees was primarily a political problem whose solution depended on reaching a just and definitive settlement of the Palestinian problem, namely, by enabling the Palestinian people to exercise their legitimate and inalienable rights to return to their homes, to self-determination and to establish an independent State on their land.

43. Mr. PERCIVAL (Australia) said that UNRWA's increasingly desperate financial situation carried with it the potential to exacerbate the already great suffering of the Palestine refugees. UNRWA's financial problems were of long standing but now, because it had failed to secure the minimum funds essential to its continuing operations, it was on the brink of complete collapse. Unless adequate additional funds were found, it would have to begin to dismantle its education programme, a prospect which his delegation found quite unthinkable. The required funds must be found, and he called on all Governments to contribute generously and quickly to stabilize UNRWA's financial situation.

44. His delegation seriously doubted the feasibility of the suggestion that UNRWA's expenses, or at least its deficit, should be met from the regular budget of the United Nations. Steps must of course be taken to put UNRWA on a more stable financial footing, but such steps must correspond to the realities of the situation.

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(Mr. Percival, Australia)

The answer to the immediate crisis must lie in a more generous and speedy response from Member States.

45. Australia's contribution to UNRWA for 1982 would be approximately \$US1 million, an increase of some 75 per cent over 1981.

46. With regard to Australia's awards to Palestine refugees for tertiary study in Australia, having granted the first such award in April 1981 his Government was anxious to grant the remaining five awards as soon as possible.

47. His Government warmly appreciated the work which the Commissioner-General and his staff were doing in extremely difficult circumstances, thereby contributing to peace and stability in the region.

48. Mr. HAMDI (Saudi Arabia) said that Israel, supported by the United States of America and certain Western countries, continued to defy United Nations resolutions calling for the repatriation of the Palestinian refugees. The principles of international law and human rights would remain devoid of meaning as long as certain powerful States Members of the Organization continued to ignore the rights of the Palestinian people and opposed the imposition of sanctions against Israel for its acts. The plight of the Palestinian people was becoming even more tragic. The countries which collaborated with Israel and had thus contributed to the tragedy of the Palestinian people were shirking their responsibility to help UNRWA to overcome its budget deficit. The economic assistance alone provided by the United States and other Western countries to Israel would be sufficient to feed the Palestinian and all the other refugees throughout the world. Before their expulsion from their homeland, the Arab people of Palestine had had no need of any assistance. Palestine was known as a land rich in natural resources and the Palestinian people were noted for their industriousness. The Palestinian refugees appealed to peace-loving countries to assist them to collect the revenue from their own property and lands occupied by the Israelis. A board should be set up to look after the property of the Palestinian refugees, collect the revenues that accrued from them and distribute those revenues among the lawful owners to enable them to lead dignified lives and not be a burden on the international community. If that was achieved, the United Nations would solve an important aspect of that grave problem.

49. The situation in the Middle East was further aggravated by the refusal of Israel and its allies to recognize the rights of the Palestinian people or to negotiate with their sole representative, the Palestinian Liberation Organization, in order to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement by peaceful means. The position of Israel and its allies had enabled other countries to intervene in the region and threaten the interests of both Arab and Western countries. The Arab countries, which had rid themselves of traditional imperialism, would solve the problem in their own way, regardless of the sacrifice involved, if a just and lasting solution could not be achieved. The countries which supported Israel should not try to stem the tide of history and should enable the Palestinian people to return to their homeland and exercise their right of self-determination because that was the proper method of safeguarding common interests in the region.

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50. Mr. SHEHATA (Egypt), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his delegation did not intend to indulge in polemics with the delegation of Syria. The Government of Syria could assist the Palestinian refugees by ceasing its aggression in Lebanon and the occupied Arab territories. The Camp David accords had become a political reality in the Middle East and could not be overlooked. They sought to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their legitimate rights, particularly the right to self-determination, without imposing any settlement contrary to their will. Syria's continued futile rejection of every initiative designed to achieve a breakthrough in negotiations showed a fear of peace. The Camp David accords continued to be the realistic framework for achieving peace on the basis of peaceful coexistence and the security of all States in the region, the mutual recognition of the Palestinian people and Israel, and direct negotiations involving all the interested parties. The Syrian delegation was incapable of accepting those principles because it was unable to accept the challenge of peace or find any other alternative.

51. Mr. TERZI (Observer, Palestinian Liberation Organization), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the Camp David accords were based on a denial of the rights of the Palestinian people and the recognition of the permanence of Israeli forces in occupied Palestinian territories. All relevant United Nations resolutions stressed the right of the Palestinian people to return to their homeland. The Camp David accords in no way referred to the exercise of that right and violated the norms of civilized conduct and United Nations resolutions. Furthermore, the Palestinian people did not seek recognition by Israel on the basis of the accords and rejected the Israeli plan to integrate the Palestinian refugees in the general population.

52. Mr. EL-FATTAL (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his delegation was not known for indulging in polemics in any forum. His delegation had cited facts which might cause distress and thus be referred to a polemics. He had simply expressed the views of a number of Arab delegations on the subject under consideration. Egypt, however, had always sought to question the motives of Syria with regard to its deterrent forces in Lebanon and to cast doubt on the worth of the Palestine Liberation Organization. The representative of Egypt had not made any reference to that organization as if the Palestinian people were not represented by any organization. The Syrian delegation had merely commented on the implications of the Camp David accords within the framework of the topic under discussion. The Camp David accords, particularly the part relating to the so-called framework for peace in the Middle East, sought, on the basis of bilateral agreement, to deprive the Palestinian people of the right to return to their homeland.

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.