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*President:* Mr. Ismat T. KITTANI (Iraq).

**AGENDA ITEM 31**

**Question of Palestine: report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People**

1. The PRESIDENT: I should like to propose that the list of speakers in the debate on this item be closed tomorrow, Thursday, 3 December, at 4 p.m., so that we can determine how many plenary meetings will be needed. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the General Assembly agrees to that proposal.

*It was so decided.*

2. The PRESIDENT: I would request representatives wishing to participate in the debate to inscribe their names on the list of speakers as soon as possible.

3. I call on the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Mr. Massamba Saré of Senegal. The representative of Israel wishes to speak—I presume on a point of order—and I call on him.

4. Mr. BLUM (Israel): Indeed, on a point of order, Mr. President, I should like, with your permission, respectfully to inquire—as I have had occasion to do once before—about your presiding over the debate on the item now before the General Assembly.

5. As I am sure representatives know, the President last week took the unprecedented step of leaving the General Assembly to attend the Arab Summit Conference at Fez. He even addressed that Conference. While the outcome of the Fez Conference is, for present purposes, immaterial, I am sure that representatives will agree that there is something incongruous and lacking in fair play about the President going to an Arab summit on the eve of the major Middle Eastern debates in the plenary General Assembly, and then returning to preside over them here. This is totally unacceptable. It can only mean that in the President's view his national origin takes precedence over his duties and responsibilities as President of the United Nations General Assembly.

6. In this connection, I should like to draw attention to rule 20 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, which is highly pertinent to the present case. It states that:

“Whenever the President of the Security Council deems that for the proper fulfilment of the responsibilities of the presidency he should not preside over the Council during the consideration of a particular question with which the member he represents is directly connected, he shall indicate his decision to the Council. The presidential chair shall then devolve, for the purpose of the consideration of that question, on the representative of the member next in English alphabetical order”.

7. The reason why a parallel rule does not appear in the rules of procedure of the General Assembly is very simple: the President of the Security Council has no vice-presidents while the President of the General Assembly is assisted by 21 elected Vice-Presidents.

8. Mr. President, I would respectfully suggest that before deciding on the matter you may wish to consult with regard to the propriety of your conducting the business now before the Assembly. I submit that, in the best interests of the office of the presidency, the President, having thus abused his office, should hand over the conduct of this item to one of the Vice-Presidents.

9. The PRESIDENT: The representative of Israel was called on to speak under the pretext that he was rising to a point of order. I shall deal first with that matter.

10. On another occasion, as he has said, he raised the same point of order. Rule 71 of the Assembly's rules of procedure states that during the discussion of any matter a representative may rise to a point of order, which shall immediately be ruled on by the President. The President's ruling may be challenged, and if it is, it must be put to the vote.

11. My ruling today in connection with my presiding over the debate on the present item is the same as it was in connection with the item dealing with the Israeli attack on the nuclear facilities in Iraq. Indeed it would be the same in connection with any other item. It is certainly proper and perfectly legitimate for me to preside; there should not be any doubt about it. On the contrary, if I should step down I would be unilaterally, on my own initiative, questioning the wisdom of the General Assembly in having elected me President for this session in the full awareness that this item and similar ones were on its agenda. Of course, the representative of Israel knows this. Indeed, he will not challenge my ruling because he is not in fact addressing the Assembly.

12. Is there any challenge to the ruling I have just stated as President? There appears to be none and I shall therefore deal with the other aspect of the statement by the representative of Israel—namely, the aspersions he cast on my conduct outside this Hall. I would simply say the following.

13. The representative of Israel is the last representative in this Hall to be giving me advice or challenging my

behaviour outside the Hall. He knows very well that the debate—including the statements in exercise of the right of reply and in explanation of vote—and the outcome of the debate, the votes on the draft resolutions, will be exactly the same whether I or someone else is in the Chair. And he knows that the Assembly knows this. But he is not addressing the Assembly; he is using a cheap, transparent diversionary tactic to draw attention away from the Assembly and to the outside, where certain media, especially, are willing and even anxious to hear what he says. Indeed, long before I was elected, he was heaping abuse on the United Nations, including the General Assembly, and those media were printing, broadcasting and televising it, as they still see fit to do.

14. It is for the General Assembly to judge whether or not I have lived up to the trust it has shown in me in electing me. It is not for the representative of Israel to decide that on his own.

15. One final word: if anyone is on trial in the Assembly, especially with regard to the item whose consideration we have just begun, it is the Government of Israel for its policy—not the President of the General Assembly. I call on the representative of Israel.

16. Mr. BLUM (Israel): Mr. President, I want to address myself to the second part of your remarks. I think what you have just said fully bears out the correctness of the view that you should indeed not preside over these deliberations. I think it is wrong for any presiding officer, while he is acting in that capacity, to cast aspersions on the integrity of any Member or any representative in the Organization. That is precisely what you have just done, Mr. President. It is wrong for you to suggest that any representative speaks to anybody other than members of the General Assembly.

17. I could, if I wanted to, raise the question whether your statement was addressed to members of the General Assembly or to some other party outside this Hall. I am not going to do that out of respect for the presidency. And if I am not challenging your ruling and the statement you have just made, it is precisely because, like everybody else, I have become familiar with the composition of this body. But the composition of this body cannot make wrong right.

18. So your ruling is the ruling, and I leave the matter to the judgement of all who have watched the proceedings here, both two weeks ago and today.

19. The PRESIDENT: I again call on the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Mr. Massamba Sarré of Senegal, with my apologies for this interruption.

20. Mr. SARRÉ (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (*interpretation from French*): The entire international community has with all proper solemnity just celebrated, in a mood of contemplation and hope, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. This ceremony once again pointed up, if there was any need for this, the urgency of finding a just and comprehensive solution of the Palestine problem. The important message of that Day to be borne in mind is the desire for conciliation, justice, peace and understanding in the face of confrontation and exaggerated statements. This message—from the United Nations, whose basic task is to preserve peace throughout the world, to a region that very

early on, through revealed religion, spread the idea of peace and justice on earth—should be heeded.

21. Once again it is time to take stock of the question of Palestine. During the past year, the Committee over which I have the honour to preside has tried to discharge the mandate entrusted to it by the Assembly. The Committee's report [A/36/35] gives members a faithful account of our activities, and Mr. Gauci, our Rapporteur, will set forth the details. As members will have noted, participation in our work was open to all the States Members of the United Nations. It was our intention thereby to involve all those of good will in the process which should lead the Palestinian people to the exercise of their inalienable rights. The Committee set itself the task of examining impartially and objectively the question of Palestine and its development. It showed itself receptive to all sectors of opinion and strove to serve justice in highlighting rights which had been disregarded or flouted.

22. It was in this spirit and within the framework of resolution 35/169 C, paragraphs 2 and 3, adopted by the General Assembly on 15 December 1980, that the Committee followed closely the new events that took place in the occupied territories, and each time the Israeli Government took measures which constituted a violation of international law or of the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council the attention of the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council was drawn to those facts. This year these measures were, basically, the illegal establishment of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, the expropriation or the annexation pure and simple by the Israeli authorities of vast territories belonging to the Arabs, repeated violations of Palestinian rights and the repeated attacks by Israel on the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, which caused the death of several Palestinian civilians. There was also the plan to build a canal which would link the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean; then Israel proceeded to dig a tunnel under the Al Aqsa mosque. Such work threatens Islamic buildings, which moreover are of historic interest.

23. All those acts, as well as many others, because of their impact on peace and stability in the region, show once again that the General Assembly and the Security Council must take effective measures to compel Israel to withdraw immediately and completely from the territories it has occupied illegally.

24. Furthermore, the Committee has, in accordance with its mandate, attended international conferences or other meetings which have considered the matter of Palestine. It participated in the Third Islamic Summit Conference, held at Mecca-Taif from 25 to 28 January 1981; the Conference of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Non-Aligned Countries, held at New Delhi from 9 to 13 February 1981; the meeting of the Palestine National Council, held at Damascus from 11 to 15 April 1981; the International Conference on Sanctions against South Africa, held in Paris from 20 to 27 May 1981; the Twelfth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held in Baghdad from 1 to 5 June 1981; and the thirty-seventh regular session of the Council of Ministers and the eighteenth regular session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, held at Nairobi from 15 to 26 June and 24 to 27 June 1981, respectively.

25. During those conferences, the Committee made known its recommendations and the ways of implementing them, and it is happy to state that the objective presentation of the problem of Palestine was welcomed in

those forums. That favourable response was reflected each time by the adoption of appropriate resolutions. A delegation of the Committee was also received by the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Mr. Yasser Arafat, who took the opportunity to reaffirm his confidence in the United Nations as regards a just and comprehensive settlement of the problem of Palestine.

26. Two United Nations seminars on the question of Palestine, having as their central topic "The Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People", were held from 10 to 14 August and from 31 August to 4 September 1981, at Colombo and Havana respectively. Those who participated in those seminars acknowledged that no restriction should be tolerated in respect of the rights of the Palestinian people as defined in the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and as accepted by the overwhelming majority of States Members of the Organization. Similarly, no infringement should be tolerated of the fundamental principles which, the international community has reaffirmed, constitute the basis for a just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine.

27. In the light of these facts and comments the Committee believes that any examination of the problem of the question of Palestine must be based on the following basic principles. First, the question of Palestine is at the core of the Middle East problem, and consequently it is impossible to envisage a solution to the problem without taking account of the inalienable rights of the people. Secondly, the exercise of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to return to their homes and to achieve self-determination, independence and national sovereignty would contribute to resolving the Middle East crisis. Thirdly, the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization [PLO], the representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing with all other parties on the basis of General Assembly resolutions 3236 (XXIX) and 3375 (XXX) is indispensable whenever efforts are made and meetings and conferences organized on the Middle East under United Nations auspices. Fourthly, the acquisition of territories by force is inadmissible, and Israel must withdraw completely from the occupied Arab territories. Finally, a greater understanding of the just cause of the Palestinian people must be sought.

28. The Committee recommends to the General Assembly that it once again request the Security Council urgently to take all necessary measures to give effect to these recommendations.

29. As representatives will have noted, these recommendations are devoid of aspects of confrontation or re-primination. They are, in the name of justice and peace, the appropriate ways and means to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights. In order to achieve this the Committee makes an appeal, in particular to Israel, to conform strictly and without further ado to the relevant resolutions of the Organization regarding the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people as just defined. Peace in that region begins with that step. The Committee makes an appeal to all parties concerned to control their emotions, passions and ambitions and to devote their genius, imagination and creative power to finding a just and comprehensive solution to the problem of the Middle East, of which the question of Palestine is the core. The international community must help them to do this.

30. We know that outside the United Nations there have been initiatives, new approaches and appeals because of

the determination to find a just solution to the question of Palestine. It would be interesting, without sacrificing the basic principles that I have just enumerated, to examine all these facts and to analyse them so as to draw the inferences arising from them.

31. The Assembly has just adopted resolution 36/67, entitled "International Year of Peace and International Day of Peace". The Palestinian question should be among the first to benefit from the generous provisions of this resolution. In order that this wish may be fulfilled, Israel, to which I am speaking once again, should heed the appeal of one of its sons who contributed a great deal to its creation, Nahum Goldmann, who said, during an interview published on 5 July 1981:

"It is not good for a politician never to change his mind. But there is a position which I have always held since the age of 17: it is that without an agreement with the Arabs there is no future for the Jewish State. My great hope is that the Jewish people in its entirety—and above all Israel—will soon have the wisdom and the courage to change course."

32. As in the past, the Committee will spare no effort to contribute to the restoration of peace in this region so dear to mankind. It pays a tribute to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kurt Waldheim, for his constant efforts to bring about a just and comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian question. The Committee highly values the co-operation and understanding demonstrated by Mr. William B. Buffum, the Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs, as well as the willingness to co-operate evinced by the Special Unit on Palestinian Rights, which is headed so competently by Mr. Yogasundram, assisted by his devoted colleagues in the discharge of this task.

33. The Committee remains convinced that it will have the confidence and assistance of the General Assembly and all persons of good will, and it will continue to spare no effort to complete the task assigned to it by the Assembly.

34. The PRESIDENT: I request the Rapporteur of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Mr. Victor Gauci of Malta, to present the report of the Committee which appears in document A/36/35.

35. Mr. GAUCI (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People: I place officially before the General Assembly the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, called for under resolution 35/169 C. The report follows the traditional pattern; it is the seventh consecutive account of the activities of the Committee since its establishment.

36. In carrying out my task today I would be less than honest if I did not admit to a feeling of *déjà vu*. The question of Palestine, which continues to perplex us to this day, was first brought before the Assembly in 1947. In that year the United Nations recognized the right of the Arab people of Palestine to an independent State, side by side with the Jewish people.

37. History records that resolution 181 (II) was implemented only in part, and subsequent resolutions were largely ignored. This omission implies that the life span of the Organization has been paralleled by the unremitting

despair of the Palestinian people. Their poignant plight contrasts starkly with our collective achievements in decolonization.

38. Despite a solitary voice which refuses to admit it—and which at one time even went so far as to deny the existence of over 4 million Palestinian people—we are reminded that there are those who to this day are still denied the application of the hallowed and supposedly universal principles of equal rights and self-determination of peoples. This is the omission the Committee has been asked to rectify, while respecting previous decisions of the United Nations. It is therefore only natural that the Committee and its work should concentrate on the restoration of defined rights so far denied to the Palestinian people.

39. After having made, in the first year of its establishment, comprehensive recommendations for a peaceful solution free from the pressure of immediate events and for building a foundation for the future, the Committee in subsequent years focused upon keeping those peaceful options open, overseeing the situation in the occupied territories, preparing in-depth studies on aspects of the Palestine question and encouraging positive action by the Security Council.

40. In attempting to gain even wider acceptance of its recommendations for an equitable solution to this agonizing problem, and to point the way forward, the Committee this year again went out of its way to encourage the views and opinions of all Member States, particularly those of the parties on the spot, and of the members of the Security Council. The number of observers who followed the work of the Committee once again increased as a result.

41. The prejudices, the misconceptions and the distortions surrounding the issue of Palestine in many quarters have not made the Committee's work any easier. We continue to face this problem, but we have managed to restore some balance in the flow of information. Only very recently, for instance, a leading television periodical in New York published two articles entitled "Blind Spot in the Middle East". The research carried out conclusively proves that U.S. networks are much more likely to give the Israeli perspectives than they are to voice Palestinian concerns.

42. The Committee, therefore, has been particularly anxious to provide objective and comprehensive studies on the issue of Palestine in order to inform public opinion, especially in the countries where this is most required. In this respect the Committee appreciates the valuable work accomplished by the Special Unit on Palestinian Rights. In addition to the in-depth studies published last year, a new one entitled "Palestinian Children in the Occupied Territories" was produced this year, and other are in an advanced stage of preparation.

43. The Committee's latest mandate for 1981 was prescribed in General Assembly resolutions ES-7/3 and 35/169 C. This year's report provides a straightforward synthesis of the work done in fulfilling that mandate. Throughout the year the situation in the occupied territories once again has had to be carefully monitored by the Committee. Several actions by Israel which, in the opinion of the Committee, violated international law and the United Nations resolutions were consequently reported to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council.

44. The gravity, the scope and the cumulative effect of these consistent Israeli violations are illustrated by the calculation that since 1967 the Israelis have purchased, appropriated or otherwise seized more than 370,000 acres of West Bank land. In May this year the *Jerusalem Post* reported Prime Minister Begin's assertion that as long as he headed the Government of Israel there would be no withdrawal from the occupied territories. An objective observer can have little doubt that the thrust of Israeli policy in the West Bank since 1967 has been to absorb it as an integral Israeli territory, stopping just short of the annexation applied to East Jerusalem.

45. It can easily be seen that Israel's claim over the occupied territories and the settlements established therein are deliberately designed seriously to undermine the basis of Arab communal life—land, water and leadership.

46. Rigid controls over water and electricity increase the vulnerability of the remaining unexpropriated land. The Arab population has experienced increasing day-to-day harassment. Newspapers are suppressed, houses are blown up. Arab communities find themselves systematically isolated by the establishment or more than 100 strategically situated settlements. This seems to be a deliberate Israeli policy to frustrate any indigenous attempts to create territorial and political continuity in the occupied territories.

47. In addition, there are ominous reports of official plans to minimize the risks of absorbing too large an Arab population by the forcible expulsion of nearly 1 million Arab inhabitants from the occupied territories. The dismal record of Israeli repression has even infiltrated the institutes of higher learning, where student protests were suppressed by the military authorities through the draconian measure of closing down Bir Zeit University.

48. Israel attempts to confer some measure of legitimacy on the multiplication of settlements, but these settlements have been denounced by this Organization and by a large sector of informed public opinion. At last year's emergency special session, the seventh, on the question of Palestine, an overwhelming majority of the 107 speakers who participated in the debate spoke out very strongly against this expansionism. However, in spite of such overwhelming evidence to the contrary, there is always subterfuge, and we still hear isolated voices in the highest echelons of power commenting that Israel's colonization of the West Bank is "not illegal". These misconceived opinions are indicative of the obstacles being placed in the way of a just solution to the question of Palestine.

49. Israel attempts to deflect criticism by euphemistically referring to the West Bank as an "administered area", hoping thereby to sidestep article 49 of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, forbidding "individual or mass forcible transfers" out of or into occupied territory. Other current euphemisms include the "closing" as opposed to the seizing of Arab land, and the "thickening" of Israeli settlements.

50. In truth, of course, no member of the international community can be deceived by such word play. The reality is that Israel's political crackdown in the illegally occupied territories has produced a vast reservoir of intercommunal bitterness. Objective observers feel overwhelming concern about what can be regarded by Palestinian politicians and other Arab leaders only as creeping annexation. It seems that a determined Israeli effort is under

way to foreclose any prospect of a reasonable solution, while the whole world looks on in dismay.

51. In October this year the Israeli coalition Government approved a scheme whereby a civilian authority would administer the lives of the 1.2 million Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. A critical editorial in *Al-Fajr*, the English language Palestinian weekly published in Jerusalem, commented in its issue of September 27 – October 3, 1981:

“It is absolutely clear that the Palestinians are not impressed because they see absolutely no constructive change in Israeli policy. They are not impressed by the fact that civilian suits will be worn now by military officers who used to doff their suits . . . to do their jobs in the West Bank.”

52. In its report the Committee specifically reminds the Assembly that, both on the establishment of settlements in the occupied territories and on the status of Jerusalem, the views of the international community that Israeli action is illegal have been almost unanimous. Yet recent statistics amply illustrate the sharp acceleration of Israeli plans to encircle Jerusalem. Moreover, Israeli radio reported on 4 October 1981 that Prime Minister Begin would soon be holding Cabinet meetings in the former Arab sector of the city. Such actions are not only highly provocative in themselves, but unfortunately also seriously hamper any future international efforts on the future of the city of Jerusalem as part of a comprehensive Middle East settlement.

53. The Committee stresses its deep conviction that the question of Palestine cannot remain unsolved. So far nothing has worked—not repression, no expulsion, not absorption. The notion of some form of Israeli enforced administrative autonomy offers no real hope for the future. The Israeli bid to persuade Arab leaders to accept autonomy in the segmented zones has not generated much enthusiasm. The “autonomy” facade is easily penetrated; subject status is not a substitute for self-determination. The continued occupation, the expulsion of the area’s political leaders, the planting of settlements—these tactics constitute an ill-advised recipe for hatred. Clearly, they are incompatible with the search for peace.

54. The periodic bombing of friendly Lebanon is the clearest indicator of Israel’s bankrupt Middle East policy. A mission of the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Countries visited Lebanon after the latest savage attack in August this year and reported that it “saw horror writ large in the faces of families, men, women and children in windows and balconies, as well as people in the streets” [A/36/547, para. 21]. Israel has violated the territorial integrity of Lebanon repeatedly, in defiance of international law, of United Nations resolutions and of world public opinion. The Committee therefore once again points out the urgent need for a genuine and comprehensive attempt to reverse this trend towards a new explosion of violence.

55. Above all else, the Committee feels bound to repeat that which is as fundamental as it is obvious, as democratic as it is legitimate: without the participation of the PLO, the representative of the Palestinian people, there will be no equitable and enduring settlement of the Palestine question. It is simply neither right nor feasible successfully to negotiate about the future of Palestine with no Palestinian leaders present.

56. How can any defender of democracy, any champion of human rights, any theorist of logic, advocate such a fatally flawed imposition? How many more lives must be lost before this basic truth is admitted? We are glad to note that steadily and surely the advancing tide of recognition of the PLO points to the futility of the last bastions of opposition. The legitimate grievances of the Palestinians are gaining widespread recognition in capitals throughout the world. To exclude the representatives of the Palestinian people from any negotiations, to behave as if they did not exist, is to fly in the face of reality. The Committee notes with pleasure that more and more States are opening their doors to representatives of the PLO.

57. In paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 35/169 C the Committee is authorized to attend international conferences and to account for its activities. The Committee’s report gives details of the conferences attended and the visits made; the number again exceeded those of previous years. These well-prepared activities enable the Committee to disseminate information about its work and recommendations, to evaluate progress and to gather public support for the implementation of those recommendations. The Committee is encouraged by the high level of support accorded to its work, by the detailed attention given to the problems of Palestine and the Middle East at those conferences and by the spontaneous sympathy shown to the disinherited Palestinians.

58. In addition, in accordance with paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 34/65 D, two seminars on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people were held in 1981. These took place in Sri Lanka and Cuba; they were the third and fourth respectively in the series on the subject. The Committee feels that these seminars have a valuable information function, engendering a frank and open flow of ideas on the question of Palestine. The reports are considered so valuable that this year they are given as annexes to the Committee’s own report [A/36/35, annexes II and III]. An even heavier programme of such activities is envisaged for next year.

59. Finally, and most important of all, this year the Committee has once again decided to bring its original recommendations to the forefront. These have received the annual endorsement of the General Assembly since its thirty-first session, five long years ago. The Committee feels that these recommendations are as valid today as they were then. They have of course become more urgent. We remind the Assembly that they are founded upon, and fully respect, decisions already taken by the Organization. They are specifically designed to involve the United Nations in a peaceful solution to the question of Palestine, which is the essential component for the resolution of the Middle East conflict.

60. On the tide of an awakened public opinion, this reality, this inescapable factor, has gained further influential recognition in the recent, if somewhat belated, statements by three former Presidents of the United States. They pointed out that the most important factor in solving the Middle East crisis was not the injection of yet more arms but a resolution of the Palestine question.

61. The diplomatic efforts of the PLO and the initiatives taken and proposals made by several international organizations and influential third parties, in addition to the efforts of this Organization, are adding significant momentum to the search for a just solution which does not ignore the heart of the matter. The Committee has taken

note of these initiatives; it welcomes and encourages them and is following them with the greatest interest.

62. The Committee wishes to stress once more that its recommendations recognize the right to existence of all States in the region, not least the newly independent State of Palestine when it is established and if it so wishes. We underline that the realization of the Palestinian people's inalienable right to return to their homes and to self-determination, independence and national sovereignty would contribute significantly to a solution of the Middle East conflict. It was for this purpose that the Committee put forward a programme which does not ignore the complexities of the situation but would still allow the implementation of a phased, peaceful exercise by the Palestinians of their legitimate rights.

63. We have consistently stressed the role of the United Nations in spearheading a peaceful solution, particularly as the Organization has been involved in the question of Palestine since its establishment. Once more, we must emphasize the crucial and decisive role of the Security Council, especially its permanent members, in this process. We therefore cannot but express concern that this body has been unable so far to reach a constructive decision on the question. This brick wall of inaction has potentially serious consequences not only for the people of the Middle East and for world peace but also for the very institutions of the Organization.

64. The Committee's frustration now compels us to ask for how long a United Nations committee can continue making recommendations, which are overwhelmingly endorsed time and time again by the General Assembly, only to see them blatantly ignored and never put into practice.

65. The desire of the United Nations as far as the people of Palestine are concerned has been expressed repeatedly. Annually it gathers increasing strength, yet our collective voice continues to fall on deaf ears when it comes to implementation. The institutions of the Organization are being ignored and consequently suffer a concomitant loss of credibility, a loss which will do little to ease our way forward in the future.

66. We all know that events in the Middle East have not in the past, and will not in the future, await constructive and decisive action by the Security Council. The intransigence of one Member State, and the hesitation of one permanent member of the Security Council, in facing up to the merging realities of the situation only contribute incendiary sparks to the already volatile and dangerous climate in the Middle East. The international community is planning peacefully ahead, but in the corridors of power a different view prevails.

67. The notion that the problem of Palestine can be solved by reversing priorities and by trying to settle the Palestinian question on the coat-tails of an agreement on Middle East security ignores the nub of the question, the implacable factor of the situation. If this aspect continues to be ignored, then unfortunately the Arab-Israeli conflict will remain the hallmark of international politics in years to come and the legitimate aspirations of a people to self-determination will have been savagely thwarted despite increasing international indignation.

68. Dominant themes of current policy towards the Middle East seem to focus upon the supply of an increased volume of increasingly sophisticated arms to the region,

more commitments of power and a deeper involvement by prominent actors in Middle East affairs. Statistics give some idea of the magnitude of arms concentration in the region. During the period 1978-1980, five Middle East countries alone accounted for over one third of all major weapons imported by developing countries. We hear continual outbursts of bristling talk, as if more arms and force were all that was required to solve an essentially humanitarian problem.

69. In this scenario the people of Palestine are treated as chattels in a game of big-Power politics; they have been condemned to the starkest of choices—either exile or foreign domination in their own land. Attempts by third parties and by this Organization to play a constructive role in formulating an equitable settlement have so far been brushed aside. This plays into the hands of extremists and creates a recipe for recurrent crises.

70. If large sections of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip continue to be swallowed up by Israel, any remaining chance of achieving a peaceful settlement will be lost. The Israelis appear intent on choosing territory over peace. Such a policy is not only morally wrong and legally untenable but will also impose on succeeding Israeli Governments the obligation to maintain a colonial rule over more than 1 million Palestinians. It will of course stoke the fires of unrest and violence, making life for the Palestinians even more unendurable and further undermining Israel's standing in the eyes of the world community. It is as much an invitation to conflict as the Committee's recommendations are an honourable prescription for peace.

71. But as far as the Committee's recommendations are concerned, we seem to be caught in a vicious circle. Endorsement is followed by inaction as surely as night follows day. Year after year the pattern repeats itself. The Committee has urged, explained, argued and annually presented the undoubtedly just cause of the people of Palestine for self-determination and independence, in accordance with the mandate given it by the General Assembly.

72. The Committee has presented a programme incorporating those rights, which if applied would culminate in their peaceful exercise. We remain convinced that positive action on the Committee's recommendations by the Security Council would create the necessary practical steps in the search for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. In particular, the Committee wishes to recall the strong endorsement by the seventh emergency special session last year of the right of the Palestinian people to establish its own independent sovereign State.

73. In the face of this situation, and as a last resort, the Committee feels it should recommend to the Assembly that, unless the Security Council takes the matter into its own hands in resolute fashion, an international conference on the question of Palestine should be held in the near future. The conference would of course require adequate preparation. Its purpose would be to provide an updated assessment of the situation in Palestine and to ensure effective implementation of the practical steps necessary for the restoration of internationally endorsed Palestinian rights—a tall order, but nothing less is required, since at the present time procrastination seems to be the order of the day.

74. By failing to deal with the stubborn realities of this increasingly desperate situation, we open the door to further repression, suffering, instability and violence. The

Committee very strongly urges that this acute problem not be handled by conflict, but by the force of reason and justice. The demand of the Palestinian people for the realization of their inalienable rights already enjoys overwhelming support. The rights have been defined, but their exercise has been ruthlessly denied. Delay will not only exacerbate suffering and despair, for as one prominent Palestinian pointed out: "What is a man worth if he has no homeland and he has no flag and no address? What good is a man?"

75. Understandably these strong feelings will be reflected in our debate, and it is only natural that some acrimony will arise. But heated exchanges should not be allowed to distract our attention from the wide international convergence that exists for the restoration of the recognized rights of the Palestinian people, rights which so far have not been fulfilled. That is where our efforts at this session should be concentrated.

76. That is the anomaly which the Committee once again respectfully urges the General Assembly to consider very carefully and very constructively. The agony of the Palestinian people can be relieved, the momentum for peace in the area can be restored, the security of all countries in the region can be safeguarded if all of us here are prepared to recognize the deficiencies in current approaches and to assume the challenge to our collective capabilities.

77. The Committee has gone far out of its way to take the views of all sectors into account and to propose a solution which does not overlook the genuine preoccupations of any of the parties to the conflict. It is time—indeed the time is overdue—for all who value human rights, freedom and peace to press resolutely for action, with the backing of the Security Council. Let us therefore hesitate no longer, for to hesitate in the face of injustice is dangerously wrong.

78. The PRESIDENT: The next speaker is the Observer of the Palestine Liberation Organization. I call on him in accordance with General Assembly resolution 3237 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974.

79. Mr. KADDOUMI (Palestine Liberation Organization) (*interpretation from Arabic*): This morning we have witnessed an attempt to obstruct the discussion and work of the General Assembly. This is how the Assembly, which granted the Zionist entity membership, is rewarded. We have an Arabic saying that if you are kind to a noble person he becomes yours, but if you are kind to an evil person he revolts against you.

80. At the outset, Mr. President, I should like to extend to you my warmest congratulations on your election to the office of President of the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly. Your election to this high office clearly indicates the great international esteem enjoyed by fraternal Iraq, to which we are linked by the bonds of nationhood and common history. Your election also shows your high personal status, attested to by your experience, skill and statesmanship, which will enable you to carry out your task perfectly.

81. On this occasion I should like to pay a tribute to your predecessor and to commend, and express appreciation of and gratitude for, the wise and efficient manner in which he managed the work of the General Assembly.

82. I cannot fail to take this opportunity to extend thanks and appreciation to the Secretary-General for his continuous efforts to solve international questions and to strengthen the principles for which the Organization was created.

83. I join those heads of delegation who have preceded me in welcoming the admission of Vanuatu, Belize and Antigua and Barbuda to membership of the United Nations. I am fully confident that those new Members will contribute, along with the others, to the achievement of the lofty goals of the international Organization.

84. At this session our question—the question of Palestine—will have been on the agenda of the General Assembly for 36 years; it will continue to be on the agenda pending a solution.

85. We meet here once every year—sometimes twice, or more—to debate and formulate resolutions and to adopt them by an overwhelming majority; then we deposit those resolutions with the Secretariat and wait—to no avail. Words on paper are one thing; what is accomplished in the realm of reality is quite another. It is exactly what is practised in reality that is in flagrant opposition to what is agreed to jointly in this Hall.

86. One, and only one, State is responsible for this tragedy, namely, the United States of America, which persists in using its hegemonist influence to impede the role of this Organization and to paralyze its ability to implement its resolutions. This is a self-evident fact. The file on the question of Palestine is quite full of balanced draft resolutions which express the international conscience and which were rejected because of the United States veto.

87. In this connection I am not concerned with pointing out the position of the Zionist Israeli entity, since it has become the quintessence of intransigence, arrogance and defiance. I say so because had it not been for the position of the United States, Israel would not have been able to take the stand it takes. Even more, had it not been for the United States, there would not have been an Israel, and even had there been an Israel it would not have stayed intact, notwithstanding the haughtiness of the Zionist extremists and their claims as to the ability to survive. Israel is only a stomach and a claw; New York is the mouth that feeds it and Washington is the muscle that controls the claw.

88. If the United States thinks that prolonging the tragedy for one or two years, one or two decades, will ensure the ultimate liquidation of the question of Palestine, then it is engaging in myth-making and self-deception. Thus the United States would in the final analysis be threatening its own interests and the interests of those it claims to protect and defend. The head of the United States delegation in the Assembly need only look around to see evidence of what we say, for this is the age of freedom, the age of people, and the Assembly is our witness. In the period between the time our question was first brought to the United Nations and now, 36 years later, more than 100 of the peoples of this world have freed themselves from oppression, colonialism and dependence; they have attained freedom and independence and added their national flags to the others flying in front of this building. This is our consolation and encouragement.

89. I assure you that our people, like all other peoples, thirst for freedom, sovereignty and independence and will, without despairing or relenting, continue to struggle

until we attain our aspirations and raise our flag, no matter how long it takes, whether it be decades or centuries.

90. This session of the General Assembly is taking place in alarming circumstances of international tensions which represent the most enormous dangers, among them the danger of regional wars that may exceed all known bounds in terms of scope or kinds of weapons used, including nuclear weapons. References to the use of tactical nuclear weapons have been clearly made more than once by President Reagan of the United States.

91. The PLO is the leader of a people who suffer from the policies of oppression and occupation, as well as from the ideologies of colonialism, imperialism and zionism. Our people, who struggle against such ideas and practices in their search for freedom, independence and sovereignty on our national soil, are aware, as are other peoples who cherish peace and justice, of the aggressive policy of the United States of America. This policy, which threatens to transform the cold war into a hot war, is embodied in unconcealed schemes and measures such as the exercises of the rapid deployment force in our part of the world; support for the military junta in El Salvador; provocation against Cuba; the massive political and military assistance and protection provided to Israel in its continued aggression against our people within and outside the occupied territories and against the brother people of Lebanon, whose capital city, Beirut, has been subjected to the most atrocious air raids since the Viet Nam war; the cover-up of the Israeli bombing of the nuclear reactor in Baghdad and of the provocative Israeli violations of Saudi air space; and the aggressive United States threats to the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

92. This aggressive United States policy, together with the American position on strategic arms and other questions, impels us to denounce and condemn that policy and call upon the people of the world to redouble their efforts to put an end to that policy. That would be a preliminary step towards international détente which would allow mankind time to move towards the solution of the accumulated economic and social problems.

93. The Organization is faced with a super-Power that no longer believes in it or in its Charter or in its decisions. Resort to force in international relations in tantamount to the obliteration of all human values and international law and to the law of the jungle in order to make the strong stronger, the weak weaker, the rich richer and the poor poorer, and to substitute oppression, persecution and despotism for justice, freedom and peace.

94. Therefore we should act to restore the prestige of this international Organization which embodies the hopes and desires of the peoples. We should endeavour to enable it to implement its recommendations and resolutions. The implementation of its resolutions, not their mere drafting and adoption, is the only test of the credibility of the Organization as a reliable authority capable of preserving international peace and security and of laying the just foundations of international relations.

95. The big Powers believe that their possession of destructive and lethal force endows them with privileges, regardless of their duties and responsibilities as big Powers. With the attainment of equitable international co-operation on the basis of the inalienable right of peoples to self-determination, freedom and independence, it is they who ultimately bear the brunt of the evil consequences of that belief.

96. Therefore we observed carefully and with concern the new developments in United States policy which brought international détente to an impasse, thus threatening the destiny of mankind in general and, in particular, in our Arab region, which is one of the most sensitive regions, especially in the wake of the conclusion of the strategic alliance between the United States and Israel and the expansion of the United States military presence in the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea.

97. The American-Israeli alliance and the American presence in and around the Arab region would involve the region in international alliances and polarization, thus increasing tension and the threat of war and consequently impeding all efforts to resolve the question of Palestine and settle the Middle East crisis.

98. It may be appropriate here to remind the Reagan Administration that its new policy—which is hardly new for us, who have experienced it since the 1950s—will not be accepted by the Arab nation, which will not accept foreign bases or alliances. For the Arab nation does not believe that there is any danger to the Arab world other than that posed by the Zionist threat, which has become a part of the Israeli-American alliance. Perhaps the Reagan Administration will learn from the experience of past Administrations and, as a result, relieve us all of the threat of war and the evil of destruction.

99. Commitment by the United States Government to the principles of the United Nations rather than challenging them; determination to implement the resolutions of the General Assembly rather than to obstruct them: that is the key to the establishment of international peace and security.

100. Thus, the continued support by the United States for the racist régime of South Africa, which refuses to withdraw from Namibia and tries to deny to the Namibian people their right to self-determination and national independence, and, in our Arab region, its continued support of the Zionist entity in its usurpation of Palestine, in its dispersion of the Palestinian people and its denial of their inalienable rights, is the best indicator of the true international positions and policies of the United States and, hence, a measure of the gap between what is said and what is done.

101. In this connection, I confirm our people's support for the people of Namibia and their exercise of their rights. We denounce the position of whoever tries to stop the liberation of Namibia. We support the relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly that of the eighth emergency special session of the General Assembly [*resolution ES-8/2*].

102. The Assembly certainly recalls the extent to which the Organization has over the past year been engaged, in both the General Assembly and the Security Council, in the consideration of the question of Palestine—or to be more precise, with the question of the brutal and continued Israeli aggression against Palestine and its people, even against their history, heritage and culture, their present and their future.

103. The Assembly will no doubt recall also the United Nations resolutions emphasizing the principles of the Charter and prohibiting the acquisition of the territory of other countries by force. Those resolutions reiterate the inalienable rights of our people, including their right to return to their homes and property, to self-determination,



to national independence and sovereignty. Those resolutions call upon Israel to withdraw completely and unconditionally from all the Palestinian and Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, setting 15 November 1980 as a deadline. The General Assembly has further called upon Israel to comply with Security Council resolution 465 (1980), which was adopted unanimously at the meeting held on 1 March 1980. The United Nations has also rejected all policies and plans aimed at the resettlement of the Palestinians outside their homeland.

104. What has been the Israeli response to all that? The Israeli response has been "no". Israel has refused to comply with any of those resolutions, assured of the United States veto which protects it from any Security Council resolution to punish or deter it in accordance with the provisions of Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.

105. Israel has not found it sufficient to reject United Nations resolutions. It has deliberately persisted in its defiance of those resolutions and pursued its racist and colonial practices, confiscating our land and spilling our blood. It has turned its back on all international norms and humanitarian laws. Its criminal practices have gone beyond Palestine's borders and people to reach Beirut and Baghdad and the airspace of Saudi Arabia and Libya.

106. This past year has been described as the year of Palestine because in the halls of the Organization we have witnessed so many activities in the course of which resolutions favourable to the question of Palestine and the rights of the Palestinian people have been adopted. That is an accurate description if based on the statements made and the resolutions adopted. But if we look at the facts and the terrorist practices of Israel, we will see that the past year has been one of Zionist agitation and Israeli defiance.

107. The establishment of settlements, for example, continues at an unprecedented rate. There are 32 settlements in the Syrian Arab Golan Heights, 12 in the Palestinian Arab Gaza Strip, 18 in the outskirts of Rafah and in the Egyptian Arab Sinai, and 111 on the West Bank, in an area comprising 34.4 per cent of the West Bank—that is, 20 per cent of the total area of Palestine. If we recall that in 1947 legally owned Jewish land amounted to 6 per cent of the total land area of Palestine, and if we compare that figure with today's figure, we can easily see the enormity of the Israeli crime against Palestine and the Palestinian people, and ever against international laws and principles.

108. The usurpation and annexation of Jerusalem, by a decision of the Israeli Knesset making Jerusalem the eternal capital of Israel, still stands. They have been unanimously condemned. More and more Government ministries and departments are being moved to Jerusalem in disregard of decisions of the Security Council. Many States have moved their embassies from Jerusalem in protest against that arbitrary and illegal action. Moreover, Israel has not stopped its Judaization of Jerusalem or its cunning attempts to eliminate the Moslem and Christian features of the city under the pretext of archaeological excavations.

109. We take this opportunity to warn and caution that the continued meddling with the Moslem and Christian Holy Places goes beyond the Palestinian national question to touch deeply the feelings of hundreds of millions of believers in the world, to whose patience there is a limit.

110. The daily life of our people in the occupied territories has become a very hell. Israeli Defence Minister Sharon's acknowledged scheme to put the military administration in civilian clothes cannot conceal the real face of Zionist terrorism and the policies of annexation, land confiscation and Judaization. Consequently, we have seen in our occupied territories over the past few weeks a massive uprising, which the enemy attempted, and is still attempting, to suppress by the most brutal and criminal means of oppression, including collective punishment, such as the demolition of houses, the closing of universities and schools, administrative detention and other neo-Nazi methods characteristic of the despots of Israel.

111. Yet we take pride in the statement made a few days ago by the Zionist General Menachem Milson, head of the so-called civilian administration, in an interview on the Israeli army radio, that the PLO governs the West Bank and Gaza Strip politically, while Israel governs them militarily. That statement is of great significance since it demonstrates the status of the PLO among our Palestinian people and provides an answer to those attempting to cast doubt on the PLO and to their desperate efforts to find a substitute for the PLO among agents and traitors. I am pleased to have this opportunity to pay a tribute from this rostrum to the masses of our people in occupied Palestine and to promise them to continue the great popular struggle until the attainment of our common goal: return, liberation and an independent national State.

112. In continuing its aggression, crimes and defiance of the entire world Israel has not limited its action to the occupied Palestinian territory. Throughout the past year it harried in the most odious way both the Lebanese and the Palestinian peoples on Lebanese territory from the south and to the extreme north. Israeli crimes culminated last July in the bombing of Beirut, the capital of Lebanon, turning whole sectors into rubble and leaving hundreds of civilians killed and thousands wounded. The bombing of Beirut was the beginning of a bitter war against the Lebanese and Palestinian peoples, using lethal weapons in land, sea and air attacks.

113. The restraint exercised by the Palestinian revolution and the joint Lebanese-Palestinian forces is testified to by the international Organization, but in view of the excesses of the enemy they had to respond to its aggression and give it a taste of what it had inflicted on our two innocent peoples.

114. The PLO succeeded in this two-week war in proving not only its ability to protect its masses but also its ability to control the situation, following the efforts of the United Nations to bring about a cease-fire. This war, like the preceding war of 1978, was a bloody test in which the PLO, at great cost, showed its competence and credibility as the representative of the Palestinian people. In this experience the PLO proved that it could not be overcome and that the Palestinian factor is the basic factor in the equation of war and peace in that part of the world.

115. This reality cannot be in any way diminished by the stubbornness of the United States envoy, Mr. Philip Habib, in ignoring the PLO as though the war he claims to have stopped by his efforts were a war between Israel and ghosts, rather than between Israel and the Palestinian people under the leadership of the PLO. Such disregard, accompanied by permanent United States support for the aggressive Israeli policy, places the blame on the United States, in the view not only of our people and nation but also of the entire world.

116. Lebanon was not the only country outside Palestine to be the target of Zionist-Israeli aggression and attack. A few weeks earlier another Arab capital, Baghdad, was the target of a similar crime. The Israeli air force bombed the nuclear reactor in Baghdad. Soon after the condemnation of this attack the Zionist enemy committed another crime against Beirut. We need not deal with the pretexts offered by the rulers of Zion for their crime, a crime condemned by the entire world, for Israel possesses atomic bombs and refuses to sign the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons [*resolution 2373 (XXII), annex*]. They were false pretexts.

117. One act of aggression in occupied Palestine, another in Lebanon and a third in Iraq—what is next? The provocative violations of Saudi Arabian airspace on the pretext of reconnaissance are next. Israeli intentions are clear: preparation for another aggression is under way.

118. I have addressed myself to the military side of the situation; now I turn to the political side. What is the Israeli attitude in this respect? Israel continues to adhere to the Camp David accords, or rather to its own interpretation of those accords, which deny our people all their national rights and establish the occupation and usurpation of our land. The Government of Israel has deliberately rejected all political attempts and efforts recognizing the minimum rights of our people, such as the right to self-determination.

119. Israel projects any initiative, whether from the East or from the West, that may lead to peace based on justice and international consent; it insists on punishing whoever may take a step in that direction. Perhaps the state of relations between Israel and the Western European countries attests to that, although it is difficult, if not impossible, for Israel to consider those countries as unfriendly or hostile.

120. Israel continues to depend on the policy of using force or imposing new realities; it is not concerned at all with any pressures based on international values and principles. By this attitude Israel categorically turns its back to the political option of solving a question on which patience can no longer be shown, after so many years of wars and suffering.

121. That policy of Israel has caused its suffocating international isolation. Its stepped-up criminal operations against our people and their aspirations can only bring the entire world to the brink of a war of which no one can foretell the scope or the chances of its being controlled.

122. On the other hand, we support endeavours to reach a just and lasting peace on the basis of understanding and recognition of the sensitivity of the Middle East, not on the basis of fear of Israel and its backers. For we are not alone in the battle. There is one firm Arab position on the cause of Palestine, no matter what differences in interpretation may surface among the Arabs. The Arab position is one.

123. Along with the Arab nation, we have faithful friends on our side whose numbers and support continue to grow. I am pleased to take this opportunity to express the appreciation of the PLO, the Palestinian people and the Arab nation to the Soviet Union for the qualitative upgrading of the bonds of friendship between us and the people of the Soviet Union, whose Government recently accorded the PLO Mission in Moscow full diplomatic status. I should also commend the Government of friendly

Greece for the similar position it has courageously taken. I also note the positions of permanent support for our people by the socialist countries, the non-aligned States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Organization of African Unity [OAU]. They all stand by our people in their struggle. To all of them we express the appreciation of our people and their leadership.

124. The recent developments on the Arab scene clearly indicate the gravity of the situation in the area and the fact that it is approaching a turning point. Therefore, the Assembly should avert the dangers before they occur and act in so far as is possible to find the means to implement the resolutions it has already adopted, particularly those pertaining to our inalienable rights. That is the only way to save the area, and perhaps the whole world, from the risk of war lurking on the horizon.

125. In the midst of international moves and political initiatives, we consider it incumbent upon the Assembly to follow up the matter of ensuring that the Security Council takes a decision affirming our inalienable rights in Palestine, rights already affirmed and reaffirmed by the Assembly. If Israel is not restrained and if a limit is not put to its actions, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and with laws, if Israel does not recognize the full rights of the Palestinian people, first and last of which is the right to establish their own independent State on their national soil, it would be naïve for it not to expect more problems and more complications than already exist. Here lie the gravest consequences of its attitude.

126. It behooves us, in this connection, to reaffirm our continued rejection of the Camp David accords. We will fight to our utmost against the plot named "administrative civil autonomy". We reiterate our categorical rejection of any conspiratorial schemes aimed at resettling us outside Palestine. We accept no alternative to Palestine. Our only answer to the statements by leaders of the Israeli enemy on alternative homelands is that those statements clearly show the mentality of conquest, oppression and colonial settlement in the lands of others by force. True, we are Arabs belonging to one single nation divided by artificial borders drawn up by colonialists. Yet we are Palestinians and Palestine is our homeland. Our Arab character and Arab feelings spring in essence from our national character and from being Arabs of Palestine. We cannot accept any alternative to Palestine, be it Jordan, Lebanon or any other Arab or non-Arab country. We have no homeland other than Palestine. We shall not let any Power in the world deny us our national identity, passed down to us over thousands of years.

127. In the position we take, we slander no one and usurp no one's land or rights. Our position is based on what the international community has repeatedly approved. It is opposed only by Israel, the usurper, and its powerful strategic ally, the United States of America.

128. The United States and certain Western European countries attempt to justify falsely their refusal to hold a dialogue with us by citing our refusal to accept a precondition they try to impose on us as a price for that dialogue, namely, that we recognize Israel. Allow me to quote in this connection the response of the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO, Yasser Arafat, to that falsehood. In his message on the occasion of the celebration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, he stated that this demand that we recognize Israel as a precondition of any meetings or talks with the PLO

“... is another way of deliberately denying the rights of the Palestinian people and continuing to behave irresponsibly and in contravention of international principles, norms and conventions. Our people are not begging for something to which they are not entitled, nor are they demanding any favours. They do not accept being insulted by the imposition of preconditions in return for recognition.”

129. In this regard, I should like to ask why these conditions should be imposed on the people of Palestine when they were not imposed at the time of Israel's recognition. We all know that only for Israel did the United Nations have a condition for admission to membership in the United Nations, namely, Israel's compliance with and respect for the resolutions adopted by the United Nations up to that time. Those resolutions provided for the return of our people to their land to live in their free and sovereign State. For 35 years Israel neither complied with nor respected those resolutions. Rather, it persisted in its aggression and in its defiance of those resolutions, and it has become what it is today. It occupies the whole of Palestine and other Arab territories. It is headed towards further expansion in accordance with its well-known slogan calling for the establishment of “greater Israel”.

130. Moreover, why do the United States and some Western European countries insist on the recognition of Israel by the PLO while they themselves refuse to recognize the PLO? When we demand an answer to this question, Washington replies that it is committed to that position by the Sinai Protocol signed in 1975,<sup>2</sup> adding that its commitment—made during Kissinger's time—was the price of that deal. In other words, Washington recognizes that Israel engaged in blackmail in regard to its position. Yet when some Western European countries are asked the same question about their position, they give a surprisingly naïve answer. They reply that their political traditions provide for the extension of recognition to States only, and the PLO is not a State. If that is true, why should what is permissible for them not be permissible for us? Why do they insist that we extend recognition?

131. What is more strange and surprising is that the enthusiasm of the United States and Western Europe for the recognition of Israel is expressed at a time when Israeli leaders reiterate, day in and day out, that they do not want recognition from anybody and that recognition does not guarantee their security. It is ironic that we are in full agreement with our enemy on this matter, for the question of recognition is only a manoeuvre aimed at obstructing the genuine political efforts to reach a just solution and a lasting peace. Israel more than any other country should seek its security in ways other than through recognition, for recognition is certainly not implied by resorting to force. But force does not last for ever, and the balance of force often changes.

132. The security and future of the region cannot be guaranteed until the major causes of conflict are eliminated, foremost among them the racist ideology which adamantly distinguishes between people on the basis of race and religion. Only when Moslems, Christians and Jews feel that they are equal citizens, with equal rights and duties, will security and stability prevail and all the causes of conflict disappear.

133. The truth is that the conflict in Palestine will end when the land of Palestine is whole again, when its history can be read as a whole instead of in short chapters and when its inhabitants become proud of being heir to

all the peoples and civilizations of the land rather than heir to one tribe or one people that assumes a special status. The conflict will be resolved when Jerusalem becomes the capital of three religions, the meeting-place of all ideas and noble spiritual and human values and the repository of the entire heritage of the forefathers; when the hand is cut off that tries to destroy what has been built over thousands of years in order to recover the remains of an age long buried.

134. Notwithstanding all the suffering and sacrifices and the profusely spilled blood of our people, we remain firmly committed to our struggle until we accomplish our historic task. Our hopes grow daily as the day of victory approaches the day of liberty, the day of genuine democracy and the day of peaceful coexistence in a land of peace.

135. Mr. ABDEL MEGUID (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Just before this debate on the question of Palestine, we celebrated the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People to express the commitment of the international community, represented by this Organization, to work with sincerity and perseverance to end the sufferings of the Palestinian people, to restore its legitimate national rights over its land, in particular its right to the establishment of its own State, and to reaffirm the international community's commitment to the many principles upon which the Charter of the United Nations is based.

136. We celebrated that Day in the conviction that we must lay the basis for an international order based on justice, legitimacy and respect for the rights of peoples and for human rights.

137. The question of Palestine is at the core of the Middle East conflict. In fact, it has become a reality which imposes itself as an essential element in the international situation. In view of its seriousness, its implications for international and regional peace and security and its repercussions on the possibilities of arriving at a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, that peace cannot be attained within the framework of a comprehensive settlement unless the legitimate and inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people are restored.

138. The just and legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people to regain its legitimate rights is an important element in the march of the peoples of the world towards an era in which the principles of freedom, justice and equality prevail, an era free of the practices of occupation, domination and oppression faced today by the legitimate national liberation movements of the third world as they seek to achieve freedom, independence and dignity and to realize their aspirations to occupy their rightful place in the community of nations and peoples, that being a legitimate right recognized and embodied in the tenets of civilization and in international covenants.

139. The just and legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people is recognized and supported by all free peace-loving peoples who believe in the dignity of man. It is a rebellion against the policies of aggression, occupation, expansion, annexation and settlement.

140. In this context, I should like to quote from the message sent by the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Mr. Mohamed Hosni Mubarak, on the occasion of the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People:

"The tragedies and devastating wars that have stricken the Middle East for more than 30 years are the result of the denial of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, which led to the death of tens of millions and the destruction of vital resources which could have contributed to the development and prosperity of peoples in the region if they had not been exhausted by a succession of wars. Those resources would have enabled the peoples to stand up to the pressures of modern civilization, pressures which may stifle these peoples, who are all developing peoples, if they are unable to offer resistance and to overcome the difficulties.

"The Palestinian cause has been the crux of the problem from the very outset and therefore determines the fate of the Middle East and makes it the prisoner of its struggles and conflicts. Not only because of the everlasting links between the Palestinian people and the people of Egypt, the question of Palestine has been the main concern of the Egyptian people and leaders. Thus Egypt has led the struggle to restore the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people, as defined in United Nations resolutions, as a basis for solving the problems of the Middle East, and to open the way for all peoples to breathe the air of peace, security and freedom.

"Egypt has met its national responsibilities towards the Palestinian people and has spared no effort to see that its cause triumphs. It has continuously called on the international community to support the inalienable rights of that people as the basis for restoring peace in the Middle East, as it undertook to do in accordance with the Camp David agreements.

"I am pleased to take this opportunity to express my satisfaction with the constructive role played by the United Nations to help the Palestinian people to recover its legitimate inalienable rights. The people of Egypt will continue to discharge its responsibilities and to believe in the just Arab cause and is determined to work seriously towards the implementation of United Nations resolutions to ensure a just and lasting comprehensive peace for all States in the region."

141. I wish to address from this rostrum all those who persist in their illusions and doubts about the relationship and everlasting ties between Egypt and the Palestinian people and the leadership of its national movement. Our relations with the Palestinian people cannot be severed, because they are relations between faithful brothers who may at times agree and at times disagree but who nonetheless remain brothers linked by a common destiny and future. Must a brother be recognized by his brother? Egypt has never raised a weapon against the Palestinian people. Egypt has never shed a drop of Palestinian blood. In peace as well as in war, Egypt will remain the protector of the Palestinian people, its devoted brother, especially when some friends turn against it or when other brothers fight over it.

142. Egypt has fought for the rights of the Palestinian people in war and in peace. After the glorious victory of October 1973 crowned its military victories, Egypt's historic initiative of 1977 paved the way to political activity based on the following starting points. They represent international consensus and constitute the basis for the settlement of the Palestinian problem, as envisaged by the international community, represented by the United Nations, the OAU and the non-aligned movement. The first starting point is the inalienable and genuine right of the

Palestinian people to self-determination without external interference. The second is the right of the Palestinian people to return and to fair compensation in accordance with United Nations resolutions. The third is the right of the Palestinian people to create its own independent State on the West Bank, including Arab Jerusalem, and in Gaza. The fourth point is the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and right to existence of all the States of the region. The fifth is the security of the region and, in fact, the security of all parties, including the Palestinian people and Israel, as real security cannot be assured for one party at the expense of the other or at the expense of the rights of still other parties. The sixth point is the rejection and condemnation of all Israeli practices and measures which are contrary to international law, the Charter of the United Nations, relevant United Nations resolutions and international agreements, and in particular the rejection and condemnation of Israeli policies and practices on the West Bank, in Gaza and in Jerusalem.

143. In the light of these considerations, Egypt in 1978 signed the document representing a framework for peace in the Middle East as a first step towards a just and comprehensive settlement of the problem in all its aspects and as a limited transitional phase during which the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 would, over a transitional period permitting the application of a provisional régime, pass from Israeli domination and occupation to the authority and control of the Palestinian people, thus paving the way, at the end of that transitional period, to a phase of self-determination, thereby enabling peaceful co-existence between the Palestinian and Israeli peoples leading to mutual recognition.

144. By rejecting and condemning all Israeli policies and practices in the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza, as well as all measures liable to alter the geographic and demographic status of the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, Egypt affirms that the Israeli decision to annex Arab Jerusalem, which is an integral part of the occupied West Bank and is Arab territory which must be restored to Arab sovereignty, is null and void and illegal. The merger of certain common services in the two parts of the Holy City, Arab and Israeli, must not be used as a pretext for annexationist and expansionist claims, which we oppose and reject. The merger of public services must never serve as a pretext for despoiling the rights to Arab sovereignty for any reason whatsoever.

145. Egypt is convinced that the solution of the Palestinian problem must be based on the following: first, Israel must withdraw to the lines in effect prior to 5 June 1967 with respect to the West Bank, including Arab Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip; secondly, the Israeli evacuation must extend to its military and civilian presence and to the settlements and their inhabitants; thirdly, security measures must apply mutually and equally to both parties, the Palestinian and the Israeli; and fourthly, the inalienable and authentic right to self-determination without outside interference must be guaranteed to the Palestinian people, as well as its right to return and to create its own independent State in the West Bank, Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip.

146. The creation of an independent Palestinian entity at the expiration of a limited transitional period will without doubt be a profound development constituting a guarantee and a safety valve for stability and security in the region as a whole.

147. In assuming its responsibilities within the framework of peaceful efforts, Egypt would like to reaffirm once again the following principles. Peace is for Egypt a strategic commitment and not a tactical position. That is why we have insisted that it should be a comprehensive peace based on right and justice and not on invasion, expansion, premeditation and opportunism, a peace leading to a historic reconciliation between Israel and the Arab nation, a peace extirpating the roots of the conflict between them. We do not, and shall never, seek to impose any solution whatever on the Palestinian people. The only thing we want today, under the transition arrangements we are trying to achieve, is to alleviate the suffering which this great people has been exposed to since the beginning of the twentieth century and to pave the way for self-determination so that it may create its own independent State in the territories occupied since 1967. Egypt's commitment in this regard is based on its national and historical responsibility and on its close and deep bonds with the Palestinian people since time immemorial. That does not affect or exclude the main role played by the Palestinian people and its leadership, the PLO in its just and legitimate struggle.

148. In spite of the difficulties encountered in the talks on Palestinian autonomy and in spite of the illegal Israeli practices in the occupied Arab territories, which have been condemned by the international community represented by this Organization, Egypt is persevering in its efforts to ensure the progress of these talks, so as to arrive at a formula of complete autonomy as a transitional phase, in keeping with the principles of international law rather than with the concept of limited internal autonomy. In this context, Egypt calls for the following: Israel's commitment to abide by the United Nations resolutions confirming the provisions of the Charter, the rules of international law, international legitimacy and the necessity for Israel to put an end to the measures taken against the Palestinian people in the occupied territories in the form of repression of freedoms, expulsion of elected Palestinian officials and other obstacles placed in the way of peace and a comprehensive settlement. As part of creating a climate of trust between the Palestinian people and Israel, Egypt calls for the application of the confidence-building measures which have already been officially submitted to the Government of Israel by the Government of Egypt in documents dated 13 October 1978 and 13 October 1980.

149. The international community should assist efforts likely to lead to a mutual and simultaneous recognition between Israel and the PLO in order to begin a peaceful dialogue and to pursue efforts for a cease-fire in southern Lebanon between Israel and the PLO, as a step which will make it easier for the United Nations to play a role in the establishment of security and order in the region, to strengthen efforts to settle the issue of Jerusalem as a symbol of brotherhood and of the unity of mankind. The creation of a Palestinian Government-in-exile is a first step towards the establishment of a Palestinian entity which would be the core of the independent Palestinian State.

150. Egypt does not seek and will never seek to monopolize efforts leading to peace. Quite to the contrary, we invite all parties concerned, at the regional and international levels, to shoulder their responsibilities for the establishment of peace in the Middle East. To that end we advocate a constructive dialogue between the United States and the PLO. Egypt remains open to all constructive initiatives likely to lead to a comprehensive and just settlement of the Palestinian question. From this rostrum

Egypt wishes to state that it does not claim to be the only one capable of finding a solution to the problem, and at the same time we wish to state that differences in evaluating the best methods for solving the Palestinian problem should not be limited to the sincere steps being taken by Egypt to make further strides towards the recovery of Palestinian rights.

151. Those steps can be summarized as follows: first, we are in favour of an orderly and peaceful transfer of authority to the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza; secondly, we believe they should be enabled to develop their political, economic and social institutions in the West Bank and Gaza in order to give complete expression to the principles of full autonomy; and thirdly, we consider that conditions must be created which will enable the Palestinian people to take part in negotiations leading to a solution of the Palestinian question in all its forms and to the restoration of legitimate rights, including the right to self-determination.

152. This is the basic position of the Egyptian negotiators in the talks on autonomy. The autonomy granted the Palestinian people will be the core of a legislative, executive and juridical power which will in turn be at the heart of the independent Palestinian State as envisaged by the Egyptian negotiators, once the Palestinian people has exercised its right to self-determination.

153. These are our objectives and this is our position. We continue to endeavour to attain our objectives and implement them. It may be that we will succeed, though perhaps not immediately. Regardless of the outcome, however, the attempt will enable us to preserve the dynamics of peace because we are convinced that only peace can guarantee the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

154. Egypt has considered various initiatives taken and proposals made here and elsewhere, all of which are serious and constructive and reflect an objective awareness of the dimensions of the Palestinian problem. In considering all of them, Egypt wonders what should be done next. Are new theories, new concepts, new principles necessary? No. What is required is a new plan of action to be implemented rapidly and endorsed by the international community. It is necessary to continue acting along these lines, to continue the move towards peace which Egypt has undertaken, as long as the parties concerned act responsibly and within the framework of the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. The best method remains dialogue, mutual recognition and the historic reconciliation of all peoples and all States of the region.

155. The historic and national responsibilities of Egypt compel it to move along the path to peace. Egypt will never renounce the rights of the Palestinian people. Egypt will not abandon the negotiator's seat to sit as a spectator, as has been done by other parties which merely make statements instead of acting.

156. To face objective realities is not to be submissive, it is not to show a lack of commitment to law. Rather it signifies continuous struggle, and that is the true revolution. The establishment of free Palestine on one square mile to begin with is better than nothing; the beginning of the existence of a free Palestine on the basis of autonomy, an internationally conceived, which will lead to complete independence is a thousand times better than the continuation of occupation.

157. I should like to quote here from a British author who felt the tragedy of Palestine and who knew Palestine from 1917 to 1980. In a work entitled *Dispossessed: The Ordeal of the Palestinians 1917-1980*, he described the position of Palestine in the international community and the injustice it has been subjected to for many years:

“More than thirty years after their dispersal, the world has at last agreed that the injustice done to the Arabs of Palestine must be rectified. It has finally accepted that the Palestinians constitute a separate people and should have their own home—not a Bantustan controlled by the Israeli army but a proper home. They must have a state, not one that displaces Israel but one that can live alongside it . . .

. . .

“The creation of a state in the West Bank and Gaza is the least that the world can now do for the Palestinians. It cannot represent full justice and will not undo the harm done to them over so many years. But it will restore to them their nationhood—they will be able to feel that they do belong somewhere, that they can function as a nation in their own land like other peoples.

“Sixty years ago their right to all of Palestine was recognized. Thirty years ago they were offered half of it. Now, when they are prepared to settle for less than a quarter, surely their case is unanswerable.”<sup>3</sup>

158. Perhaps today we see that pious wishes are an ineffective weapon and that action is the weapon of the revolutionaries. We cannot continue to wish for what we turned down yesterday. In the near future we do not want to find ourselves in a situation which would have been desirable had it not come too late.

159. What Egypt seeks is a break in the deadlock. We are at a stage of comprehensive global negotiation prior to a final settlement, with the participation of the Palestinian people. We would like to see Palestinians govern and not be governed. We would like to see the Palestinians as masters of their fate so that they may occupy their rightful place among the nations and peoples of the Middle East within the framework of a free and independent Palestinian State.

160. For the Egyptian people the Palestinian question is very important. Egypt will not accept any alternative to the right of the Palestinians to self-determination, because that is recognized as a right of all peoples. After all of the sacrifices we have made we cannot accept any violation of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. Egypt has chosen the path of peace, and that choice is irreversible. We have chosen to side with peace-loving countries in order to lay the basis for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East for the benefit of the peoples of the region and of the world as a whole. That cannot be attained without recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, which includes its accession to independence and freedom.

*The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.*

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NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.

<sup>2</sup> See *Official Records of the Security Council, Thirtieth Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1975*, document S/11818/Add.5.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in English by the speaker. See David Gilmour, *Dispossessed: The Ordeal of the Palestinians 1917-1980*, London, Sidgwick and Jackson, 1980, p. 218.