



General Assembly Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/37/361
S/15312
27 July 1982
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: RUSSIAN

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Thirty-seventh session
Items 31 and 34 of the provisional agenda*
QUESTION OF PALESTINE
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Letter dated 23 July 1982 from the Permanent Representative
of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United
Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the text of the replies given by Mr. L. I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, to the questions put by the newspaper Pravda and published in the Soviet press on 21 July 1982.

I request you to have these replies by Mr. Brezhnev to the questions put by Pravda distributed as an official document both of the General Assembly, under items 31 and 34 of the provisional agenda, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) O. TROYANOVSKY

* A/37/150.

ANNEX

Replies by Mr. L. I. Brezhnev to the questions
put by the newspaper Pravda

Question: How do you assess the situation that is now developing in and around Lebanon?

Reply: Every day distressing news is coming out of Lebanon which arouses indignation and anger - anger against those who are committing heinous crimes in Lebanese territory. Thousands of Lebanese and Palestinians have died at the hands of the occupiers, and the bloodshed has not stopped. Beirut, the Lebanese capital, is being destroyed. The Israeli actions cannot be termed anything but genocide.

Why is Israel still continuing its lawless aggression? Why is it showing disdain for decisions of the United Nations Security Council demanding an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the aggressor's forces from Lebanon? Why does it take the liberty of ignoring world public opinion? All this is going on because Israel has the backing of a Power whose identity is well-known - the United States.

In the Soviet Union we are moved by the courage of the Palestinians and all those who are tenaciously opposing the Israeli militarists. However complex the Palestinian problem may be, and however many troubles the Palestinian people may have encountered, one thing is clear: the Palestinian problem is not a Gordian knot; it cannot be cut with a sword. The steadfastness which the Palestinians are showing in such tragic circumstances demonstrates even more forcefully that they are defending the living cause of a living people and that they will not be crushed.

So, a definite conclusion can be drawn: Israel's aggression is turning into a resounding political and moral defeat and is leading to its increasing isolation on the international scene.

This, by the way, is beginning to be understood by more and more people in Israel itself. There is also a growing understanding in the world to the effect that the best and most realistic means of solving the problem of the Arab people of Palestine, as the Soviet Union has repeatedly stated, is the creation of a Palestinian State.

The events in Lebanon are a constant and major preoccupation of the Soviet leadership. The position of the Soviet Union is clear: the flames of war must be extinguished, the aggression must be curbed, and Israeli forces must leave Lebanese territory.

I should add this: our country has been giving and will continue to give aid and support to those who do not yield to the aggressor, those who are seeking a just settlement and peace in that region.

Question: What immediate action, in your opinion, should be taken for that purpose?

Reply: It is essential, first of all, that Israel and the United States implement the decision of the United Nations Security Council on the cessation of aggression against the sovereign State of Lebanon and on the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Israeli forces.

If we are talking about the most pressing and most urgent action to take, it is essential to put an end to the Israeli siege of Beirut. We are not opposed, as the first step in that direction, to the separation of the forces defending West Beirut and the Israeli forces.

For that purpose it would be possible to use United Nations forces - especially since detachments of the United Nations Interim Force are already in Lebanon in accordance with a decision of the Security Council. Naturally, we shall continue our firm opposition to the stationing of American troops on Lebanese soil. We have given an appropriate warning.

I should also like to emphasize that the more united the forces opposing Israel's military adventure, and the greater the number of States demanding that the aggression be curbed, the sooner and more surely will it be brought to a halt.

In the present - let us say, critical - situation, the unity of the Arabs becomes of vital importance. Whatever interferes with that unity, in our deepest conviction, must be put aside in this critical hour. In this context, there is an increasingly imperative and obvious need for the Arabs jointly to determine what measures are necessary in order to guarantee the rights of the Palestinians to life, security, independent development and the establishment of their own State.

Lastly, what is occurring in Lebanon again makes it necessary to raise the question: Is it not time, seriously and with a full sense of responsibility, to tackle the task of a just and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East? The tragic experience of 10 years of incessant acts of aggression and military conflicts has shown that the path of military confrontation, like the path of separate deals, has not led and cannot lead to a settlement of the problems of the Middle East. These can be solved only as a result of collective efforts by all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole lawful representative of the Palestinian people. Looking ahead, it is in that very light that we see the value of the proposal we put forward concerning the convening of an international conference - and the sooner the better. The Soviet Union stands ready to work in a practical manner towards that goal, co-operating loyally with all those wishing to play their part in the establishment of a lasting peace in the Middle East.
