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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Letter dated 20 September 1982 from the Permanent Representative
of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to the United Nations addressed to
the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a message addressed to Your Excellency by Colonel Muammar Qaddafi, Leader of the First of September Revolution of the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, concerning the situation in Lebanon.

I should be grateful if you would arrange for this message to be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under item 34 of the provisional agenda.

(Signed) Ali A. TREIKI
Permanent Representative

* A/37/150.

ANNEX

Message dated 20 September 1982 from the Leader of the
First of September Revolution of the Socialist People's
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to the Secretary-General

The continued occupation of Palestine, the persistent aggression against the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples, the wholesale massacres perpetrated by the Zionist gangs against the Palestinians and Lebanese and the continued inability of the United Nations, in spite of all the resolutions, to take practical measures to put an end to the occupation and stop the massacres, owing to the American position of support for Israel, have made me lose faith in the usefulness of the United Nations, and, as a citizen and a revolutionary and political leader in this contemporary world, I have decided to impart my conviction to my people and my nation and to all the peoples who have not usurped a permanent seat in what is (falsely) called the Security Council. I shall even call upon my country to withdraw from this Organization, and I shall do my utmost in this regard to encourage all small nations to withdraw likewise from that Organization. I shall strive to establish a new organization for the small and oppressed nations, even if that leads - and it may lead - to the development of a new polarization, so that the world makes polarization trilateral or quadrilateral, rather than bilateral, unless the veto is eliminated or amended in such a way as to make it a right of all the peoples who comprise the United Nations and, unless the General Assembly achieves effectiveness and the Security Council is made subject to it and is based on a majority, rather than the veto. This conviction and that decision have come as an inevitable result of the exposure of my Arab country to occupation, destruction and genocide, while the United Nations took no concrete action to stop that or to put an end to it. They have also come as a result of the continued threat to the security of this country presented in a persistent manner that is most extremely dangerous for the country's future, while the international Security Council has been unable to prevent it. My patriotic, nationalist and humanitarian conscience does not permit me to keep silent when, before the eyes and ears of the world, over a few weeks, 20,000 Palestinian and Lebanese civilians have been killed and 30,000 more wounded and following the wholesale massacre perpetrated recently in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps, in which thousands of innocent old men, women and children were killed in a brutal and atrocious manner unprecedented in human history.

You have yourself suffered from the evident inability of the United Nations. You have no confidence in its capability, as you have declared a number of times in your statements and affirmed in your latest report. You declared in a recent statement that you would resort to the peoples, in the words of the Charter, which begins: "We the peoples of the United Nations".

I regret to have to express to you and to the world the bitter truth which I perceive in my country, namely, that the second historic attempt made by the peoples in 1945 (in San Francisco) to establish an international organization to prevent war and keep the peace has failed utterly, as did the first attempt (i.e., the League of Nations).

We the Arabs are the best qualified to give this gloomy testimony and to announce this unfortunate outcome with deep sorrow and distress, because our country has been subjected to aggression, and the United Nations has been unable to apply any Article of its Charter. This made us fully convinced that the United Nations has failed and that its most important organ, the Security Council, has been paralyzed, having become an American and Israeli national security council, not an international security council, because of the so-called veto, which the United States has used a number of times this year in the interest of Israeli aggression and against the legitimate rights of the Lebanese and Palestinian peoples. The veto is a right to exercise dictatorship over the will of all the peoples who comprise the United Nations, which amounts to an undermining of the fundamental rights on which the Preamble to the Charter is based. It reads, in part: "to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small". Chapter I, paragraph 1, states that the purposes of the United Nations are "to maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression ... in conformity with the principles of justice and international law". Paragraph 2 of the same Chapter reads: "To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights ... of peoples".

It is clear from the above that emphasis is placed on collective responsibility for the maintenance of peace and that the Organization is based on the principle of the equal sovereignty of all its Members. In reality, they are unequal in the Security Council. Either these principles are applied, or we shall be forced to withdraw from this unsuccessful Organization. If those States were given the right to exercise dictatorship over the will of peoples in the Security Council and to prevent the Organization from being used as an instrument for maintaining peace by force, where peaceful means failed, and to suppress aggression against the territory of others, one begins to wonder why was this right not used to deter the Israeli army, which is currently occupying the capital of a State Member of the United Nations. Chapter I, paragraph 1, which calls for the adoption of collective measures for the suppression of acts of aggression, should have been applied. On the basis of the rule that "acting is deception", the Security Council has failed in the task entrusted to it under Chapter V, Article 24, which reads:

"In order to ensure prompt and effective action by the United Nations, its Members confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and agree that in carrying out its duties under this responsibility the Security Council acts on their behalf".

The Lebanese who resist Israeli tanks advancing on their homes to kill their children and destroy their homes over them in the heart of their capital are regarded as terrorists, as stated by the Israelis in justification of their barbarous aggression. What meaning remains for self-defence and the defence of honour and legality in general, if a Lebanese who is attacked in his home by an American-made Israeli tank is accused of terrorism when he resists that tank, while Great Britain is entitled to exercise the right of self-defence in the South

Atlantic and the Israelis exercise the right of self-defence in the centre of Baghdad, the capital of Iraq.

I emphasize that I do not expect you to take any positive action through this Organization, which is in its death throes and of which nothing is left except the appearance of the twentieth century. However, I should like to draw attention, through the States Members of the Organization, of which my country is one, to two serious issues.

First, if the Arabs become able to acquire the necessary defensive power, no one in the world, whoever he may be, will have the right to prevent them from using the same method against their enemies on the basis of "reciprocity". They will have the right to do that, taking the events which are currently unfolding in Lebanon as a precedent which has been incorporated in the norms of international law and, in particular, the law of war. Any Israeli who resists an Arab tank, should it one day advance on his home in Tel Aviv, should be considered a terrorist to be disarmed in the same manner as the Israeli army is now disarming the Lebanese, not Palestinian, resisters.

The Palestinians were a non-present justification for the occupation of Lebanon. What is the justification for the occupation of Beirut and the continuation of the war on land and sea and in the air? The justification is the presence of the Lebanese in Lebanon. There is protest and preparation for another war because of the presence of Syrians in Syria and Libyans in Libya. The justification for their destruction is that they carry firearms to defend themselves. At this stage, we enter the age of the illogical.

Secondly, we the Arabs are the ones who have suffered most from the veto. Having ascertained the inability of the United Nations to maintain peace and to suppress brutal aggression, we have the right, together with other oppressed peoples, to search for an alternative to the present United Nations.

All that I request is that you circulate this letter, through your Office, to the Members of the Organization. I assure you that, one day, this generation or a succeeding generation will make use of this letter as a historic plea in defence of our right, the right that belongs to us the Arabs or to anyone who is exposed to the same fate and a sufficient justification to constitute a political and legal truth for the commencement of the withdrawal from this Organization of the nations which do not have the veto or a permanent seat in the Security Council.

Muammar El-Qaddafi
Colonel
