



President: Mr. Imre HOLLAI (Hungary).

*Address by Mr. Hernán Siles Zuazo, President
of the Republic of Bolivia*

1. The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome the President of the Republic of Bolivia, Mr. Hernán Siles Zuazo, and I invite him to address the Assembly.

2. Mr. SILES ZUAZO (Bolivia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I bear a message from my people to the Assembly. It is a message full of anguish but also of hope. I beg your indulgence in speaking with feeling of these matters at this late hour in the work of the General Assembly, but we want it to be understood that this is also a time for defining our historic destiny.

3. My country has just emerged from the trials and tribulations of 18 years of dictatorship, interspersed with brief periods of nationalist Governments with popular support. It would take too long to describe the sacrifices made by my people during this devastating period. To recover their liberty, dignity and sovereignty, the Bolivian people had no weapons but their strength of character and the extraordinary solidarity of democratic Governments and of international and non-governmental organizations. This triumph of Bolivian democracy bears the hallmark of the highest human qualities. It was brought about in peace, with the political maturity acquired through adversity. There were no upheavals, reprisals or destruction of property. The country now lives under the rule of law. There are no political prisoners, no muzzled press, no persecuted ideology, race or religion. Bolivia—and I am proud to be able to say this—today has a genuine democracy of noble lineage. Bolivia has recovered its dignity and its international image and is beginning to be identified with democracy and not with drug trafficking and lawlessness.

4. My country was plunged into chaos of disquieting proportions. Together with the moral and political crisis came a desperate economic situation, the most salient features of which are well known and are shared by many other third-world peoples: a heavy external debt, runaway inflation, an overwhelming deficit in the public sector, a lack of essential goods and services and a plummeting level of productive activity, with its aftermath of strikes, unemployment and wretchedness. These economic problems which are now affecting my country aggravate those of dependence and underdevelopment from which it is already suffering: the external structural imbalance, the fact that most of the working population have very low levels of output, the vulnerability of the economy to changing external factors, the lack of markets of

adequate size, the disjointed and heterogeneous nature of its productive structure and the weakness of its savings and investment rates.

5. Bolivia has reached this situation by a process that is worth examining, because it has a useful lesson for all the countries of the third world.

6. My country shared in the rise in prices of exported raw materials resulting from the expansion of the world economy and the increased price of hydrocarbons. Similarly, it had recourse to many external credits, which were easily granted because of the international financial liquidity which prevailed during the past decade.

7. However, the expansion of financial resources resulting from these processes was not used to benefit the majority of the people of the nation. The ruling State and private minorities used the resources gained from the export of our raw materials and from the external borrowing to deepen and consolidate social inequality. In fact, they frittered away the resources, leaving the major problems of Bolivian development with no solution. Those minorities used imported and domestic goods and services in order to imitate the consumer patterns of the high-income countries, while neglecting productive investment and leaving the great majority of the population to struggle in poverty.

8. The distorted and narrow distribution of resources was based on two principal facts. Economically, a policy of opening the economy to international commercial and financial flows was followed. In support of this course, it was argued that Bolivia could have access to the financial resources needed for its development and could receive manufactured goods from the developed countries.

9. This economic policy, based on commercial and financial opportunism, received warm support from the major academic centres of the developed countries, where it is still affirmed that the principles of comparative advantage and the conventional doctrine of the international division of labour are the best way towards development. Our ruling minorities could thus cover the satisfaction of their selfish interests with the respectable cloak of scientifically founded principles.

10. But that economic policy, which was against the national interests, could be drawn up and carried out only behind the people's back, and it was therefore necessary to establish iron, retrogressive dictatorships. Only under such régimes could that policy, which favoured the high-income groups, be implemented.

11. An analysis of economic and political events in my country in recent decades shows beyond question the unhealthy symbiosis which was established be-

tween external and internal interests. The external interests wanted to place their products and their loans in my country, led by their desire for gain, and with not the slightest concern for the consequences. Internal interests wanted only to strengthen their power and their wealth and to have the means to imitate ostentatiously and offensively the way of life of the major industrial centres.

12. The international crisis of recent years showed the fragility of the fundamental principles on which our political economy was based and also the vulnerability of my country's peripheral position in the international economic system. With the external stimuli gone, the Bolivian economy collapsed, and the symbols of the so-called past development were unmasked as pretentious and ridiculous ideas with which it had been unsuccessfully sought to cover the cracks in our underdevelopment.

13. Unfortunately, Bolivia is not the only country suffering from the overwhelming burden of external indebtedness. We share this problem with other third-world countries.

14. In the particular case of my country, it is repugnant to the national conscience that the people has to pay, with tremendous sacrifices, for a mortgage entered into behind its back by unlawful Governments which used those resources to maintain themselves in power.

15. Sir, that the General Assembly was right to elect you President has been confirmed by the masterly way in which you have conducted the business of the current session. You represent, with the highest dignity, the best traditions of the noble nation of Hungary. I ask you to accept my sincere congratulations.

16. I am also particularly pleased to greet, on behalf of the people and Government of Bolivia, the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, a noble son of Peru and a close friend of my country, where he held a post in the initial stage of his outstanding diplomatic career. When he became Secretary-General, we Latin Americans were rightly proud. Today, after he has had only a few months in that post, we are more than ever convinced of his complete devotion to the cause of the United Nations.

17. Thirty years ago I had the privilege of standing where I am now, as Vice-President of the Republic and head of the Bolivian delegation to the seventh session of the General Assembly. On that occasion [384th meeting], I expressed my anguish at seeing an Assembly which was beginning its work with a clear awareness that it was struggling for the very existence of this Organization, whose principal mandate was to build a constructive peace for all the peoples of the world.

18. Since then, mankind has made extraordinary technological advances. None the less, at this session we are again gathered together in insecurity. Relations between peoples and peoples have not developed at the same rate as has technology. Peace has not been won; poverty has not been overcome; racial discrimination has not been eliminated; human rights have not been universally respected; and the exploitation of man and peoples has not been done away

with. In summary, the objectives of the United Nations have not been attained.

19. The climate of tension, violence and mistrust in which mankind lives is not conducive to optimism. The lack of faith in international organizations and in multilateral endeavours, instead of being dissipated, has been deepened until it has reached alarming dimensions. This Organization, on which mankind has based its hopes, is not immune to this unfortunate attitude. There is a growing tendency to do without the United Nations, to set aside its machinery and procedures and to ignore its resolutions.

20. This reality has been clearly described by the Secretary-General in his masterly report on the work of the Organization, where he warns us that "Such a trend must be reversed before once again we bring upon ourselves a global catastrophe and find ourselves without institutions effective enough to prevent it". [See A/37/1.]

21. This bleak picture is made even more sombre when we observe the relentless stockpiling of nuclear weapons capable of destroying every vestige of life on our planet. The virtually total absence of negotiations to reach agreement on a treaty limiting strategic weapons between the two most powerful countries in the world is a further factor in this uneasy situation.

22. As if all this were not enough, a considerable number of third-world countries have embarked upon an arms race which is enriching the countries that provide the arms and impoverishing those that buy them. The logical deplorable consequence of this absurd competition is that enormous resources are being used to purchase weapons, while increasingly meagre sums are devoted to economic and social development.

23. It has been said until we are tired of hearing it that, if the resources devoted to stockpiling nuclear weapons and buying conventional armaments and military equipment, which now amount to the astronomical annual total of \$700 billion, were transferred to development programmes, mankind would have more than enough to do away with extreme poverty.

24. I hope that one day, a day of enlightenment and promise, the countries of the third world will together decide multilaterally to freeze the purchase of weaponry.

25. In 1952, the Bolivian people aroused the conscience of the continent by taking up arms against a system of political oppression and economic domination. A popular, democratic Government came to power, which, through a genuine process of national liberation, gave the people back its sovereign rights and powers. Now that Bolivia has once again taken the road of national revolution, we are proceeding with the firm determination to base our Government on ideological pluralism and a mixed economy. In other words, we shall allow the free play of political ideas and respect private enterprise. Internationally, we intend to follow a policy basically directed towards the universal objectives of peace, development and justice.

26. The new voice of Bolivia will be raised in warm support of national liberation movements and the great struggle against imperialism, colonialism, neo-

colonialism, racism and all forms of foreign aggression and domination.

27. My Government is convinced that the application of the lofty principles of the Charter of the United Nations by all Member States would bring about peace and guarantee international security. However, too often we see that principles such as non-intervention and self-determination are violated by those who feel sufficiently powerful to arrogate to themselves the role of referee of the international community.

28. Hence, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries is steadily gaining in importance. That organization was set up to lend cohesion to the efforts of third-world countries against any system of economic and political oppression.

29. We note with dismay that two member countries of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries—Iraq and Iran—are continuing to shed the blood of their peoples in a fratricidal war which is resulting in enormous loss of life and resources. My Government urges both countries to seek a just, peaceful and lasting solution to this conflict.

30. We welcomed most warmly the adoption, by an overwhelming majority of votes, of the resolution on the Malvinas Islands and we reaffirm our resolute solidarity with the great people of Argentina, which rightfully claims sovereignty over that part of its national territory.

31. The grave crisis affecting the brother countries of Central America is a cause of deep concern for my Government. Tension, threats and escalating violence are all factors in the conflict which is developing and becoming more complex in that region. The foundations of peace are being constantly and increasingly weakened and, because of a lack of vision and understanding, the threat of war is arising. What is necessary is respect for the sovereignty of each and every country of the region and of their right freely to dispose of their natural resources and carry out changes in their political, economic and social structures. It is now more important than ever before that the principles of non-interference and self-determination are respected, if a conflagration in Central America, which could so easily extend beyond those frontiers, is to be avoided. The situation calls for initiatives in good faith such as that of Mexico and Venezuela, which have opened prospects for a peaceful political solution. The peoples of that region have already suffered too much under totalitarian régimes to have to suffer now the horrible scourge of war.

32. The affront to the human conscience represented by the practice of *apartheid* of the Government of South Africa must be brought to an end. South Africa's arrogant defiance must be met with a firm and categorical response on the part of the international community. In my Government's opinion, it is necessary gradually to increase the sanctions against South Africa until that country realizes that it cannot indefinitely flout both the Organization and the peoples of the world. South Africa's stubbornness can also be seen in its refusal to withdraw from Namibia, in flagrant violation of the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. My

Government wishes to pay a tribute to the people of Namibia and earnestly hopes that its long struggle will culminate in the achievement of genuine independence.

33. Bolivia voted in favour of the Plan of Partition for Palestine and recognized the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the State of Israel, a country with which we at present maintain relations. But Israel's recent attack on Lebanon caused us real consternation and we categorically condemned the advance of its forces on Beirut.

34. My country endorses the principle of the inadmissibility of territorial acquisition by force and calls for Israel's withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories. At the same time, my Government declares that, in its opinion, there can be no peace in the Middle East until a free, sovereign Palestinian State is established. We recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

35. The zeal with which we defend the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force was born of our bitter national experience and is based on an old American doctrine which embodies the principle that war does not give any rights. In other words, aggression and the use of force and violence must be rejected.

36. More than a century ago, Bolivia suffered a war of aggression which left it geographically land-locked. It was an unprovoked war, supported by the imperialism of the time. Aggression was fruitful: it enabled the aggressor and the monopolistic interests behind it to exploit the great natural resources of occupied Bolivian territory and left my country without a sovereign outlet to the sea. But Bolivia did not give up, nor will it ever give up, its right to free, sovereign, useful access to the Pacific Ocean. This is our national cause. It is also the cause of the continent. It will one day be—unless we have found justice—one more cause of the international community, as was the return of the Panama Canal to the Panamanians, as is still the return of the Malvinas to Argentina and of Gibraltar to Spain, as is the need to set up a Palestinian State and the need for the independence of Namibia and the abolition of the *apartheid* system.

37. The struggle of the Bolivian people for sovereign access to the sea will finally be victorious, because that is what my country wants, it is what America wants, it is what justice wants. The cause of Bolivia is gaining ground, as is borne out by the adoption a few days ago of a fourth resolution on the item by the General Assembly of the Organization of American States. That resolution confirms three previous resolutions which declare that it is in the standing interest of the hemisphere to find a solution whereby Bolivia should have sovereign and useful access to the Pacific Ocean.

38. For its part, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, at the Sixth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Havana in September 1979, recognized the just and rightful claim of my country to recover its outlet to the Pacific Ocean with full sovereignty. That declaration was reaffirmed at the Conference of Ministers for Foreign Affairs held at New Delhi in 1981, the Meeting of

the Co-ordinating Bureau held at Havana this year and the last meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs at this session of the General Assembly.

39. The lack of access to the sea limits the possibility of my country's participation in future advantageous use not only of the food resources of the oceans but also of the energy wealth and resources which they hold. It is not right to set one country outside the distribution of marine resources and marine wealth in circumstances in which the worsening of the world shortages of food and raw materials will oblige everyone to seek in the sea-bed and the ocean floor future sources of welfare and progress for humanity.

40. If the international political situation is chaotic and bleak, the economic situation is much more disquieting and gives cause for concern. What is worse, the nations which are in a position to contribute to a solution to economic problems seem to lack the political will to do so. The search for approaches which could close the gap between the rich countries of the North and the poor countries of the South is not making progress. Cancún created the illusion that finally the basis had been laid for a beginning to global negotiations which would lead nations to attain the objectives of the new international economic order; but after that meeting nothing happened. Among the countries of the North there are some which continue to oppose any review of the decision-making machinery or the operational rules of institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank or the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, as if those bodies, which were set up in 1946, were endowed with the gift of infallibility and as if nothing had happened since then. But the world today is quite different; hence, the adaptation of the institutions of yesterday to the needs of today is quite rightly and properly called for by the third world.

41. I know that I am saying nothing new. I know that there is absolute agreement that the world economic situation is of irrefutable seriousness. I know also that the central topic of the general debate carried out at the beginning of this session dealt with this. However, both the Group of 77 and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, at their ministerial meetings, have given a ruling on the situation, stating clearly the causes for the decline. Thus, I do not now have to make an exhaustive analysis of the crisis, and I shall confine myself to saying only that my Government associates itself with those that appeal to States to face the situation resolutely. We all have to understand each other now. Solidarity among the countries of the South must be strengthened. North-South dialogue must be intensified and translated into understanding.

42. The recovery of democracy has opened promising prospects for the people of Bolivia, who are now ready to make tremendous sacrifices to deal with the social and economic chaos to which I referred earlier. But that undertaking will be thwarted if Bolivia does not find a proper response to its aspirations from the international community.

43. My Government has made a commitment to the people to respond to their sacrifice with an enormous effort to overcome as quickly as possible the tragic

legacy of dictatorship. We come to the international community to ask for assistance in this endeavour.

44. The eradication of the illicit drug traffic is the duty of all of us—the Governments of the countries where drugs are produced and the Governments of the countries where they are used. I do not have to dwell on the unfortunate consequences of this filthy and detestable trade. Its corrosive action affects everyone; it fosters corruption; it conspires against political order; it infringes the morality of the countries where it has its origin; and it is a serious social threat in the countries where the demand is highest.

45. The pessimistic tone with which I began this statement derives from the apprehensions of my Government about the tendency on the part of some States to act outside the United Nations framework, disregarding the purposes and principles of the Organization. I think it is necessary, in the face of this attitude, to renew a collective effort to give back to the Organization its proper place as the centre for international understanding and co-operation. We would like the United Nations to be a strong, vigorous Organization which sets down the necessary directives for a world of peace and harmony.

46. Let our Organization be not a waning star but rather a radiant sun to light the peoples' way to peace, progress and justice.

47. The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Bolivia for the important statement he has just made.

AGENDA ITEM 31

Question of Palestine:

- (a) Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People;
- (b) Report of the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on the Question of Palestine;
- (c) Reports of the Secretary-General

48. The PRESIDENT: I now call on Mr. Massamba Sarré of Senegal, in his capacity as Chairman of both the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on the Question of Palestine.

49. Mr. SARRÉ (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on the Question of Palestine (*interpretation from French*): Yesterday, in a spirit of contemplation and hope, the international community marked the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. That event afforded the international community an opportunity to reaffirm, in unequivocal terms, the urgent need to find a just, comprehensive solution to the Palestinian problem, which has continued to be so tragically prominent in international affairs, particularly during the painful events in Lebanon. It is within this framework that we should place the seventh emergency special session of the General Assembly, held from 20 to 28 April 1982, from 25 to 26 June 1982 and from 16 to 19 August

1982, devoted basically to the question of Palestine. To that should be added the Security Council meetings on the situation in Lebanon.

50. I wish at this stage to express the hope that today, even more than in the past, the Assembly will be guided by that need when it is considering the record of the past year with reference to the Palestinian question. That is the chief recommendation of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, whose report [A/37/35 and Corr.1] I have the honour to introduce. That report faithfully reflects the action undertaken by the Committee throughout this past year, on the one hand to promote the implementation of the General Assembly recommendations on the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and on the other hand to give maximum coverage to those recommendations based on the following fundamental elements: first, the question of Palestine is at the core of the Middle East problem and, consequently, no solution to the Middle East problem can be envisaged unless account is taken of the rights of the Palestinian 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 a positive solution of the Middle East crisis; thirdly, the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization [PLO], the sole 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 undertaken and conferences and deliberations are organized on the question of the Middle East; fourthly, the acquisition of territories by force is inadmissible and, therefore, Israel must withdraw completely and unconditionally from the occupied Arab territories; fifthly, broader understanding of the just cause of the Palestinian people is a factor of peace and stability in the affected region; and sixthly, the right of the States of the region to live in peace and security must be recognized.

51. As can be seen, those recommendations, which are based on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, envisage dialogue and negotiations to bring about a just, lasting, comprehensive solution to the Palestinian question. Any spirit of confrontation is ruled out.

52. After the General Assembly adopted resolution 36/120, the Committee sought as faithfully as possible to fulfil the mandate entrusted to it. It proceeded in accordance with the same principles and methods as last year, namely: first, a blanket invitation to all States Members of and observers to the United Nations, including Israel and the PLO, to make their contributions in the form of their choosing to the work of the Committee; secondly, the production of realistic, balanced work likely to expedite the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

53. Thus, the dozen countries and organizations that have continued to participate this year in the work of the Committee as observers have been joined by others, such as Ecuador, Czechoslovakia and Niger.

54. However, the Committee was once more compelled to express regret over the refusal of the Israeli authorities to co-operate, although Israel is one of the

parties most concerned in any solution to the Middle East crisis. That attitude is all the more regrettable since, in our view, disregard of an organ or decision of the United Nations because one has not voted in favour of the resolution which brought it about could ultimately block the functioning of the United Nations itself.

55. As in the past, this year again the Committee has taken a certain number of initiatives within the United Nations and outside it and, in particular, in the Security Council, whose active support is indispensable for the implementation of the majority of these recommendations. Thus, in a series of letters addressed to the President of the Security Council relating to new events which have occurred in the occupied territories—such as Israel's plans to clear a whole area of the Negev desert of all Palestinian Bedouins who live there, the closure of the Bir Zeit University, the dissolution of the municipal councils of Dura and Nablus and the building of new settlements on the West Bank—and when it participated in various meetings of the Council, the Committee has emphasized that that body should re-examine its recommendations and take action that might lead to the adoption of positive, just measures to bring about a solution of the Palestinian question.

56. Unfortunately, the Council has not yet taken a stand on this question, despite the support of the majority of its members for the General Assembly decisions.

57. Representatives will recall the concern of certain Council members and their desire not to harm the peace efforts under way. However, this should in no way be used as a pretext for keeping the Security Council perpetually paralysed. On the contrary, the progress made recently concerning recognition of the rights of the Palestinian people should encourage and promote positive action by the Council, particularly since the recommendations submitted by the Committee merely request the implementation of decisions and resolutions already adopted by the United Nations and accepted by all parties directly or indirectly concerned in the Middle East crisis.

58. For their part, the members of the Committee expect the Council to resume, as soon as circumstances permit, its debate on the Assembly's recommendations, in order to assist in their implementation, for their adoption by the Council remains one of the primary objectives of the Committee.

59. In tandem with those initiatives, the Committee engaged in various activities in other competent United Nations bodies. Those organizations were called upon to be ready to implement the recommendations of the Committee and to undertake the transitional measures necessary to avoid any delay in the implementation of those recommendations. Furthermore, in accordance with its mandate, the Committee has widely disseminated information on its work and on various aspects of the problem relating to the implementation of the recommendations of the Assembly. Indeed, it seemed necessary to the Committee to continue to show wide sectors of international public opinion that its aim was to deal equitably and objectively with the problem of the rights of the Palestinian people,

which until recently had seemed to leave a broad sector of international public opinion indifferent.

60. Accordingly, the Committee organized three seminars, one of which was held, for the first time, in North America, in New York, from 15 to 19 March 1982; another was held in Europe, at Valletta, from 12 to 16 April 1982; and a third in Africa, at Dakar, from 9 to 13 August 1982. The collective contribution by the academics, parliamentarians and others who influence international public opinion and participated in these events made a considerable contribution to educating public opinion in various regions about the complex problems and the multiple aspects of the Palestinian question. I would stress here in particular the Appeal for a Western European initiative in the Near East, issued after the Valletta seminar and signed by parliamentarians of Belgium, France, Greece, Italy, Malta and the United Kingdom.

61. The Committee intends to strengthen its action in the field of information through new television programmes explaining its purposes and goals and some aspects relating to the dimension and place of the Palestinian fact in the context of the Middle East crisis. Accordingly, our Committee was represented in various international conferences, in particular the meetings of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries held in Kuwait, Havana and Nicosia, and the thirteenth Ministerial Meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Conference held at Niamey. On those various occasions, representatives of the Committee described the developments in its work and noted with satisfaction the willingness shown at those meetings to implement our recommendation.

62. We have actively embarked on the preparatory work for the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, to be held in 1983 at UNESCO headquarters in Paris. In the Committee's opinion, that Conference, in which universal participation must be guaranteed, should give the international community an exceptional opportunity to guide the development of the situation in the region and to promote the means of bringing about the effective exercise of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. In this regard, it would be a good idea for the General Assembly once again to call upon all States Members of the United Nations to take an active part in the preparatory and actual work of that conference.

63. As I stressed at the beginning of my statement, the recent events in Lebanon, following the invasion of that country by Israel, and the massacres in the refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila have given a new dimension to the Palestinian question. Beyond the considerations connected with those events, one thing is clear: that the equitable solution of the question of Palestine is the only way to restore peace and stability to that region. In order to do that, one condition must be met: Israel must be prevailed upon to show less intransigence. That intransigence has so far caused all the efforts undertaken by the international community and all the peace proposals made to find a comprehensive solution to the problem to fail. Indeed, Israel has shown by its actions and statements that it really does not want any settlement that does not meet its own demands. In the pursuit of that plan, that country flouts world public opinion and

acts in violation of international law and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

64. Nevertheless, it is comforting to see that the international community is beginning to understand Israel's real intentions. Another encouraging sign is the growing awareness by the Israeli people of their leaders' policy of defiance.

65. In order to restore peace and stability to the region, the international community must see to it that the Palestinian people can exercise its inalienable rights in its own independent State. It owes it to that people as well as to the innocent victims whose blood has been spilt in vain. It must also establish appropriate machinery to guarantee the security of the States of the region.

66. It is fitting here to pay a tribute to the Secretary-General for his initiatives and efforts to achieve a just and comprehensive solution to this problem. Since taking office, he has drawn the attention of the international community to the gravity of this matter and the need to find a just and lasting solution to it. Furthermore, he constantly undertakes initiatives in this respect, and it is our duty and responsibility to assist him in his efforts.

67. Senegal has the honour to preside over this Committee and is resolved to support any effort that is likely to bring about a just solution to this problem. The Head of State of Senegal, Mr. Abdou Diouf, reiterated that about 10 days ago, during the official visit made to our country by the Vice-President of the United States, Mr. George Bush.

68. It is also appropriate at this time for the members of the Committee to pay a tribute to Mr. William Buffum, Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs, of whose Office the Division for Palestinian Rights, directed so devotedly and competently by Mr. Yogasundram and his able staff, is part. We have always met with understanding and co-operation from everyone there, in the service of peace.

69. In conclusion, I should like to express again the conviction of the members of the Committee that the present situation in the Middle East allows no room for further prevarication and that the international community must face its responsibilities and open the doors of peace to the Palestinian people, represented by the PLO. The course of past and present negotiations proves that that is the only choice.

70. The United Nations has never taken up the question of the Middle East in circumstances as favourable as those which now pertain. Indeed, during this year, proposals, initiatives and approaches have emerged from various quarters which, leaving aside their provenance, do have the merit of trying to unfreeze the situation. Taken as a whole, these proposals, initiatives or approaches contain elements already contained in the Committee's recommendations. The content is more important than the origin; the main objective is to achieve a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine.

71. Furthermore, the state of mind of the various belligerent parties, like the present development of the international situation, indicates that, above and beyond the apparently insurmountable obstacles, there

exists a process of evolution which seems to allow for relatively confident optimism. Therefore, the Assembly must take this opportunity to appeal once again to the Security Council to adopt, without further delay, in the light of all these factors, the recommendations transmitted to it by the Committee and to consider them as the basis for a solution to the question of Palestine. In so doing, the Security Council would greatly increase the chances of a peaceful settlement in the Middle East, thus underlining the truth of the historic message addressed to the world three decades ago by the founding fathers of the United Nations, who gave themselves the noble mission "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war".

72. The PRESIDENT: I now call on Mr. Victor Gauci, of Malta, Rapporteur of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and Rapporteur of the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, to present the reports of those Committees.

73. Mr. GAUCI (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and Rapporteur of the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on the Question of Palestine: I have the honour officially to introduce the eighth successive report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian people [A/37/35 and Corr.1]. On this occasion, there is also the report of the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on the Question of Palestine [A/37/49 and Corr.1], in 1983.

74. I shall not tax the patience of the Assembly by going into too much detailed explanation of the reports to complement what has already been said so ably by the Chairman. The pattern, the purport, the gravity and the urgency of the first report should by now be familiar to all. By the nature of events on the spot, by reason primarily of the failure to record tangible progress in the Security Council, the Committee on Palestine perforce has had to mark time, to keep watch, to enlighten public opinion and to strive ceaselessly for positive action, mainly via the Security Council, so as to promote a peaceful and enduring solution.

75. The only real progress that the Committee can identify over the past year, important as it undoubtedly is, unfortunately has not been sufficient on this occasion to prevent massive conflict, the crescendo of which was reached only a few months ago but which most certainly will not fade into oblivion. This contrasts with the previous six-year record, when the sustained hope of progress at least prevented widespread hostilities.

76. So I should like first to outline the plus factors for the consideration of the Assembly. In the course of the year under review, the Committee and the Special Unit on Palestine co-ordinated to produce three new studies, bringing the total so far to 16. These studies are particularly relevant in the light of current events. They are entitled: first, "Social, Economic and Political Institutions in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip"; secondly, "The Legal Status of the West Bank and Gaza"; and thirdly, "Israeli Settlements in Gaza and the West Bank". We respectfully bring these objective studies to the attention of all Member States. The demand for these studies, and for those previously

published, increases every year. Steps have therefore been taken not only to reproduce them but also to publish them in several other languages.

77. The Committee also helped to organize three seminars, one in the United States, another in Malta and a third in Senegal. Each one was well attended, and scholarly contributions of the highest quality were submitted by the panelists on various aspects of the Palestine question. These aspects included: the nature and structure of the PLO; the historical, political, legal, economic and human rights aspects of the Palestine question, including separate studies on the status of Jerusalem; Israeli policy in the illegally occupied territories; and, finally, the role of the United Nations in promoting a solution.

78. The Committee unfortunately encountered practical difficulties in organizing the first seminar in North America outside United Nations Headquarters and consequently it was held at Headquarters, where, I must frankly admit, it received much less attention than it really deserved. The fact that a United Nations committee on Palestine was trying to encourage a free and open dialogue with individuals or organizations interested in the question, whatever the views they might hold, elicited little response. The fact that a United Nations committee was ceaselessly toiling to encourage debate and to throw light on a question of such fundamental importance for regional and world peace raised not the slightest ripple of interest in the local mass media.

79. By contrast, the Committee enjoyed generous press coverage during the European and African seminars, held at Valletta and Dakar, respectively. In both these seminars, a programme of action was devised, and in the case of the seminar in Malta parliamentarians present, representing most political shades of opinion in Western Europe, spontaneously issued an urgent appeal to their respective Governments soliciting a European initiative in the Near East. The precise words of the Valletta appeal are:

"From Malta, we address an appeal to the parliamentarians, political parties, trade unions, organizations for solidarity and intellectuals of the European Community to give their support to an initiative which will express the desire of the European peoples to see the Palestinian people at last living in their own homeland in peace, freedom and dignity." [See A/37/35 and Corr.1, annex III.]

80. Once again I am pleased to report that such declarations not only greatly encourage the members of the Committee but also confirm our conviction that, after thorough exposure to the real nature of the Palestine issue, time and time again participants and audience alike emerge fully supportive of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and anxious to bring about a peaceful solution.

81. In accordance with the established practice, the proceedings of the seminars have been compiled and published, and the reports on each seminar have been annexed to the Committee's own report.

82. Another significant area of progress has been the internal functioning both of the Committee and of the Unit. The work-load greatly expanded not only because of negative events in the occupied territories but also because of increased awareness and sympathy

generated by the Committee on behalf of the Palestinian people and their legitimate rights. The Committee consequently organized itself in the manner best calculated to meet the demands made on it and the Unit itself was strengthened and upgraded to the level of a Division. The harmony that exists among the members of the Committee and the Secretariat members of the Division for Palestinian Rights and between the members and the Secretariat is a source of inspiration to all of us, under the dedicated chairmanship of Mr. Sarré, of Senegal.

83. Perhaps most significant and encouraging of all has been the steadily increasing support that the substantive resolutions on the Palestine issue have been attracting in the General Assembly since the day the Committee was first established. Let me quote some figures. With minor annual fluctuations, dependent on the actual texts of the draft resolutions, the affirmative vote has gone up from 93 in 1975 to 127 in 1982, an increase of 37 per cent. This represents a significant strengthening of an already solid first base. The negative vote has dwindled from 18 in 1975 to 2 in 1982—a 900 per cent decrease. The abstentions have decreased from 27 in 1975 to none in the latest two votes, held during the seventh emergency special session in 1982; that represents an infinity decrease. And the combined negative and abstention vote has been reduced from 45 in 1975 to 2 in September of this year—a decrease of 2,250 per cent. This in turn represents a tremendous erosion of antagonism towards Palestinian aspirations to justice, so far denied them.

84. This increased international recognition and support for the just cause of the Palestinian people at the United Nations was matched by the consistent quantitative and qualitative progress achieved by the PLO in gaining bilateral recognition in world capitals to an extent now much greater than that enjoyed by Israel itself. In addition, once again we record with great appreciation the support extended to the recommendations of the Committee by several associations of States, in particular the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Organization of Islamic Conference.

85. From this evolving pattern which I have briefly described, in particular the voting record in the Assembly, one would have thought that the trend of international opinion on this question was now not too difficult to determine. The desire to relieve the agony of the Palestinian people in the illegally occupied territories, to restore a momentum for peace and to recognize deficiencies in the approaches so far applied—all this has stood out with remarkable clarity and insistence since our debate last year, even though a number of influential countries were still sitting on the fence, uncertain as to the timing and scope of envisaged collective or individual initiatives.

86. In introducing the Committee's report at the thirty-sixth session of the Assembly I stated:

“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.

“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.

“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 emerging 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.” [80th meeting, paras. 64-66.]

I also said:

“We therefore cannot but express concern that this body has been unable so far to reach a constructive decision on the [Palestine] 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.” [Ibid., para. 63.]

87. Perhaps precisely for those reasons, because Israel sensed its growing isolation and because of the hesitation of the Security Council, once more Israel took matters illegally and militarily into its own hands so as to upset the evolving scenario. The events unfortunately speak for themselves. Israel effectively saw to that, and here comes the negative aspect: it is an account of steady regression, even of mass murder.

88. The details are all outlined in the report, and I shall not repeat them except perhaps to stress the many violations pointed out by the Commission on Human Rights and enumerated on pages 16 and 17 of the report; these are supplemented by the abundant evidence provided in the report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population in the Occupied Territories [see A/37/485].

89. In consequence, the Committee has had to write innumerable letters of protest against Israeli practices in the past year—too many letters for our liking, but not one more than was absolutely necessary. Several series of meetings of the Council and of the Assembly have had to be called because repression and violence have run riot in the occupied territories. Universities have been closed, hospitals and schools bombed, elected mayors maimed or expelled, illegal settlements established, and so on, in a sorry chronicle which leaves the area seething with resentment. When can we put an end to so much human suffering?

90. Israel's policies in the illegally occupied territories represent *de facto* annexation; old maps are no longer recognizable. This is Meron Benvenisti's argument:

“Begin simply does not need to apply Israeli law to the West Bank. The system is so ingenious that it is just not required. We already have *de facto* annexation and creation of a dual society: the local and regional council areas with Israeli norms, standards, services and democracy, and the rest for Arabs who have no political rights under the civil administration.”

91. Against all this daily accumulation of evidence, the Security Council remained immobilized, and it did not take Israel too long to go even further.

92. On a flimsy pretext and through what its leaders atrociously described as “divine inspiration”, Israel launched a massive military incursion against Palestinian and Lebanese civilians in Lebanon. The exercise escalated into an inferno of clash, casualty and calamity. Mere words can do no justice to the horror that ensued. If it looked shocking on television screens, one can hardly begin to imagine what the tens of thousands of victims must actually have felt. One example will suffice. A photograph taken on the spot showed a group of dead children, aged from one to six years. In Oriana Fallaci’s words:

“The most horrific thing, however, is not the fact that they are so little and so dead; it is the fact that they are literally chopped up in pieces. Here a little foot missing from the body of the smallest, here a little arm missing from the body of the oldest, here a little hand open as if to beg for mercy.”

93. Mercifully, the carnage is now over—for the time being at least. Israel still acts with arrogant impunity as the military overlord of the present situation. The Committee, however—and indeed the world community—cannot but speculate on how many thousands of lives would not have been lost, how much damage would not have been incurred, how much expense on armaments would not have been frittered away, how much animosity would not have been engendered if only action had been taken with unanimity by the Security Council on the basis of the Committee’s recommendations six years ago—six sanguinary years of agonized turmoil for the Palestinian people, who came to the United Nations bearing the torch of peace and asking for our help, the help of every individual nation in the Assembly.

94. The cynicism in the area is almost beyond belief. Israel’s international behaviour is intolerable. It arises from a fanatical admixture of biblical and security considerations, stridently advanced by Israel and abetted by the mass media with little regard for truth or reality. In the same previously quoted interview, for instance, Ariel Sharon asserts that Israel is not participating in an arms race, it is only trying to improve its defence capabilities. He feels sorry for a commander who doubted the need to enter Beirut. Like his predecessors before him, he claims he does not covet a single inch of Lebanese soil, but so far not much has been done to disprove Israel’s voracious appetite for the Arab territory illegally occupied since 1967—almost 20 years ago—and coming more tightly under Israeli control with every measure enacted by the Knesset. Already, apparently with sinister intent, Israeli troops are equipped for a long stay in Lebanon.

95. A sense of sanity must be restored urgently to the Middle East before the nuclear threshold is breached.

96. The Committee detected positive signs and opportunities several years ago, and the sacrifice of Beirut would not have occurred if the positive recommendations had been acted upon then and if the seed of hope thus planted could have been nourished by all instead of being kicked around disdainfully by some.

97. It is to the credit of the United Nations that its search for peace is never-ending, and so, despite the most recent in a series of tragic set-backs, the Committee as a last resort recommends the holding of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine at a date earlier than originally anticipated, in August 1983, in Paris. Details of the preparatory work are contained in my second report [A/37/49 and Corr.1]. Its most significant recommendations are in paragraph 10, concerning participation in the Conference, and paragraph 20, which sets out its objectives. The Committee hopes that both these aspects, in particular, will be endorsed by the Assembly at this crucial time.

98. As we all know, and as this brief overview will have shown, it is evident that something is definitely wrong in the state of Palestine. That cradle of civilization, the land of spiritual inspiration for peace and brotherhood, has become the cockpit of conflict, but only because of Israel’s barefaced belligerence in its distorted image of peace. By its attitude of “why stop here since I can get away with it?” Israel has gone—and has been allowed to go—much too far. It is on the verge of defeating moderation in the region and plunging the world deeper into economic and political chaos.

99. But now, at long last, against the bleak and sanguinary picture of the carnage of Beirut, a universal cry of heartfelt protest against senseless slaughter has finally penetrated the corridors of power, even in Israel itself. Influential voices assert with greater conviction that it is time to call a halt to this policy and to the muddled approaches of the past.

100. Perhaps the most poignant and significant call for a new approach was made on 26 October, in an article published in *The New York Times* by the novelist Amos Kenan. Let me use his own words:

“As long as you Americans help us to stand up, we Israelis have no chance to stand on our own feet. We have no chance to have peace as long as you support us in war. We have no chance to straighten out our relationships with our neighbours as long as you help us forget that they, too, are legitimate children of humanity and that they, too, have legitimate rights.”

101. A solution, if it is to endure, needs to have quasi-universal backing. The essential elements for a peaceful solution have been aired in general terms on so many occasions and by so many different leaders, and most recently—somewhat tardily and deficiently, but none the less appreciated—by the President of the United States.

102. The review and recommendations on the situation by the League of Arab States at the twelfth Arab Summit Conference, held at Fez in September [see A/37/696] also marked a joining of ranks and a positive commitment to a peaceful formula for the Mid-

dle East. Europe, both East and West, did the same. The Committee's own recommendations remain incomparable in terms of their legal foundation, their logical sequence, their comprehensive content, the international backing they have already acquired and the reliance on an effective role by the United Nations which they envisage in their progressive approach. There is a wide area of convergence in these declarations and proposals.

103. Moreover, there is now abundant evidence that the solution cannot be found on the strength of periodic military conflict resulting in armed occupation of land and followed by forced settlement of people. A solution can only be found which rests on internationally accepted principles, particularly the equal rights of peoples to self-determination—one of the 10 principles signed with so much fanfare in the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation, held at Helsinki in 1975, more or less at the same time as the Palestinian leadership brought their political case to the United Nations. Perhaps we need to refresh our memories on this principle, which clearly declares that "all peoples always have the right, in full freedom, to determine, when and as they wish, their internal and external political status, without external interference, and to pursue as they wish their political, economic, social and cultural development".

104. This is what the Palestinians legitimately desire. This is what the Committee recognizes and recommends. This is what Israel seems determined perpetually to deny. But neither Israel nor anyone else has the right to defy logic, principle and legality. On the contrary, every Member State has the obligation to strive for the elimination of any form of violation of the principle of self-determination of peoples.

105. I have already indicated in the past and have repeated today that various proposals made have a lot in common and can be considered as complementary. There has not, however, been an opportunity for these proposals to be concretized as a whole, in a concise manner, to serve as a blueprint for action. After thorough consideration, and with intellectual candour, the proposed International Conference on the Question of Palestine to be held in Paris next year could establish and clearly define, without equivocation, the broad parameters for a peaceful solution, and so set the seal of universal approval on those proposals and on effective ways and means of having them implemented.

106. It is late, but not too late, to start building up the blocks of a peace based not on force of arms but on the soundness of reason. The protagonists—all of them—will be the main beneficiaries, but the whole world will breathe more freely then, and we shall also have given the United Nations, our one and only Organization, a tremendous boost.

107. For let us repeat it once more, peace is the leitmotiv of the United Nations, and the Organization itself is the centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of common ends. There can hardly be a more common cause than the practical attainment by the Palestinian people of their rightful place among the family of nations.

108. Those of us who really wish for peace in the Middle East cannot remain indifferent any longer to

the Palestinian cause, the cause of justice; the essential first step is for all to recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and to redress the results of Israeli repression and injustice. In that endeavour, not a single nation can remain aloof. The proposed international conference in Paris provides both the platform and the opportunity for justice and peace to be secured in the Middle East.

109. The PRESIDENT: I now call on the Observer of the Palestine Liberation Organization, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 3237 (XXIX), of 22 November 1974.

110. Mr. KADDOUMI (Palestine Liberation Organization) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Mr. President, I am happy, as I speak for the first time at the current session of the General Assembly, to express to you my heartfelt congratulations on your election to the presidency, especially as strong ties exist between us and your friendly country, based on the principles of solidarity in the struggle against colonialism and imperialism and the right of peoples to self-determination and to the preservation of their national independence. I am confident that you, Sir, with your experience and knowledge, will be able to accomplish the task assigned to you by the General Assembly with great skill and ability.

111. I am also happy to express our deep appreciation of the noble efforts of the Secretary-General in the service of the causes of peoples and of international peace and security in accordance with the Charter and the principles of the United Nations.

112. I must also express our deep thanks and appreciation to Mr. Sarré, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, and to all the members of the Committee, for their valuable efforts and positive role in finding a suitable international formula for a just settlement of the question of Palestine in accordance with United Nations resolutions.

113. The General Assembly is meeting again to discuss the question of Palestine at its current session, after having resumed its seventh emergency special session three times this year, at the request of Member States, to discuss this same question. Yesterday, here at United Nations Headquarters, and in various corners of the world, we celebrated the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, in accordance with a decision by the Assembly [*resolution 32/40 B*] to the effect that 29 November of each year should be thus marked. We all heard the message sent by Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO, on this occasion, in which he spoke in detail about the events in Lebanon, about the collusion of certain Powers and about the situation in the Middle East as a whole. The observance of this Day, in which the entire international community participated, and all the time the international community has devoted to discussion of the question of Palestine, carry great meaning for our Palestinian people and increase its belief in the justice of its cause, and its trust in its future, in the inevitability of its victory, and in the securing of its inalienable rights, including its right to return to its homeland to exercise its right to self-determination and to establish its independent Palestinian State, in accordance with

United Nations resolutions. On the other hand, the time the United Nations has spent discussing the question of Palestine—longer than any other question—clearly reflects the concern and interest of the international community in putting an end to the oppression and aggression to which the Palestinian people have been and are still subjected. It also reflects the interest of the international community in the situation in the Middle East, in which the question of Palestine is the core of the struggle because the situation there is dangerous and threatens the security and peace of the whole world. Of course, all General Assembly resolutions and statements have clearly and unequivocally stated that Israel's aggressive and expansionist policy, its military adventures, its disregard for United Nations resolutions and its flagrant violations of the principles of international law, of the Charter of the United Nations and of human rights, are solely responsible for the permanent tension in the Middle East, for the constant threat to international peace, for the horrible crimes committed against the Palestinian people in Palestine and in Lebanon and for the tragic human suffering of the millions of people expelled from their homeland by Israel, whose lands were confiscated by Israel and who have been pursued by Israel on land, on the seas and in the air. Israel killed some of them, expelled, imprisoned and tortured others and denied them the right to live in their country in freedom and dignity, thus waging a real war of genocide against a peaceful people, the Palestinian people. It is regrettable that Israel should have committed all these barbaric actions, which are against all laws, norms, religions and moral principles, without any effective deterrence and with the full political, economic and military support of a super-Power that is supposedly responsible, by virtue of its permanent membership of the Security Council, for the maintenance of international peace and security, for the implementation of United Nations resolutions and for respect for the Charter of the United Nations. That super-Power is the United States.

114. Since its inception, the United Nations has been linked in a unique and unprecedented manner with the Palestinian question, which has been a permanent item on its agenda since 1947. The subject has taken up an enormous amount of time in the deliberations of the United Nations, in the Security Council, the General Assembly and in the committees and specialized agencies, and has led to the adoption of many resolutions. Despite all the long years of continuous effort and human suffering, no end is in sight to the cycle of violence and terrorism waged by Israel and its allies against the Palestinian people right up to the present day.

115. The question of Palestine has led to all those efforts and has commanded all that world interest because it is unique in our contemporary international life in its political, legal and human dimensions and in its liberation aspect. It also represents a continuous challenge to the world conscience and to the ability of the United Nations to realize the aims of its Charter and impose respect for its resolutions.

116. Perhaps 29 November 1947 represents the beginning of the United Nations dealings with the question of Palestine. That was when the General Assembly adopted resolution 181 (II), partitioning Pales-

tine into two States—a Jewish State and an Arab Palestinian State. Subsequently, it adopted resolution 194 (III), which it has continuously reaffirmed ever since, emphasizing the right of the Palestinian refugees to return to the homes from which they had been forcibly displaced, and the right to compensation of those who did not wish to return. It is truly tragic that, although 35 years have passed since that decision, the Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people continues, and the refugees, whose numbers have increased many times, are still waiting to return to their homes. Moreover, the right of the Palestinian people to lead a free, dignified life and to establish its own independent State in accordance with United Nations resolutions has yet to be exercised.

117. As I said at the beginning of my statement, we consider that the insistence by the United Nations on keeping the question of Palestine as an open item on its agenda for all this time, despite the attempts by the United States to mislead the Organization and to stall the work of the Security Council, attempts which have paralysed the Council's effectiveness in this regard, has great significance, because the international community yearns to achieve justice. It refuses to accept situations based on force, oppression and aggression, and it refuses to accept attempts to impose the will of others unilaterally on the Organization.

118. The responsibility of the international community, as represented at the United Nations, is clear and acknowledged as regards all matters pertaining to the liberation of peoples and the exercise of the right to self-determination, which is one of the cornerstones of the international political order, represented by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

119. Over many long years, the Palestinian people has suffered all kinds of oppression. It has suffered exile and terrorism and has been denied the most basic political and human rights. As a result, our people was forced throughout these years to exercise its legitimate right to self-defence and to stand up to aggression by all means, in accordance with the decisions of the United Nations. The Palestinian people has made great human sacrifices during its long, continuous struggle, which it has waged despite the unprecedented imbalance of power. It was able, with the help of brothers, friends and freedom-loving peoples all over the world, to expose the lies of the deceitful Zionist propaganda, to unmask Israel and its imperialist allies and to prove to the entire world that Israel alone is the main direct threat to peace.

120. In the past few years, the struggle of the Palestinian people has crystallized and its goals and instruments have been defined. Its independent national identity has been strengthened. The PLO, as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, has gained the recognition of the United Nations and the great majority of countries in the world, except the United States, which still ignores this clear reality.

121. In its struggle against Israeli occupation, the Palestinian people has also defeated all aggressive plots, especially the so-called self-rule plan, which is just another Israeli lie to cover up the continued occupation and final annexation of the West Bank and

the Gaza Strip, which are destined to suffer the same fate as Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. Israel's attempts to label the PLO as terrorists have failed; they did not convince anyone. It is now clear that the PLO is the civilized, living embodiment of a great people, the Palestinian people, which knows its goals and struggles for its rights, rights which have been recognized by the peoples of the world and by the United Nations itself in all its resolutions from 1947 until the present day.

122. By our heroic steadfastness and our great sacrifices, we have added a new page to the record of the struggle of nations that have stood up to foreign occupation, colonialism, racism and fascism throughout history, nations that fought for the implementation of the principles of the United Nations, which are designed to build a world based on justice, security and peace. When Israel was acting in an unprecedentedly barbaric and savage manner, violating both the letter and the spirit of the principles of international law, human rights and United Nations resolutions, the PLO, the representative of the Palestinian people, which was the victim, continued its struggle with the greatest degree of responsibility, and the highest respect for, and commitment to, international legality.

123. Moreover, I am sure that everyone is aware of the positive and constructive role played by the PLO to secure peace in many areas of international tension. The PLO has always expressed its willingness to have international forces contribute to the peace process in the Middle East on the basis of United Nations principles and resolutions as well as within the framework here defined. Furthermore, the Palestine National Council, the supreme legislative organ of the Palestinian people, at its fifteenth session, held in April 1981, confirmed that the real touchstone for any international initiative to achieve peace in the Middle East is the role of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and the right of that people to self-determination and the establishment of its own independent State on its national soil, in keeping with United Nations resolutions.

124. In this context, the PLO welcomed the joint Soviet-American statement of October 1977 and the initiative of the late President Leonid Brezhnev, who stressed the basic role of the PLO in the solution of the Middle East crisis and the problem of Palestine and the need for the Palestinian people to exercise all its inalienable rights, in accordance with the resolutions of the United Nations on the Palestine question and the role of the United Nations in the settlement of this problem.

125. Finally, the PLO, as a member of the League of Arab States, participated in the twelfth Arab Summit Conference, held at Fez, which established a framework for Israel's withdrawal from the Palestinian and occupied Arab territories and proposed an Arab peace plan for the Middle East.

126. While President Reagan's recent initiative of 1 September this year showed some progress in the United States position, it is devoid of the basic components without which there can certainly be no comprehensive and just settlement of the Middle East problem. These elements are specifically: recognition of the PLO and its role as the sole and legitimate

representative of the Palestinian people; recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including its right to establish its own independent State; and complete and unconditional Israeli withdrawal from the Palestinian and occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem.

127. The PLO left Beirut politically and militarily strong. Despite the criminal siege it had to face for three months, despite the attempts to starve its inhabitants, despite a campaign of murder and destruction unprecedented in history and despite American-made phosphorus, cluster and vacuum bombs and internationally banned weapons used by invading Israel night and day for two and a half months against the civilian population of heroic Beirut and the refugee camps, the Palestinian and Lebanese fighters stood steadfast and in this heroic stand gained the respect and gratitude of all freedom-loving and honour-loving peoples of the world. As for Fascist and racist Israel, it remains in the dock, with the blood of women and children dripping from its hands. The cries of the anguished thousands it incarcerated are still ringing in the ears of all those throughout the world who have any conscience or humanity.

128. Unable to enter Beirut by force, after the Palestinian resistance withdrew in order to save and protect the civilian population, and upon securing American and international guarantees—which, regrettably, were not honoured—Israel unleashed its hatred and fascism in a horrendous massacre in Sabra and Shatila, a massacre which will forever remain a disgrace for all those who planned, facilitated and executed it and all those who shut their ears to and turned their backs on the worst crime of mass murder, in cold blood, of thousands of unarmed Palestinian and Lebanese civilians. It is truly regrettable that, months after this horrible massacre, the Israeli criminals have yet to be punished and are planning new massacres, disregarding the condemnation and protests of the world. Massacre, crime and genocide have always been a basic element of Israel's Zionist policy since its inception—the policy of Begin and Sharon and their terrorist gangs. The history of Begin, Sharon and Shamir and their terrorist groups is replete with historical evidence categorically proving that assertion, beginning with the massacre in Deir Yassin in 1948, the massacre in Qibya in 1953, the massacre in Kafr Kassem in 1956 and, last but not least, the massacre in Sabra and Shatila in 1982.

129. Israel, which has violated Lebanese sovereignty and attempted to undermine the national, territorial integrity of Lebanon, aimed its actions not only at the Palestinian revolution but also at Lebanon, its people and its land. Otherwise, why does it still remain in Lebanon?

130. Despite the fact that three months have elapsed since the Palestinian fighters left Beirut, Israel is stalling about its withdrawal in order to impose an invidious peace treaty on Lebanon and security arrangements which contravene Lebanon's sovereignty.

131. Recently, Israel has begun to divert the waters of the Litani River with the aim of stealing and exploiting those waters. It has instigated religious tension so as to destroy Lebanon's unity and incite its

people into a fratricidal war in order for Israel to be able to maintain its occupation and control of Lebanon.

132. The PLO, in full awareness of its responsibilities to the Palestinian people first and then to the peoples of the world—and thus to the security and peace of the whole world—with full self-confidence and encouraged by the sweeping international support for the Palestinian people and its inalienable rights, participated fully and effectively in the twelfth Arab Summit Conference which presented an Arab peace proposal in accordance with United Nations resolutions relevant to the Palestinian question, especially resolutions 3236 (XXIX) and 3237 (XXIX) and all other resolutions calling for the complete and unconditional Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, including Jerusalem, and the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the establishment of its own independent State. Those resolutions also included the recognition of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and the necessity of its participation on an equal footing in all international efforts to secure peace in the Middle East within the framework of the United Nations.

133. All nations of the world have welcomed that Arab peace proposal, which is based on international law, and consider it a great positive development and a just formula acceptable to all those who are genuinely interested in peace in the Middle East region and in the world.

134. On the other hand, what is the real Israeli position? What has the terrorist Begin proposed—or, rather, what has any Israeli Government since 1948 proposed—for the Palestinian people?

135. We need not go back to the Zionist ideology before the establishment of Israel and its racist view of the Palestinian people, epitomized in the saying “A land without a people for a people without a land”. Everyone knows that this was a great lie and a flagrant historical distortion, designed to mislead public opinion, and even the Jews themselves. It has resulted in making the Palestinian people a people without a land.

136. For long years, Israel hid behind another big lie to cloak its real aggressive intentions. That lie was that the Arabs and the Palestinians wanted to destroy Israel. That continued to mislead some until, in 1956, Israel overran Egypt's land, and again, in the 1967 aggression, Israel overran the lands of Egypt, Syria and what remained of Palestine. A few months ago, Israel overran the lands of another Arab State, fraternal Lebanon, destroying towns and camps, displacing and murdering civilians, Palestinian and Lebanese. Israel still remains there, attempting to impose its conditions and hegemony over Lebanon and the entire Arab nation.

137. Golda Meir, Israel's former Prime Minister, once said: “Who are the Palestinians? I have not heard of them”. Menachem Begin, the current Prime Minister, said: “Where are the Palestinians? I do not know any Palestinians except us”—and by that he meant that the Israelis were the Palestinians.

138. Moreover, I challenge the view that any Israeli Government over the last 35 years has been committed to clear and known borders for Israel or has offered

any alternative for the Palestinian people other than murder, displacement, annexation, confiscation of land, imprisonment, concentration camps and the persistent denial of the national identity of the Palestinian people and its inalienable national rights.

139. Finally, on the basis of a repugnant racist theory designed to preserve solely the Jewish element in the State of Israel, thus preventing large numbers of Palestinian Arabs from remaining as citizens—a theory which in the past led to the tragedies that befell the Jews themselves—the Israeli Labour Party, whose appetite is insatiable, offered a distorted plan, and the Begin Government offered an autonomy plan to the population of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. That strange proposal does not recognize the right of the Palestinians who remained on their land to sovereignty over their land or the sources of water, or of any other right except of that of collecting garbage, cleaning the streets and serving their “Hebrew” masters.

140. Moreover, they forbid those Palestinians remaining in the Gaza Strip and on the West Bank to hope or even to dream of one day having a free homeland and an independent State, on pain of becoming subject to expulsion and deportation on the pretext that they owe allegiance to the PLO.

141. These are the facts. They are, as the General Assembly can see, very different—totally different—from the distortions of the media, controlled by the Zionist and imperialist circles.

142. The Palestinians are thus non-existent, they are an illusion, a myth invented by the Arab Governments to destroy Israel; at other times they are portrayed as killers and terrorists; finally, and at best, they are portrayed as simply people who happened by chance, a chance which lasted for thousands of years, to be land belonging historically to Israel, and who, therefore, deserve only annihilation or displacement unless they accept the sovereignty and the control of the chosen people over their lives, their future and their competence.

143. The report distributed a few days ago by the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories [A/37/485]—but one of many reports by international committees—gives a clear picture of the actions of the Israeli occupation authorities in terms of repression, confiscation of land and violations of human rights in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. That report, however, is but the tip of the iceberg in the series of investigations undertaken by various international committees, all of which lead to one conclusion: that Israel is violating human rights in a flagrant, premeditated and continuous fashion and that Israel is violating international law, as well as the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, without there being any attempt to deter or stop it.

144. For the past 30 years, Israel has been systematically pursuing a policy of genocide in its unceasing attempts to destroy the Palestinian people. In this connection, the Israeli occupation authorities have since 1967 promulgated more than 1,000 military decrees, all of which have actually changed the laws that prevailed in the occupied territories. That is a violation

of international law, since the fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 relative to the protection of civilian persons in time of war prohibits an occupying Power from introducing any changes in the territories it occupies.

145. Under Israeli occupation, our Palestinian people live in conditions that are an unbelievable travesty of law. The Israeli authorities rely mainly on the emergency laws of the British Mandate, which have been described by a former Israeli Justice Minister as Nazi-like regulations. And if those laws do not meet the objectives of the occupation, the military authorities will take care of the problem by promulgating a decree, thus "legitimizing" the wishes of the occupier. This situation, which can be described only as the law of the jungle, has thus far enabled Israel to seize more than half of the occupied lands and more than 80 per cent of the water resources and to establish 130 settlements, not to mention the additional settlements it is planning. It has annexed Jerusalem, expelled university professors and elected mayors, dispossessed families, arrested children, changed history books and the names of towns and villages, increased the number of prisons and detention centres, and sown violence and hatred everywhere. In spite of all these categorical facts, however, Israel still hides its head in the sand, as though that could change reality.

146. The Palestinian people is a fact, and that people is determined to achieve its rights, regardless of the passage of time. Moreover, it is willing to make further sacrifices to that end, especially since it enjoys the support of the international community and of all the peoples of the world and is carrying on its struggle within the framework of international legitimacy. The PLO is a powerful reality that cannot be ignored or disregarded. The Palestinian people, in complete unanimity, has given it its full confidence. The PLO enjoys international recognition exceeding by far that enjoyed by Israel. Events and struggle over the past years have proved that any attempt to destroy it is an exercise in futility: the PLO has not been destroyed. Moreover, the solution of the Palestine and Middle East problems cannot be achieved without the full participation of the PLO, as has been repeatedly reaffirmed by this Assembly.

147. As for the disgraceful talk about the "security of Israel" and Israel's "destruction", we believe that Begin and his gang, and the policy of Israel itself, will take care of that. I shall read out what a newspaper not known for its support for the PLO or for hostility to Israel, *The New York Times*, published on 20 September in an editorial by Anthony Lewis:

"The women and children massacred in the refugee camps are one more testament in man's history to the dehumanizing power of hatred.

"Palestinians were the victims in Beirut. But it is Israel that is ultimately threatened by the policies of Mr. Begin and Mr. Sharon.

"In the name of peace, they have waged war. In the name of trust, they have practised deception on their friends. In the name of religion, they have undertaken territorial aggrandizement. They have done all this, they insist, for Israel's security. But they have in fact put its security at risk by trying to extend Israeli control into troublesome areas

nearby. And they have stripped Israel of what must underlie its military power, however great that is: a decent respect in the opinion of mankind."*

148. Despite the complete blindness with which Israel's policy is guided, we take heart from the growing awareness among Israeli Jews of the dangers of this aggressive racist, expansionist policy that threatens not only the Palestinians but Israel itself. Israel has become a Fascist State controlled by a few terrorist leaders who stand against all Jewish spiritual values and deny the principles and lessons of history based on the suffering and sacrifices of millions of Jews who, for generations, endured racist and Fascist ideologies that raised the same slogans and made the same arguments as are made today by Begin and Sharon and other Israeli leaders—slogans about "historical rights", "racial purity", "cultural superiority", *lebensraum* and the creation of "new facts" through the Fascist use of arms. Those are Hitlerite-Nazi slogans.

149. It is more necessary than ever today to redouble our efforts and stand up to the continuing Israeli imperialist aggression against the Palestinian and Arab peoples. With United States support, Israel has constantly flouted all the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and Security Council alike.

150. Thus, Israel is defying not only the rights and will of the Palestinian people, but also the entire international community—the United Nations, the norms of international law—and all that is good, just and honest in human life. Israel's attitude calls for a serious stand by the entire international community. Its policies and actions threaten to renew the conflict and endanger international peace and security.

151. From this rostrum, we call upon the United States to shoulder its responsibility as a great Power responsible for the maintenance of peace and security in the world, to reconsider anew its policy in the Middle East and to stop supplying Israel with weapons and funds that enable it to continue expansion and aggression. Also, we call upon the United States to adopt a balanced position and prove its intention to establish peace in the Middle East by taking practical measures and positions that demonstrate its credibility and seriousness. That will, in fact, not happen until the United States unconditionally recognizes the PLO and the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, in keeping with the principle for which the Americans themselves fought 200 years ago an armed revolution to achieve their national independence.

152. Today, more than ever before, we have a great opportunity to achieve a just peace in the Middle East. This opportunity should not be lost; otherwise we shall enter a new labyrinth with unimaginable consequences for international peace and security.

153. The elements for a just peace are well known and enjoy full international unanimity. They are specifically: complete Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Palestinian and Arab territories; solution of the Palestinian problem in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions and within a United Nations framework through an international con-

* Quoted in English by the speaker.

ference in which all the parties concerned, including the PLO, will participate on an equal footing; and recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to return to its homeland, to self-determination, and to establish an independent

national State on its national territory, under the leadership of the PLO, its sole legitimate representative. Those are the elements for peace without which there can be no peace in the Middle East.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.