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New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 49th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MUBAREZ (Yemen)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 68: ISRAEL'S DECISION TO BUILD A CANAL LINKING THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA TO THE DEAD SEA: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 68: ISRAEL'S DECISION TO BUILD A CANAL LINKING THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA TO THE DEAD SEA: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/37/328 and Corr.1; A/SPC/37/L.41/Rev.1 and L.42)

1. Mr. BURAYZAT (Jordan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the statement made by the representative of Israel the previous day was nothing more than another demonstration of falsehood and hypocrisy. The attempt to portray the Israeli project to build a canal linking the Mediterranean Sea to the Dead Sea as a peaceful plan for the development of the region was futile, for the execution of the project would cause irreparable damage to Jordan, as its delegation had stated at the opening of the debate on item 68. No less than 15 per cent of the gross national product of Jordan would be lost. The project would have other demographic and ecological implications for Jordan and the Palestinian people.

2. No amount of Israeli rhetoric could hide two basic facts. First, the project was part of a plan designed since the early 1930s to facilitate the movement of the largest possible number of Zionist settlers to Palestine. The work already undertaken by Israel in connection with the use of watercourses was, like the canal project itself, part of a broader plan. Jewish colonization of Palestine was essentially based on agricultural expansion; that was still the case in the agricultural settlements in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights. The other glaring fact was that the project was part of an elaborate plan to perpetuate Israel's occupation of the Arab territories. Israel was preparing the ground for another strategic drive, whose adverse consequences for Jordan and the Palestinian people were quite obvious. The project would be another tributary to Israel's military nuclear industry and was another aspect of the aggressive policies pursued by Israel in the region.

3. In its statement, the Israeli delegation had called on Jordan to enter into negotiations with Israel in connection with the project. Israel, which had been occupying Arab territories since 1967 and was constantly threatening the Palestinian and Jordanian peoples with its military and political manoeuvres, was now calling on Jordan to negotiate. That was a mockery of everyone's intelligence. For decades, Jordan had been calling for genuine and sincere negotiations with a view to solving the Palestinian problem and ending the Arab-Israeli ordeal, but to no avail. At the same time, Israel was paying lip-service to peace and carrying out acts of war. The Israeli call for negotiations was but a disguised manoeuvre which would in no way contribute to the attainment of peace.

4. Mr. LEVIN (Israel) said that a long and sterile debate had been held on an item of such technical importance as the construction of the canal between the Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea. Jordan and Iraq had delivered sermons on international law and international practice. Such sermons coming from Iraq were extremely surprising, since that country had repeatedly violated the norms of

(Mr. Levin, Israel)

international law, despite denunciations from the international community. It had been said again and again that Israel wanted to build an empire and that its military establishment would benefit by the construction of the canal. The Arab leaders had apparently come to fear the bugbears they had used to terrify their peoples.

5. Jordan had claimed that, for decades, it had been submitting peace proposals. He was prepared, there and then, to accept those proposals, even though the action initiated by Jordan in 1967 without any provocation should not be forgotten. Despite all the attacks on it, Israel had submitted, on 8 December 1982, a document on the beneficial aspects of the project for the entire region. His delegation had no wish to continue answering the usual charges automatically levelled by so many Arab delegations.

6. Mr. KUBBA (Iraq) said that Israel had failed to present sound arguments because it had no arguments to present. Zionism was bent on proceeding with its expansionist policy. The attack on Iraq was not worthy of a response.

7. Mr. BURAYZAT (Jordan), introducing draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.41/Rev.1, drew special attention to the measures referred to in paragraph 5.

8. Mr. BOUAZZA (Morocco) said that his delegation wished to become a sponsor of draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.41/Rev.1.

9. Mr. DAVIS (United States of America) commended the Secretary-General on his balanced and fair report, which permitted a better understanding of a very complex issue. The United States remained strictly neutral with regard to the legal, environmental and economic aspects of the project, which was still in the pre-feasibility stage. It had supported and would continue to support negotiations between the two parties with a view to a peaceful and reasonable settlement of their differences.

10. The United States could not support draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.41/Rev.1, because it censured a Member State for a decision which the United States understood had not yet been taken. He referred the Committee to section I, paragraph 2, of document A/37/328, which stated, inter alia, that the decision to begin executing the project would not be taken before the results of the feasibility study were available. The concerns expressed in the draft resolution were premature and would not be conducive to a peaceful settlement of the differences between Jordan and Israel, which would be possible only through direct negotiations between the parties concerned. For those reasons, his delegation would vote against the draft resolution.

11. At the request of the representative of Israel, a recorded vote was taken on draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.41/Rev.1.

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burma, Burundi, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Democratic Yemen, Denmark, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland, France, German Democratic Republic, Germany, Federal Republic of, Ghana, Greece, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Cameroon, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia.

Against: Israel, United States of America.

Abstaining: Malawi, Zaire.

12. Draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.41/Rev.1 was adopted by 101 votes to 2, with 2 abstentions.

13. Mr. SMITH (Jamaica), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his delegation had voted in favour of draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.41/Rev.1 because the Secretary-General's report (A/37/328) clearly showed that the Israeli project to build a canal to link the Mediterranean Sea to the Dead Sea would have serious economic implications, and could have adverse effects on Jordan's production of potash. That would cause damage to resources that were already limited. Furthermore, as had repeatedly been stated, the Israeli project would involve the construction of permanent installations in the Gaza Strip, which would be in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949.

14. Mr. LEVIN (Israel) said that his delegation wished to clear up some confusion concerning the procedure followed at the previous meeting in connection with the circulation in extenso of the paper entitled "Mediterranean-Dead Sea Project: Outline and appraisal", which the Permanent Representative of Israel had transmitted to the Secretary-General with a note dated 11 May 1982.

15. It was unacceptable to his delegation that a technical study which had been transmitted as an act of courtesy to the Secretary-General should be circulated as a result of a decision taken by the Special Political Committee. It was clear that that action could create a very undesirable precedent not only with regard to the study in question, but also with regard to the inviolability of confidential

(Mr. Levin, Israel)

communications between a Mission and the Secretary-General. That action was similar to a Committee's decision to have other documents from the archives of the Secretariat published.

16. The confusion concerning the circulation of the aforementioned paper had apparently arisen because the representative of Jordan, in his initial statement, had referred to a "note" dated 11 May, without making it clear which documents he had in mind. Even so, Israel would agree to the publication in extenso of an updated version of the paper, provided that the related document transmitted to the Secretariat by the Jordanian delegation ("The Mediterranean-Dead Sea Canal: The Israeli project and its dangers") was also published in extenso. It was hoped that the Jordanian delegation would not oppose such a course of action, which would be fair.

17. On the other hand, the distribution of both documents would obviously have financial implications. The Committee would probably wish to take that into account. Israel's paper was voluminous and was accompanied by maps in colour. However, if the Jordanian delegation was interested, the paper could be published, provided that that was on the basis of reciprocity.

18. The CHAIRMAN, referring to the measures mentioned by the representative of Israel, said that, according to rule 123 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, "when a proposal has been adopted or rejected, it may not be reconsidered at the same session unless the committee, by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting, so decides."

19. At the previous meeting, the Committee had taken a decision at the request of Jordan, and no delegation had raised objections at the proper time. However, the question of linking two requests had been raised at the previous meeting, and the Chairman had decided that each request should be submitted separately. Now that the Jordanian request had been granted, it was improper to reconsider the matter, unless the Committee so decided by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting. Still, if any delegation wished to submit a new request, the Committee could consider it.

20. Mr. BURAYZAT (Jordan) said that his delegation agreed with the Chairman's explanation, and was grateful to the Chairman and the Committee for their clear decision and their adherence to the rules of procedure. Jordan looked forward to the publication of the Israeli study, whatever the financial implications. What was important was that the facts should be known.

21. Mr. KIRTON (Guyana) said that, regrettably, his delegation had been absent during the voting on draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.41/Rev.1; had it been present, it would have voted in favour.

22. After an exchange of courtesies, The CHAIRMAN declared that the Special Political Committee had completed its work for the thirty-seventh session.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.