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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWO THOUSAND
EIGHT HUNDRED AND FORTY-SEVENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 14 February 1989, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. RANA

(Nepal)

Members: Algeria
Brazil
Canada
China
Colombia
Ethiopia
Finland
France
Malaysia
Senegal
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
United Kingdom of Great Britain and
Northern Ireland
United States of America
Yugoslavia

Mr. DJOUDI
Mr. NOGUEIRA-BATISTA
Mr. FORTIER
Mr. YU Mengjia
Mr. PEÑALOSA
Mr. TADESSE
Mr. TORNUDD
Mr. BROCHAND
Mr. RAZALI
Mr. BA
Mr. BELONOGOV

Mr. BIRCH
Mr. OKUN
Mr. PEJIC

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The meeting was called to order at 3.40 p.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

THE SITUATION IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES

LETTER DATED 8 FEBRUARY 1989 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TUNISIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/20454)

LETTER DATED 9 FEBRUARY 1989 FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/20455)

The PRESIDENT: In accordance with the decisions taken at the previous meetings on this item, I invite the representatives of Bahrain, Democratic Yemen, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Pakistan, Qatar, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Yemen and Zimbabwe to take the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber. I invite the representative of Palestine to take a place at the Council table.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Al-Shakar (Bahrain), Mr. Al-Alfi (Democratic Yemen), Mr. Badawi (Egypt), Mr. Bein (Israel), Mr. Salah (Jordan), Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait), Mr. Fakhoury (Lebanon), Mr. Shah Nawaz (Pakistan), Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar), Mr. Adam (Sudan), Mr. Al-Masri (Syrian Arab Republic), Mr. Ghezal (Tunisia), Mr. Sallam (Yemen) and Mr. Mudenge (Zimbabwe) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber; Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) took a place at the Council table.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Nicaragua, Turkey and the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I

(The President)

propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Dost (Afghanistan), Mr. Mohiuddin (Bangladesh), Mr. Zapotocky (Czechoslovakia), Mr. Zachmann (German Democratic Republic), Mr. Tarmidzi (Indonesia), Mr. Mahallati (Islamic Republic of Iran), Mr. Kagami (Japan), Mr. Treiki (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), Mr. Serrano-Caldera (Nicaragua), Mr. Aksin (Turkey) and Mr. Oudovenko (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 13 February 1989 from the Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Permanent Mission of Senegal to the United Nations, which reads as follows:

"I have the honour to request that the Security Council, in accordance with rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure, extend an invitation to His Excellency Ambassador A. Engin Ansay, Permanent Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to the United Nations, in the course of the Council's discussion of the item entitled 'The situation in the occupied Arab territories'".

That letter will be circulated as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/20462. If I hear no objection I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation to His Excellency Mr. A. Engin Ansay under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

(The President)

The Security Council will now resume its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The first speaker is the representative of the Sudan. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. ADAM (Sudan) (interpretation from Arabic): I wish first of all to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. We are confident of your ability and impartiality.

I wish to convey to the Permanent Representative of Malaysia my delegation's highest appreciation of the seriousness with which he presided over the work of the Council in January.

We hope that the Council's present consideration of the situation in the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel will go beyond paying lip-service. More than a year has gone by since the adoption of resolution 608 (1988) on 14 January 1988. The situation in the occupied Palestinian territories has been marked by an ongoing massive popular uprising, which has now lasted 14 months. The situation deteriorates daily because of the practices of Israel, the occupying authority. Those practices have exceeded all moral and humanitarian limits.

Since 1967, the Security Council and the international community in general have responded to this situation, whose nature is obvious. Irrespective of the pretexts put forward by Israel and its allies, that situation is one of military occupation that has persisted to this day, extending throughout the Palestinian territories and the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including Jerusalem. That must be the point of departure for any critical analysis of the situation in that region.

Secondly, we cannot ignore the fact that the Palestinian people opposes the occupation and is resisting it, as is its sacred legitimate right, a right that has

(Mr. Adam, Sudan)

been exercised by all peoples throughout history. Hence it is unjust to recognize that right for some peoples, including it in the heroic pages of their history, while denying it to others.

Israel accuses the Palestinian people - which it has expelled and which is dispersed through the world, and whose territories it is occupying - of subversion, violence and subversive rioting. It calls upon the entire world to condemn that people. This is reverse logic which means either that Israeli leaders have decided to disregard the facts or that they do not see the facts as they exist.

In either case we confront an abnormal situation where one party is determined to pursue a lengthy conflict threatening peace and security in the Middle East and throughout the world. We state here with firm conviction that the Palestinian people in the occupied territories is exercising its legitimate right to dignity and respect and must be saluted for its actions.

The situation in the occupied Palestinian territories continues to deteriorate daily - and, it seems to me, for the following reasons. First, the Israeli military occupation is becoming institutionalized, and this lies at the very root of the problem.

(Mr. Adam, Sudan)

Secondly, the occupation authorities refuse to respect the Fourth Geneva Convention. Even worse, they do not recognize that Convention and daily carry out unimaginable repressive actions in full view of the entire world.

Thirdly, the occupying authorities do not respect the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolutions 605 (1987), 607 (1988) and 608 (1988).

Finally, we wish to stress also that the Security Council will not be able to ensure implementation of its resolutions in order fully to protect the Palestinian people from the oppression of the Israeli occupation forces. We deeply regret that, for the toll taken by that attitude on the part of the Israeli occupation forces has so far been about 500 martyred, 50,000 wounded and 30,000 detained.

We shall not refer to other inhuman practices that demonstrate sadism and an increasing propensity for repression. Other speakers have already done that. But I would emphasize the defeatist attitude taken by the Israeli occupation soldiers when faced by this peaceful uprising of children armed with stones. Some are convinced that this uprising can be broken only with bullets and by breaking bones. Others, full of despair, are receiving psychiatric care. But the Israeli authorities continue to say that the occupation soldiers are under strict orders and that they do not exceed the limits, opening fire only in exceptional cases. These "exceptional cases", however, probably mean the the actions which soldiers take every day: murder, detention and other practices which demonstrate blind sadism.

Everyone is aware of the political evolution of the situation in the Middle East since the meeting of the Palestine National Council in Algiers in November last year. During that meeting, the Palestine National Council proclaimed the birth of the State of Palestine, in conformity with General Assembly resolution 181 (III). The leaders of the Palestinian people have clearly stated their

(Mr. Adam, Sudan)

acceptance of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). Also, they have very clearly reaffirmed the necessity of convening an international peace conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of all the parties concerned in the conflict, at the regional and international levels. Since then, more than 90 States have recognized the State of Palestine. For its part, the United States has initiated a political dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organization, which demonstrates the realism being shown by the United States. That must be emphasized.

But what are the consequences for Israel of all the events that have taken place recently? How does Israel view the situation in relation to the search for a just and lasting peace? Israel refuses all the realistic and serious initiatives taken by the Palestinians. It maintains its occupation of Palestinian and Arab territories, and has no fixed geographical political boundaries. As Israel sees it, the refusal of the Palestinians to accept occupation is a form of subversion that it must combat by military oppression and stamp out.

But, in the final analysis, what legitimate rights does Israel intend to grant the Palestinian people? Does it intend to negotiate with representatives not acceptable to the Palestinian people in order to establish a puppet government in the occupied territories? Such an attitude - which is myopic and arrogant - cannot lead to a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. Indeed, these kinds of proposals have been made in the past and have been still-born.

It is high time that the Security Council took every possible measure to enable the United Nations to exercise its direct responsibility in order fully to protect the Palestinian citizens in the occupied territories who are confronted by the Israeli occupation authorities, so that they can exercise their right to

(Mr. Adam, Sudan)

establish an independent State in full freedom and tranquillity. Israel's security and well being cannot be ensured at the expense of the Palestinian people and their rights.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Sudan for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is Mr. A. Engin Ansay, the Permanent Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to the United Nations, to whom the Security Council has extended an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. ANSAY: On behalf of the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and on my own behalf, I am indeed happy to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of February. We have full confidence in your ability successfully to guide the deliberations of the Council by virtue of your vast experience, your competence and your wisdom. Allow me also to express our gratitude and appreciation to Ambassador Razali, the Permanent Representative of Malaysia, for the exemplary manner in which he presided over the Council last month, which was a particularly eventful one.

Today is, I believe, the four hundred and thirty-third day of the glorious intifadah of the valiant Palestinian people. This is a nation which - in addition to having 500 of its sons martyred in one year and scores of thousands wounded, beaten, imprisoned and tortured at the hands of the authorities of the occupying Power as well as houses blown up - has been subjected throughout the past 22 years to various forms of political and economic oppression and persecution, culminating in the blatant violation of their most basic human rights.

(Mr. Ansay)

Small wonder that even the United States State Department in its latest report points out the fact - though rather belatedly - that Israel's response to the Palestinian uprising "led to a substantial increase in human rights violations" in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Small wonder also that it was reported by The New York Times last Sunday that Senator Patrick Leahy, referring to Israel's "serious human rights violations", had said last week:

"They build up enormous resentment in the United States, and in the future it will hurt them".

Is it not about time - we should like to ask the Israeli authorities - that they fully realized that the intifadah cannot be stopped either by force or by ignoring the only legitimate representatives of the Palestinian people?

(Mr. Ansay)

If a national poll published last Friday in the Israeli daily newspaper Yediot Achronot shows that the majority of the Israeli population - 54 per cent, to be exact, according to that paper - clearly favours direct negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organization; if many permanent Jewish leaders and scholars throughout the world have also come to believe that a Palestinian State, like a Jewish State, is a historical necessity; if behind all of Israel's problems, that is, economic, social and political, lies the intifadah and the state of war that exists between Israel and most of its neighbours; if during Mr. Shamir's visit to troops in the West Bank city of Nablus last month, an Israeli soldier could address his Prime Minister in the following manner:

"Mr. Prime Minister, to achieve order in the casbah I have to act brutally towards people free of crime. I feel humiliated by this behaviour, the situation has become a catastrophe. It is breaking us and strengthening the Arabs";

if that country's political leadership today is not up to that soldier's level of candour and honour in facing reality; if the former and current Administrations of the United States accept the legitimacy of the Palestine Liberation Organization and engage in an official serious dialogue with them; if our Secretary-General, in his report of 28 November 1988 on the situation in the Middle East, in giving an account of the deliberations of the Algiers session of the Palestine National Council, states:

"The recent session of the Palestine National Council has generated a new momentum in the diplomatic process and I believe it offers fresh opportunities for progress towards peace which should be seized"; (S/20294, para. 37)

and if the great majority of the Members of the United Nations, specifically 94 States, have to date recognized the new Palestinian State - then we firmly

(Mr. Ansay)

believe that it is high time for this body to do something commensurate with the ideals to which it aspires and that live up to its responsibilities by adopting measures consistent with the explosive situation in the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories with a view to ending the abominable repression carried on by the Zionist occupation forces, so as to protect the Palestinian men, women and children in the occupied territories and to expedite the convening of the international peace conference on the Middle East.

There can be no question that the United Nations is duty bound to ensure the realization of the legitimate aspirations and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. It is also incumbent upon the Security Council to implement the decisions and recommendations of the General Assembly on the Palestinian question that have been adopted year after year by an ever-increasing majority, particularly those calling for the international peace conference on the Middle East.

For the past 15 months the Palestinian people have waged a heroic struggle against injustice, oppression and occupation, in order to regain its inalienable rights to self-determination, to return to its homeland and to establish an independent and sovereign state in Palestine, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. But the international community has not yet been able to redress, or even fully to realize, the injustices suffered by the Palestinian people. Therefore, the Palestinian people, through the intifadah, showed once again its determination to resist Israel's brutal policies of violent oppression, occupation, deportation, Judaization of Palestine, desecration of the holy places of Muslims, establishment of illegal settlements and the adoption of barbaric measures to silence protest by Palestinians, killing hundreds of defenceless and innocent men, women and children.

(Mr. Ansary)

The intifadah springs from a people which has lost patience, a people driven by two decades of humiliation and oppression, a people which at last is raising its head, rejecting occupation and foreign domination. That rejection has now become irreversible. The intifadah springs from a people which is using the simplest yet most effective of weapons - the stone, picked up from its own national soil.

As we all know, the Palestinian question is at the core of the Middle East problem, and at the heart of the Palestinian question lies the problem of Al-Quds Al-Sharif, the continued aggravation of which constitutes a grave threat not only to the stability of the region but to international peace and security as well.

For the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the cause of Palestine and Al-Quds Al-Sharif is the prime cause of the entire Muslim Ummah because of its justness and because of the fact that Al-Quds Al-Sharif is the first Kiblah and the third holiest shrine of all Muslims.

For more than four decades Israel's policies of expansionist aggression, ruthless oppression of the Palestinian people, provocative defiance of the will of the international community and intransigent flouting of all norms of international law have been the single source of unabated violence, tension and war in the Middle East. The ultimate designs of those policies are as transparent as they are futile, namely, the permanent usurpation of the fundamental rights of the Palestinians and the liquidation of the Palestinian cause.

By occupying the Palestinian and Arab territories, raiding Palestinian refugee camps and institutions in neighbouring countries, stepping up construction of new settlements and expanding those that already exist, by confiscating property and by carrying out constant reprisals, arrests and persecution of the Palestinian population, Israel is attempting to bring about demographic changes and thus realize its annexationist goals and ambitions and consolidate its control over the occupied territories.

(Mr. Ansay)

Those policies, which are designed to undermine the Palestinian cause and to destroy the will of the Palestinian people to struggle against illegal occupation and tyranny, were not able to suppress the will of the Palestinian people, but, on the contrary, they fueled the uprising. Through intifadah a new era in the history of the valiant Palestinian people has emerged. It has shown that it is ready to confront a mighty military Power with bare hands.

Intifadah proved its effectiveness and unmasked the true face of Israeli authority before world public opinion. Those brave martyrs glorified the history of their proud nation in its struggle for justice and freedom.

The last Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, the seventeenth, hailed with pride the heroic uprising of the Palestinian Arab people against the heinous Israeli occupation forces in defence of their homeland and their inalienable national rights. It reaffirmed the unflinching stand of the Islamic States to support the Palestinian people in their ongoing struggle until the total withdrawal of Israeli forces from all occupied Palestinian territories, including the Holy City of Al-Quds Al-Sharif. The Conference reaffirmed its rejection of any partial and individual solutions which would disregard the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people or ignore the Palestinian Liberation Organization, their sole legitimate representative. The Conference condemned Israel's expansionist policy and continued occupation of Arab lands and denounced its coercive measures in violation of human rights as well as the imposition of an economic stranglehold on the population to force them to end their courageous uprising. The Conference mandated its Secretary-General to maintain contacts with the Secretary-General of the United Nations and other regional and international organizations with a view to implementing Security Council resolutions 605 (1987), 607 (1988) and 608 (1988) and the application of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

(Mr. Ansary)

Then came the fifteenth of November 1988.

That date will be a date to remember. On that particular day, a historic decision was to take place in Algiers at the conclusion of the nineteenth extraordinary session of the Palestine National Council (PNC) - the session of the intifadah and national independence, to declare an independent Palestinian State on Palestinian land. The adoption of that historic declaration is eloquent testimony to the wisdom, sagacity and political acumen of the Palestinian leadership. This act of statesmanship amply reflects the ardent desire of the Palestinian people for the establishment of a just and durable peace in the Middle East.

The Palestinians amply demonstrated their sincere desire for a settlement within the framework of international legality when their representatives accepted Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), that acceptance clearly stated in the decisions adopted by the Palestine National Council in Algiers in November last and in the statements adopted in Stockholm and Geneva later.

The important development of the Palestinian position and the many initiatives undertaken by the Palestine Liberation Organization eventually led to an American-Palestinian dialogue that demands a favourable response from the Israeli Government and recognition by it of the need to speak with the representatives and leaders of the Palestinian people.

But the current Israeli position so far with regard to the problem can only lead to the ossification of the situation and to an increase in violence, to the detriment of dialogue and moderation. It is now clear that important sectors of the Israeli public, including scholars, members of the armed forces, and the media, reject such actions which have already been rejected by peoples and Governments of the civilized world and by the majority of regional and international governmental and non-governmental organizations.

(Mr. Ansay)

The Organization of the Islamic Conference calls upon the international community, particularly the parties directly concerned, to seize this opportunity for promoting a just and durable peace in the Middle East by urgently convening the international conference with full and equal participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and to extend its fullest support to the Palestinian struggle for self-determination and national liberation by recognizing the independent Palestinian State.

(Mr. Ansay)

The Palestinian people, who have endured endless suffering at the hands of Zionist aggression, have once again demonstrated their passion for peace and justice by adopting a new peace strategy. The international community must take due cognizance of this historic step taken by the Palestinian leadership. It is obvious that the problem cannot be resolved without an international political settlement that will take into account all the aspects of the question and meet the concerns of all the parties.

The heroic intifadah continues undeterred by Zionist persecution. The Islamic Ummah remains committed to the intifadah and will continue to extend its full support for the early realization of an independent Palestinian State.

The Organization of the Islamic Conference, on behalf of its membership of 46 sovereign States, yearns for the day when the flag of Palestine will be unfurled over its own territory and will wave proudly here also, amidst those of the other Members of the United Nations. When that day comes, Israel may also be able to savour the sweet taste of recognition and cherish the blessings of peace.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Mr. Ansay for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. DJOUDI (Algeria) (interpretation from French): The Algerian delegation takes great pleasure in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council.

The high esteem and consideration in which your colleagues hold you, and the professional and personal qualities that have won you their admiration, make us feel entitled to be fully confident in your fulfilment of your mandate.

I also wish to pay a well-deserved tribute to Mr. Ismail Razali, Ambassador of Malaysia, for the exemplary manner in which he conducted the work of the Council during a particularly busy month of January.

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

The continued aggravation of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories has once again led to the urgent convening of the Security Council. For the last 14 month, a dangerous escalation inherent in the brutal logic of the occupation has constantly alerted public opinion to what is truly a crazed attempt at annihilation, pursued with most murderous blindness.

Since then, with the cold impartiality of those concerned primarily with objectivity, the media have reported a strict accounting of the horror, which allows us each day to learn the exact number of dead and wounded. Thus, the steady intensification of the repression and its counterpart, the resistance, have made apparent the disproportionate sophistication of the methods used by the occupiers and the pathetic means - other than their manifest determination - available to the young Palestinians.

Beyond such largely statistical totals, we must nonetheless always return to the symbols and the reality they express. Precisely because they are the product of a predictable chain of events inherent in the logic of occupation, current events in the occupied Palestinian territories inevitably lead us to note three realities.

One manifest reality is the disarray of the occupation forces. Since they cannot conceive of any alternative to repression, it is in blind escalation and extensive systematic recourse to lethal force that they claim to have found a response to a situation whose origin is the occupation itself. Through the so-called new measures, the occupier has resumed or updated practices of sad memory for those who have lived under occupation: any Palestinian manifesting his rejection of the occupation by the only means of expression available to him is henceforth marked for murder.

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

While it is true that the initiators of those measures can themselves be in no doubt as to their certain failure, it is to be expected that there will be a considerable increase in the number of victims as a result of those measures - particularly among the young children whose irresistible determination leads them to display their unbending will to rid themselves of the occupier.

The second reality is that the resistance to the occupation derives renewed vigour and resolve from the very rage of the oppressor. As did peoples formerly under occupation, the Palestinian people is today confirming that reality. Through their popular intifadah, the Palestinians in the occupied territories have imparted a new dimension to the Palestinian people's struggle for the reconquest of their full rights. However difficult it may be for them to acknowledge it, not even the occupation forces would today dare doubt that that struggle has now entered its final phase.

That leads to another observation regarding the nature of an occupation born of openly annexationist aims and the consequent systematic dispossession of the Palestinians' rights and property in an attempt to weaken their national identity: it is clearly the frantic pursuit of its plans for dominion that underlies the Israeli refusal to recognize and respect the Fourth Geneva Convention.

The Israeli occupier was not mistaken as to the profound attachment of the Palestinians to their land. Resort to the arbitrary measure of expulsion and deportation of Palestinians implicitly recognizes that being torn from his land is the supreme punishment that can be inflicted upon the Palestinian, who would prefer to die there rather than resign himself to being held by the occupier. Similarly, the bulldozing of ancestral homes is an expression of a permanent will to maintain the Palestinian people in a state of wandering and exile, even in its own land. In a land where the historic olive tree has been the symbol of peace since the

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

earliest times, one is obliged to see in the desperate uprooting of olive trees by the occupying forces their inability to conceive of any language of peace other than the language of delusion.

It must be pointed out that a venture of this sort can result only in the strengthening of the expression of the Palestinian people's identity; it can only galvanize its struggle for sovereign fulfilment within the framework of the State it has decided to give itself.

Fourteen months after the intifadah began and a year after the Council declared itself on the situation in the occupied territories by adopting resolutions 605 (1987), 607 (1988) and 608 (1988), events have demonstrated that the repression could not simply be regarded as a fact of life and nor could the Palestinian resistance simply sink into oblivion. It is a sign of our new times that the international community is remarkably vigilant vis-à-vis the phenomenon of becoming accustomed to tyranny, which used to be just one more injustice against the Palestinian people. It is already a significant victory of the intifadah that it has overcome that phenomenon, which has often been an offense against the justice of its struggle. For a long time, while the dispossession inflicted on the Palestinian people continuously preoccupied the international community, the attitude of certain States bearing the greatest responsibilities was often seen as the nervous manifestation of a bad conscience anxious above all to soothe itself.

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

But we live today in a new international climate, marked by a dynamism for peace that has made the quest for definitive and just solutions inevitable everywhere where previously the deadlock and uncertainty threatening international security had been evident.

However, the Middle East is today clearly a region where this new climate is having difficulty penetrating. But this is not the fault of the PLO, which has done everything in its power to make its contribution to this edifice of peace which must be the work of the whole international community. By its courageous decisions taken in Algiers on 15 November last, the Palestinian National Council has convinced the most sceptical of its determination to work effectively towards the achievement of a lasting peace in the Middle East. Those circles that have traditionally been the most reticent have not mistaken this will for genuine, sincere and effective peace on the part of the Palestinian people which they have welcomed, thus evidencing a new willingness to seek with the PLO - whose representativeness they no longer dispute - means for achieving that peace.

For its part the General Assembly last December took note of the decisions of the Palestine National Council, solemnly reaffirmed by Mr. Yasser Arafat at Geneva, and through the adoption of new decisions has renewed its commitment to promoting the holding of the international conference on the Middle East, with the participation of the PLO on an equal footing.

Hence, can there be any mistaking the nature of the murderous obstinacy shown by the Israeli leaders, an obstinacy that has led them to seek to disqualify the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in their vain search for a more accommodating interlocutor? Can anyone be deluded when they seek to prejudge the outcome of the conflict through a solution which they themselves have chosen as being more ideally suited to their unchanging objectives of expansion and creeping annexation?

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

The recent intidadah has been both an effective and a symbolic witness to the tragedy inflicted daily on the Palestinian people.

The Palestinian people seeks to be a fully recognized party in the quest for a solution to this intolerable injustice. The Security Council, as its activities in recent months show, is at the centre of the international community's efforts to secure a just and definitive settlement wherever conflicts persist. No one realizes better than its members, in particular its permanent members, how decisive the Council's weight can be in promoting a definitive settlement of the Middle East conflict, one fully consonant with the just national aspirations of the Palestinian people. It is therefore its duty to take urgent decisions capable of guaranteeing the safety and security of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories, decisions that would not only be necessary but also transitory since they would have to be accompanied by the establishment of a framework recognized as being most appropriate, that is, an effective international conference under United Nations auspices to guarantee the full restoration to the Palestinian people of their national rights.

That is what today is expected of the Council. We hope that it will affirm its full determination in order to achieve this goal.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Algeria for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. PEJIC (Yugoslavia): Sir, I am greatly pleased to extend to you, the representative of the non-aligned Kingdom of Nepal, a country with which Yugoslavia is linked with bonds of traditional friendship and co-operation, my cordial congratulations on your assumption of the responsible duties of President of the Security Council for the month of February, which, much like the previous month, has seen intensive and very important activities concerning some issues of vital importance for international peace and security. Your vast diplomatic experience

(Mr. Pejic, Yugoslavia)

and political wisdom are guarantees that you will discharge your task very successfully.

My appreciation goes also to the representative of friendly and non-aligned Malaysia, Mr. Ismail Razali, for his extremely effective conduct of the Security Council deliberations during the busy month of January.

The general improvement of the situation in the world, the trend towards dialogue and negotiations between super-Powers, and other international factors, as well as the efforts made within the United Nations and the Security Council to launch a process of political solution of hotbeds of crisis that have plagued international relations for years, have thus far found no adequate reflection in the Middle East crisis and a solution of the Palestinian problem that is at its core.

The continued deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories as a consequence of the intransigent policy of Israel and its persistent attempts to put down the intifadah - the uprising of the Palestinian people against foreign occupation and domination that has now lasted for more than one year - with the use of the most brutal measures has been the focus of the world's attention, as well as the principal cause for concern and anxiety of the broadest segments of the international public. Because of the potentially great danger for global peace and security, this question deserves to be not only the subject of continuous consideration in the Security Council but also its main preoccupation until a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Middle East crisis and the Palestinian problem is achieved. The example of Namibia is telling proof that there is no problem, irrespective of its complexity, that cannot be solved within the United Nations if there exists the will of all interested parties and the readiness of influential outside factors to make their constructive contribution.

(Mr. Pejic, Yugoslavia)

The courageous resistance of the Palestinian people to foreign domination and their readiness to persevere in their legitimate demands for the realization of their inalienable rights to self-determination and independence regardless of the price have shown the untenability of the situation created by the Israeli occupation that had lasted many years. It is obvious that even the most brutal measures and actions by the Israeli occupation authorities, which have so far, claimed the lives of hundreds of Palestinians, cannot break the will and resolve of the Palestinian people to persist in their justified struggle for freedom and dignity. The international public has already passed judgement on these inhuman practices and policies. This was also recently confirmed by the State Department's report on the massive violations of human rights in the occupied territories.

Yugoslavia has been pointing out for years that the situation existing in the occupied territories cannot be solved through a policy of *fait accompli* and by *diktat*, repression or military means. A solution must be sought through political means, with full respect for the genuine interests and rights of all countries in the region, primarily through the realization of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and a State of its own. This is more evident today than ever before.

In the assessment of Yugoslavia, the overall international circumstances and conditions for opening the process to a peaceful solution of the Middle East crisis and the Palestinian problem have for a long time not been as favourable as they are today. There have been removed some important psychological and political obstacles that hampered past attempts to open up prospects for a political solution of this exceptionally difficult and dangerous problem. This is particularly true of the historic decision taken by the Palestine National Council at its meeting in Algiers last November that met with the broadest possible recognition and support

(Mr. Pejic, Yugoslavia)

of the international public. Of great importance also are the statement made in Geneva by the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Mr. Yasser Arafat; the resolutions on the question of Palestine adopted at the forty-third session of the General Assembly; and the establishment of a dialogue between the United States and the PLO.

(Mr. Pejic, Yugoslavia)

Urgent action by the Security Council is no doubt called for by the explosive situation in the occupied territories, which is worsening with every passing day. The hundreds of Palestinians killed, the thousands detained and the tens of thousands wounded and the innumerable Palestinian homes destroyed are grievous testimony to the suffering of the Palestinian people and of a senseless policy which makes a solution to this most serious international crisis ever more difficult to achieve. Such a policy could hardly be expected from a country whose own people was exposed to unheard of persecution and suffering in a not so distant past. In order to protect the innocent Palestinian population from the ever more brutal measures of the Israeli occupation authorities, it is necessary to ensure urgent implementation of Security Council resolution 605 (1987), requesting Israel to respect and implement in the occupied territories the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

At the same time it is necessary that the international community address itself to finding ways to initiate the process for a just and lasting solution to the Middle East crisis and the Palestinian problem on the basis of full and consistent respect for the authentic aspirations of the Palestinian people. It is also necessary at this time to point out again at this time that Israel's continued refusal and lack of readiness to commit itself to the process of seeking a political solution to the Palestinian problem and its continuation of its policy of repression are very detrimental to Israel itself and to its position in the world. In this context it is of particular concern that some most influential factions in Israel continue to ignore the reality. In saying this we are motivated by a genuine desire to see Israel and its citizens live in real peace and stability after so many years of unrest.

(Mr. Pejic, Yugoslavia)

Yugoslavia expects the Security Council to be able to be able to take a resolute position on this occasion regarding the continued deterioration of the situation in the occupied territories. At the same time we believe that it should mark the beginning of more active involvement by the Security Council in finding the most appropriate basis for initiating the process of finding a political solution to the Middle East crisis and the Palestinian problem, which is at its core. In our opinion, which is shared by almost all United Nations Members, this implies Israel's withdrawal from all the Arab and Palestinian territories occupied since June 1967, realization of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to self-determination and to its own homeland, and respect for the right of all the countries of the region, including Israel, to peace, security and existence within internationally recognized borders.

The General Assembly session on the question of Palestine re-confirmed the conviction that the most realistic and only acceptable way to solve the Middle East crisis and the Palestinian problem is the early convening of the International Conference, with the participation of all directly interested parties, including the PLO, on an equal footing, an approach staunchly supported by the Palestinian people in the occupied territories.

To this end, Yugoslavia renders its full support to all constructive efforts that would lead to the commencement of serious and substantial consultations aimed at finding the broadest possible basis for achieving a breakthrough in the peace process. We fully support the efforts of the Secretary-General along these lines.

We consider that this is the right time to try to direct the course of events in the Middle East by joint efforts in the direction of stable and lasting peace. We have no illusion that it is going to be easy and simple to achieve. At this

(Mr. Pejic, Yugoslavia)

important juncture, however, this is our joint historic obligation and, I would say, a moral debt to the legitimate and inalienable aspirations and rights of the Palestinian people, as well as to the interests of peace and stability in that area, of exceptional importance for international relations. We therefore earnestly hope that this debate will serve as an important encouragement and contribution to stepping up the efforts to bring about a solution to the Palestinian problem. Otherwise, further delays will be fraught with ever greater danger for international peace and security. We should all strive to prevent that by joint action and endeavour.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Yugoslavia for his kind words addressed to me and my country.

The next speaker is the representative of Turkey. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. AKSIN (Turkey): Mr. President, at the outset I want to thank you and the other members of the Security Council for the opportunity to address the Council on the subject under discussion. On this occasion, I wish to extend to you my warm congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of February. We are pleased to see as President of the Security Council the representative of Nepal, with which Turkey has excellent relations. We are confident that the Security Council will benefit from your diplomatic skills and experience in dealing with sensitive international questions.

I wish equally to pay tribute to Ambassador Razali for having led the Council in January with great ability and dedication.

Turkey has a direct and natural interest in the Middle East and in the fate of the people of that vital region adjacent to our borders. We value this opportunity to set out before the Council our views on the deeply distressing developments in

(Mr. Aksin, Turkey)

the occupied Palestinian territories that have forcefully reminded the world, once again, of a major political problem that cries out for a just and lasting settlement: the question of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

In the course of the debates in the General Assembly a few months ago, my delegation expressed its views on the situation in the Middle East and the question of Palestine. Without repeating our views at length, I should like to recall that the Middle East conflict has been on our agenda since the inception of the United Nations. During the past four decades, we have been witnesses to recurring warfare and endless human suffering in this region. The lack of a political settlement has been at the core of all the troubles.

For over 20 years Arab territories have been under Israeli occupation. Can it be a surprise that, finally, the Palestinians should rise up in protest against this Israeli occupation? The current uprising of the Palestinian population is neither artificially induced nor a temporary phenomenon. It is the reflection of the prolonged frustrations and repeated disappointments experienced by the Palestinians over the years. The uprising is the natural result of an oppression which has been allowed to go on for much too long.

My Government has been following with deep concern and apprehension the grave developments in the occupied Palestinian territories. Since December 1987 there has been tragic loss of life and much human suffering. The figures provided by the representative of Palestine to the Council in his statement last Friday are most disturbing. My Government has publicly denounced the arbitrary Israeli measures and practices that seriously violate the human rights of the Palestinian people living in the occupied territories, and has called on Israel to desist from all acts of violence against the civilian population. Most recently, on 18 January of

(Mr. Aksin, Turkey)

this year, my Government expressed, once again, its deep concern at the multiplication of incidents which led to the killing and wounding of ever more innocent people as a consequence of new Israeli measures.

As stressed in Security Council resolution 605 (1987) adopted in December 1987, and also in the statement of the President of the Council issued on 26 August of last year, the policies and practices of Israel, and in particular the killing and wounding of unarmed Palestinian civilians, are bound to have negative consequences for the efforts to achieve a lasting peace in the Middle East.

(Mr. Aksin, Turkey)

The deportation of Palestinian civilians from the territories occupied by Israel, which was also the subject of Security Council resolutions 607 (1988) and 608 (1988), adopted early last year, and the shocking practices of destroying homes and beating Palestinian civilians, the curfews imposed in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the desecration of holy places and various punitive economic and social measures mentioned in United Nations documents cannot be tolerated under any pretext. These are arbitrary measures of desperation, and they constitute a violation of the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. Such measures have led to further escalation of tension in the occupied territories. The uprising that has been taking place in those territories has a much wider scope than before and has the nature of a popular revolt against Israeli occupation. It is evident that the resistance to the occupation is widespread and deeply rooted. The ongoing struggle proves that the Palestinians will no longer accept either their second-class status or the Israeli occupation.

To redress the situation in those territories the Israeli Government must be induced to respect the Fourth Geneva Convention. We share the view that Israel has an obligation to fulfil its commitments under that Convention.

We cannot overlook the close link between the current sufferings of the Palestinians and the need to find a political settlement of the Middle East problem. The political nature of the current troubles in the region is rightly stressed in the Secretary-General's reports submitted to the Security Council and the General Assembly. We share the view that the intifadah is a direct result of the stalemate in the search for a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The lack of a proper negotiating process has been one of the major impediments to addressing the substantive questions in a meaningful manner. The current uprising has highlighted once again the urgent need for an effective negotiating

(Mr. Aksin, Turkey)

process. In that connection the proclamation of an independent Palestinian state by the Palestine National Council last autumn constituted a historic milestone for progress towards peace. The moderate tone of the Declaration adopted by the Council and the constructive statement made by Mr. Arafat during the General Assembly debate at Geneva were most encouraging. It is our earnest hope that the moderate and realistic posture adopted by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) will be assessed positively by all the interested parties and that Israel will respond in the same spirit so that the peace process can finally get under way.

A durable political settlement in the Middle East can only emerge from comprehensive negotiations conducted in good faith between all the parties concerned. Such negotiations will have to address and satisfy the legitimate concerns and expectations of all the interested parties and above all of the Palestinian Arab people, whose right to self-determination cannot be disputed. To that end, Turkey is ready to support all peace efforts. Within that framework my Government would welcome the convening of an international peace conference with the agreement of all parties concerned. We hope that the current debate in the Security Council will provide a new impetus to the international community's peace efforts in the Middle East.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Turkey for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Democratic Yemen. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. AL-ALFI (Democratic Yemen) (interpretation from Arabic): Allow me to express my delegation's pleasure at seeing you, Sir, presiding over the Security Council for this month. We are sure that your great ability and broad experience will contribute to the success of the Council's work and help it to achieve

(Mr. Al-Alfi, Democratic Yemen)

positive results that serve the just causes of struggling peoples, among which the cause of the Palestinian Arab people. The confidence we place in you was also placed in your predecessor, His Excellency Ambassador Ismail Razali, Permanent Representative of Malaysia, to whom we express great appreciation for the dedicated and excellent manner in which he conducted the Council's business last month.

All the speakers we have heard since the opening of the current debate in the Council have concluded that the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories is extremely serious and that it is deteriorating further with the continuation and escalation by Israel, the occupying Power, of its oppressive practices and policies against unarmed Palestinian people. Anyone who has followed the Council's discussions is aware of the fact that the Security Council has not met for some time - indeed, nearly a year - to discuss this matter. This reflects a failure on the part of the Council to discharge its duties and responsibilities under the United Nations Charter, thereby putting into question its ability to halt the Israeli occupation and aggression, and hence its ability to maintain international peace and security.

We shall not here repeat examples of the various brutal forms of oppression being practised by the Israeli occupying authorities against the Palestinian people. Those matters were dealt with by the representative of Palestine at the beginning of this debate, as well as by the Chairman of the Group of Arab States in his statement on behalf of that Group. We should like, however, to reaffirm the following points.

First, the Palestinian popular intifadah is here to stay until it has fully achieved its objectives. It is the natural result of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories. Israel and its forces may devise as many advanced and

(Mr. Al-Alfi, Democratic Yemen)

modern methods as they wish to quell the intifadah, but they will not succeed. The Palestinian people are waging a heroic struggle against the Israeli occupation forces, which are armed to the teeth with sophisticated weaponry. The martyrdom of almost 500 Palestinians, the majority of whom are young people and children, as well as the injury, detention and deportation of tens of thousands of Palestinians and the demolition of their homes - all are the result of Israel's continued occupation and the Palestinians' determined resistance of it. That fact, while underlining the gravity of the situation, also presents the Council with a very important questions: How long will the Council remain unable to discharge its responsibilities? How many more Palestinian victims must fall before the Palestinian people can impress upon the Council the need to take decisive measures to stop the bloodshed being perpetrated by the Israeli occupying forces?

(Mr. Al-Alfi, Democratic Yemen)

Secondly, the intifadah once and for all belies the false picture long painted by Israel and its allies to whitewash the occupation and to portray the Palestinian people as having accepted it. Logic and historical inevitability prove that the will of peoples is indomitable and that no people can be subjugated forever.

Thirdly, it is interesting that an isolated incident of three years ago continues to fuel the Zionist propaganda machine, which exploits it to win the heart of United States public opinion, while the martyrdom of 500 Palestinians since the beginning of the intifadah and the criminal acts perpetrated daily by the Israeli occupation forces - which have been fully covered by the international mass media, and which include burying and burning people alive, miscarriages and the breaking of bones - seem to have become familiar everyday occurrences that we are supposed to accept. Indeed, in some quarters hasty efforts are made to justify or conceal these things. That simple comparison shows clearly that what the Palestinian people need first and foremost is to be treated like the rest of humanity.

Fourthly, Israel's record since its inception is replete with violations of Palestinian human rights. The international community knows this full well, and it has been reaffirmed by General Assembly resolutions. We hope that the recent acknowledgement of this by the United States will lead to the end of that country's opposition to the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories. Israel's record is replete also with violations of international treaties and resolutions, foremost among them the various Security Council resolutions pertaining to the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories. While the Council has declared illegal the annexation of Jerusalem and the deportation of Palestinian civilians, we wonder what it has done to deter those who perpetrate such illegal acts.

(Mr. Al-Alfi, Democratic Yemen)

Fifthly, any delay in dealing with the situation correctly, in such a way as to put an end to the occupation and expedite the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable national rights, foremost among them the right to self-determination and sovereignty in an independent Palestinian State, will make the Palestinian people despair of the ability and credibility of the Security Council with respect to achieving a just solution of the question of Palestine and a political settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East.

One of the first steps towards restoring the Palestinian people's confidence in the Council would be the adoption of serious measures for the urgent convening of an international conference on peace in the Middle East under United Nations auspices and with the participation of all parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Any attempt to ignore or circumvent this will result in failure to achieve the desired objective: the establishment of just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

We hope the present Security Council debate will result in urgent positive measures to put an end to the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories and restore the Palestinian people's confidence in the Council's ability to support its just cause and its right of self-determination and sovereignty in its own independent State.

If the result of this debate is the same as in the past, the Palestinian people's just struggle to achieve its inalienable national rights will of course continue. There is no doubt that if the current grave situation continues without the aggressors and occupiers being deterred and without their policies and practices being halted, the situation in the entire region will be explosive and we shall miss the chance for peace, which has seemed closer, especially since the historic positive decisions taken at Algiers by the Palestine National Council.

(Mr. Al-Alfi, Democratic Yemen)

We believe that the adopt of serious measures by the Security Council could have a profound effect on the course of events. Those measures should be commensurate with the Council's responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security in the Middle East. The way to achieve this is to deal with the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict - the question of Palestine - and to adopt the measures necessary for a just solution.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Democratic Yemen for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Qatar. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. AL-NASSER (Qatar) (interpretation from Arabic): I wish at the outset to extend to you, Sir, my delegation's sincere congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We are confident that your vast experience, diplomatic skill and tact will make a great contribution to the smooth functioning of the Council and to its discharge of its responsibilities under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security.

I wish also to congratulate Ambassador Ismail Razali, Permanent Representative of Malaysia, for the outstanding effectiveness with which he served as President last month.

Once again, the Council is considering the tragedy of the occupied Arab territories in Palestine and considering what action the international community can take to bring that tragedy to an end. The news reported daily in the mass media recounts the heroism of a people determined to regain its rights, sovereignty and independence regardless of the price it must pay in the blood of its martyred sons and in being subjected every hour of every day to the brutality of the Israeli forces of occupation.

(Mr. Al-Nasser, Qatar)

The intifadah has now lasted more than a year. In that time hundreds of victims have been shot dead by Israeli soldiers; thousands have been gravely wounded; thousands more have been placed in concentration camps. The Israeli forces have indiscriminately killed men, women and children; they have evacuated innocent people from their houses and have blown those houses up without cause; they have perpetrated acts of aggression and terrorism against the population with impunity.

Israeli officials have even made statements reaffirming their policy of repressing and oppressing the population and insolently declaring their resolve to put an end to the intifadah by force and violence, heedless of the blatant violations of human rights and international law those acts entail. The Israeli leaders thought the Palestinian people's intifadah was a transient phenomenon that would be extinguished with the passage of time or through military pressure. But they forgot that the Palestinian people rejects humiliation, usurpation and the denial of its rights, just as it rejects treatment as anything but a noble people.

Do the Israelis really think that through repression, incarceration and expulsion and by meeting the stones of demonstrators with bullets - whether plastic, rubber or any other kind - they can weaken the roots of the intifadah or the resolve of those who are rising up against oppression to continue their resistance until they attain sovereignty?

(Mr. Al-Nasser, Qatar)

Israel, which refuses to understand the reality of its brutal acts, finds itself sinking ever deeper into international isolation. Its acts cannot be justified or accepted by the international community - even by those allies that usually provide it with excuses, assistance and aid.

Statements that have been made by the Governments of most of the countries of the world supporting the rights of the Palestinian people and denouncing the policy of oppression, force and violence pursued by the Israeli occupation authorities are a clear condemnation of the behaviour of those authorities and their wilful violation of the human rights of the Palestinian people.

In the part relevant to Israel, the report issued recently by the United States Department of State about human rights practices in 1988 all over the world strengthens the international position of denunciation of the acts of aggression and violence in the occupied Palestinian territories. The report contains a description of the situation in those territories, in which reference is made to incidents of gunfire, beatings, arrests and deportations. I shall not dwell on the contents of the report. It includes details that show that the United States Government considers that the use of violence and force in the occupied territories is excessive. I would only draw attention to a statement in the report that the soldiers of the occupation authorities have resorted to gunfire in situations in which they were not in danger, causing avoidable killings and injuries. The report states also that Israel has resorted to deportations, thereby contravening the Geneva Convention and that the authorities have given lenient punishments on the soldiers and settlers who have engaged in torture and oppression against Palestinians.

That international position denouncing the policy of oppression and violence pursued by Israel in the occupied territories supports and affirms numerous

(Mr. Al-Nasser, Qatar)

resolutions adopted by the Security Council and its statements regarding the situation. Israel has rejected those resolutions and statements and persists in violating their provisions as well as the provisions of international law and international conventions.

The festering crisis in the occupied Arab territories and Israel's insistence on pursuing a policy of oppression, as well as its declaration of its intention to put down the Palestinian resistance by sword and by fire, makes it incumbent on us to consider this situation promptly and provide the protection to the Palestinian people that is envisaged in the United Nations Charter and in international law and international conventions.

We have referred before to the statistics regarding the toll of victims taken by the Israeli policy of aggression among the Palestinian people who are continuing their resistance and their practice of steadfastness. There have been hundreds of martyrs, thousands of wounded and detainees, scores of deportations, hundreds of miscarriages by pregnant women attested to by doctors and hospitals, breaking of bones, and incidents of people being buried alive. In addition, the demolition of houses and the uprooting of trees by the very ones who have claimed to be cultivating the desert are among the crimes that are strengthening the will and determination of the Palestinian people to achieve their ultimate objective: freedom and independence.

And all that is taking place in the midst of much talk about plans for settling the Middle East problem and the initiation of dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) on ideas that could lead to a final, peaceful solution to that problem. The international community has laid the groundwork for such prospects by agreeing to the idea of the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East, with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the PLO.

(Mr. Al-Nasser, Qatar)

In the context of preparations for peace and the achievement of a permanent solution to the Palestine problem and the Arab-Israeli conflict, which has been going on for more than four decades now, the international community has the duty of making its contribution to these preparations by taking measures to put an end to the Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people and to protect them, on their land, from oppression and persecution, so that they will be able to exercise their rights, like other free peoples.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Qatar for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Afghanistan. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. DOST (Afghanistan): Allow me, at the outset, to join previous speakers, Sir, in sincerely congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of February. We have every confidence that you will provide exemplary guidance for the activities of the Council during this month. May I also express our appreciation to your predecessor for the very capable manner in which he presided over the work of the Council in January.

The Security Council is deliberating on an issue of utmost importance to international peace and security. The situation in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories has been characterized by the repression and brutality perpetrated by Israeli occupation forces for a very long time now. This situation must not be left unchecked. The Security Council is expected, in line with its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, to adopt immediate and effective measures to put an end to the suffering of Palestinian people living under Israeli occupation. We welcome this discussion by the Security

(Mr. Dost, Afghanistan)

Council and hope that its outcome will be nothing less than a decisive step towards the liberation of occupied Palestinian lands and the restoration of the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to determine the destiny of their nation by their own will and in their own independent State in Palestine.

The recent unjustified escalation of Israeli atrocities against defenceless Palestinian people in occupied Palestine - including murder, merciless beating, illegal detention, forceful expulsion, demolition of family homes and brain damage to children by the use of so-called plastic bullets - is a profoundly inhuman act, to which the international community cannot, and must not, remain indifferent. It is exactly this legitimate concern of the international community that the Security Council is called upon to alleviate by adopting timely and effective measures towards the full independence of Palestine, including Jerusalem. The elimination of Israeli occupation, the root cause of the suffering of Palestinian people under the Zionist yoke, is the only solution that will ensure the full restoration of the long-denied rights of these people. Meanwhile, the Palestinians and other Arab peoples in occupied areas have every right to expect from this world body, and particularly from the Security Council, the immediate protection of their human rights, which has been denied them by Israel's flagrant violation of international law. The brutality with which the occupying Power has met the intifadah in Palestine, resulting so far in the martyrdom of 490 innocent Palestinians and injury to another 50,000, demonstrates the urgency of such protection.

(Mr. Dost, Afghanistan)

The intifadah, in its second year and marching ahead with added vigour and determination, is indicative of the fact that the heroic Palestinian people are bent on fighting the aggressor and occupying Power with stones, paying a high price to achieve their ultimate goal - the full independence of their territory.

The intifadah has earned the great admiration of all peace loving countries and people around the world. Public awareness of the Palestinian struggle is on the rise. All these factors and the peace initiatives by Palestine have helped influence some countries to reconsider their policies vis-à-vis Palestine.

The means for achieving a lasting and just solution for the Middle East problem and the question of Palestine at its core have been known for quite some time. The need for the convening of an international peace conference for the Middle East with the participation of all sides concerned, including, of course, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), on an equal footing, has met with the consensus of the international community. Steps towards the preparation for the convening of that conference should be hastened. The historic decisions of the Palestine National Council on 15 November 1988 in Algiers embodied in the Declaration of Independence of the State of Palestine and the political statement which provides for the acceptance of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), have provided the fertile ground for the success of such an international conference. What remains to be done is to grasp this unique opportunity to establish peace in the Middle East by taking concrete steps towards the timely convening of that conference and for the Security Council to adopt measures to compel the Israeli rulers to comply.

In conclusion I wish to reiterate the full solidarity and support of the people and Government of the Republic of Afghanistan for the State of Palestine and the PLO. We believe in the justness of their struggle and are confident that the

(Mr. Dost, Afghanistan)

Security Council will not find it difficult to support their legitimate cause to the fullest extent possible.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Afghanistan for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Indonesia. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. TARMIDZI (Indonesia): Mr. President, on behalf of my delegation I should like at the outset to express our appreciation to you and the other members of the Security Council for granting me the opportunity to participate in these crucial deliberations on the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory. I wish also to extend to you, Sir, our congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of February. We are confident that the diplomatic skills and wisdom that you bring to this high office will enable the discharge of your weighty responsibilities.

Before proceeding, I should like to avail myself of this opportunity to express our appreciation to Ambassador Ismail Razali, Permanent Representative of Malaysia, who exhibited during his tenure at the helm of the Council last month the same erudition and diplomatic acumen for which he is well known among his colleagues of the Association of South East Asian Nations.

The Security Council has been convened in order for the Council to take up the extremely dangerous situation in the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem.

Indonesia's participation in this debate is prompted by its profound concern over the escalation of the already intolerable repressive measures against the Palestinian people in the occupied territory. In recent weeks we have witnessed an upsurge of wanton brutality and violence, unprecedented since the outbreak of the

(Mr. Tarmidzi, Indonesia)

intifadah, the sustained popular uprising of the Palestinians, which now has entered its fourteenth month. In fact, during the past two months alone 55 Palestinians have been killed and at least 500 wounded. Moreover, to these stark statistics must be added those reflecting the death and devastation of the previous 12 months, including nearly 500 martyrs, 50,000 wounded and over 25,000 imprisoned, as well as scores deported and more than 550 homes destroyed.

In these circumstances, this body must no longer tolerate the daily atrocities being wilfully perpetrated against innocent and defenseless people who are valiantly asserting their legitimate aspirations and inalienable rights.

However, in focusing our attention on the policies and practices of the occupying Power, as heinous as they truly are, we should not be distracted from the historical injustices inflicted on the Palestinians and the recent momentous decisions in the interest of peace taken by the Palestinians themselves through the Palestine National Council (PNC) at Algiers last November.

The proclamation of the Palestinian State and the affirmation by the PNC of the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations as well as the acceptance of all relevant United Nations resolutions on the question of Palestine are a clear demonstration of the Palestinians' commitment to achieving a lasting and durable peace. Indeed, the historic decisions taken at the PNC meeting and the message of peace brought by the Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Yasser Arafat, to the December meeting of the General Assembly in Geneva have elicited universal acclaim by the international community.

In this regard, as one of the first to recognize the independent Palestinian State, Indonesia is deeply gratified that nearly 100 other Member States have also accorded recognition. As a consequence of its decision, I should like to inform members that the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia recently met with the

(Mr. Tarmidzi, Indonesia)

Permanent Representative of the Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations and held discussions about finalizing the preparations for the impending opening of the Palestine Embassy in Jakarta.

The developments as they have continued to unfold over the course of the past year, on the ground in the Palestinian territory and on the diplomatic front, confirm that there can be no return to the status quo of the previous two decades.

Likewise, the positive response from Israel's traditional friends to the Palestinians' peace initiative, including the initiation of talks between the United States and the PLO, further reflect a new momentum for the commencement of genuine negotiations leading to a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Middle East conflict.

In these circumstances it is imperative that the Security Council adopt the necessary decisions to bring an immediate end to the carnage in the Palestinian territory and to ensure the protection of the Palestinian people. It is also self-evident, however, that such actions can only be palliative and cannot by themselves bring justice to the Palestinians and peace to the strife-torn region.

(Mr. Tarmidzi, Indonesia)

Therefore, bold and imaginative initiatives are called for in order to break out of the deadlock on the convening of the international peace conference on the Middle East, as endorsed by General Assembly resolution 38/58 C. In this, it is essential that the Security Council demonstrate the political will to defuse the explosive situation and to move decisively forward in achieving the essential elements for a durable settlement - Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, the effective exercise by the Palestinian people of its sovereignty in the newly proclaimed Palestinian State and the right of all States in the region to existence within secure and internationally recognized boundaries.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Indonesia for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of the German Democratic Republic. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. ZACHMANN (German Democratic Republic): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of February and to wish you success in the discharge of your responsible duties. At the same time, I should like to express my delegation's appreciation to the representative of Malaysia, Ambassador Razali, for the efficient way in which he presided over the Council's work during the month of January.

My delegation also wishes to formulate its thanks for having been granted the opportunity to explain the position of the German Democratic Republic regarding the situation in the territories occupied by Israel, which the Security Council cannot but consider once again. It is with deep concern that the world public follows the escalation of oppressive practices against the Palestinian people and thus the further aggravation of tensions in the entire region. The German Democratic

(Mr. Zachmann, German
Democratic Republic)

Republic agrees with all those who bear political responsibility and who demand that an end be put immediately to the violent measures that have led to the killing of hundreds of Palestinians, women and children among them, and the wounding of thousands. What matters now is finally to implement the pertinent United Nations resolutions that are supported by the overwhelming majority of the Member States and that call upon Israel to cease its policy of occupation and oppression, which disregards the most elementary norms of international law and by which it further prolongs the immeasurable sufferings of the Palestinian people.

More than ever before, the situation requires negotiations among equals on the basis of the United Nations resolutions, a result-oriented dialogue and joint efforts by all States and peoples of the region to provide for a secure future. Those who are not willing to follow this logic must ask themselves whether they are really interested in peace - a peace which the Palestinian people, the Arab countries and Israel not least need so badly.

The German Democratic Republic will support all steps that would help implement the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and of the State of Palestine and would allow the Israeli people to live in peace and within secure boundaries. For that to come true, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) has submitted to Israel realistic proposals which aim at initiating a process of political settlement. And the decisions taken by the 19th Palestine National Congress at Algiers, like the statement made by Mr. Yasser Arafat before the forty-third session of the General Assembly meeting in Geneva, testify equally to its absolute will to achieve a political settlement of the Middle East conflict. As a result of its flexible and constructive attitude, the PLO has been gaining further political weight. That is also testified to by the fact that a dialogue has been initiated between the most diverse political forces and the sole

(Mr. Zachmann, German
Democratic Republic)

legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. It is important now that Israel, too, display an unconditional readiness for a just and lasting peace and that it be prepared to accept the PLO at the negotiating table.

The principles for settlement of the Middle East conflict are already laid down in the numerous resolutions the General Assembly adopted on the matter. That goes for the demand for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the immediate and unconditional Israeli withdrawal from all territories occupied since 1967 and the guaranteeing of the right of all States of the region to independence and secure boundaries.

During the course of the forty-third General Assembly session, a host of speakers have already pointed to the positive changes that have occurred in the world and in international relations and that give us encouragement to continue on the road of disarmament, détente and negotiation in spite of complex problems and profound differences. The German Democratic Republic, too, believes that the existing favourable conditions, particularly with regard to regional conflicts, should be used to resolve them - given political realism on the part of all involved - in a lasting and just way.

The Middle East conflict's long history has known a number of endeavours and proposals to end it. And it has become evident that all those plans aiming at bringing about separate solutions to individual problems were doomed to failure. It is, therefore, all the more understandable that the idea of convening an international Middle East peace conference is supported by almost all States. There is also far-reaching agreement in that the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and all interested parties, including the PLO as the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, should participate in such a conference on an equal footing. In order for such a conference to be

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successful, the interests of all parties involved in a political settlement would have to be duly taken into account.

In the face of continuing and even escalating acts of violence against the Palestinian population, a speedy beginning of the Middle East peace conference is urgently required. The most effective way to achieve that would be a decision by the Security Council allowing for at least preparatory steps. When adopting resolution 598 (1987) on the settlement of the conflict between Iran and Iraq and resolutions 628 (1988) and 629 (1988) on Namibia, the Security Council proved capable of acting consistently and unanimously. Where the solution of the problems in the Middle East is concerned, a similar commitment could give fresh impetus to a speedy settlement of that conflict, too, and could visibly increase the authority of the Security Council and the United Nations as a whole. We hold it necessary for the Secretary-General to continue his efforts for convening the conference.

(Mr. Zachmann, German
Democratic Republic)

The uprising of the Palestinian people, which has been going on for more than one year now, has clearly and tragically shown that the Palestinian people can no longer be refused the implementation of its inalienable rights. From this rostrum my delegation reaffirms its unqualified solidarity with the heroic struggle that the Palestinian people is waging to end the Israeli occupation and to establish an independent State. The United Nations may also rest assured that the German Democratic Republic will go on doing whatever it can when it comes to making a contribution towards progress on the road to a political resolution of the Middle East conflict.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the German Democratic Republic for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Bangladesh. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. MOHIUDDIN (Bangladesh): Mr. President, it is a matter of pride and pleasure for my delegation to see you presiding over the Security Council not only because of your prodigious abilities and personal qualities, but also because my people hold your country, Nepal, close to their hearts. I would at the same time compliment your predecessor, Mr. Ismail Razali of Malaysia, on the remarkable leadership he imparted to the Council in the preceding month. He was able to vindicate the trust that his friends and admirers had reposed in him.

It is a matter of utter and profound sadness not just for me but for all who are gathered here, and even for others beyond these halls, to see the international community so inert and helpless before the obduracy of Israel, which has chosen to turn a deaf ear to the voice of reason and sanity. As we gather here to take stock of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, my delegation joins previous speakers in the expression of concern and indignation over the continued

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worsening of the situation in the area. If the anguish of the people of Palestine is a great tragedy, our tolerance of Israeli atrocities is a mortal sin.

The sufferings of the people of Palestine has been excruciating. Shooting of innocent men, women and children, razing their hearths and homes, depriving them of food and water, and robbing them not only of their rights but also of their human dignity are affronts to humanity.

The litany of Israeli atrocities perpetrated in the occupied territory is inordinately long. Suffice it to refer to various reports confirming that the human rights situation in the occupied territories has worsened tremendously since the beginning of the uprising. The recent publication of the United Nations Division for Palestinian Rights, entitled "Developments affecting Palestinian rights", reported that more than 400 Palestinians have been killed and nearly 50,000 wounded during the first year of the intifadah.

The United States State Department's recent report on human rights has also mentioned "a substantial increase in human rights violations" in the occupied territories by the Israeli authorities. It has also reported on "widespread beatings of unarmed Palestinians who are in the uprising and also of persons not involved". The United States had also viewed deportation of Palestinians as a contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Despite the brutality of the repression, the unique resistance, intifadah, continues in the occupied Palestinian territories. It is our belief that neither force, nor repression nor any measures of brutality can ever extinguish the flames of the uprising.

But what must this Council do? Can it afford inertia any longer? Clearly, time is of the essence. Every day the tragedy continues to widen. This Council

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must intensify action to ensure Israeli compliance with the Geneva Convention of 1949. If it does not heed the Council's formal resolutions, it is the bounden duty of all members, collectively and severally, to try to persuade the Israeli authorities to behave humanely.

And then we must tackle the problem at its root. The problem of Palestine is not intractable. The essential elements for a just, equitable and lasting solution have already been identified. The first step would be the convening of the International Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C.

That sufficient agreement has emerged in the Security Council, where all members believe in the desirability of an international conference on the Middle East, has heightened our expectations. Regrettably, however, differences on procedural matters remain unresolved. In this context we agree with the Secretary-General's observation in his report (S/20294) that in the prevailing circumstances it is insufficient to concentrate solely on procedural matters rather than to address fundamental questions. We believe that the loss of lives and the untold sufferings of the Palestinian people make it imperative more than ever before for the Security Council to act now with a sense of urgency to ensure withdrawal of Israel from the occupied territories. We also call upon the members of the Security Council, in particular its permanent members, to take necessary measures in translating into reality the letter and spirit of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

It is time for words to be matched by deeds. In this regard we reaffirm our support to the setting up of a preparatory committee within the framework of the Security Council to undertake measures with a view to an early convening of the international conference.

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Bangladesh believes that the path to the solution of the crisis lies through such a conference. But then in such a meeting the Palestinians must be represented by their sole, legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), or else all such efforts would come to naught.

In this context we welcome the resumption of dialogue between the United States and the Palestine Liberation Organization. It has opened up new vistas for a negotiated peace in the Middle East. This must be readily seized.

I would be remiss here if I did not mention the fresh prospects for peace that have been created by the historic proclamation of the independent Palestinian State in November last year. I take pride in mentioning that Bangladesh was one of the first to accord recognition to the State of Palestine. The number of countries that have recognized independent Palestine has swelled to 94.

The pursuit of a solution to the Palestine issue is the responsibility of us all. We must act and act quickly, because delay would mean further loss of life and more human suffering in the occupied territories.

I conclude in prayer for the success of our collective efforts towards finding a just, equitable and lasting solution to this problem.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Bangladesh for his kind words addressed to me and to my country.

The next speaker is the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. MAHALLATI (Islamic Republic of Iran) (interpretation from Arabic):

"Glory to Him who did take His Servant for a journey by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Mosque of Al-Aqsa, whose precincts we did bless in order that we might show Him some of our signs; for He is One Who heareth and seeth (all things)." (The Holy Koran, XVII:1)

(Mr. Mahallati, Islamic
Republic of Iran)

(continued in English)

After reciting a verse from the Holy Koran which clearly demonstrates the importance of the Mosque of Al-Aqsa and the land of Palestine for the Muslims, I would like to begin my statement by commemorating the memory of all Palestinians who were martyred by the Zionist forces of occupation which attempt in vain to suppress the glorious uprising of the Palestinians in the occupied land.

(Mr. Mahallati, Islamic
Republic of Iran)

Mr. President, it gives my delegation pleasure to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I am confident that, in view of your vast experience as the representative of the friendly country of Nepal, the Security Council will, under your able leadership, exert its utmost effort to fulfil its task. I also wish to extend my felicitations to Ambassador Ismail Razali, the Permanent Representative of Malaysia, for the skilful manner in which he conducted the work of the Council during the month of January.

The tragic occupation of Palestine, which has seriously disturbed the peace and security of the region and has led to the homelessness of Palestinian people and their present plight, constitutes the central theme of a great part of contemporary world politics, the fundamental issues being the future of millions of Palestinians, their land, their aspirations and their inalienable right to self-determination, independence and the establishment of their own Palestinian State. Since the usurpation of Palestine, Palestinians have been subjected to unspeakable violence, terror and appalling crimes.

Under such circumstances, Palestinians driven from their homeland or living under the oppression of the Zionist régime, had no choice but to rise and struggle for the restoration of their own legitimate rights. Whenever the Palestinians have intensified their struggle to free themselves of the Zionist subjugation and to liberate their homeland from the Zionist occupation, the usurper régime has resorted to the most oppressive and inhumane measures and the most sophisticated weapons systems in order to preserve the status quo and enhance its domineering expansionist policies. The reaction of the Zionist régime to the recent uprising has been no exception to this rule.

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Republic of Iran)

On 9 December 1987, the heroic uprising of Palestinians began. The uprising is the public expression of rejection of oppression and occupation - a demand for self-determination and national independence. There is nothing new about the objectives and aspirations of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories because they have longed and strived for the liberation of all Palestine for 40 years. There is, however, something quite new and extraordinary which marks the recent uprising and guarantees its success - that is the phenomenal perseverance, the unbreakable will power, the willingness to pay dearly, the strong commitment to the cause demonstrated by each and every Palestinian of the occupied territories, irrespective of their sex or age, for whom struggle, commitment and martyrdom have become the integral culture of resistance to Zionist occupation. It is the Palestinians under occupation who are leading other Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims in the world as a whole in the holy struggle against oppression and Zionism. I regret that many of us are not even loyal and consistent followers.

The Israeli savage though futile iron-fist policy to sustain occupation and subjugation has not broken the Palestinian will. It has broken thousands of Palestinian bones and heads. It has martyred 500 Palestinians, wounded 50,000 and imprisoned many other thousands. I wish that the members of the Council were able to perceive a hypothetical situation where the shoe was on the other foot. It would be interesting to see how the Council would react.

In addition to various restrictive measures intensified against the civilian population in the framework of the iron-fist policy, the Zionist usurpers have continued to take administrative and economic measures to reinforce their control over occupied territories. These measures, combined with the policy of establishing "Zionist settlements", are aimed at altering the political, religious, cultural and demographic features of Palestine. These factors have all contributed

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to the deterioration of the situation, leading to the glorious uprising of the Palestinian people. To quell the uprising of Palestinians, the Zionist base has increased the extent of its crimes against the people and resorted to further acts of brutality in recent days, which has resulted in an increasing number of casualties. Hundreds of Palestinians have been martyred by security forces and Zionist settlers.

Undoubtedly, the savagery of the régime occupying Quds against Palestinians, who fight with empty hands and resist the occupiers armed with modern weaponry, shows the Zionist régime's anxiety over the growth and further strengthening of such a deep-rooted movement and resistance; a resistance which is gaining momentum and which will continue unabated until the objective of freedom and liberation of the entire land of Palestine is achieved.

The Zionist persistence in its continued occupation of Palestine and sections of other Islamic and Arab lands, its unprecedented crimes perpetrated in the West Bank and Gaza Strip against civilians, the bombardment of Palestinian camps and the massacre of innocent Palestinian refugees - all derive from a savage and mad mentality prevalent in the Zionist hierarchy, a mentality based on heedlessness, not only to the principles of international law and resolutions of the General Assembly and Security Council but also to the basic principles of humanity and civilized behaviour. This mentality has allowed the Zionist régime to pursue its policies of occupation and expansionism despite international condemnation.

In order to prevent the Israeli atrocities, the Security Council adopted resolutions 605 (1987), 607 (1988) and 608 (1988) and condemned the Israeli practices, calling upon the Zionist régime strictly to observe the Fourth Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. The Security Council also called for a just and comprehensive settlement of the

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Republic of Iran)

Arab-Israeli conflict. What was the reaction of the authorities of the Zionist régime to these calls for sanity? Nothing but continued heedlessness and contempt.

As long as Palestine is occupied, tension and bloodshed will continue. The only possible solution is through the realization of the rights of Palestinians to self-determination and the establishment of their own independent State in all of their territory. This must, without hesitation, be the major concern of the international community.

Palestine is an Islamic territory, an Islamic heritage, and it remains an Islamic point of identity. The land of Palestine is the platform of the ascension of the Prophet Mohammad; its significance is that it contains the first Kiblah direction - towards which Muslims prayed. Its occupation by Zionist usurpers is a transgression against all Muslims of the world and its liberation is therefore a great religious obligation and commitment.

. The people and Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, together with hundreds of millions of Muslims of the world, while condemning strongly the occupation of Palestine and policies and practices that have contributed to that illegal occupation, support the holy struggle of Palestinians and will extend all assistance to ensure the emancipation of the entire land of Palestine.

Finally it has to be stressed that the United Nations has a special responsibility in the search for a solution to the question of Palestine. It should utilize all its resources to end the Zionist occupation and to restore the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to establish their own independent State in the entire land of Palestine. The sooner that happens, the faster peace and tranquillity will return to the region. The immediate task of the Security Council, however, is to fulfil its obligation under the Charter of the United

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Republic of Iran)

Nations and to bridle the maverick Zionist security forces and settlers who are running wild and armed to the teeth among the unarmed Palestinians of the occupied territories and Quds.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his kind words addressed to me and to my country.

The next speaker is the representative of Japan. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. KAGAMI (Japan): I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of February. I am confident that with the benefit of your guidance and diplomatic skill the work of the Council will be fruitful. I should also like to express my appreciation for the exemplary manner in which your predecessor, Ambassador Ismail Razali of Malaysia, conducted the Council's work during the month of January.

I would further like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for the kind words of condolences on the demise of the late Emperor Showa expressed during a preceding meeting of the Council.

The Government of Japan is deeply concerned over the situation in the occupied territories, which seems to grow more violent with each passing day. Particularly disturbing are the almost-daily reports of casualties among the Palestinian civilian population. It is the growing urgency of the situation that has compelled my delegation to participate in the present deliberations of the Council.

In listening to the statements of my colleagues I am impressed by the strength of the conviction that the present situation in the occupied territories is intolerable and must be resolved without further delay. It is clear to all of us that the suffering the Palestinian people in the occupied territories will continue until a just, lasting and comprehensive peace is attained. Japan has long insisted that such a peace must be realized on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the recognition of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination. Specifically, peace in the Middle East

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should be achieved as quickly as possible through, first, the withdrawal of Israel's armed forces from all territories it has occupied since 1967; secondly, the recognition of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, including the right to establish an independent State and, thirdly, the recognition of Israel's right to exist.

Careful consideration must be given to the legitimate security requirements of all the countries and the aspirations of all the peoples in the region, including the Palestinian people. It is the view of Japan that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) represents the Palestinian people. Thus, in order to advance the cause of peace, in the Middle East Japan believes it is essential that Israel and the PLO recognize each other's position and that the PLO participate in the peace process.

In a word, our objective is Israeli-Palestinian coexistence, on the basis of Israel's right to exist and the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, including the right to establish an independent State. The Declaration of an independent State by the Palestine National Council is, in our view, of great significance as an expression of the Palestinian people's long-cherished and legitimate aspiration to nationhood.

It is clear to us that peaceful coexistence between the Israeli and Palestinian peoples can only be achieved through negotiations by all the parties concerned, with Israel and the PLO as the principal parties.

The validity of that position, which the Government of Japan has consistently maintained, has been further strengthened by the significant developments towards peace that have been made subsequent to the meeting of the Palestine National Council in Algiers last November. Those developments include the declaration of the establishment of the State of Palestine, Chairman Arafat's announcement of

(Mr. Kagami, Japan)

moderate and realistic policies to be pursued by the PLO and the commencement of the dialogue between the United States and the PLO. I wish to reaffirm Japan's intention to support vigorously the peace-making efforts being undertaken by the parties concerned and to help keep alive the current momentum for peace, which is too precious to lose.

In particular Japan appeals for the early convening of an international conference in which all the parties, including the PLO, will participate. We are all aware of the conflicting views as to the modality of such an international conference and would urge all parties to do their utmost to establish a common ground that will make the convening of such a conference possible.

In that connection the active effort the Secretary-General is currently pursuing to bring about peace in the Middle East should be commended and further encouraged as a means to that end. We understand from the statement made by the Israeli delegation on Friday of last week that the Government of Israel does not exclude the possibility of the Secretary-General's involvement in the peace process, and we note that with interest.

We were encouraged that at the General Assembly meetings held in Geneva last December the resolution on the conference was adopted by an overwhelming majority of Member States. The Government of Japan particularly welcomed the statement of the Palestine National Council that such an international conference should be held on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), among others. The statement was an important step forward and was instrumental in gaining broad international support for the conference.

Further, my Government noted with great appreciation Chairman Arafat's clear renunciation of terrorism, as that too will contribute to creating an environment in which peace negotiations can begin.

(Mr. Kagami, Japan)

It is no exaggeration to say that those new and positive developments were brought about, at least in part, by the uprising. By showing the world that a policy of force and repression cannot ensure any degree of calm in the area, the Palestinians in the occupied territories have focused our attention on the urgent need for a negotiated peace. Moreover, the uprising has strengthened the Palestinian people's sense of identity and their conviction that they are entitled to the right of self-determination.

At the same time a careful observer of the situation will notice that the uprising has caused a subtle change in the thinking of the Palestinian people both inside and outside the occupied territories, for there is now a general recognition of the need for a practical and concrete strategy to attain their goal. The political statement of the Palestine National Council can be considered as a clear manifestation of this new thinking, which is apparently directed towards a peaceful settlement to be achieved through negotiations. Indeed, we must understand that behind the current desperate acts of the Palestinians in the occupied territories is the longing for peace and a brighter future.

(Mr. Kagami, Japan)

The worsening situation in the occupied territories is all the more unfortunate in the light of those developments. As in any situation where tensions run high and violence is endemic, mutual restraint by all the parties concerned is crucial. It should be stressed, however, that Israel, as the occupying Power, must bear the responsibility of protecting the civilian population in the occupied territories. That Israel, in utter disregard of Security Council resolutions 607 (1988) and 608 (1988), continues to insist that the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War does not apply to the situation in the occupied territories, is deplorable. Its refusal to reconsider its position on the deportation of Palestinians is likewise reprehensible.

I must also reiterate my Government's condemnation of the excessive use of force by the Israeli authorities against Palestinian civilians. The use of plastic bullets, the arbitrary detention of civilians and the demolition of the homes of civilians only result in an escalation of the violence. Once again the Government of Japan implores Israel to show utmost restraint in the territories.

The Government of Japan has repeatedly expressed to Israel its grave concern over the excessive measures taken against the Palestinian people. Those measures are particularly unfortunate now, as they run counter to the peace momentum that is being generated in the Middle East. It is time that Israel acknowledged the strong appeals of the international community and recognized the gravity of the situation by taking a more flexible and constructive position in order to achieve a peaceful solution.

As we continue to strive to attain a negotiated settlement, we must not forget the need to alleviate the social and economic difficulties besetting the Palestinian people. Indeed, those difficulties have been aggravated this past year. The Government of Japan has taken steps to increase significantly its

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contributions to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in a sincere effort to improve the quality of life of the Palestinians in the occupied territories.

Important though it is, however, humanitarian assistance cannot in itself bring about a peaceful settlement of this fundamentally political issue. And it seems that all the parties concerned agree on at least one point - namely, that the status quo in the occupied territories is intolerable. The need for change is apparent to any reasonable person.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Japan for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. TREIKI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (interpretation from Arabic): I wish at the outset to express my delegation's sincere congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. In the light of my knowledge of you and my long friendship with you, and in view of your diplomatic skill and great ability, I am sure you will lead the Council's work to the desired goal.

I also congratulate your predecessor, our friend Ismail Razali, Permanent Representative of Malaysia, on the outstanding skill and vast diplomatic experience with which he conducted the work of the Council last month.

I was very hesitant to come to address the Security Council. I wondered whether I could say anything new - although there are always new developments: new martyrs fall daily; children's bones are broken every day; there are mass deportations; there are detentions; there is much more.

(Mr. Treiki, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

The Security Council has met several times to discuss this question. It has issued statements which, while toned down, remain in the archives of the United Nations. Those archives are full of such statements. The right of veto has at times been used to thwart the adoption of draft resolutions.

Everyone knows inhuman acts are carried out in the occupied territories and throughout Palestine. Everyone condemns them. Everyone knows there have been hundreds of martyrs and thousands of detainees, and that the number of detainees, deportees and martyrs is constantly rising. But what action has been taken so far to put an end to this? The subject is treated as though it were a mere humanitarian question or a question of stone-throwing children whose parents' homes are demolished, whose parents are gaoled and tortured, their bones broken, and more.

But this is a far larger question. It is the tragedy of an entire people uprooted from its land more than 40 years ago, displaced from its homeland, and persecuted even in its diaspora, its leaders murdered, destroyed by military planes. The Security Council has met to discuss that and adopted resolutions on the subject.

But the occupiers say, "No; we have annexed Jerusalem and I shall stay there despite all your resolutions. We have annexed the Syrian Golan Heights and we shall stay there". Most of them actually say that the West Bank is an integral part of the Israeli entity, calling it "Judea and Samaria". Now, some of them are saying that southern Lebanon is actually "northern Israel" - that is, a part of Israel. We have all heard the Israeli representative say in this Chamber that they will continue to pursue the same policy and will not be deterred.

(Mr. Treiki, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

The Council speaks of the Geneva Conventions, and they reject them. The Council speaks of the Charter, and they cynically disregard it. What, then, is the solution? This is the third day the Council has met; it has heard many statements and will hear many more. They were good statements expressing the positions of countries. But the Council remains helpless. Under the United Nations Charter, the Security Council bears a special responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. But peace is deteriorating and security is constantly threatened in the region because of the Israeli entity's acts of aggression and expansion.

(Mr. Treiki, Libyan Arab
Jamahiriya)

What will the Security Council do on this occasion in particular? Some may say that we are not being rational. But is it rational to accept occupation? Is it rational to regard the innocent child throwing stones as a terrorist? Is it rational that the innocent child who throws stones because he wants to live as a human being on his own land should see his father's house demolished and his father's car confiscated? When we were children we studied the Code of Hammurabi. We always found these rules very strange. But we are now seeing even harsher and more cruel rules being applied.

The experience of the United Nations with South Africa should serve as a pioneering experience. The international community, pursuing a realistic policy towards the apartheid régime, imposed an economic boycott which forced the white minority régime to accept reality, go to the negotiating table and accept the independence of Namibia - which we shall indeed soon see. That is the result of action by the international community. We shall also probably see a change in the nature of the apartheid régime in South Africa.

That should be an example to us of the benefits of acting together. The international community must not confine itself to resolutions. Many resolutions have been adopted by the General Assembly; many have been adopted also by the Security Council. But what is required is action. The bones of children will continue to be broken, despite our condemnation, because the Council has not taken practical action - and I say this with all respect for the Council - to put an end to these acts of repression. Territories will continue to be annexed if no practical action is taken.

It is high time to implement Chapter VII of the Charter and to take practical measures to put an end to these acts of aggression, to this disregard of all international norms.

(Mr. Treiki, Libyan Arab
Jamahiriya)

There are some who are touchy about this question and others who regard it as marginal. They call upon the Palestinians to lay down their weapons. They even call upon the Palestinians to exercise caution in what they say. But the aggressor, the occupier, is left free to kill, displace, deport and destroy with impunity. We do not believe that a solution lies in providing the Zionist entity with billions of dollars or with thousands of immigrants. We shall only see more settlements and more deportations and further intransigence.

Hence, the optimum solution is practical action by the Security Council. No matter what the resolution the Council will adopt - and in any case we believe that it will not be adopted in the desired form - it will be to no avail. It better behoves the Council to hold a closed meeting to discuss practical measures for putting an end to the carnage and the violations of human rights in Palestine. That would be more useful and far more important than listening to all these statements - most of which, including my own, are emotional.

The United Nations, which has adopted resolutions on the question of Palestine and which agreed to membership by the Zionist racist régime, bears a special responsibility towards the Palestinians, who have been displaced for more than 40 years. They have been required to make many sacrifices - and they have made them. The Palestinian people have probably acted in a manner contrary to their convictions. But they have yet to see some justice done. We are still in the same political situation. Despite our absolute belief in the importance of the United Nations - indeed, the small countries and peoples look to the international Organization to protect their independence - we and many of our peoples have come to regard the United Nations in general and the Security Council in particular as a wailing wall, where tears are shed but no action is taken. We hope that for once the Council will depart from its usual behaviour and will affirm to the world that

(Mr. Treiki, Libyan Arab
Jamahiriya)

it can shoulder its responsibilities and put an end to aggression and occupation.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Czechoslovakia. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. ZAPOTOCKY (Czechoslovakia): May I first of all extend to you, Sir, our congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for February and to wish you much success in this responsible post. At the same time, I should like to take the opportunity to express our recognition of the unswerving efforts exerted by the Permanent Representative of Malaysia in his work as President of the Security Council last month.

Only a few weeks have passed since the approval by an overwhelming majority of States at the forty-third session of the General Assembly of a whole series of resolutions concerning the situation in the Middle East and in the occupied Arab territories, condemning the Israeli occupation of the Arab territories and expressing full support for the inalienable rights of the people of Palestine. In spite of this, the Security Council is again compelled to hold a series of meetings to take a decision on serious and brutal violations of the rights of the population of the occupied territories.

The situation in the occupied territories is very grave. Protests there have reached massive dimensions, showing unequivocally that the Palestinian people are never going to become reconciled to the Israeli occupation and the brutal repression by the occupiers. However, Israel continues its dangerous practice of playing with fire. Murders and the bashing of demonstrators are taking place, as well as raids in which the houses of innocent persons are demolished.

(Mr. Zapotocky, Czechoslovakia)

The root of the present situation is the continuing Israeli occupation of the Arab territories of Gaza, the West Bank, the Golan Heights, southern Lebanon and also East Jerusalem. Israel occupied those territories by force, retains control over them by force, and uses force to render impossible the implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people - primarily the right to self-determination, including the establishment of their own State.

The violence perpetrated by the Israeli occupiers against the Palestinians must open the eyes also of those who perhaps believe that supporting the invader, tolerating his aggressiveness or seeking separate deals with him can make peace and stability in the region possible. As has been proved by decades of practice, the opposition is true. All the steps in that direction that have been taken so far have led only to an aggravation of the situation.

(Mr. Zapotocky, Czechoslovakia)

The question of Palestine constitutes a very serious international problem. Therefore, a settlement must be comprehensive, just and lasting. That is the kind of solution pursued by the proposal for the convening, under the auspices of the United Nations, of an international peace conference on the Middle East with the participation of all parties involved in the conflict, including, on an equal footing, the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, as well as the five permanent members of the Security Council.

The chances of holding such a conference are growing, due, inter alia, to the approval by the Palestine National Council of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which demand recognition of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all States in the Middle East. The condition, of course, is that the other side responds to this act of realism in an equally realistic manner.

Hardly conceivable against this background is the position of the Israeli Government, which rejects the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and does not want to understand that a peaceful and comprehensive solution of this problem is in the interest of Israel as much as in that of the other parties concerned. At the same time, we are aware that the relations between Israel and the Palestinians are extremely complicated. The burden of many decades of mutual mistrust and hatred is very heavy. There is no doubt that a solution will not be easy. Yet real hope is emerging.

We consider it necessary in the present situation to step up the activity of the Security Council in order to create realistic prerequisites for a just solution of the question of Palestine. The Israeli rejection of concerted United Nations

(Mr. Zapotocky, Czechoslovakia)

efforts in the form of an international conference is a blind alley from which no escape is possible through armed force or separate deals, a fact which has been confirmed quite convincingly by the past 22 years as well as by recent events.

The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic fully supports the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including the establishment of their own State. Therefore, we shall continue to extend political support to the just struggle of the heroic Palestinian people and hope that these Security Council meetings will be yet another significant step towards the implementation of the justified demands of the people of Palestine. That is why we expect all five permanent members of the Security Council to fulfil with full resolve the mandate conferred upon them by the relevant General Assembly resolutions and to initiate the work of the preparatory committee for the international Middle East conference.

We are firmly convinced that it is necessary to continue all efforts of the United Nations to achieve the unconditional withdrawal of the Israeli forces from all territories occupied since 1967 and to enable the attainment by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights, including the establishment of their own State. Only in such a way can peace, security and stability for all in the region be brought to life.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Czechoslovakia for his kind words addressed to me.

The last speaker for this meeting is the representative of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. OUDOVENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): Sir, I should like first of all to welcome you as President of the Security Council. I wish you the best of success in your conduct of the Council's

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

work for this month. Everyone is familiar with your great diplomatic experience and your profound knowledge, which you use skilfully in your work in the most varied bodies of the United Nations, in particular the Special Committee against Apartheid. The high authority and respect you enjoy among delegations at the United Nations will doubtless enable you to fulfil in the best possible way the duties of President of the Security Council in the consideration of the critical situation which continues to develop in the occupied Palestinian territories.

I also wish to pay a tribute to your predecessor in the presidency, the Permanent Representative of Malaysia, Ambassador Ismail Razali, who successfully conducted the work of the Council last month.

There have been few optimistic assessments and forecasts in the last few years about the situation in the Middle East. The deadlocked situation which has come about there and the absence of any substantial shifts in the positions of the interested parties have left little room for reflection. Last year reminded us that in politics no permanent deadlocks can occur. Events which started in the occupied territories towards the end of 1987 radically altered the whole Middle East situation.

More than a year ago, the Secretary-General submitted a report to the Security Council in document S/19443, which even then fully confirmed the fact that the mass demonstrations of Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip had taken on the dimensions of a broad popular uprising. The Secretary-General's report, which contained facts about casualties among the civilian population, mass arrests, deportations and other mass violations of elementary human rights in the occupied territories, has become an illustration of the full tragedy of the situation of the Palestinians.

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The question of the situation in the occupied territories has been on the agenda of various United Nations organs for more than 20 years. Throughout all those years the international community has witnessed the inhumane violent practices of Israel, which are flagrant violations of the United Nations Charter and the many decisions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. Those actions also constitute a direct breach of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and other fundamental international legal instruments. The critical nature of the situation in the Palestinian territories has long been evident, as has been convincingly testified to by the numerous facts and objective and impartial assessments and conclusions contained in the latest report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories, document A/43/694. A new confirmation of that has been provided recently by the participants in the session of the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva.

Reflecting the strengthened determination to resist terror and the atrocities of the Israeli authorities in the occupied territories, the Security Council in resolutions 605 (1987), 607 (1988) and 608 (1988) expressed deep concern about the events taking place there, condemned the Israeli policy of the deportation of Palestinians and demanded their return to their homeland.

However, the official declarations of the Israeli leaders have left no doubt that they intend to continue to follow a policy of annexation and colonization and to rule in the occupied territories with an iron fist. The Intifadah has made evident the full failure of that policy.

It was felt for many years in Israel that time was on their side with respect to the occupation and that resistance to the occupation and to expansion would weaken. But the opposite actually happened.

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

The intifadah definitively destroyed the attempts made over more than 20 years to hypnotize world opinion through the myth of the "benefits" of Israeli colonization and the Palestinians' adaptation to it. It is also putting an end to the notion of the strategic benefits of territorial seizures that had come to be widely held in Israeli society. The opinion that the occupied lands would become a kind of security buffer around Israel proved illusory. The threat to Israel's security can only be truly eliminated by mutual security, relying on an agreement acceptable to all, on a balance of interests and co-operation. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) clearly demonstrated its willingness to espouse such policies at the nineteenth special session of the Palestine National Council, which adopted truly historic documents. That willingness was confirmed in the Palestinian peace initiatives advanced by Mr. Arafat, the leader of the PLO, in his statement before the General Assembly in Geneva.

These steps by the Palestinian leadership have received a broad endorsement from the international community, which seeks the early convening of an international conference on the Middle East in accordance with United Nations decisions.

We wish to express our conviction that such a conference cannot fail to mark a radical turning-point in the process of a Middle East settlement and a solution to the Palestinian problem. It is proper to point that the broad international support for the idea of a conference has come to be a practically unanimous position of the Member States of the United Nations. That was confirmed by the General Assembly in resolution 43/176, adopted by a record number of votes. The United Nations has once again demonstrated its ability to act as a catalyst by promoting steps towards a settlement of the Palestinian problem.

The new situation in the region requires a shift towards practical measures to set in motion the mechanism for a conference and the elaboration, within the

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framework of the United Nations, of a concrete strategy and plans to provide assistance to the participants in the conference in establishing a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. The United Nations has both the high authority and the necessary capabilities to do this. In that regard, an exceptionally important role belongs to the permanent members of the Security Council, who could, we feel, proceed to hold consultations to consider related issues. Resolution 43/176 is important in that it requests the Security Council to consider measures necessary for the convening of a conference, including the establishment of a preparatory committee.

My delegation considers that a conference on the Middle East must become a truly plenipotentiary, viable and flexible mechanism capable of elaborating mutually acceptable solutions and decisions on a whole range of problems involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict. In that regard, it is important that the format of its work should not only not encroach upon the rights and interests of any of the parties, but also make it possible to uphold the principle of unconditional respect for their sovereignty and independence and the right of each people to self-determination and to choose its own path to development.

We take this opportunity to call upon the Government of Israel again to reconsider its position, to join in the broad international consensus in support of the conference and to become involved in collective efforts designed to secure a stable and just peace in the Middle East, which would be in the interests of all States, and we are convinced, the people of Israel itself. It is precisely the collective discussion of the situation that has come about in the Arab-Israeli conflict which in our opinion should now lead to a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East.

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

The time has come to prove that the blood of those who have fallen in the intifadah has not been shed in vain. We appeal to the members of the Security Council to take the necessary measures to put an end to Israel's cruel actions in the occupied territories and to take the necessary practical steps to prepare an international conference on the Middle East.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic for his kind words addressed to me.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list for this meeting. The next meeting of the Security Council to continue the consideration of the item on the agenda will be fixed in consultation with the members of the Council.

The meeting rose at 6.35 p.m.