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TWENTY-FOURTH YEAR

**1511**<sup>th</sup> MEETING: 15 SEPTEMBER 1969

NEW YORK

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## NOTE

*Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.*

Documents of the Security Council (symbol S/. . .) are normally published in quarterly *Supplements of the Official Records of the Security Council*. The date of the document indicates the supplement in which it appears or in which information about it is given.

The resolutions of the Security Council, numbered in accordance with a system adopted in 1964, are published in yearly volumes of *Resolutions and Decisions of the Security Council*. The new system, which has been applied retroactively to resolutions adopted before 1 January 1965, became fully operative on that date.

## FIFTEEN HUNDRED AND ELEVENTH MEETING

Held in New York on Monday, 15 September 1969, at 10.30 a.m.

*President:* Mr. Y. A. MALIK  
(Union of Soviet Socialist Republics).

*Present:* The representatives of the following States: Algeria, China, Colombia, Finland, France, Hungary, Nepal, Pakistan, Paraguay, Senegal, Spain, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Zambia.

### Provisional agenda (S/Agenda/1511)

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. The situation in the Middle East:

Letter dated 28 August 1969 addressed to the President of the Security Council by the representatives of Afghanistan, Algeria, Guinea, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, the Niger, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Southern Yemen, the Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Arab Republic and Yemen (S/9421 and Add.1 and 2).

### Adoption of the agenda

*The agenda was adopted.*

### The situation in the Middle East

Letter dated 28 August 1969 addressed to the President of the Security Council by the representatives of Afghanistan, Algeria, Guinea, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, the Niger, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Southern Yemen, the Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Arab Republic and Yemen (S/9421 and Add.1 and 2)

1. The PRESIDENT (*translated from Russian*): In accordance with the previous decisions of the Council and with the consent of its members, I now propose, with the Council's consent, to invite the representatives of Israel, the United Arab Republic and Indonesia to take the places reserved for them at the Council table, so that they may participate in the discussion of the item on the agenda without the right to vote.

*At the invitation of the President, Mr. Y. Tekoah (Israel), Mr. A. El-Erian (United Arab Republic) and Mr. H. R. Abdulgani (Indonesia) took places at the Council table.*

2. The PRESIDENT (*translated from Russian*): In accordance with other decisions taken earlier by the Council, I shall now invite the representatives of India, Somalia, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Ceylon and Malaysia to take the places reserved for them at the sides of the Council chamber, since the space at the Council table is limited.

*At the invitation of the President, Mr. A. S. Gonsalves (India), Mr. A. A. Farah (Somalia), Mr. M. H. El-Farra (Jordan), Mr. J. M. Baroody (Saudi Arabia), Mr. H. S. Amerasinghe (Ceylon) and Mr. S. A. L. M. Hashim (Malaysia) took the places reserved for them.*

3. The PRESIDENT (*translated from Russian*): I wish to inform the members of the Council that I have also received letters from the representatives of Lebanon [S/9446] and Tunisia [S/9448], requesting permission to participate in the debate on the question before us. Therefore, if there is no objection, I propose, in accordance with the usual procedure, to invite the representatives of Lebanon and Tunisia to participate in the debate on this question without the right to vote. In view of the limited space available at the Council table, I should like to ask them to take the places reserved for them at the sides of the Council chamber. I shall invite each of them to take a place at the Security Council table when his turn comes to speak.

*At the invitation of the President, Mr. E. Ghorra (Lebanon) and Mr. S. El Goulli (Tunisia) took the places reserved for them.*

4. The PRESIDENT (*translated from Russian*): The Security Council will now continue its consideration of the item on the agenda. The first speaker on my list is the representative of France, on whom I now call.

5. Mr. BERARD (*translated from French*): Mr. President, all those who, like myself, are old hands in the United Nations, and who have for years been able to observe the work of Don Jaime de Piniés, first as Minister Counsellor and then as Ambassador at the head of his delegation, knew that he would be an outstanding President of our Council and that he would display the qualities which enabled his country to leave such a profound imprint upon world history. The facts have not belied this expectation; quite the contrary.

6. With regard to yourself, Mr. President, we have known your qualities of intelligence, political skill and your great experience of the United Nations too well not to be happy to work in this Council under your guidance. We know that you will be for us an ever-vigilant guide and a sagacious partner in dialogue.

7. Strong feeling has swept the world at the news that one of the most revered Holy Places, towards which hundreds of millions of persons turn their thoughts, one of the most famous works of art of the Middle East, dating back to the seventh century, has been damaged by fire. That feeling, of which each day has brought us a new echo, is fully shared by my delegation and my country.

8. Imbued with equal respect for all religions and beliefs, France has always condemned anything which could undermine them. It also considers that works of art, in whatever country they may be found, are part of the cultural heritage of all mankind, and that any misfortune to one of them injures the world community.

9. My delegation wishes to tell the Arab and Moslem representatives again that it understands the heartache this event has caused them. However, we express the persistent hope that the eminently religious nature of that emotion may, by that very fact, prevent any aggravation of the tension which provoked that deplorable fire. We appeal to everyone to spare no effort to avert such a consequence.

10. The repercussions have been all the greater because this painful event occurred in the sector of Jerusalem which has been occupied by Israeli forces since June 1967 and because it concerns one of the exalted places of the city. A city holy to three religions, Jerusalem is naturally one of the most critical points in any settlement in the Middle East, and one over which passions are most readily inflamed. That is why the Security Council, in its concern to foster a relaxation or, at least, prevent an increase of tension, once again demanded, in a unanimous resolution of 3 July 1969 [267 (1969)], that no change should be made in the status of Jerusalem, censured "in the strongest terms all measures taken to change the status of the City of Jerusalem", and declared them "invalid".

11. On that occasion, my delegation was instructed to recall that "the problem [of the Holy Places] is a political, religious and legal one and not only an administrative and social one", and that "the future of Jerusalem cannot be decided unilaterally" [1483rd meeting, para. 52].

12. The reactions aroused in the world by the burning of the Al Aqsa Mosque have shown how justified these anxieties were. In a more general way, it has become apparent, once again, that the prolongation of the tension in the Middle East constitutes a daily danger to peace. In the face of incidents and military actions whose frequency and gravity are constantly increasing, my country is more than ever convinced of the need to arrive at a just and lasting over-all settlement of the conflict without delay. For several months now it has proposed a procedure to break the vicious cycle of violence once and for all and bring about an equitable solution based on the unanimous will expressed by the Council in its resolution 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967.

13. Following the new and serious event represented by the burning of the Al Aqsa Mosque—Al Aqsa the distant, yet so close to the hearts of all Moslems—my delegation shares the wish of those who hope that a complete, impartial and public investigation will make it possible soon

to fix responsibility, thereby contributing to a calming of feelings. We emphasize that the preservation and protection of all the Holy Places of Jerusalem is one of the essential elements of a settlement in the Middle East. Finally, we consider that this painful affair makes it even more necessary and urgent to put into effect an over-all, just and lasting solution of the problems confronting the Middle East. I reserve the right to speak again later, during the discussion of the draft resolution.

14. The PRESIDENT (*translated from Russian*): I thank the representative of France for the kind words he has addressed to me.

15. The next speaker is the representative of Lebanon, whom I now invite to take a place at the Council table and to address the Council.

16. Mr. GHORRA (Lebanon): Mr. President, I wish to thank you and the members of the Council for giving me this opportunity to state my delegation's views on the question before the Council regarding the arson committed against the Al Aqsa Mosque. However, allow me at this stage to share in the various tributes paid in the Council both to your predecessor, Ambassador Piniés of Spain, and to you, Mr. President.

17. When the question of Jerusalem was last debated before the Council, I had occasion to state the following on 2 July 1969 on behalf of the Lebanese delegation:

"Jerusalem is of particular importance and interest to Lebanon. The Christian and Moslem communities which compose the population of Lebanon have had, from time immemorial, deeply rooted spiritual, traditional and affectionate ties with the Holy City. Until the Israeli occupation in June 1967, their access to the religious shrines had never been interrupted and this constant association has been to them a source of pride and inspiration. The calculated and sustained Israeli plans for the de-Arabization and the Israelization of the Old City, containing the Moslem and Christian Holy Places, has aroused the gravest concern of the Government and people of Lebanon." [1484th meeting, para. 123.]

18. Our concern was justifiable and well-founded. Here I seem to be borrowing the words of the representative of France, who has just spoken. We did not have to wait very long before tangible proof was given for that concern. The burning of the Holy Al Aqsa Mosque on 21 August last shocked the whole world. It aroused amongst the Lebanese people a deep sense of anguish, dismay and indignation. These feelings cannot be attributed to religious and political considerations alone, important though they may be. They spring also from an inner revolt against an injurious act committed in a flagrant manner against civilization itself, an act which affects a human heritage respected by peoples of all cultures and religions. And because of that act, the moral and spiritual values cherished by mankind have profoundly suffered.

19. In its usual show of unanimity when its paramount interests or those of the Arab peoples are at stake, the Lebanese people expressed in many ways their indignation

at the outrage, and their solidarity because of the outrage, with Arab and Moslem peoples everywhere. The whole country went on strike on 23 August. The day was considered a day of national mourning and grief. The leaders of all religious and political groups voiced their protest and sorrow. Many of them declared that Israel should be held responsible for the conditions which led to this act of arson.

20. Prime Minister Rashid Karami of Lebanon strongly condemned Israel's act of sacrilege on the Al Aqsa Mosque and stated that this act affected not only the Moslems and Arabs but also all those who believe in God, anywhere in the world. He saw in it another expression of the grave injustice committed by Israel against the Arab peoples and called upon the great Powers to shoulder their responsibility to put an end to it.

21. Prayers were held in mosques and churches alike for the safety of the Holy Places in the occupied areas and for the deliverance of the Old City of Jerusalem from the yoke of Israeli occupation. Some of the Christian leaders expressed their fears about the fate of the Holy Sepulchre Church and the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. Moslem and Christian leaders genuinely believe that the process of the Zionization of Jerusalem, in which the Israeli authorities are at present engaged, holds many forebodings for the future of the non-Jewish Holy Places.

22. Our esteemed Secretary-General is already, I presume, in possession of cables from some of those leaders. Our fears, as well as those of the Arabs, about the future safety of the Holy Places can be dispelled only in one way: by the immediate withdrawal of Israel from the Old City of Jerusalem, as well as from the occupied areas, in compliance with the Council's decisions, and then by the restoration of the legitimate Arab authority and jurisdiction over them. As the Arabs have for centuries protected the safety and sanctity of the Holy Places, they can resume their historic role in making of Jerusalem a home of peace and justice, a centre where all sacred shrines are protected, respected, and accorded due care.

23. I am not here at this stage of the debate to establish the responsibility of Israel. That has been amply done by my colleagues who preceded me. They have ably expounded all arguments and proof to establish that responsibility. But in this context I wish to put on record the following statement of President Charles Hérou of Lebanon:

"Israel bears, without doubt, the responsibility of this crime irrespective of the identity of the person or persons who committed it. In addition, the presence of Israel in Jerusalem and her actions there constitute in themselves a violation of human rights and an infringement on the sacred and divine principles.

"The burning of Al Aqsa Mosque is but one of the manifestations of this original sin. There is no parallel in human history to this challenge to heaven and earth which can be left to pass with impunity.

"All believers, not only Arabs, Moslems or Christians, should feel bound to take some joint and legitimate act of self-defence vis-à-vis the Israeli action."

24. Yes, there is an original sin at the root of all that is happening in the Middle East. That sin is the continuous aggressive policy of Zionist Israel against the Arab peoples and countries. We were reminded at the 1510th meeting by the representative of Ceylon that if it had not been for the Israeli occupation of the Old City of Jerusalem, the situation we are discussing would never have arisen.

25. The burning of the Al Aqsa is a reminder to the world that what happened on 21 August can happen again and that the Holy Places of any religion are no longer safe and secure under an alien military occupation. It is therefore high time to put an end to this occupation and to promote conditions conducive to the establishment of peace with justice. This act of arson cannot be considered as an isolated act. It should be viewed within the context of the whole situation in the Middle East. It took place under the umbrella of military occupation.

26. The conditions created by the Israeli military occupation are conducive to the perpetration of such an act. The person allegedly responsible for the arson, Mr. Rohan, is being represented as a Christian in order to absolve Israel of all responsibility. But this so-called zealot Christian was brought to Israel by the Jewish Agency, which is the international arm of Israel. He lived in a kibbutz for several months. He shared with his Israeli foster-parents his visions and his mission to destroy the Mosque so as to clear the way for the rebuilding of Solomon's Temple, in preparation for the arrival of the Messiah. Therefore, his intentions were not hidden; they were known. The French weekly, *Nouvel Observateur*, of 1 September described Mr. Rohan as being a Zionist more than the Zionists and perhaps a carrier of one of their obscure dreams.

27. We have heard in the Council assessments of the perilous situation in the Middle East. It has been stated that instead of progress, there has been regression. The other day our esteemed Secretary-General, in his statement before the United Nations Correspondents Association, drew attention to the explosiveness of the situation in the Middle East and to the fact that 22 months after the date on which resolution 242 (1967) had been unanimously adopted by the Security Council, no break through had been achieved towards a settlement of the crisis.

28. We fully agree with those views. The situation is fraught with danger. The peace and security of the Middle East, nay, of the whole world, are imperilled. The Security Council assumes, in these circumstances on the eve of the convening of the General Assembly and the meeting of world leaders at the United Nations, a grave responsibility. Injured parties have come before the Council time and again to plead their cases, seeking action against the persistent acts of aggression of Israel against its Arab neighbours and its occupation of their territory. The most that those injured parties have been able to achieve here has been to walk out with some moral satisfaction that the aggressor has been condemned. They have obtained scores of mimeographed resolutions, but those resolutions remain

ineffectual because of Israel's stubborn refusal to comply with them. The deadlock created by that refusal of Israel must be broken. This could be done by decisive action undertaken by the Security Council, and by concentrated, sustained and vigorous efforts deplored by the major Powers with a special responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security in the world.

29. I conclude by saying that Israel's actions are fanning the flames of violence in the Middle East. Those flames must be extinguished. The fire-engines of peace must act promptly. The Security Council can set the provisions of the Charter in motion without waiting for Arab complaints against Israel's action. By doing so with decisiveness and speed it can avert catastrophe in the Middle East and the world, and strengthen the chances for peace.

30. The PRESIDENT (*translated from Russian*): The next speaker is the representative of Tunisia, whom I now invite to take a place at the Council table and to address the Council.

31. Mr. EL GOULLI (Tunisia) (*translated from French*): Mr. President, since I am newly accredited to the United Nations by my Government, and this is the first time I have the honour of speaking before the Council, it is my pleasant duty to congratulate you on the qualities of high diplomacy with which you are presiding over these discussions, and to thank you and the members of the Council for your kindness in allowing me to participate in your work.

32. This is a solemn, and I would even say a grave, occasion. At a time when mankind is already terribly afflicted by all kinds of ills—political conflicts, devastating wars, poverty, hunger—its spiritual values, quite rightly respected and spared since the creation of our Organization, now, with the criminal arson of the Al Aqsa Mosque, are in turn sullied. In the face of the worst misfortunes, men, whatever the political régime, social organization, degree of economic and technical development in which they live, have constantly sought salvation in faith, that faith which gives their lives its ultimate meaning.

33. The request addressed to you, Mr. President, under the pressure of the public opinion of 25 States, to convene this Council, reflects the danger to international peace and security caused by the criminal arson which occurred on 21 August in occupied Jerusalem. The fact that my country has decided to add its voice to that of other Moslem countries in coming here, to this chamber, to state its concern and express its indignation bears witness, needless to say, to our total confidence in the United Nations, and particularly in its principal organ, the Security Council, the last bulwark, in the eyes of the international community and under the Charter, against racism, arbitrary action, injustice, and the policy of fait accompli. In short, the ultimate responsibility, in our view, devolves upon the Council, whose duty is clear: it must react appropriately to these acts which are likely to disturb world peace and security.

34. Mr. President, with your permission I shall not review the chronology of the events of 21 August. The facts are well known to the Council. Those who have spoken before

me have ably and accurately recounted them. But I should like to be allowed merely to quote the message which the President of the Republic of Tunisia, on learning of the tragic event, addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations:

“I have the honour to inform you that the Government and people of Tunisia have heard with emotion the news of the fire that has ravaged the Moslem Holy Places in Jerusalem.

“This heinous act, aside from the fact that it shows a complete contempt for the highest spiritual values, will by its nature gravely aggravate the situation in the Middle East and render even more difficult the search for a just peace in the region.

“The Tunisian Government considers that the responsibility of the Zionist State, the occupying Power, is directly involved.”

35. The terms of this message express perfectly the depth and nature of the emotion aroused in my country by that unspeakable act. It is neither religious fanaticism, nor racial solidarity, nor any supposed interest in political manoeuvring designed to alarm international public opinion unduly, as some have claimed, that has aroused the emotion of the Tunisian people and their President.

36. We have stated our position on the substance of the question many times, in other circumstances, and unequivocally. Today, it is a cry of distress we utter here, voicing the pain and incomprehension of millions of Tunisians who, like millions of other Moslems, feel struck to the very heart by an indescribable act which places the situation in Jerusalem in its true proportions. This act augurs a dark future for the spiritual values of which history has made the Holy City the guardian and which many generations of Moslems, Christians and Jews have venerated and continue to venerate, thereby giving the inhabitants of that land the finest example of tolerance and human brotherhood.

37. It would be superfluous to review the details which can only tarnish this debate and, in our view, prevent it from rising to the level of the event involved. Whether the damages are great or not, whether the firemen arrived quickly or took their time, whether the Sheikh, the leader of the Moslem community, participates in the investigation or not—all these factors should not obscure the essential point: the military occupation which has created an atmosphere conducive to the perpetration of this crime.

38. We do not want to give a religious dimension to the conflict in the Middle East. It is Israel that does this. From the moment Israel's leaders set up race and religion as principles of power, this can only lead to fanaticism.

39. Therein lies the sinister truth. Therein lies the real danger which the international community must denounce. And that is why hundreds of millions of people today fear they will find themselves swept by the unleashing of passions and the logical sequence of fanaticism into the vicious circle of violence and hatred.

40. What a part of humanity is experiencing today is a real tragedy; a tragedy of misunderstanding, injustice and passivity. Yet the process unleashed by the Zionist authorities since their occupation of Palestine is clear, and their intentions no less evident. After having dispossessed and driven the Palestinians from their country, the occupying authorities, carrying out a carefully prepared plan, are now attacking basic values. Their purpose is step by step to Judaize the whole of Palestine and the burning of Al Aqsa is but one link in the chain.

41. It is a classic rule to annihilate, among a colonized people or what is left of it, everything that may give it an awareness of its identity, of its specific individuality as a nation, and that can keep its history and glory alive. The occupiers, the colonizers—as the peoples of the third world know only too well—do not confine themselves to military oppression and repression, which most often results only in the physical incapacitation of the colonized. The colonizer realizes that to wipe out a people he must destroy its soul and drive it to moral decadence and to the renunciation of its values. That is the reason for the Israelis' relentless vindictiveness against the Holy Places of Islam and Christianity in Palestine.

42. Yet the resistance of nations against cultural decay throughout history should remind the Tel Aviv authorities of the vanity of their enterprise, unless their intention is, by a diabolical tactic, to make peace impossible in the Middle East by unleashing the devastating forces of passion there. There is a real danger of seeing that part of the world blaze up into a conflagration which by its duration—and now by its nature—could easily spread to other areas, thereby plunging into the darkness of war a world which has suffered from it all too much.

43. While the representatives of a large portion of mankind, meeting here, try to hasten the hour of peace, the Israeli leaders, intoxicated by passing military successes, resolutely turn their backs on the world community, flouting an international order which others have patiently built up, and treating with the greatest contempt wise resolutions of which—with regard to Jerusalem—I need only mention the most important, namely, those adopted by the General Assembly in 1967 [2253 (ES-V) and 2254 (ES-V) of 4 and 14 July 1967] and the two unanimously adopted by the Security Council [252 (1968) of 21 May 1968 and 267 (1969) of 3 July 1969]. Those resolutions forbid Israel to change the status of Jerusalem and condemn all acquisition of territory by military conquest.

44. Israel has been occupying Arab territories, and Jerusalem in particular, for over two years. It has repeatedly proclaimed its firm determination to give that city a new status, its aim being to confront the world with a fait accompli. Suiting the action to the word it has, under the vigilant surveillance of its soldiers, undertaken works, proclaimed measures and decreed laws tending to turn this high seat of Islam, Christianity and Judaism into a Zionist garrison. The only way it was able to carry out its nefarious plans was by the military occupation of the city. That is why we maintain that Israel bears full responsibility for the situation. Is it not inconceivable that those supposedly highly trained technicians—as the Israelis are—should be

taken unawares by some fanatic? If he was able to commit his crime it was surely because the context was conducive to it, and the psychological conditioning he received in the particular atmosphere prevailing in that martyred land prepared him for it.

45. Once the crime has been committed, it is very easy to appease one's conscience at little cost, as the Israeli leaders are doing, by appealing for understanding and fraternity. It is even easier to refer to one or two comments in the press to prove their point.

46. The representative of Israel here sings us the litany of fraternity and peace. But how will they be possible when he knows full well that the authorities who have instructed him to do so will never act on the resolutions of the Council? That is why we think it is up to the Council, and to the four great Powers in particular, to assume their responsibilities in this matter and, above and beyond the Al Aqsa fire, in the whole Palestine question.

47. That is why, on learning of this crime, the President of the Republic of Tunisia addressed Secretary-General U Thant directly, as well as the Heads of State of the four great Powers. We reiterate his appeal that Israel's responsibility for this criminal act should be denounced, that the occupation of the Arab territories should be terminated, that the Palestinians should regain their right to their usurped land, and that the world, and especially the Middle East, should be spared new wars.

48. Mr. M'BENGUE (Senegal) (*translated from French*): Mr. President, my delegation is happy to congratulate you on your accession to the presidency of the Council. Your political instinct, your cordiality, your skill and your perspicacity are known to all of us, and we also congratulate ourselves on the cordial relations that exist between your great country and ours.

49. We should also like to repeat our feeling of admiration for Ambassador Piniés, who presided over the Council last month.

50. The Council has been meeting for several days now at the request of 25 Members of the United Nations to examine the situation created as a result of the burning of the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. My delegation, as you undoubtedly know, Mr. President, has no intention of encouraging passions at this debate. We consider it our duty to try to contribute effectively and in a positive manner to the search for a just and lasting solution of the painful problem which is rending the Middle East. That has been and remains a constant of our policy on the problem affecting the Middle East. We are obliged, however, to recognize that occurrences such as the burning of the Al Aqsa Mosque are not likely to facilitate the restoration of peace in that area. The burning of Al Aqsa, one of the high Holy Places of Islam, is indeed an odious act which the conscience of the whole world condemns.

51. The mosque was set on fire as a deliberate attack on spiritual values which, as everyone knows, constitute a basic dimension of human existence, and we can readily under-

stand the indignation felt by all believers, whether Moslem, Christian or Jewish, throughout the world.

52. The Senegalese people, which is profoundly attached to the values of the spirit and respects all beliefs, provides the example of a country where perfect harmony prevails among the various religious communities.

53. Senegal, which is fortunate in having at its head a humanist of world renown, an ardent and tireless fighter for the cause of man, learned with great indignation of the act of sacrilege committed at the Al Aqsa Mosque, one of the most revered places of Islam, an act which testifies to a marked contempt for the highest spiritual values.

54. We know that, in their public statements, the Israeli authorities have expressed feelings of indignation and reproof. But, actually, this problem raises the question of the status of Jerusalem. In fact, the problem will not be settled until the day that Jerusalem is evacuated. Only the withdrawal of Israel from Jerusalem and the 'other territories under military occupation can ensure the safety of the Holy Places. That raises the question of the observance of all the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council in this field. However, Jerusalem is still under the control of the Tel Aviv authorities, as are many other Arab territories. The burning of Al Aqsa, which the whole world condemns today, is not an isolated occurrence. It is the direct result of Israel's occupation of Arab territories by force. Thus, incidents of the kind we condemn today will not be put to an end once and for all until an over-all solution to the problem is found.

55. We speak this blunt truth without any hatred or any hostility towards the Jewish people, which, as President Senghor has said, is, together with the Arab and the black people, one of the three suffering peoples of the world.

56. But we cannot forget that, at present, it is the Arabs who are subject to physical attack and occupation.

57. We have always condemned the use of violence to settle political problems. That is a basic principle of our foreign policy. However, there is another, no less important, principle which we have always advocated: negotiation.

58. We still consider that resolution 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 constitutes the most suitable framework for the restoration of a just and lasting peace in that troubled part of the world. It is the responsibility of the Security Council as a whole, and its four permanent members in particular, to make much more whole-hearted efforts to give effect to that resolution in all its aspects, so that peace may be restored and the countries of the region may devote themselves to the tasks of development in order to achieve a better life for all the populations living there.

59. The PRESIDENT (*translated from Russian*): I thank the representative of Senegal for the kind words he has addressed to me.

60. Mr. YOST (United States of America): I am very happy, first, to take this occasion to express our deep

appreciation to our eminent colleague Don Jaime de Piniés for the fashion, at the same time tactful and constructive, in which he conducted our deliberations last month. It was a particularly busy and difficult month in the Council, and we were therefore especially fortunate to have the benefit of Ambassador Piniés' wise leadership.

61. Permit me also to welcome you, Sir, to the presidency. We know that we can count on your great experience and talents to ensure that our deliberations this month will also contribute to international peace and security.

62. The United States was profoundly shocked and dismayed by the burning, on 21 August, of the Al Aqsa Mosque in occupied Jerusalem. We understand and are deeply moved by the evidence of genuine concern and devotion that this unfortunate incident has evoked from Moslems the world over. In addition to the special grief felt by all the followers of Islam, the damage to that historic shrine and to its priceless furnishings is mourned as a heavy loss of part of the spiritual legacy of all mankind.

63. We respect the concerns expressed by the 25 Members in their message of 22 August to the President of the Security Council [S/9407],<sup>1</sup> which, as we understand them, are essentially threefold. First, we would agree that the facts surrounding this tragedy must be investigated thoroughly and impartially. To do any less would be to encourage suspicion, emotionalism and fanaticism.

64. Secondly, we see merit in the proposal that a group of distinguished Moslems assist in determining the extent of the damage to the Mosque and be associated with the necessary repairs. We were pleased to hear Mr. Tekoah, the representative of Israel, state that his Government has no objections to this proposal. Such a step would be entirely consistent with our views on the major role of the religious communities in Jerusalem and with the widely-shared view that Jerusalem is a legitimate concern of the international community.

65. Thirdly, I believe there is no disagreement on the necessity for more adequate precautions against repetition of such a desecration.

66. Having said that, I wish to make it clear that my Government's deep and abiding interest in Jerusalem has caused it to examine very carefully the facts that are so far available. Without attempting to prejudge the findings of competent investigations, I should like to say that we have seen no shred of evidence to support the allegation that the act of suspected arson which occurred at the Harm Ash Sharif on 21 August was other than an individual act, as demented as it was dastardly. We would think it most unfortunate if the international community, which itself shares a deep interest in Jerusalem's shrines, were diverted from formulating a positive response to the present situation, by incitements or allegations in support of other objections. The Council cannot lend itself to any such

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<sup>1</sup> Incorporated in substance in document S/9447, annex I; see *Official Records of the Security Council, Twenty-fourth Year, Supplement for July, August and September 1969*.

incitements or allegations. Our real interest lies in ensuring that the full facts regarding the fire and the circumstances surrounding it are brought to light in a manner which satisfies the legitimate interests and concerns of Moslems and others throughout the world.

67. My Government notes the steps taken immediately by the Government of Israel to institute a broadly-based Commission of Inquiry which contains representatives of all three great religions which have Holy Places in Jerusalem. We welcome Israel's announcement that the hearings of the Commission of Inquiry and the trial of the suspected arsonist will be public and open to observers from any country or of any faith.

68. Several speakers have already referred to the 1954 Convention and Protocol for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict,<sup>2</sup> to which Israel and the Arab States are parties, and to which they have already had recourse at the suggestion of and through machinery set up with the assistance of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. The application of this Convention in the Arab-Israeli area appears to have proceeded rather smoothly. We view Ambassador Tekoah's remarks as indicating that the Government of Israel is prepared to continue to co-operate with the Director-General of that organization in applying the Convention.

69. It is therefore entirely possible that it could also be applied in a satisfactory manner to assist in resolving the legitimate question regarding the circumstances of the fire at the Al Aqsa Mosque. It might also serve as a basis for facilitating measures to guard against future tragedies of this nature, pending the achievement of a just and lasting peace in the area, including closer communication and planning between Moslem representatives on the one hand, and the occupation authorities on the other.

70. Barely nine weeks have passed since the Council unanimously reaffirmed the special interest of the international community in the City of Jerusalem [*resolution 267 (1969)*]. On that occasion I elaborated in some detail the position of the United States on the subject of Israel's responsibilities as an occupying Power [*1483rd meeting*]. That position has not changed; it remains as I stated it on that occasion.

71. We do not, however, consider that it is appropriate or desirable so soon again to re-examine and pronounce upon the status of Jerusalem or to link the deplorable fire in Al Aqsa to the whole tragic Arab-Israeli conflict. We regret that the draft resolution which we have before us [*S/9445*] has gone so far beyond the purpose, as we understood it, for which the Security Council was called into session. We were hoping for a resolution which would concern itself directly and exclusively with measures for the maintenance, repair and protection of the Holy Places, including provision for adequate participation of Moslem representatives, but not one which again went over the ground covered during our debate last July.

<sup>2</sup> Signed at The Hague on 14 May 1954 (see United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 249 (1956), No. 3511).

72. Our position on the political elements of the status of Jerusalem was made completely clear by our vote for Security Council 267 (1969). Had the present draft resolution reaffirmed that resolution but dealt substantively only with the concerns expressed in the 22 August communication to the President of the Security Council, we would have been able to vote for it. Since we do not have that option and since, as we have said, we find other portions of the draft resolution inappropriate in the present context and not well-calculated to serve the ends we have in mind, the United States will abstain.

73. This does not, I repeat, imply any lack of concern by my Government for the maintenance and protection of the Holy Places. We consider that the Government of Israel, as an occupying Power, has a heavy responsibility to Moslems everywhere and to all mankind to see that the Holy Places are protected. We urge it to take every precaution to do so and to co-operate fully with the Moslem community in so doing. We are prepared to support any suitable action by the United Nations in achieving this objective.

74. Finally, we need hardly remind ourselves that our presence here today, as on so many occasions in the past, is against the backdrop of another no less urgent need. That need is for even greater efforts toward the achievement of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, a peace which has been long awaited and is long overdue. In support of that goal, restraint and co-operation of the parties themselves are absolute requirements. As we approach a time when the Foreign Ministers of the States most concerned and of the four permanent members of the Security Council which have been seeking to assist in the search for peace in the Middle East assemble here, let us all make a very special effort to restrain violence, to moderate debate and to create an atmosphere of conciliation and goodwill in which the peacemakers may work constructively.

75. The PRESIDENT (*translated from Russian*): I thank the representative of the United States of America for the kind words he has addressed to me.

76. Mr. KHATRI (Nepal): Mr. President, I should like first of all to pay tribute to your predecessor, the Ambassador of Spain, for the manner in which he guided the work of the Security Council during the last month, and to express our compliments and good wishes to you in your office. We admire your personal qualities and respect you as the representative of a great country whose contribution to the development of contemporary world society is far more than I can say. It will indeed be a pleasure and privilege to work under your leadership. I assure you of the wholehearted co-operation of my delegation in your task.

77. With regard to the item under consideration, I wish to state very briefly the position of my delegation on it. My delegation shares the sentiments of profound sorrow and indignation expressed by every speaker in the Council at the burning of the holy Al Aqsa Mosque on 21 August 1969. Men of good faith and goodwill everywhere have joined in condemnation of that despicable act of arson, which resulted in damage to one of the holiest places of worship and reverence of Islam. On this occasion of universal anguish, our overriding concern should be to

ensure that an objective and full investigation into the matter is carried out and that a swift restoration of the Mosque is effected. Steps should, of course, be taken to prevent recurrence of such acts of vandalism.

78. We have no direct and precise information about the immediate circumstances surrounding the outbreak of the fire. In the absence of an objective and full report on the matter, the Security Council is naturally not in a position to attach responsibility for that act of sacrilege to one party or another. I might add that, as far as my delegation is concerned, we have regarded the expression of grief and anguish by the Government of Israel and other elements of public opinion as sincere. We have also noted the spirit of fairness shown by the Government of Israel in the matter of recognizing the special interest of Moslem States and communities in the Holy Places and welcoming their co-operation in the restoration work at the Al Aqsa Mosque.

79. At the same time, we cannot help reflecting that the incident of 21 August occurred at a time when the entire city of Jerusalem was under the military occupation of Israel. Regrettably, the Government of Israel has failed to comply with specific resolutions of both the General Assembly and the Security Council. While the city remains under military occupation, it is the duty of the Government of Israel, under accepted norms of international law, not only to respect religious sentiments but also to preserve and protect public institutions and places of veneration and worship and monuments of spiritual values in the occupied territory. This duty is paramount. It is specially so because the conditions of any military occupation are fraught with unforeseen dangers. We are hoping that the 21 August incident will turn out to be not a direct result of any general feelings of hatred and fanaticism, but an act of a madman, unrelated to the conditions which tend to give rise to those feelings.

80. Considering that the situation in the Middle East is a continuing threat to world peace, any decision by the Security Council must be primarily aimed at easing that situation. Our concern now is, doubtless, the restoration and restitution of the holy Mosque, with the necessary co-operation of Moslem States and communities. I would think that the attitude of the Government of Israel in this regard would make this co-operation possible. On the other hand, it is fitting that Israel should be reminded of its obligations and responsibilities as an occupying Power and further called upon to abide by the decisions of the United Nations.

81. Respecting the draft resolution [S/9445] which was introduced at the 1510th meeting on Friday by my friend, Mr. Shahi, representative of Pakistan, with his usual eloquence and clarity, I might say that we have viewed it with those considerations uppermost in our minds. In view of our support for General Assembly resolutions 2253 (ES-V) and 2254 (ES-V) and Security Council resolutions 252 (1968) and 267 (1969), and sharing as we do the universal concern for the situation in the Middle East and particularly the fate of the city of Jerusalem, my delegation will cast its vote in favour of the draft resolution, whose principal purpose is the reaffirmation and reiteration of

those earlier resolutions. We do so also because we have noted with satisfaction the assurance that there had been no allegation of complicity of the Government of Israel in the incident of 21 August.

82. The burning of the Al Aqsa Mosque, despicable as it is, has, nevertheless, brought all of us together in common sorrow and grief on account of the damage caused to a part of a universal human heritage. We are united in our sorrow, so it is evident that our purpose would be best served if we unite in action, too. I realize that we, in the Council, must strive for unity and unanimous resolutions that do not fail to take into account all the elements of fact connected with any given situation. Indeed, I would say that the solemnity of the present occasion particularly calls for such a decision, to which every member of the Council could lend his support without any feelings of reservation or doubt, however slight.

83. The PRESIDENT (*translated from Russian*): I thank the representative of Nepal for the friendly words he has addressed to my country.

84. Mr. MORALES SUARES (Colombia) (*translated from Spanish*): I should like to express our admiration and appreciation for the task performed with outstanding tact and poise by the representative of Spain while he was President of the Council.

85. At the same time, I also wish to express my delegation's satisfaction at seeing a person possessing such outstanding qualifications of character and intelligence presiding over the work of the Council this month.

86. Colombia, as a country of deeply rooted religious convictions, which constitute a basic feature of our national character, has a profound respect for the beliefs of others. Therefore we naturally demand the greatest reverence for places hallowed by the faith and traditions of peoples and a full guarantee of complete freedom of access to and worship in those places. That respect explains our sincere distress at the burning of the Al Aqsa Mosque and our sorrow and sympathy with regard to the injury done to feelings deserving of the greatest consideration.

87. With regard to the eventual implications of this unfortunate occurrence, my delegation believes that any initiative or decision of the Council must be adopted in the light of all the necessary facts. Otherwise, more harm than good will result.

88. My Government maintains cordial diplomatic relations with a number of States where the Islamic religion is professed. It also maintains diplomatic relations with Israel, although that has never hindered us from expressing, with complete freedom of judgement and on various occasions, views which do not coincide with either the theories or interests of Israel. As an example, I may mention what my delegation said when changes in the status of Jerusalem were debated in this responsible body.

89. In expressing those opinions, my delegation never fails to bear in mind that Colombia is a country whose war potential is extremely limited and whose offensive capacity

is, perhaps fortunately, insignificant by comparison with that of the great Powers. Our strength and our influence must and do derive from the freedom of our judgement, the balance which we want to be characteristic of our views, and our allegiance to legal principles which are unchanging.

90. In the specific case before us, a rational analysis of the events described to the Council does not lead us to find that there has been a deliberate intention on Israel's part to destroy or damage the Al Aqsa Mosque. On the contrary, the present situation itself shows that Israel has no advantage to gain from what has occurred but, rather, only a grave cause for concern and uncertainty.

91. This tragic event, which the entire world must help to redress—since the Mosque is part of the collective spiritual and artistic heritage—should be investigated and punished without allowing any indirect political after-effects to add to the bitter facts and the dangers already existing in the Middle East.

92. The PRESIDENT (*translated from Russian*): I thank the representative of Colombia for the kind words he has addressed to me.

93. The next speaker is the representative of Israel, on whom I now call.

94. Mr. TEKOA (Israel): If it is the fire on 21 August that really concerns us, polemics and acrimony are superfluous. In reply to statements made this morning by Arab representatives, I should merely like to add that not only have fires occurred in Jerusalem's Holy Places prior to 1967 but that the hazard of fire in the shrines has been generally recognized for years.

95. Thus, following the very serious fire at the Holy Sepulchre which lasted for over 24 hours, *The New York Times* of 29 November 1949 reported:

“The hereditary office of Doorkeeper of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem—always held by a Moslem—has been restored by King Abdullah of Jordan, it was announced. Chief responsibility of the Moslem Custodian will be to maintain precautionary measures against outbreaks of fire or other accidents likely to endanger worshippers.”

96. Similar concern has always existed regarding conditions in Al Aqsa. For instance the Beirut daily *Al-Hayat* wrote on 27 October 1957:

“In 1947, Mr. Abd-el-Fattah Hilmi, Director of the Arab Antiquities Bureau in Cairo, wrote in his report about the conditions which existed in Al Aqsa Mosque the following.

“Factors which contribute to cracking prevail in the Dome and it is imperative to take immediate steps in order to preserve this magnificent Islamic heritage.”

After a detailed description of the bad conditions which are observed in the report, the correspondent stresses the fact that “experts have recommended to plan the lighting of the

Mosque by electricity and the measures which will prevent fire”.

97. Indeed, in the words of *The Economist* of 30 August 1969:

“It is remarkably difficult to believe... that the Mosque was more vulnerable to a firebug, or accident, under Israeli administration than Arab.”

98. Three Christian leaders writing to the editor in *The New York Times* of 10 September 1969 were even more outspoken. Msgr. John M. Oesterricher, the Reverend Edward H. Flannery and S. Rose Thering, O.P., declared: “If negligence enabled the arsonist to do his job, it was not Jewish negligence but that of the Moslem authorities.” In fact, it is obvious that the prompt and energetic efforts by the Israeli authorities restricted the damage caused by the fire and saved the Mosque.

99. It is said in the Bible: “Jerusalem shall be called City of Truth.” Indeed, Jerusalem asks for truth and reverence. Its sacredness abhors falsehood and abuse.

100. The unfounded nature of the accusations voiced against Israel becomes even more striking when certain facts about the attitude toward Holy Places of some of those who level these accusations are recalled. The grim tale of Jewish Holy Places, houses of worship and religious sites desecrated, pillaged and destroyed by Jordan is well known. Less publicized is the fact that only half a year ago, on 21 December 1968, an attempt was made by a terror squad from Jordan to sabotage the Wailing Wall, Jewry's most sacred Holy Place. It will also be remembered that on 20 June 1969 three bombs were exploded in the path of crowds of worshippers on their way to and from the Wall, wounding three persons, including a child of 12. Disregard for sacredness does not seem to be confined to Jewish shrines.

101. The Beirut daily *Al-Hayat* wrote on 24 July 1969:

“No one in the whole Moslem world can ever forget 24 January 1965, the day when, for the first time in history, tanks penetrated into the Great Umayyad Mosque in Damascus and shelled the worshippers. Two hundred worshippers were killed on that day. The Great Mosque was closed for several days in order to enable the cleaning of its walls, fences, roofs and the Mihrab which were soiled by the blood of the slain.”

102. On 16 April 1964, a mosque in the city of Hama was shelled by tanks in order to suppress a Moslem demonstration against the Baathist régime.

103. The Iranian newspaper *Chau Van Khoun* reported on 7 August 1969:

“According to DPA and Reuters, the Baathist régime of Iraq intends to demolish the holy shrines of the Shiah Moslems in Iraq. The Shiah holy places consist of the tombs of the Shiah Imams. They are held sacred by all the Moslems of the world. The Imams were each examples of perfect human beings. Not only the Shiah,

but all other Moslems also respect them and visit their graves.”

104. The Holy Places sacred to Islam, Christianity and Judaism were of course of little import when the Jordanian army shelled Jerusalem in 1948, while the world stood silently by. They were of no import again on the morning of 5 June 1967 when the Jordanian forces initiated the indiscriminate bombardment of the city. The Arab terror squads, organized and trained by the Arab Governments, had no qualms at all when a few weeks ago they rained rockets on Jerusalem with its Holy Places.

105. A distinguished American Christian leader, the Reverend A. Roy Eckardt, wrote to the editor of *The New York Times* on 26 July 1969:

“Against bitter opposition from all other Arab States, Jordan conquered and annexed, among other areas, the eastern part of Jerusalem.

“ . . .

“In 1967 Jordan shelled West Jerusalem, killing and maiming hundreds of people and forcing Israel to fight back.

“Jerusalem has never been the national capital of any people save the Jews. For longer than the century that culminated in the rebirth of the State of Israel, Jews were the largest population in Jerusalem, and particularly the Old City. When the Jordanians seized East Jerusalem they destroyed the Jewish quarter and evicted its people, killing many of them. Religious life and freedom for Christians are flourishing in Israel and suffering in Arab nations.”

106. An eyewitness report by Louis B. Fleming, published in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* of 1 September 1969, described Israel’s attitude to the Holy Places; it stated:

“The Israeli Government has been credited by international experts with doing a good job of preserving the antiquities and respecting the Holy Sites of all religions.

“ . . .

“The Israeli Government has left the administration and security of the Holy Places to each religion—Jewish, Moslem and Christian.

“The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization has taken an interest in the problem through special representatives of the nations involved, who make periodic inspections of historic and religious sites through an agreement between Israel and its Arab neighbours. H. J. Reinink, a Dutchman with long experience in the preservation of antiquities, spends eight to ten days in the occupied territories every two months, checking on Arab complaints. His reports are confidential, but persons familiar with the situation indicate that most of the complaints are groundless.

“Experts have said privately that Israel’s record in maintaining holy sites is better than the record of Arab

States, notably Jordan, which permitted widespread desecration of Jewish sites in the 19 years that Jordan controlled the Walled City and all of East Jerusalem.”

107. The Security Council’s deliberations on the Al Aqsa fire are drawing to a close. We appeal to members of the Council not to end these deliberations on a note that would add to the controversies of the Middle East. Our region has enough hostility. It does not require another injection of acrimony. It pleads for voices of calm and understanding. The draft resolution before you [S/9445] is not conceived in that spirit. There is no reason whatever to reiterate at this stage known but strongly contested views. It is what unites us that we must seek and not that which separates us. The draft resolution would exacerbate the conflict without introducing a single constructive element, a single impulse toward understanding and co-operation—and this on a matter on which understanding is possible and co-operation sorely needed.

108. The eyes of the world are again on the Security Council, in hope, in expectation that perhaps this time it will find it possible to give encouragement to those who do not want to fan the flames.

109. Mr. MWAANGA (Zambia): Since I am speaking in this debate for the first time, allow me, Mr. President, to express the satisfaction of my delegation on your assumption of the high office of President of the Security Council for the month of September. Given your long years of experience in the field of international diplomacy, I have no doubt that you will conduct our deliberations to our utmost satisfaction. Our two countries, Mr. President, have always enjoyed extremely friendly and correct relations. I have no doubt that the visit of President Kaunda to the Soviet Union next month will further strengthen our relations.

110. May I also pay due tribute to Ambassador Piniés of Spain, who skilfully presided over our Council last month.

111. It was with shock and dismay that we learned of the burning of the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem on 21 August 1969. People of different religions all over the world have joined in a condemnation of this despicable act of vandalism. We are not Moslems but we do not have to be Moslems to recognize the fact that the Al Aqsa Mosque is a sacred and revered place of worship in the Islamic world.

112. It has always been our firmly held belief that the burning of any holy place belonging to any religion is a monstrous crime. We recognize that the issue before us has much wider and deeper implications. It would be inconclusive to discuss this outrage in purely religious terms, without taking into account the political circumstances which surrounded the incident.

113. It is not possible to conclude soberly that this outrage would not have been committed without the Israeli occupation of Arab Jerusalem; but the fact that it occurred in circumstances of occupation and also without the protection of the people to whom the Mosque belongs compels us inescapably to conclude that it is a direct consequence of the Israeli occupation of the Holy City of

Jerusalem. The safety and sanctity of all religious places in the City of Jerusalem is of vital concern to Zambia. There is no doubt that the burning of the Mosque has aggravated the already-grave situation in the Middle East, and mine is the hope that the Council will adopt well-reasoned and meaningful measures that will be aimed at removing the root causes of the conflict and that will create the necessary atmosphere for removing the cloud of tension building up over the Middle East horizon.

114. The PRESIDENT (*translated from Russian*): I wish to thank the representative of Zambia for the kind words he has addressed to me. I also share his views on the relations being developed between our countries, and fully agree with his remark that the forthcoming official visit of the President of Zambia to the Soviet Union will contribute to the further development and strengthening of the relations between the Soviet Union and Zambia.

115. Mr. JAKOBSON (Finland): I am happy to have this opportunity to pay tribute to the Ambassador of Spain, who, as President for the month of August, conducted the affairs of the Council with great skill and impartiality.

116. I am also happy, Mr. President, to be able to extend to you the best wishes of the Finnish delegation and to convey our great respects to you, both personally and as representative of a country with which Finland, happily, has relations of friendship and co-operation.

117. The news of the fire in the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem understandably caused shock and anxiety throughout the world—and in particular, of course, among the Moslem nations. The damage suffered by one of the most important religious shrines of the world is a loss to civilization as a whole. It is fortunate that the greater part of the Mosque could be saved and that it continues to serve as a centre of worship.

118. The issue raised by the fire in the Al Aqsa Mosque is the safety and protection of the Holy Places in Jerusalem. That is a matter of universal concern. Accordingly, in August 1967, the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ernesto A. Thalman of Switzerland, when receiving instructions for his fact-finding mission to Jerusalem, was specifically requested to gather information on the situation of all of the Holy Places. His mission<sup>3</sup> is worth recalling as an example of an agreed procedure by which the United Nations was able to obtain information about the state of the Holy Places in Jerusalem.

119. On the question of the status of the city of Jerusalem, to which many speakers have referred, my delegation stated its position in July of this year [*1484th meeting*] when the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 267 (1969) making it quite clear that the international community cannot accept as valid any measures or actions that might tend to change the status of the City of Jerusalem. Obviously, nothing that happens in

Jerusalem can fail to affect the political atmosphere in the Middle East.

120. The wave of emotion that swept over Islam after the fire in the Al Aqsa Mosque has further increased the tension in the area where the strain was already close to the breaking point. Nobody stands to gain from this unfortunate event. It is a tragedy for all the parties to the conflict.

121. In these circumstances the Security Council, charged with the responsibility of maintaining international peace and security and committed as it is to a search for a peaceful solution of the conflict in the Middle East, should in our view deal with the question before us in a manner designed to prevent a further deterioration of the situation. This will be the primary criterion by which my delegation will determine its position on the draft resolution now before the Council.

122. The PRESIDENT (*translated from Russian*): I thank the representative of Finland for the kind words he has addressed to me. For my part, I also wish to express full satisfaction at the development and further strengthening of the friendly and good-neighbourly relations between our countries.

123. Mr. SOLANO LOPEZ (Paraguay) (*translated from Spanish*): Mr. President, may I offer you my delegations' most cordial congratulations as you assume the responsibilities of President of the Security Council, which is now entrusted to your well-known experience and political wisdom. You can count on my delegation to give you all the necessary co-operation in the discharge of your duties.

124. Having said this, I shall now refer to the deliberately set fire which occurred on 21 August of this year at the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, a fire which could have destroyed it completely. Seldom have we been called on to witness the spectacle of the expression of a sentiment so universal as the unanimous condemnation of the attempt to destroy the Al Aqsa Mosque, which is sacred not only to those of the Moslem religion, but also to those who, while belonging to other faiths, consider that holy places revered by any religion must be protected and safeguarded against desecration or sacrilege and the possibility of deliberate destruction.

125. My country and the Government I represent have felt and still feel the strongest repugnance at the attempted burning to which I refer. We most sincerely regret the damage done before that fire was put out, and wish to convey to members of all faiths, and especially to the States with predominantly Moslem populations, the expression of our unreserved condemnation of the criminal act of 21 August.

126. The keen world-wide emotion once again demonstrates the special nature of and justified concern over the problem of Jerusalem—that City which is unique in the world, within whose jurisdictional confines lie the most Holy Places revered by the faithful of three of the most widespread religions on earth whose combined adherents total hundreds of millions of human beings. That emotion

<sup>3</sup> See *Official Records of the Security Council, Twenty-second Year, Supplement for July, August and September 1967*, document S/8146.

also reflects the legitimate collective interest of the international community and of the Organization which best represents it, namely, the United Nations, in the imperative need to preserve the international legal status of Jerusalem as defined by the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

127. Moreover, it again shows the importance of the status of Jerusalem as a part of the general problem of peace and security in the Middle East, with which it is intimately and inextricably linked. The opinion of my delegation with regard to that status has been expressed on many occasions, of which the latest was very recent, during the debates which led to the unanimous adoption of resolution 267 (1969) on 3 July. Therefore, I do not think I need to reiterate it, since it is public knowledge, and is known also to the United Nations in general and the Security Council in particular.

128. At this hour of universal feelings of abhorrence for the crime committed at the Al Aqsa Mosque on 21 August, our thoughts turn to the need to intensify the efforts to reach a stable and just peace in that region, based on the unanimous resolution adopted on 22 November 1967 by this Council [242 (1967)], including, of course, the question of the legal status of Jerusalem.

129. I have only a few more words to say. They refer to the draft resolution [S/9445] submitted by the representative of Pakistan at the 1510th meeting on Friday, 12 September. That draft includes provisions which represent our views, as we have indicated them by our vote in favour of the adoption of resolutions 252 (1968) and 267 (1969), as well as the others to which I have referred in this statement. Nevertheless, the inclusion of other provisions

and the particular circumstances surrounding this debate oblige me to state that, when that draft is put to the vote, my delegation will find it necessary to abstain. This abstention, I wish to repeat very clearly, in no way implies any change whatever in the position traditionally taken by my delegation on the status of Jerusalem and the declaration concerning the legislative and administrative action taken by Israel to change that status, specifically referred to in resolutions 252 (1968) and 267 (1969) of this Council.

130. I would not wish to conclude this statement without paying a tribute of very warm and sincere gratitude to Mr. Jaime de Piniés of Spain for the exemplary way in which, as President of the Council, he conducted our deliberations and work during the past month. His presidency was among those which do honour to the Council.

131. The PRESIDENT (*translated from Russian*): The list of speakers for today's meeting of the Council is exhausted. The next meeting of the Council will be held, with the consent of all the members, today at 3 p.m. There are only a few speakers on the list for that meeting, which gives grounds to suppose that the Council will be able to go on to consider the draft resolution which has been submitted [S/9445], and conclude its consideration of this question at that meeting. Apart from everything else, the Council must also do so because the General Assembly will begin its twenty-fourth session tomorrow and many members of the Security Council, and the representatives of those countries which brought this question before the Council, wish to conclude the discussion today. If there are no objections, further comments or additions, the meeting is adjourned.

*The meeting rose at 12:55 p.m.*

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