



President: Mr. Jorge E. ILLUECA (Panama).

AGENDA ITEM 34

The situation in the Middle East: reports of the Secretary-General (*continued*)

1. Mr. RÁCZ (Hungary): The region which we call the Middle East has never seen peace and tranquillity during the past four decades or so since the end of the Second World War. Not only are its many-sided original problems still far from resolved, but the situation there has become even more complex and alarming.

2. The continuous deterioration of the situation and the permanent, and indeed ever-increasing, tension, together with the most tragic developments of the past year, have made the international community aware time and again that the Middle East crisis is one of the most formidable problems in the international arena, a problem that directly threatens world peace and security. The grave situation in that troubled part of the world is of universal concern, and the achievement of a political solution to it is one of the most pressing tasks challenging us today. All of us must be fully aware of the fact that a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Middle East problem would be a great contribution to the relaxation of international tension and to the realization of the main objective of the United Nations: to safeguard lasting peace and stability throughout the world.

3. Regrettably, however, the situation in the Middle East has been developing in a way contrary to the lofty goals enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. The difficulties in arriving at a just solution to the problem seem to be much greater today than they were years ago.

4. The deterioration of the situation in the Middle East is, in our view, closely connected with the two trends in world politics today with regard to the ways and means of solving international disputes—that is, it is closely connected with the answer of the parties concerned to the question whether the peaceful way or the threat and use of force is to be given priority in searching for a settlement of the issues to be resolved. And in this respect there must not be any doubt that the root cause of the conflict and the main obstacle to its solution is the expansionist policy of Israel, based upon its infamous ambitions for a Greater Israel and aimed at consolidating and perpetuating the consequences of the acts of aggression repeatedly committed against neighbouring Arab States.

5. Without going into details, I should just like to recall, at this juncture, the stubborn denial to the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, the declaration of Jerusalem as Israel's "eternal capital", the bombardment of the Iraqi nuclear installations, the annexation of the Syrian Golan Heights and the invasion of Lebanon as recent manifestations of the political course that has for many decades now been pursued by Israel. The unceasing attacks against the Palestinian and Lebanese people, the

fomentation of the internal Lebanese problems, the constant and ever-increasing threat to the security of the Syrian Arab Republic, all of which we resolutely condemn, are further proof of the true nature of Israeli policy, based as it is on the doctrine of "might makes right".

6. It is in this context that we reiterate that the Israeli Government could not pursue its aggressive policy of expansionism, repeatedly violate international law and challenge the authority and prestige of the United Nations by continuously defying its resolutions and that it could not obstinately ignore world public opinion without almost unconditional manifold political, military and economic support from the United States and without its recently revitalized and further deepened strategic co-operation with its major ally. No one can fail to recognize the responsibility to be borne by Washington, whose Middle East policy has entered a new stage characterized by its increased military presence in, and direct interference in the internal affairs of, the countries of that region. Had there been any doubts about the true nature of the United States' mediatory and peace-keeping role, the most recent events have surely dispelled them.

7. Developments in past years have shown how great a danger lies in escalating the conflict, prolonging the confrontation and further delaying the solution of the problem of the Middle East. At the same time, the past years have also taught us that no just and lasting settlement can be achieved either by using force or by trying to impose unilateral solutions favouring only one of the parties to the conflict and serving imperialist strategic considerations alien to the interests of the peoples of the region.

8. The failure of some bilateral or trilateral efforts, based on an unfair and unacceptable approach which was inconsistent with international law and the spirit of the Charter, has resulted in a growing expectation by the international community that new, sincere, collective efforts will be forthcoming.

9. We are convinced that all problems, global or regional, can be justly resolved by peaceful means, through negotiations, given the political will of all the parties directly or indirectly concerned. The Middle East crisis is no exception. It is in this spirit that we fully support the idea, put forward at the recently held International Conference on the Question of Palestine, to convene an international peace conference on the Middle East on the basis of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and relevant United Nations resolutions, with the aim of achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. We share the view that the peace conference should be convened under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation on an equal footing of all parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization [PLO], the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, the United States, the Soviet Union and other interested States.

10. My Government has always supported every effort to find genuine solutions to the long-outstanding problems of the Middle East. We demand an immediate end

to the Israeli occupation of Lebanon and are in favour of any constructive endeavour to restore the unity, territorial integrity and independence of the Lebanese Republic, which we hope would then commit itself to the policy of non-alignment.

11. We also stand for the realization of the political principles of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Middle East crisis, as embodied in the Arab peace plan, adopted on 9 September 1982 at the Twelfth Arab Summit Conference, held at Fez,¹ and in the similar—in some respects indetical—plan contained in the Political Declaration of the Political Consultative Committee of the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty, meeting at Prague on 4 and 5 January 1983 [see A/38/67]. In this spirit, we are of the firm conviction that a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement must be based on the complete and unconditional withdrawal of Israel from all the Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem; the solution of the question of Palestine, the core of the Middle East issue, by the recognition and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to establish an independent, sovereign State of their own; and the safeguarding of the independent and secure existence of all States of the region, within internationally recognized boundaries.

12. The United Nations has a vital role to play in the search for a genuine solution. While all Member States are required to match their words with their actual deeds and to act in accordance with their obligations deriving from the resolutions of the Organization, the Security Council must bear a special responsibility in facilitating a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement without any further delay.

13. While consistently supporting the just cause of the Arab countries, we would like to emphasize the compelling need to restore and consolidate the unity of all the forces striving for a genuine solution, which is long overdue. Any setback strengthening the co-operation of these forces will only help those who seek to make a just settlement impossible.

14. Mr. WASIUDDIN (Bangladesh): Last year, during the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly, when we were debating the situation in the Middle East under the shadow of the barbarous, treacherous and completely unjustified invasion of Lebanon and the devastation and destruction that it had caused, including the horrifying massacres at Sabra and Shatila, it was thought that the conscience of the international community as a whole, particularly that of the super-Powers, would have been sufficiently jolted to make it realize the urgency of tackling this unsolved problem. Indeed, we heard from certain quarters that the opportunity for a settlement of this issue had never been so ripe as it was then. We also heard the acknowledgement that a comprehensive solution of the situation in Middle East was a necessity and that it must take into account the rights of the people of Palestine. As a result, a number of proposals were put forward by various Governments aimed at finding a comprehensive solution to the Middle East problem.

15. We fully agree with the Secretary-General, who, in his report on the situation in the Middle East, stated that “although all those proposals contained elements that were unacceptable to one party or another, he felt that they deserved careful study and that every opportunity should be seized to overcome the present impasse and shift the conflict from military confrontation to peaceful negotiation.” [See A/38/458, para. 34.]

16. It is indeed most regrettable that every opportunity was not seized and that instead it was maintained that only one particular plan, the so-called Camp David accord,

which had failed even to stop Israel from expanding its settlement policy in the West Bank and to prevent its harassing and persecuting the Palestinian population there, was the only one that could provide a durable solution. Instead, what has occurred during the year has been stated by the Secretary-General in his report as follows:

“The developments in the Middle East during the past year have given little cause for the hope that the problems of that region are nearer to solution. Great efforts have been made to bring about conditions in which the State of Lebanon could regain the full exercise of its sovereignty with the withdrawal of all non-Lebanese forces, but so far the achievement of this objective is not in sight. Preoccupation with the events in Lebanon has tended to overshadow the consideration of the major aspects of the Middle East problem, and there can be little doubt that developments in this year of frustration will prove to have made even more difficult the comprehensive settlement which alone can eventually bring coexistence and peace to this vital part of the world.” [*Ibid.*, para. 39.]

17. In the mean time, Israel has continued to harass and oppress the Palestinian people of the West Bank. It has continued building new settlements in that region and has not withdrawn from Lebanon.

18. The gravity of the situation in this unfortunate region is mounting and unless the political will to eschew all national interest is shown by the parties concerned and the issue, that is, a comprehensive and just solution of the Middle East problem, tackled honestly and genuinely, the present tense situation in the region will turn into a crisis of insurmountable magnitude, to the detriment of international peace and security. I am referring to the very recent developments in the region, where an element of super-Power rivalry has emerged as a result of the massive arming of Israel by the United States of America and a military alliance between the two having been arranged. These are dangerous portents and cause us all grave concern as they cannot but be a setback to the process of peace-making.

19. Bangladesh has stated time and again, with a vast majority of fellow States Members of the United Nations, in the Assembly and in various international forums that it views the essentials of any meaningful peace plan as a composite whole, as a comprehensive and just settlement, each part thereof being integrally related to the others. We firmly believe that no solution in the Middle East can be envisaged which does not take fully into account the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people and that any examination of the question of Palestine must be based on the following basic principles: first, that the question of Palestine is at the core of the problem of the Middle East and consequently it is not possible to envisage a solution to the problem of the Middle East unless one takes into account the rights of the Palestinian people; secondly, implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to return to their homes and to achieve self-determination, independence and national sovereignty; thirdly, that the participation of the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing with all other parties, on the basis of relevant General Assembly resolutions, is indispensable; fourthly, that the acquisition of territories by force is inadmissible and Israel must withdraw totally from all occupied Arab and Palestinian territories; and, fifthly, a genuine and greater understanding of the just cause of the Palestinian people.

20. Bangladesh is of the opinion that no progress can be made by the tackling of this complex problem by a

few countries which are themselves interested parties to the dispute and which will consider only solutions which are tilted heavily in their favour, serving national interests only, to the detriment of the rights of the people of Palestine. The international community as a whole, under the aegis of the United Nations, must be involved in the peace process if the results are to be just and lasting. It was for this reason that Bangladesh whole-heartedly participated in the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva from 29 August to 7 September 1983, and fully supports the Geneva Declaration on Palestine,² which calls for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East. We consider that a just and durable peace in the Middle East can be brought about, particularly with the participation of the United States, the Soviet Union, the PLO and Israel in this conference.

21. Before I conclude, I must express the appreciation of the Bangladesh delegation of the untiring, selfless and dedicated efforts through which the Secretary-General has endeavoured to fulfil the mandates given to him by the Security Council and the General Assembly. His report on the situation in the Middle East is an incisive analysis of this problem, made with his well-known impartiality and dedication to the Charter of the United Nations. If only the Powers that really matter would pay heed to the Secretary-General's observations in his report and display the political will to co-operate with him, an international peace process under United Nations auspices could come to fruition. Bangladesh firmly believes that adoption of this course is the only way to achieve a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

22. Mr. RUTIHINDA (United Republic of Tanzania): The Middle East problem dates back to the infancy of the Organization. It is a problem resulting, ironically, from an act by the Organization to restore to a people its inalienable rights, long denied. It was thus in realization of the perversity of the logic of restoring rights to one people through denying the same to another that the Assembly has concerned itself with the problem. It is also the realization of the tragedy of the Palestinian people resulting from the adoption by the Assembly of the 1947 partition plan, as well as its continuing implications for international peace and security, that over the last decade has led the United Nations rightly to pay particular attention to the Middle East problem.

23. A succession of wars, which have failed to resolve the conflict, point to the dangerous proportions which problems can assume if not contained and resolved. Also, the countless unrewarding diplomatic efforts undertaken in the search for peace point to the fact that unless a deliberate effort is made to tackle the issues central to the problem in the area it will not be possible to avert conflict.

24. A year after the General Assembly last considered the question, the actual situation has greatly deteriorated. The Palestinian people continue to be denied their rights and resolutions of the United Nations remain unimplemented. Acts of occupation, violation of human rights and aggression perpetrated by Israel are a permanent reality in the Middle East. Israel is proceeding with its policy of establishing settlements in the Arab and Palestinian occupied areas in flagrant contravention of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law. Lebanon continues to be occupied and Israel remains determined to dismember the country through direct occupation and the so-called peace treaty which it has imposed on the people of Lebanon. Israel is also at the centre of the continuing fratricidal fighting in Lebanon, as demonstrated by its sponsored massacre of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps.

25. In the course of this year, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Organization of African Unity, the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Commonwealth Heads of Government, as well as the Security Council, have addressed themselves to the situation in the Middle East. Invariably, concern has been expressed over the state of international tension that has persisted in the Middle East, the principal cause of which is the denial by Israel of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. Above all, there has been general agreement that the question of Palestine is at the core of the problem and thus any comprehensive, just and lasting political settlement on the Middle East will, *a priori*, require its resolution.

26. The adoption by the Assembly, at its twenty-ninth session, of resolution 3236 (XXIX) was thus in realization of the tragic error on the part of the international community. The adoption of that resolution further reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in Palestine, including the right to self-determination, the right to national independence and sovereignty and the right to return to their homes and property from which they had been uprooted and displaced as a consequence of the arbitrary nature of the partition. Yet today, a decade later, the Palestinian people have seen no peace. The situation in the Middle East has continued to degenerate as the region has been thrown into a cycle of violence and an unprecedented arms race.

27. The Palestinian people are used as pawns in the ideological confrontation and the pursuit of super-Power ambitions. As was the case in the partition plan, the Palestinian people are not consulted and their legitimate interests are consistently and completely ignored while, instead, considerations completely alien to the problems of the area are invoked to determine the course of events in the region.

28. The continued denial to the Palestinian people of their rights and Israel's incessant campaign of lawlessness are the related key issues in the problem. The occupation of Arab territories, the annexation of the Syrian Golan Heights, the attack on the Iraqi nuclear facilities, the invasion of Lebanon, the Sabra and Shatila massacres and the Israel-sponsored acts of terrorism and assassination are all germane to these two factors. It is regrettable that, as is the case with the *apartheid* régime of South Africa, Israel is encouraged in its intransigence by the unwavering support—or at least the non-repudiation of its policies of aggression, occupation and denial of human rights—that it receives from the United States.

29. The refusal by Israel to comply with the numerous resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council constitutes the major obstacle to peace in the Middle East. The Israeli policies of aggression against and occupation of Arab and Palestinian territories, as well as its outright annexation of territory, are inadmissible, as they are in total violation of international law and principles and have contributed to the exacerbation of tension. There are other violations of the United Nations resolutions and the principles of international law committed by Israel, as demonstrated by the campaign to establish illegal settlements in the occupied territories so as to change the demographic composition of those territories and thus create a *fait accompli* in the region. The international community has made it clear that unless Israel desists from further aggravating the situation, which as a consequence of its actions has already been transformed into a perpetual state of war, the Middle East will be plunged further into unending conflict.

30. The Assembly, the Security Council and the international community as a whole have a duty to work for

peace in the Middle East, because the issues involved concern the very fabric of international relations. The situation, as it relates both to the denial of rights to a people and to international peace and security, calls for immediate action to contain the problem.

31. The most significant outcome of the many years of United Nations preoccupation with the problem has clearly been the evolution of common understanding and broad agreement on the nature of the problem itself, as well as the modalities and ingredients of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution in the Middle East. At the same time, however, the international community has also seen the prospects of a peaceful settlement continuously fade from the horizon as it has had to resort to force and the perpetration of more human suffering.

32. The Palestinians are a people with a legitimate claim to their homeland. They have the right to speak for themselves; hence the PLO, their sole legitimate representative, must be enabled to consolidate its ranks. Accordingly, the United Republic of Tanzania views with serious concern the current divisive differences within that organization. We hope that the international community will assist in promoting and facilitating reconciliation and restoring harmony among the Palestinian people.

33. Clearly the problems in the Middle East have ramifications beyond the Palestinian question *per se*. Another tragic manifestation of the problems in the Middle East is the current crisis in Lebanon. We are concerned at the continuing fratricidal fighting in that country, with its implications for international peace and security, which has been exacerbated by the involvement of certain external Powers with global interests. We hope the international community will spare no effort in working towards the restoration of the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon.

34. There exists consensus on the general conditions which would facilitate the solution of the Middle East problem and restore peace and stability to the region. We continue to believe that any such modality must be based on the following: first, the total and unconditional withdrawal of Israel from all the Arab territories occupied since 1967; secondly, the reaffirmation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to return to their homeland, to self-determination and to establish their own independent State in the area of Palestine; thirdly, the reaffirmation of the right of all the States in the region to an independent existence within secure and internationally recognized boundaries.

35. The Assembly must reaffirm those primary prerequisites for peace in the Middle East. Accordingly, the United Republic of Tanzania welcomed the adoption by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine in August this year of a proposal for an international conference on the Middle East, to be convened on the basis of the principles of the Charter and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, for the purpose of finding a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. In pointing out that the essential element of the conference would be the creation of an independent Palestinian State in Palestine, the Conference underlined the centrality of the Palestinian question to the whole Middle East problem. We expect the Security Council and the world community to respond to that challenge and bring peace to the region.

36. Mr. VRAALSEN (Norway): Recent developments in the Middle East have given little cause for hope that the problems of that region are nearer to a peaceful solution. The actual state of affairs in the Middle East seems to have made it even more difficult to achieve a comprehensive settlement which could eventually bring

a just and lasting peace to that highly volatile part of the world.

37. Confronted with the increasing dangers of an escalation that threatens the security of the region and beyond, we all share the obligation to do our utmost to promote the peace-making process. My Government continues to believe that peace and security in the Middle East can ultimately be achieved only through a negotiated settlement that will take due account of the basic aspirations and the vital interests of all the parties concerned. The use of force cannot resolve the Middle East conflict but serves only to escalate and further complicate it.

38. During the last year, Lebanon has been at the forefront of international attention. My Government has been following the tragic events in Lebanon with growing concern. The loss of life and destruction in the aftermath of the invasion in 1982 caused shock and distress all over the world. The fighting has continued on and off throughout this year, with great suffering for the people of Lebanon. Once again, we appeal to all parties to refrain from further acts of violence and to respect the independence, territorial integrity and national sovereignty of Lebanon. All efforts should be made in Lebanon to achieve a national reconciliation by bridging the internal divisions.

39. The Norwegian Government welcomes and supports the effort made by President Gemayel to move towards a national reconciliation. Only on the basis of such a reconciliation will it prove possible to rebuild a peaceful and independent Lebanon. We strongly urge all outside parties to curb the traffic of arms to the different parties in Lebanon. Moreover, we share the view that no foreign troops should remain in Lebanon without the consent of the Lebanese Government. Given the gravity of the current situation, Norway sincerely appeals to all parties in Lebanon to work with each other in the search for peace.

40. Despite new cycles of violence, my delegation believes that it is possible to conduct fruitful and constructive negotiations on the situation in the Middle East. It must be stressed, however, that the situation is precarious and could very easily further deteriorate. It is therefore essential that all the parties concerned show moderation and restraint.

41. In the opinion of the Norwegian Government, the basic elements of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement are contained in the Charter of the United Nations and in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). The most important elements remain the following: the acquisition of territory by force cannot be accepted and all States in the area must have the right to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders. The third prerequisite for a lasting peace in the Middle East is recognition and implementation of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination.

42. Taken together, these basic principles would strike a balance between the most vital interests of the parties concerned. Only if the parties mutually recognize these fundamental interests will it be possible to break out of the vicious cycle of violence, enmity, fear and mistrust that has prevailed for so many years.

43. Certainly, it is not enough to state these principles in abstract terms. They must be translated into political action. First, on the part of Israel, this means withdrawal from territories that have been occupied since the 1967 war. In this connection, one cannot but be concerned about the growth of the illegal Israeli settlements on the West Bank. My Government has repeatedly deplored this policy, which entails negative consequences for the

general political climate in the Middle East. We urge the Israeli Government to discontinue this policy. Secondly, on the part of the Palestinians and the Arab countries, it means recognition of Israel and its right to exist within internationally recognized borders.

44. My delegation shares the view that a just and lasting peace in the Middle East would be difficult to obtain without the active support of the major Powers. Norway, for its part, has supported the efforts made by the Government of the United States to find solutions to the conflicts in the Middle East, for example the Camp David accords, which brought peace between Egypt and Israel, and the plan presented by President Reagan in 1982 which remains a valid and constructive blueprint for progress in the Middle East conflict. We urge the United States to continue its efforts to find peaceful solutions to the problems of the Middle East. In the present situation, this would also necessitate a dialogue with the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic. Such a dialogue would be in the interest of all parties concerned, and we would express our hope that the Rumsfeld mission will lead to a greater understanding between the parties as to their mutual interests in a political settlement.

45. May I add here that the set of principles agreed upon last year at the Twelfth Arab Summit Conference,¹ held at Fez, contains a number of new, constructive and positive elements that could contribute to the success of the peace process.

46. The Palestinian problem remains at the core of the Middle East conflict. A solution can only be found in the context of direct negotiations between the parties concerned, including representatives of the Palestinian people. The Palestinians cannot be expected to accept the responsibilities inherent in any peace solution unless they themselves have had a voice in the negotiations leading up to the solution.

47. In conclusion, Norway has given and will continue to give its support to all efforts aimed at resolving the Middle East conflict in a constructive and equitable manner.

48. Mr. MOUSHOUTAS (Cyprus): We are deeply disturbed at the fact that despite the numerous resolutions and decisions adopted by the Assembly, despite the overwhelming desire of the international community that the Middle East problem be resolved as soon as possible on the basis of the Organization's resolutions and decisions, the situation in the Middle East, instead of improving, is, on the contrary, deteriorating even further, thus constituting one of the major sources of tension in the world.

49. Israel's policy of aggression and expansion and its continued violation of international law, the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and all the resolutions of the Organization, have turned the region into a most dangerous hotbed of crisis.

50. The numerous statements we have heard so far on the situation in the Middle East expressing the positions of the various Governments leave no doubt as to the crucial importance attached to it and the urgency with which the problem must be faced. At the same time, the responsibility of Israel for the lack of progress or, rather, the retrogression we are witnessing, cannot be overlooked.

51. Israel's defiance of the relevant United Nations resolutions and decisions, its persistence in establishing more and more settlements in the occupied territories, the repression of the civilian population in the Palestinian and Arab territories occupied by Israel, its illegal effort to annex the Syrian Golan Heights, its attempt to gain international acceptance of the transfer of its capital to

Jerusalem, and its invasion of neighbouring Lebanon—all these acts provide clear evidence of the expansionist policies Israel follows in dealing with its neighbours.

52. The contempt Israel is showing for the decisions of the international community and for international law and world public opinion clearly shows that the solution it envisages and pursues regarding the Middle East problem is one based on military adventurism. Israel's unacceptable policies in the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories and its intensified efforts to transform the demographic and administrative character of these territories are indicative of its aim of trying to impose its will in the region by military might.

53. At a time when the overall international situation has been exacerbated and international tensions are causing grave concerns, developments in the Middle East are even more dangerous. The perpetuation of the problem and the frequent flare-ups we witness year after year in this strategically sensitive region, especially the recent bloodshed in Lebanon, constitute a serious threat to international peace. The outbreak of hostilities in the region involves the horrifying possibility that they may not be restricted to that region, but may spread and engulf the whole world, with catastrophic results.

54. The Seventh Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, which took place at New Delhi from 7 to 12 March this year, reiterated that the question of the Middle East would not be resolved and that peace would not be established in the region unless all the following principles were recognized.

55. First, the question of Palestine is the core of the Middle East problem and the root cause of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

56. Secondly, the question of Palestine and the Middle East problem form an indivisible whole, and cannot be dealt with or resolved separately. In view of this, a partial solution, or a solution confined to some aspects of the conflict to the exclusion of others, is not possible. Nor is it possible to establish a partial peace. Peace should be just and comprehensive.

57. Thirdly, a just peace in the region can be based only on Israel's total and unconditional withdrawal from all occupied Palestinian and Arab territories and the restoration of all the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to return to their homes, the right to self-determination without foreign interference and the right to establish their own independent and sovereign State in their national territory, on the basis of General Assembly resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974.

58. Fourthly, West Jerusalem is part of occupied Palestinian territory; Israel should withdraw completely and unconditionally from it and restore it to Arab sovereignty.

59. Fifthly, the PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people; it alone has the full right to represent this people and to participate fully in all international conferences, activities and events relating to the question of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict, in order to secure the alienable national rights of the Palestinian people and to solve the Middle East problem. No solution can be considered comprehensive, just or acceptable without the participation of the PLO, on an independent and equal footing, in its elaboration and acceptance.

60. Sixthly, all the measures taken by Israel in the Arab and Palestinian territories since their occupation, covering installations and all changes affecting political, cultural, religious, demographic, physical, geographical and other features, are null and void and illegal.

61. Finally, all settlements established, or to be established, by Israel in occupied territories are null and void and illegal and are considered an obstacle to peace. They should, therefore, be pulled down immediately; no new settlements should be established and the proliferation of existing settlements should not be allowed.

Miss Dever (Belgium), Vice-President, took the Chair.

62. Cyprus, a founding member of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, fully subscribes to these principles. The Government of the Republic of Cyprus has always supported the solution of the question of the Middle East and of Palestine on the basis of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the decisions and resolutions of the Organization, and the principles and policies of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. In this regard we express our full support for the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and unity of the neighbouring friendly and much-tormented country of Lebanon.

63. In view of our historic and friendly ties with the peoples and countries of the Middle East, and our proximity to the region, the critical situation prevailing there is of special concern to us. But, more than that, we share common experiences and common problems, common hopes and aspirations. The people of Cyprus, like the people of Palestine, have been uprooted from their ancestral homes and lands; their occupied lands are being colonized and they themselves are being deprived of their basic human rights. Turkey is defying the wish of the international community, and, contrary to international law and morality, uses its military power to achieve its goals.

64. The adverse developments in the Middle East make us even more convinced that intensive efforts should be made aiming at an urgent solution of the problem, with the active and equitable participation of all parties concerned. An integral part of this solution is the recognition of the right of all countries and peoples of the region to safe, independent and peaceful development within recognized boundaries, free from the threat or use of force.

65. A comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the conflict in the Middle East would be in the vital interests not only of the peoples of the region, but of the world as a whole. We urge the international community to intensify its efforts to find such a solution for the sake of peace and security in the Middle East and in the world in general.

66. Mr. PAPAJOGEJI (Albania): This year, the question of the Middle East is being discussed in the Assembly at a time when the situation in the region is very tense and fraught with great dangers, seriously threatening not only the Arab peoples and countries of the region and those around it, but also international peace and security.

67. At the root of all this lies the aggressive activity of the Israeli Zionists, the expansionist policy of imperialism and social imperialism and the support it receives from various reactionary forces.

68. The two imperialist super-Powers, the United States of America and the Soviet Union, have further intensified their plotting policies and activities in the Middle East, with a view to elbowing each other out so as to keep the Arab countries under their yoke, plunder their resources and stifle the just national liberation and anti-imperialist movements of the peoples of the region. To this end, they have increased enormously their military presence in the Middle East. They have massed their aggressive fleets there, fleets which haunt the region like monsters, port facilities for them having been secured.

69. A very dangerous situation has been created, especially since the aggression launched by the Israeli Zionists,

supported by American imperialism, against Lebanon. As is now well known, the aim of this criminal aggression was to deal a heavy blow at the Palestinian movement, to achieve the *de facto* partition of Lebanon and to turn it into a springboard for acts of aggression against other Arab countries.

70. Time has shown that the stationing in Lebanon of the United States Marines and troops from some other countries constitutes a precedent with very dangerous potential consequences. It is being exploited to legalize an action which in turn paves the way for the old policy of imperialist Powers, which, under the pretext of maintaining order, sent their armies to various countries to establish their colonial domination.

71. Recent events show that the American forces which were sent there allegedly to maintain peace have undertaken such military operations as may lead to war, with very grave consequences for the Arab peoples and other peoples the world over.

72. The super-Powers instigated, provoked and try to keep alive the fratricidal war between Iraq and the Islamic Republic of Iran, a war that is causing heavy losses to the peoples of both countries. They are doing their utmost to stifle the anti-imperialist revolution of the Iranian people, who overthrew the despotic régime of the Shah and expelled the imperialists from their country.

73. The further aggravation of the situation during this period is being exploited by the Zionists of Tel Aviv, who, owing to all kinds of political, economic and military support and assistance of American imperialism, are acting without restraint and escalating their aggressive activities against the Palestinian people and other Arab peoples. The Israeli Zionists continue to hold the Arab territories under their occupation. Not only do they not intend to release them, they are, on the contrary, expanding them by undertaking new invasions while speeding up their colonization. They are practising a policy of brutal genocide against the Palestinian people while planning and preparing new aggressions with the aim of attacking and subjugating one after another those Arab countries that do not agree with the expansionist policy of the Tel Aviv hangmen and their masters in Washington.

74. There is no doubt that it is Washington that incites and supports Israel, which, for its part, has been and remains an obedient instrument of the United States of America, putting into effect that country's policy in the Middle East. The strategic alliance between the United States of America and Israel has been designed and forged in order to be used continuously against the Arab peoples, to threaten and blackmail all the Muslim peoples and to extend the range of activity of Israel's military machine.

75. The Soviet social imperialists, too, through their policies and activities, have encouraged and favoured Zionist aggression. Who can really believe that the Soviet Union sincerely supports the Palestinian people and the other Arab peoples when the Soviet army has invaded Afghanistan by fire and sword and holds it under occupation, and when, as is known by everybody, the Soviet Union has allowed tens of thousands of Jews to leave the Soviet Union for Israel to colonize the occupied Arab territories?

76. The Israeli Zionists undertake anti-Arab military actions whenever the interests of the imperialist monopolies in the region are affected. The imperialists are not interested in solving the problem of the Middle East. On the contrary, their policy and activities in the region have further aggravated the situation there. They stir up trouble and create conflicts in order more easily to reach

their goals in this oil-rich and strategically important region. It is the ambition of the big monopolies to plunder the wealth of the Arab countries in the Middle East, which constitutes the core of the conflict between the imperialists and the Arab peoples.

77. At present, the American imperialists, the Soviet social imperialists and other enemies of the Palestinian people are all active. All of them wave the olive branch and cry out in defence of the freedom and independence of peoples; all of them send cables and exchange messages, now with one and now with the other; but all of them conceal the truth, and the truth is that they are protecting nothing but their own mean interests, at the expense of the Arab peoples.

78. The Camp David accord, its supplement—the Reagan plan³—or other plans which circulate over the hot sands of the Middle East offer no solution to the problem. On the contrary, they aim at undermining its solution, and this enables Israel to reach its objectives and the super-Powers to strengthen their grip on the region.

79. At present, as in the past, the Palestinian problem remains the core of the question of the Middle East. It is no accident that the enemies of the Arab peoples and of the Palestinian people have intensified more than ever before their attacks aimed at eliminating the Palestinian struggle and closing the chapter of the Palestinian problem once and for all. But the question of Palestine can be neither closed nor buried by the plots hatched against it, for it is the just cause of a people determined to fight to the end to regain its plundered homeland.

80. The American imperialists, the Soviet social imperialists, the Israeli Zionists and other reactionary forces are intensifying their policy of divide and rule, which aims at destroying the unity of the Arab peoples. In particular, their attempts to sow discord within the PLO and to estrange it from various Arab countries cannot but have grave consequences. The strengthening of unity is essential in the struggle of the Arab peoples against their common enemies. The Arab peoples, which have distinguished themselves by their freedom-loving and patriotic traditions and have produced a civilization that is known and highly valued by all mankind, will find their way to unity, which will help them stay the criminal hand of Zionist imperialist aggression.

81. The Albanian people and their Government have strongly condemned the ugly crimes and the cruel genocide practised by the Israeli Zionists against the Palestinian people, and the intrigues and plots of the super-Powers against the Arab peoples. In expressing the firm support of the Socialist People's Republic of Albania for the just struggle of the Arab peoples, Mr. Enver Hoxha, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Albanian Labour Party, has said:

“However protracted the struggle, however great the difficulties and however many the sacrifices required of them, victory will be theirs. Right is on their side. The whole of progressive mankind is with them. Our people have always stood beside the fraternal Arab peoples and the heroic Palestinian people and supported their just cause. In the future, too, the just struggle of the Arabs and the Palestinians will have the full and unreserved support of the Albanian people.”

82. Mr. WAHEED (Pakistan): In his report on the situation in the Middle East, the Secretary-General presents a pessimistic picture of the area, stating that “The developments in the Middle East during the past year have given little cause for hope that the problems of that region are nearer to solution”. [*See A/38/458, para. 39.*] In the

past year, as in preceding years, we once again witnessed a fruitless search for peace and an absence of progress on any element of a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict. Indeed, the situation in the area has further deteriorated and has reached an explosive point, at which it could spark off a wider conflagration.

83. The escalation of the fighting in Lebanon and the visit of the Israeli Prime Minister to Washington—which reportedly resulted in the materialization of a strategic dimension in relations between the two countries—are the two most recent developments which add to the existing tension in the area and represent new sources of concern and anguish on the Middle East scene.

84. Commenting on these developments, a Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman expressed great concern over the escalation of the fighting in Lebanon following attacks on 5 December by United States aircraft against Syrian-held positions, and stressed the imperative need for restraint by all concerned. The spokesman also added that the reported political and military accord between Israel and the United States would only embolden Israel to carry out fresh aggression against its neighbours in total disregard of international norms.

85. The reported United States-Israeli accord, which is apparently aimed at bolstering Israel's security, is unlikely to help the cause of peace in the Middle East. The issue of Israel's security is a contrived one. Israel has at its disposal a military machine which not only ensures its security against any conceivable challenges in the region, but has become the vehicle of its expansionism, threatening the security of all its Arab neighbours.

86. The issues at stake in the Middle East are diverse. They relate to the fate of the Arab and Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967, the future of the Palestinian people who continue to live either in exile or under foreign subjugation, and the termination of Israeli aggression against Lebanon, which cannot be allowed to become the beginning of yet another phase of Israeli expansionism and occupation of an Arab land.

87. Peace and security are indivisible, and to that extent the security of every nation in the Middle East depends on the prospects of peace in that sensitive and strategic area of the world.

88. The Arab States, as well as the PLO, responded positively to the demands for a just peace in the Middle East when they offered the Arab peace plan,¹ adopted on 9 September last year at the Twelfth Arab Summit Conference, held at Fez, in the wake of Israel's unprovoked invasion of Lebanon. In this plan they offered a reasonable basis for the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East in which all States could coexist within secure boundaries. At the International Conference on Palestine, held at Geneva from 29 August to 7 September this year, the same offer was revived with the recognition of the right of all States in the region to exist within secure and internationally recognized boundaries. Israel rejected both these opportunities of peace out of hand. It did so not because these offers failed to extend assurances of security to all States of the region, but because they emphasized the quintessential elements of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East—namely, the end of Israeli occupation of the Arab and Palestinian territories and respect for the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to a sovereign State in their homeland.

89. Israel's refusal to withdraw from the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories or to respect the Palestinian rights is evident, more than anywhere else, in its policies

and practices in these territories. The sole objective of these policies is to annex and absorb these territories into a "Greater Israel".

90. Israel is attempting systematically to change the legal status of the West Bank and Gaza and it has already enacted laws to that effect in respect of the Holy City of Jerusalem, despite the rejection of these steps by the Security Council and the General Assembly. The Arab and Palestinian population of the territories is being systematically harassed, terrorized politically and economically and persecuted, with the clear aim of pushing it into exile. Above all, Israel is attempting to change the demographic and historic character of the occupied territories, in particular the West Bank; a stark manifestation of this is the continuing establishment and expansion of Jewish settlements in these territories, which in turn displace and dispossess the Arab and Palestinian inhabitants of the lands.

91. Nearly 60 per cent of the land in the West Bank has been usurped by the Israeli authorities; they have established more than 150 settlements on that land. The pace with which Israel is pursuing this objective can be judged by the reports regarding Israeli settlement activity provided by the Government of Jordan.⁴ During the months of August and September 1983 alone, Israel established seven new settlements in the West Bank. It is therefore not surprising that all peace initiatives, regardless of their origin, have demanded a halt to the establishment of settlements as a proof of Israel's willingness to work for peace in the region. Israel must abandon its expansionism if it entertains a genuine desire for peace.

92. Beyond the occupied territories, since its invasion of Lebanon a year ago, Israel has missed no opportunity to demonstrate its military might and superiority and to retaliate with brutal reprisals wherever it has encountered resistance to its occupation of southern Lebanon. Its notion of secure boundaries now appears to extend to the Awali River in Lebanon, along which it is engaged in consolidating its position. Israeli military power may have the capability of inflicting death and destruction on the people of Palestine, Lebanon and other Arab countries but it will not succeed in breaking their determination to live in dignity as sovereign, independent people; nor will it ever succeed in coercing them into accepting an unequal peace on Israel's terms.

93. The declarations and decisions of the United Nations offer the best hope for a just and peaceful settlement of the Middle East question. Pakistan firmly believes that the Arab peace plan adopted at Fez continues to constitute a viable basis for bringing peace to that troubled region. The Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights,² adopted at the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, also outlines measures which can supplement this important peace effort.

94. We urge the early institution of a suitable negotiating process, including an appropriately organized international conference within the framework defined by the International Conference at Geneva. In this regard, we fully agree with the Secretary-General that the Security Council provides a practical framework for setting in motion the regional peace process in the Middle East, as its procedures permit the participation of all parties concerned.

95. The situation in the Middle East is an issue which has persisted since the inception of the United Nations, and it continues to test the ability of the Organization to maintain international peace and security. A just resolution of the Middle East conflict is therefore imperative not only to bringing peace to a sensitive region of the

world but also to sustaining the credibility of the United Nations as an instrument for international peace and security and a symbol of human aspirations to the promotion of international relations based on the principles of the Charter. The grim consequences of the Palestinian tragedy and the Middle East conflict are becoming increasingly visible in an ever-worsening international political climate, and these must be resolved in order to save the world from sliding into a greater crisis.

96. Mr. MANOLATOS (Greece): I have asked to speak in order to express the views of the 10 member States of the European Community on the item before us.

97. The situation in the Middle East has deteriorated over the past 12 months. The consequences of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, which the Ten have vigorously condemned, are still with us. Lebanon has found itself in the throes of a conflict which could have led to its disintegration. The Ten firmly support the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon and the authority of its Government. The Ten express the hope that the dialogue initiated in Lebanon will lead to national reconciliation and ensure the unity of the country. They also stress the need for early progress towards the complete withdrawal of all non-Lebanese forces, with the exception of those whose presence might be required by the Lebanese Government. The Ten are ready to work for these objectives, jointly and individually.

98. The Ten are deeply concerned about the hostilities in northern Lebanon, notably in and around Tripoli, which have caused intolerable suffering and considerable loss of life among the civilian inhabitants of the region, both Palestinians and Lebanese. They recall their Athens statement of 9 November 1983 on the subject and they condemn all bloodshed in Lebanon, whether it comes through internal strife or through external acts of violence. They urge the parties concerned to heed the Security Council's call, contained in its resolution 542 (1983) of 23 November, to cease hostilities immediately and settle their differences exclusively by peaceful means and refrain from the threat or use of force.

99. One regrettable consequence of events in Lebanon has been to make progress towards the settlement of the wider Middle East problem even more difficult. It is the view of the Ten that peace will not prevail in the region unless the security and legitimate interests of all States and peoples are taken into account. The Ten continue to be deeply conscious of the importance that the problem of Palestine holds for future peace and security in the Middle East. They firmly believe that a just solution of this problem is an essential element for any comprehensive peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

100. The commitment of the Ten to the right of Israel to live in peace and security is fundamental and unwavering. In parallel, they further confirm that there can be no real peace or stability in the region unless the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people are recognized. In particular, self-determination for the Palestinian people, with all that this implies, remains an essential element of any comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the conflict. The views of the Ten on the principles which could secure peace in the Middle East were set out in the Venice Declaration, issued on 13 June 1980 by the European Council,⁵ and in subsequent statements on the issue, particularly the statements of the Ten at Brussels, on 29 June⁶ and 20 September 1982⁷ and the European Council's declaration issued on 22 March this year.⁸

101. A way to peace was indicated by President Reagan's initiative of 1 September 1982,³ and the Twelfth Arab Summit Conference, held at Fez, demonstrated a readiness for it. The Ten appeal to all the parties in the conflict

to move forward from a readiness for peace, which all of them have expressed in the past, towards mutual recognition as partners in genuine negotiations on the basis, *inter alia*, of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). The Ten recall in this context the French-Egyptian initiative in the Security Council.⁹

102. The Ten are convinced that negotiations are the key to the problem and that it is for the parties directly concerned to negotiate a lasting settlement. Such negotiations will have to embrace all the parties concerned, including the Palestinian people, and the PLO will have to be associated with them. The Ten call upon each of the parties to assume its international responsibilities without further hesitation. They stress the need for all the parties to abide by the resolutions of the Security Council and to make known explicitly their approval of those resolutions.

103. In the interest of the search for peace, the Ten ask Israel to abandon its policy of gradual annexation and of unilaterally creating *faits accomplis* in the occupied territories, which is contrary to international law and is a major and growing obstacle to peace efforts. For their part, the Ten are closely associated with such efforts, as demonstrated by, among other things, their continuing support for the peace-keeping role of the United Nations as well as of the multinational forces to which some of them contribute. Having a deep interest in the future of the area and close ties and common interests which link them to the Middle East, the Ten will continue to promote peace, to maintain their contacts with all parties and to use their influence to encourage movements towards compromise and negotiated solutions.

104. The Ten have repeatedly expressed their grave concern over the humanitarian situation in Lebanon and stressed the need to adhere strictly to generally recognized humanitarian principles. The European Community and its member States have contributed to the humanitarian assistance operations in Lebanon. In their conclusions adopted at Stuttgart on 19 June 1983 they reaffirmed their serious concern at the distress of the Palestinian civilian population and expressed the hope that the relevant international organizations would be allowed to assist those people without hindrance.¹⁰ They are deeply appreciative of the relief work which has been carried out in Lebanon by different international agencies, in the most difficult conditions. They call on all parties to co-operate with the responsible agencies as well as with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, which, on an interim basis, has been entrusted by the Security Council with important additional tasks in the humanitarian and administrative fields.

105. The Ten have just had occasion, at the 32nd meeting of the Special Political Committee, to express their concern at the continued aggravation of the situation in the occupied territories. They attach the greatest importance to all matters affecting the rights of the population of the Arab territories which Israel has occupied since 1967. The Ten are deeply concerned because the Israeli policies in the area have led to mounting tension and continued unrest. They reaffirm their position that the settlements in the Arab territories occupied since 1967, as well as any change in the status and demographic structure of these territories, are illegal under international law.

106. The Ten reaffirm that until an end is put to the territorial occupation which Israel has maintained since 1967, within the framework of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement, the relevant provisions of the Regulations annexed to the Hague Convention IV of 1907¹¹ and the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of

Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949,¹² are applicable to all these territories. Moreover, the Ten reiterate that Israeli policy concerning East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights is contrary to international law and therefore invalid, in their view.

107. Another aggravating factor in the Middle East is the continuing war between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq, in which the Ten have been and will remain neutral. The Ten strongly deplore the lack of progress towards a solution to this conflict, which constitutes a serious threat to the stability of the region and to international security and entails heavy suffering for the two peoples involved. They appeal urgently to the two belligerents to spare the civilian population and to abide by all international conventions applicable in time of war. In this respect, they welcome the report of the United Nations mission¹³ which visited areas subjected to attacks and stress the utility of such missions.

108. On the other hand, the Ten deeply regret that none of the peace initiatives undertaken hitherto has succeeded in bringing the fighting between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq to an end. They take this opportunity to call once more for a cease-fire, the cessation of all military operations and the withdrawal of forces to internationally recognized frontiers, and for a just and honourable settlement, acceptable to both parties. Security Council resolution 540 (1983) could constitute the starting point for a process leading to peace. The Ten confirm their readiness, if requested by both parties, to participate in the efforts aimed at restoring peace in the area. They appeal to the belligerents to refrain from any act of war or measure which might endanger free navigation in the Gulf, or which might lead to an escalation of hostilities.

109. In conclusion, the Ten are convinced that every effort must be made to grasp all opportunities for making real progress towards peace in the Middle East. While fully realizing the complexity of the issues involved, the Ten reaffirm that problems can and must be solved without recourse to the use of force. They will continue their best efforts in pursuance of this objective.

110. Mr. KIRÇA (Turkey): The Arab-Israeli conflict is by far the most challenging issue facing the international community today, not only because of its intrinsic importance, but also because of its always serious implications for world peace and security. The situation in the Middle East has not improved in the past year and the danger signs are now ominous and more readily discernible than ever before.

111. Turkey always takes a very close interest in the events of the Middle East region. Our location, our history and the fraternal ties that bind us to the Arab people make us vitally concerned with what happens in that region. We consistently strive for stability in the Middle East and encourage and support all genuine efforts for the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. That is why we earnestly hope that the present debate will provide us with a better understanding of where possibilities for peace-making lie. We believe that discussion of major issues in the General Assembly should be instrumental in bringing the international community closer together in their perceptions and understanding of those issues. We must all aim, not at easy victories without real content, but at understanding the essence of the Arab-Israeli conflict in our search for specific steps that would facilitate the achievement of an overall settlement in the Middle East. This is the spirit in which we approach the present debate.

112. In the view of the Government of Turkey, the crucial requisite for the resolution of the Middle East problem is a cohesive and united position on the part

of the Arab States. The Arab people must act together and with singleness of purpose. Any differences they might have among or within themselves should be resolved by peaceful means and in a manner that does not adversely affect their capacity to pursue a just and lasting settlement of the Middle East question. History shows that unity translates into strength; the contrary is also unfortunately corroborated by history.

113. In the course of the recent debate on the question of Palestine, we emphasized that the Palestinian problem constituted the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict and that it should be accorded first priority. We stated that without a just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine first, we could not realistically aim at the solution of the problems between the Arab States and Israel as a whole on a lasting basis. We referred to the usefulness of the results obtained at the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held this year at Geneva, and stressed the importance of the Geneva Declaration on Palestine² and the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights.² At that time, we explained in some detail our views on the Palestinian problem. On this occasion, we shall focus on other dimensions of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

114. The unrelenting violence in Lebanon is a source of deep concern for the people and Government of Turkey. The continued occupation of the country and the presence of foreign elements complicate further the already difficult, indeed colossal, task of putting Lebanon together again. We urge the Lebanese to pursue the process of national reconciliation because there is no acceptable alternative to that process. It is clear that the Lebanese must themselves decide on how they want to reconstruct anew the future of their country and that compromise will be required on all sides to achieve a new balance. We reiterate firmly our support for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon. We also renew our call for the withdrawal from Lebanon of Israeli occupation forces and all other forces not authorized by the Government of Lebanon.

115. Turkey urges the peaceful settlement of the Middle East question through the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive solution. Such a solution requires political will and readiness for negotiation by all the parties to the question. These negotiations must include the representative of the Palestinian people, the PLO. If there is to be peace in the Middle East, all the parties in the region should desist from further exacerbating the tense situation prevailing there.

116. Israel has primary responsibility in this regard. The intransigence and arrogance which typically characterize Israel's posture are clearly dysfunctional and serve no useful purpose. Israel will not attain the peace and security which it absolutely needs, and which it so ardently professes to desire, by persisting in policies of aggression, annexation, illegal settlements, and the violation and usurpation of the rights of others. Israel's actions are not consistent with its stated goal of peace through negotiation. An essential step therefore would be for Israel to begin to align its words with its deeds *vis-à-vis* its Arab neighbours.

117. Perhaps the paramount way in which Israel can demonstrate its commitment to a peaceful future would be for it to cease forthwith its policy of illegal settlements in the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories.

118. We witness with growing dismay Israel's relentless pursuit of expanding and increasing Israeli settlements, which continue to proliferate all over the occupied territories. More than any other factor in the current equation of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the issue of settlements

is the most insidious and potentially the most dangerous process, debilitating the prospects of any negotiated settlement. In what territory are the Arab Palestinians to exercise their right of self-determination if Israel steadily absorbs and, for all practical purposes, annexes the Arab lands it has occupied since 1967? The Government of Israel must know from experience how complex the question of settlements is and how difficult it is to reverse the process once it is set in motion and allowed to gain momentum. Israel should also be aware of the terrible cost it is inflicting on the civilian Arab population in the course of implementing the policy of settlements. There is not, nor can there be, any justification whatsoever for the oppression of innocent people who are already suffering the great injustice of having to live under foreign military occupation in their own land. Israel must immediately and unconditionally put an end to its repressive policies, which violate the basic rights of civilian populations. The rules of international law in this respect are well established, and Israel is obligated to apply the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949 to the Arab territories under its occupation since 1967.

119. The recognition and application of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people is the *sine qua non* of peace and security for the Middle East region as a whole. Only then will all the States in the region be able truly to look forward to existence within safe and internationally recognized boundaries. At the same time, for any settlement in the Middle East to be just and enduring, it must entail Israel's withdrawal from all Arab and Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem. The preservation of and ensuring of respect of the historically unique character and special status of the Holy City of Jerusalem also constitute an indispensable element for peace in the Middle East.

120. These are the conditions that have to be attained to bring peace and stability to the Middle East. In the mean time, we cannot condone and we must not acknowledge or recognize Israeli acts with respect to the Holy City of Jerusalem. All acts by Israel which have altered or have purported to alter the character and status of Jerusalem are null and void. We request Israel to comply with the resolutions of the United Nations on the subject of Jerusalem. Similarly, Israel must rescind its unilateral decision on the Golan Heights, which belong to the Syrian Arab Republic. Turkey has categorically condemned that decision, regarding it as null and void and without legal effect.

121. The situation in the Middle East easily lends itself to a pessimistic assessment of the future course of events and developments in the region. This is precisely why we must all make an effort to prevent a further deterioration of conditions in the area and seek ways to improve the situation. Turkey believes that, despite traumatic setbacks in the region, the momentum for peace is still alive. The Arab peace plan, adopted by the Twelfth Arab Summit Conference at Fez on 9 September 1982,¹ an important milestone in the search for peace, retains its validity and relevance. Since the plan represents a common Arab position, it has promise and potential which must be exploited constructively by all concerned and must be built upon patiently. There have also been other worthwhile efforts and initiatives which, while not conclusive, have served to revitalize the dynamics for peace-making.

122. The most recent expression of the desire and potential for a peaceful settlement in the Middle East has been the convening of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine. The Conference, in which Turkey took an active part, decided that it was essential to convene an international peace conference on the Middle East

within the framework of the purposes and principles of the Charter and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, with the aim of achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. We believe that Israel, in particular, and all other concerned parties should ponder over the meaning and results of the Conference and consider how those elements can be utilized for the achievement of the objectives of peace, security and stability in the region.

123. We do not wish even to contemplate an alternative to a peaceful solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. We must all strive for the reduction of tension in the area and for the creation of conditions that would be conducive to genuine dialogue and meaningful negotiation. We renew our call to Israel to stop journeying along the path to force and confrontation and to take the path of reason, negotiation and conciliation. The former path is self-defeating; the latter holds the promise of peace, security and happiness. We urge our Arab brethren to continue their pursuit of a peaceful settlement because we know, as they must know, that their just cause will in the end prevail.

124. Mr. LEGWAILA (Botswana): In his report [4/38/458], the Secretary-General pertinently describes the situation in the Middle East as a "great historical tragedy". Indeed, the past year has witnessed the inexorable unfolding of even more tragic events in that tormented region. Death and carnage seem to have become the hallmark of the area.

125. To the brutalized people of Lebanon, life must seem to have lost its sanctity—its very meaning—as literally every day scores of innocent Lebanese men, women and children are bombed out of existence. The same is the lot of the Palestinian people, who not only have remained homeless and stateless but have also become caught up in the seemingly interminable death dance so characteristic of the Middle East today. As if the squalor and misery of life in the refugee camps were not more than enough, Palestinians have also increasingly become helpless victims of instant death and perpetual flight from one refugee camp to another as shooting matches, even between factions of their own children, become the order of the day.

126. The people of Israel, too, would be deluding themselves if they were to lull themselves into a false sense of security and to portray themselves and their beleaguered State as an impregnable fortress, an island of tranquillity in a turbulent sea—even a sea of blood and chaos. There is nothing tranquil about Israel today. There is no way the people of Israel can ever enjoy genuine peace and security as long as they remain indifferent to the homelessness and statelessness of a whole nation—the Palestinian nation. Palestinians will never reach the stage, in their struggle for freedom, where they will stop yearning to be free and willing to pay the ultimate price for their freedom.

127. And so we are still where we were when we debated this vexing issue last year. That is, we are nowhere near a solution to the Middle East question. Meanwhile, the situation has become even more frightening. A terrifying assortment of foreign troops remains ensconced in Lebanon; invited or not, that is not the point. The point is that the very necessity of their presence there must be a source of heightened anxiety for us all, for the Middle East is not an ordinary region where even the testing of the latest in weapons of war can be done with so much impunity.

128. My country is of the view that, like any Member State of the Organization, Lebanon has every right to ask to be left alone to decide its own future without uninvited

interference in its internal affairs. We therefore support Lebanon's call for uninvited troops to withdraw from its territory.

129. We have repeatedly argued that there can be no peace in the Middle East so long as the Palestinian question is not fully and realistically addressed. The Palestinians want a State of their own, just as the Jewish people wanted a State of their own before Israel was created. The Jewish people, surely, should be the first to appreciate the searing agony of homelessness and statelessness. Palestinians want nothing more or less than the Jewish people wanted before the State of Israel was created for them. And the Palestinians are entitled to nothing more or less than what the Jewish people have. They, too, are entitled to a State in which they will be free to decide their own future, organize their own society in their own way and determine their own destiny as they see fit.

130. This suggests that any solution intended to proscribe the free expression of the aspirations of the Palestinian people will not work, for the Palestinians are not interested in half a loaf. They want a whole loaf. They want a homeland unencumbered, unfettered, with all the appurtenances of statehood, sovereignty, integrity and independence.

131. It therefore goes without saying that any solution to the Palestinian question reached in the absence of the full participation in the negotiations of the authentic leaders of the Palestinian people will be worth nothing more than Muzorewa's internal settlement in Ian Smith's Rhodesia. The Palestinians must be allowed to play a leading role in the search for a solution to their own problem rather than be treated as if they are incapable of articulating what it is they want for themselves.

132. Otherwise, Botswana will remain opposed to the predication of the existence of the State of Israel on the condition that Palestinians remain a nation of refugees, with no home, no State, no hope, no future in the land of their forebears. We have to be realistic. It is unrealistic to think that any of the States in the Middle East will meekly agree to be wiped from the face of that region in exchange for the creation of a Palestinian State. All the countries in the region have every right to exist. That is, they have every right to exist as long as their existence does not preclude the existence of others. And so we are adamant in our conviction that possibly the surest way of finding a final solution to the Palestinian problem is for the Arab neighbours of Israel to accept unambiguously the existence and reality of the State of Israel. That is to take away from the Jewish State the often-stated excuse that Israel cannot be expected to accept the creation of a Palestinian State on its own ashes. Is it not high time our Arab friends called Israel's bluff?

133. As the Secretary-General points out in his report: "Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories, the rights of the States in the area to live in peace within secure boundaries and the future and rights of the Palestinians still constitute the main elements of the Middle East conflict as it now faces us" [*ibid.*, para. 41].

All these elements must be addressed with all the seriousness they deserve, if there is to be a real solution to the Middle East problem. Simple logic dictates that each of the elements is important in its own right and can be ignored only at the peril of any initiative aimed at addressing any of the others. Israel must withdraw from Arab territories if it expects its Arab neighbours even to contemplate the possibility of forgetting the enmities of the past and begin to speak of peace and coexistence with the Jewish State. All the States in the region must be made to feel secure within recognized boundaries if they are to be encouraged to refrain from

engaging in the politics of military adventurism. And the rights and future of the Palestinians should be seen and understood to be inseparably bound up with any hope for a lasting solution to the Middle East problem.

134. We are fully aware that the past, particularly a past such as we have in the Middle East, with its ancient historical and theological overtones, is not the easiest thing to forget. There are those in the Middle East, if we are to be frank, who will eternally regard the State of Israel as an inexcusable, intolerable and totally unacceptable accident of history which must be completely nullified, voided and extinguished. In our view, to share such an ossified position is simply to wish that there will never be a solution to the Middle East problem. As we have said before, an accident of history or not, the painful fact is that so far the State of Israel has shown itself to be not a transient phenomenon but a living, permanent reality with which we have to reckon if we are to be realistic and approach the Middle East question realistically.

135. I speak as one who comes from southern Africa, a region where more than 300 years ago a group of Dutchmen representing a Dutch company called the Dutch East India Company arrived at the south-western tip of our continent on their way to the East to look for spices. Having run out of their supplies of fresh food, Jan Van Riebeeck, the leader of the group, and his men, decided to come to the Cape of Good Hope to grow some vegetables before proceeding with their voyage to India, their destination. That was 1652 and we are now in 1983.

136. Jan Van Riebeeck's descendants are today the exclusive rulers of South Africa—that is, they rule the country to the exclusion of the indigenous populations. Africa is sworn to fight their tyranny and their exclusivism to the bitter end, but only their tyranny—not their right to exist in our midst.

137. And yet, accident of history or not, we in Africa have accepted white South Africans as Africans, even as we hate with all the zeal at our command all the racism and the inhumanities of *apartheid* they have introduced in the southern tip of our continent. This is because we came to the realization that we would do no good to our own right to exist in southern Africa by threatening to nullify the right to existence of others—those who, perhaps by an accident of history, have made their homes among us. Yes, Africa will fight their racism and *apartheid* to the bitter end, but only their racism and *apartheid*, not their existence or the accident of history they represent.

138. The Middle East needs a lot of forgiving and forgetting if the nations of the area are to begin the arduous task of building foundations for peaceful coexistence. The occupation of Arab territories by a defiant Israel, its invasion of Lebanon in 1982, its persistent massacres of innocent Palestinian women and children caught up in wars some of which they do not even understand, the presence in Lebanon of many bands and battalions of heavily-armed men from so many places, near and far, all of this stands out in stark relief as a frightening augury of catastrophe in the Middle East if nothing is done, and done fast.

139. Mr. SALLAM (Yemen) (*interpretation from Arabic*): As we once again consider the question of the Middle East, I begin by expressing my delegation's appreciation of the Secretary-General for his report. In it, he states that the international community's concern over the events in Lebanon has tended to overshadow consideration of the major aspects of the question of the Middle East [*ibid.*, para. 39]. He also warns that any further delay in reaching a just, comprehensive solution in the Middle East would lead to a catastrophe whose consequences might extend beyond the boundaries of the region.

140. Therefore, with the Security Council failing to play the role that it should under the Charter of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security, the Assembly must adopt resolutions denouncing aggression, condemning the aggressors and reaffirming the principles of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and the principle of the non-use of force or the threat of force in international relations. On this basis, shortly after the declaration of the recent agreement between the United States and Israel on the implementation of the statement of understanding of 30 November 1981, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Yemen Arab Republic issued a communiqué stating:

“The Yemen Arab Republic has followed with grave concern the recent developments in Lebanon, namely, the United States air raids against the Syrian-held positions in Lebanon. While denouncing this act of aggression, it reaffirms its support for the fraternal Lebanese and Syrian peoples as well as for all Arab countries whose independence or security is threatened. It once again reaffirms that the strategic agreement between the Israeli enemy and the United States of America aims at destabilizing the Middle East, promoting the tendency to aggression against the Arab nations and perpetuating the occupation of the Arab and Palestinian territories and of the sister State of Lebanon, as well as the denial of the legitimate, inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, namely, its right to return, to self-determination and to the establishment of its own independent State on Palestinian soil.”

141. Our understanding of the recent strategic agreement between the United States and Israel is not very different from that of other peace-loving countries. First, it is inconsistent with the responsibilities and credibility of the United States as a super-Power and permanent member of the Security Council bearing a special responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security not only in the Middle East, but throughout the world. Secondly, it undermines the credibility of the role which the United States claims to be playing as a neutral mediator to solve the conflict between the States and peoples of the Middle East. Thirdly, it clashes with the sincerity, seriousness and credibility of the United States' peace initiatives to solve the question of the Middle East, at the core of which is the question of Palestine. For any peace initiative to succeed, the initiating State must in good faith pursue a policy of neutrality with regard to the parties to the conflict, foremost among which is the PLO. Fourthly, it is inconsistent with the mandate entrusted to the United States by the international community as co-president of the international peace conference to be convened under the auspices of the United Nations to solve the question of the Middle East. All the parties concerned, including the PLO, are supposed to participate in the conference on an equal footing. The implementation of the strategic agreement gives the United States a special status such that the parties directly concerned in the conflict could regard the United States as having itself become a party to the conflict, as a result of its alignment with Israel. This would adversely affect the extent of United States participation and the sincerity of its peaceful efforts, as well as the seriousness of the positions it might adopt *vis-à-vis* any peace plan at any international peace conference.

142. In listing these realities, the delegation of the Yemen Arab Republic does not intend to offend the United States of America. On the contrary, the intention of my delegation is to offer constructive criticism, in all good faith, and to warn against the possible consequences of this state of affairs.

143. The firm position of principle of the Yemen Arab Republic is to stand firmly by the side of its bigger sister, the Syrian Arab Republic. Any attack against the Syrian Arab Republic would be tantamount to an attack against the Yemen Arab Republic. The people and Government of the Yemen Arab Republic would not hesitate to give all possible support and assistance to the Syrian Arab Republic in the event of its territory being the object of any foreign aggression.

144. The peoples of the Middle East are peace-loving peoples which aspire to peace, based on justice and on respect for the inalienable legitimate rights of peoples. On the basis of our love of peace, we call upon the United States of America to reconsider the statement of understanding between the United States and Israel of 30 November 1981, as well as the recent agreement pertaining to the implementation of that earlier understanding.

145. We call upon the United States to dedicate all its efforts and potential as a super-Power and as a permanent member of the Security Council to bringing pressure to bear upon Israel to respond to the call of the international conscience and recognize the inalienable legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, which has suffered the scourge of displacement, poverty, disease and deprivation, languished under the yoke of Israeli occupation, humiliation and hegemony, and been subjected to carnage and the most sophisticated weapons of war and destruction.

146. We call upon the United States to devote all its efforts and its huge potential to bringing about an honourable, just solution to the question of the Middle East that will uphold the dignity of all the parties concerned and eliminate the hatred and rancour that have accumulated for so long in the hearts of generation after generation. That can be achieved only on the basis of the total and unconditional withdrawal of Israeli troops from all the occupied Arab territories, including the Holy City of Jerusalem, the full recognition of the inalienable legiti-

mate rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to return, to self-determination and to establish its own independent State on Palestinian national soil, the recognition of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and the application of the principles of the Arab peace plan adopted at Fez on 9 September 1982 by the Twelfth Arab Summit Conference.¹

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

NOTES

¹ See *Official Records of the Security Council, Thirty-seventh Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1982*, document S/15510.

² See *Report of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 29 August-7 September 1983* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.83.I.21), chap. I.

³ See *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1982, vol. 18, No. 35, p. 1081.

⁴ See *Official Records of the Security Council, Thirty-eighth Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1983*, documents S/16066 and S/16164.

⁵ *Ibid.*, *Thirty-fifth Year, Supplement for April, May and June 1980*, document S/14009.

⁶ *Ibid.*, *Thirty-seventh Year, Supplement for July, August and September 1982*, document S/15265.

⁷ *Ibid.*, document S/15421.

⁸ *Ibid.*, *Thirty-eighth Year, Supplement for January, February and March 1983*, document S/15657.

⁹ *Ibid.*, *Thirty-seventh Year, Supplement for July, August and September 1982*, document S/15317.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, *Thirty-eighth Year, Supplement for July, August and September 1983*, document S/15867.

¹¹ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *The Hague Conventions and Declarations of 1899 and 1907* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1915), p. 100.

¹² United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973, p. 287.

¹³ See *Official Records of the Security Council, Thirty-eighth Year, Supplement for April, May and June 1983*, document S/15834.