



CONTENTS

	Page
Agenda item 29: The situation in the Middle East (<i>continued</i>)	1361

President: Mr. Hamilton Shirley AMERASINGHE
(Sri Lanka).

AGENDA ITEM 29

The situation in the Middle East (*continued*)

1. The PRESIDENT: In connexion with this item, three draft resolutions have been submitted, in documents A/31/L.24, A/31/L.26 and A/31/L.27. Of these only document A/31/L.24 is before the Assembly at the moment; the other two draft resolutions will be circulated shortly. In addition, amendments to draft resolution A/31/L.24 have been submitted in document A/31/L.25, which is before the Assembly.

2. Before calling on the next speaker in the debate, I shall call on the representative of Israel, who wishes to introduce draft resolution A/31/L.24.

3. Mr. HERZOG (Israel): Thank you, Mr. President, for permitting me to make a further statement in introducing this draft resolution.

4. I present to the Assembly draft resolution A/31/L.24, which has been submitted by the delegation of Israel under agenda item 29 and which reads as follows:

The speaker then read out the text of draft resolution A/31/L.24.¹

5. The draft resolution follows the many statements made by the Government of Israel in which my Government's willingness to enter into negotiations with the Arab countries involved in the Middle East conflict was reiterated. It follows a statement by the Prime Minister of Israel to the Socialist International in Geneva only some 10 days ago in which he proposed that a parallel be drawn between the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East and the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, held in Helsinki. As he stated:

"Coexistence, security, trade, technology, co-operation and human bridges—these are the essence of the Helsinki baskets. And I buy them. I buy them as the essence of an

¹ For the text, see *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Annexes, agenda item 29.*

agenda for a Geneva conference on security and co-operation in the Middle East. For lasting peace is a matter of relations and exchange between peoples. Not only Governments." [87th meeting, para. 145.]

6. This is, to the best of my knowledge, the first draft resolution ever submitted by Israel for consideration by the General Assembly. We bring it in the full knowledge that there is a feeling abroad that the Middle East can move towards peace today. We do so in full knowledge that there is no possibility for the Middle East to move towards peace without a renewal of the process of negotiation between the States parties to the conflict. For years we have maintained that the only way in which to move the area to peace is through direct negotiations, face to face.

7. The United Nations created a mechanism, namely the Geneva Peace Conference, which has already brought about two disengagement agreements—one between Israel and Egypt and one between Syria and Israel—and an interim agreement between Israel and Egypt. Why not activate this mechanism immediately so that we can sit down together and negotiate? Our position is crystal clear. We want peace, and we are prepared to compromise for peace, real peace between countries, as the ordinary man in the street understands the word "peace".

8. If, as our Prime Minister pointed out, the Arab States feel that it is too revolutionary to move towards peace all at once, then we are prepared, as a first move, for an agreement leading to a cessation of hostilities and to non-belligerency. We made that proposal to the three Arab States—Egypt, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic—last March through the good offices of the United States of America, and so far have not been favoured with a reply. Only last week, an additional impetus to the prevalent feeling in the world that we must move towards negotiation was given by the decision of the Socialist International in Geneva. The second paragraph of a resolution passed by the Socialist International reads as follows:

"The Socialist International emphasizes the importance of ensuring that a peace settlement between Israel and its neighbouring States be based on negotiations and agreement between the parties in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and not be imposed on them from outside. It calls, therefore, for the reconvening of the Geneva Peace Conference on the basis of the two aforementioned resolutions and the original letter of invitation".

9. Considerable interest has been aroused by the so-called "peace offensive". Our problem is that we do not know which is the true voice of the Arab world. Do the soothing

statements made by President El-Sadat to visiting congressmen and the American media represent the true voice of the Arabs today, or do the statements which we hear in this Assembly hall represent the Arab voice? We have heard here in the past week statements by Arab representatives calling for the imposition of a solution, not for negotiations, and calling for war if we do not accept the solution imposed. Do those voices represent the true Arab voice?

10. Two draft resolutions drafted by the Arab delegations have been presented for the consideration of this Assembly. One is extreme, one-sided, biased and hostile to Israel. In that draft, Israel is condemned, sanctions against Israel are called for, the provisions of Security Council resolution 242 (1967) with regard to withdrawal are falsified. More than that, the essence and spirit of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) are violated, because the draft calls for effective measures within an appropriate time-table rather than negotiations between the parties, and the Palestinian Liberation Organization [PLO], which is committed to the destruction of Israel, is to take part in the United Nations Peace Conference on the Middle East.

11. The second draft resolution has been couched in moderate terms and made purposely ambiguous so that it could allow of different interpretations. The second draft resolution is more subtle. Despite its apparent moderation it is designed to do away with the Geneva Peace Conference as originally constituted and to convene a new conference with different terms of reference and ground rules. Not by accident were the words "early resumption" of the United Nations Peace Conference, which appeared twice in working papers of this draft resolution, replaced by the words "early convening". Not by accident is all reference omitted to Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which formed the agreed basis and framework for the Geneva Conference. Not by accident was reference to General Assembly resolution 3375 (XXX) introduced in the more extreme draft to indicate the basis and themes which the Arabs seek for the differently constituted peace conference. In brief, the aim is not to convene a conference for peace but to activate the Security Council against Israel.

12. The moderate draft resolution aroused the interest of many delegations. Then, however, the Ambassador of Egypt arose before the Assembly and spelled it out. He crossed the "t"s and dotted the "i"s. He removed all the ambiguity and called a spade a spade. He indicated, as did the Ambassador of the Syrian Arab Republic, that these two draft resolutions form one package, are linked one to the other and form one whole. He indicated further, with reference to participation in the Geneva Peace Conference, that he included the PLO. He also referred to the Secretary-General's initiative, because it, too, included the PLO.

13. By spelling it out, the Ambassadors of Egypt and the Syrian Arab Republic left no doubt in anybody's mind that here we were again, with the same old, time-honoured Arab call for a solution to be dictated to Israel in advance, and for pre-conditions to be laid down for a Geneva Peace Conference, both as to its composition and its recommendations.

14. For his part, President El-Sadat of Egypt spelled out what he meant by the Geneva Peace Conference. He pointed out in a number of interviews, such as in the *Sunday Times* of London and in *Time* magazine, that in his view successful negotiations at the Geneva Peace Conference would, of course, entail an Israeli withdrawal, but would not mean a renewal of diplomatic relations between Israel and its neighbours, would not mean the opening of borders, would not mean the establishment of commercial relations, would not mean the resumption of tourist traffic, and so forth. All this, he thought, should be left over to the next generation.

15. Have we not waited long enough? Have not enough generations suffered? Must we wait for the next generation? Why cannot we negotiate for peace?

16. We have made it clear time and time again that we consider that the problem of the Palestinian Arabs must be solved within the framework of peaceful negotiations. Our Foreign Minister is on record to the effect that, given the proper basis for negotiations on the Palestinian issue, he would recommend to our Government informal consultations in advance between the three main elements—Israel, Jordan and the representatives of the Arab population in the West Bank—so that they could influence any solution which might be discussed. Prime Minister Rabin said only last week that it would be possible for people who live in the West Bank to be attached to the Jordanian delegation attending the Peace Conference or to come as part of the Jordanian delegation. The Prime Minister, addressing a joint session of the United States Congress only last January, emphasized the fact that he did not discount Palestinian representation in the peace delegation of Jordan.

17. At the Geneva Peace Conference in December 1973, seven of the 11 delegates in the Jordanian delegation were Palestinians.

18. All this is perfectly natural if you consider the fact that 80 per cent of the Palestinian Arabs live in Israel, Jordan, the West Bank and Gaza, that some 70 per cent of the Palestinian Arabs hold either Jordanian or Israeli passports, and that Jordan today is 80 per cent of what was the territory of Mandatory Palestine.

19. Our position in regard to the PLO was clearly defined by our Prime Minister only last week:

"The PLO"—as he pointed out—"is not a partner for negotiations, for the simple reason that its political basis is non-acceptance of Israel and its right to exist."

20. The Palestine Covenant, as I have pointed out to you on many occasions, calls for the destruction of Israel, denies the existence of any link—historic or religious—between the Jewish people and the Holy Land, and rejects any form of compromise as a basis for a solution.

21. Recently we have been regaled with stories of a softening in the PLO attitude. On 26 November, just over a week ago, the leadership of the PLO met in Beirut, and the following are some extracts from the resolutions which were passed by that leadership:

"The Palestinian Revolution warns against current Arab and international activity to bring to an end the Pales-

tinian problem and to strike a blow at the hopes of the Palestinian people."

22. A further resolution decries the attempts by "Israel, the imperialists, and a number of Arab régimes to bring about a change in the PLO leadership".

23. Another resolution states:

"The leadership of the revolution will stand firmly against any international or Arab move to bring about a settlement in the area which will not include as a condition full national Palestinian independence for the Palestinian people in all its territory"—in other words, in the whole of Israel and Jordan.

And it continues: "The Revolutionary Command emphasizes that it rejects out of hand resolution 242 (1967) as a solution for the Palestinian people."

24. Here you have the answer to the insinuation which has been made that there is a change in the position of the PLO. Its position is quite unequivocal and absolutely straightforward: it is a position with which no self-respecting State represented here would contemplate any form of compromise, given the same conditions.

25. I emphasize again that we view the Geneva Peace Conference and the process of negotiations with one purpose, and one purpose only, in mind: that is, to achieve peace. We do not contemplate it as a step in the direction of national suicide for Israel which is what the PLO's avowed purpose is.

26. We have been subjected to an enormous amount of talk, of prevarication, of double talk, to a verbal smokescreen which hides the true purpose behind the words expressed. That is why we decided to present this draft resolution, which, if accepted as presented by us, would have the parties sitting down in Geneva tomorrow, negotiating for peace.

27. We are prepared to go to Geneva tomorrow, in accordance with the text of this draft resolution, without any "buts" or "ifs" or "perhapses"—without any pre-conditions whatsoever. The Conference is sovereign; let it decide about participants and substantive matters.

28. I have no illusions whatsoever about the strength of our position in this Assembly. I have no doubt but that every attempt will be made by the Arab delegations and their friends to torpedo this draft resolution, in one way or another, by means of amendments and other devices. If they do so, as they probably will, they will have performed a great service for us, because in this draft resolution we have stated clearly, simply and unequivocally what we are prepared to do. Any action taken to prejudice the prospects of this draft resolution in its present form and language would only reveal the true intent of those taking such action. Those countries which will undoubtedly do as the Arab delegations bid them and participate in a move to vitiate this draft resolution will bear a heavy responsibility before history.

29. In bringing this draft resolution to this Assembly, may I express the hope that we shall rise above the hateful

diatribe and rhetoric that characterizes deliberations on our problem; that we shall see before us the prospect of a Middle East in which, as in days gone by, we shall both—Jew and Arab—join to recreate the great civilizations which we both represented in the past. I express the prayer that we may for a short minute set aside the hatred which characterizes this debate and, together, seek a way to move towards peace. The mechanism is there; it has been proved and found effective. I appeal to the members of the Assembly to support this draft resolution as presented to them, since it can bring about a situation whereby the parties mentioned in it will be sitting down facing one another—tomorrow, next week, next month, soon—negotiating for peace.

30. May I hope that they will join with us to set in motion the process which must lead towards peace. Israel is willing and prepared to enter into negotiations for peace today, tomorrow—whenever they wish. The members know as well as I do that they will be subjected to a renewed barrage of hatred and diatribe from the Arab representatives following this move of ours. I can only say this to them: you want to test us—to test our sincerity? By all means, do so: put us to the test; pass this draft resolution in its original form, without pre-conditions, and you will see for yourselves how we will react.

31. The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of Sri Lanka, who wishes to introduce the amendments contained in document A/31/L.25, and the two draft resolutions contained in documents A/31/L.26 and A/31/L.27.

32. Mr. KANAKARATNE (Sri Lanka): Mr. President, I appear before you and this Assembly this afternoon to introduce, on behalf of the delegations of India, Malta, Senegal, Yugoslavia and Sri Lanka, amendments, contained in document A/31/L.25, to draft resolution A/31/L.24, which has just been introduced by the representative of Israel.

33. This Assembly heard, last Thursday afternoon, at the commencement of the debate on the situation in the Middle East, what I may describe as an extremely eloquent statement by the representative of Israel singing an undisguised refrain for peace. And, as was to be expected, he repeated himself this afternoon in introducing the draft resolution presented by Israel, contained in document A/31/L.24.

34. But those of us who heard him last Thursday afternoon [87th meeting] and those of us who have heard him this afternoon again must surely have noted that the gossamer robes of the angel of peace that he appeared in on both occasions will probably be seen, upon closer examination, to be instead a simple and crude "see-through".

35. What is this peace that the representative of Israel, quoting his Prime Minister's statement before the Socialist International in Geneva, was asking for? The times the word "peace" was used by the representative of Israel this afternoon and last Thursday, if counted, would surely number more than 100. But no one in this hall, indeed no Member of the United Nations committed to the obligations of the Charter, could ever refuse to hearken to a call

for peace. But what are we talking about here when we are discussing the situation in the Middle East? It is not a question of peace by itself. Surely it is a question of peace with justice.

36. Has the representative of Israel overlooked that there can never be in the world among nations, within national boundaries or between communities within nations a peace founded on injustice—unless it be the peace of the graveyard or a peace imposed on the weak by the more powerful? After 31 years of existence, the United Nations cannot now be steam-rolled into accepting a peace of either of those varieties.

37. The representative of Israel waxes eloquent rejecting, on behalf of his Government and country, a peace imposed by others. What precisely is the kind of peace he has been advocating here for the Middle Eastern countries in general and the Palestinian people in particular, if not a peace to be imposed by a group of States meeting at a so-called peace conference without the participation of the Palestinian people and their representatives? That, surely, must be the point to which this Assembly must address itself in evaluating the motivations of the draft resolution submitted by Israel in document A/31/L.24 and the motivations of the amendments to that draft resolution that I have the privilege and honour of introducing on behalf of five delegations.

38. We also are seeking to achieve peace, but we are seeking to achieve a lasting peace, a durable peace, which can be only a peace founded on justice and acceptance by all the parties immediately and most directly interested.

39. The Israeli draft resolution would have us call on Egypt, Israel, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic "to reconvene without delay at the Peace Conference on the Middle East under the co-chairmanship of the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in order to resume negotiations...". Is there not here a suggestion of a Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark? How can Israel, Egypt, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic reach, by negotiations, a permanent and just peace in the Middle East without the participation of the Palestinian people, without permitting the voices of the Palestinian people to be heard in those negotiations? We are told, in very authentic and acceptable terms, that it has commonly come to be recognized that there is a "Palestinian dimension of the Middle East problem"; in using that phrase, I am quoting the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/31/270-S/12210 of 18 October 1976, in which the Secretary-General says, in paragraph 4:

"On 26 January 1976, at the conclusion of the Security Council's debate on the Middle East problem, including the Palestinian question, the Secretary-General made a statement in which he noted that the discussions of the Council had emphasized the Palestinian dimension of the Middle East problem and had reaffirmed the right of every State in the area to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries."

40. If it is the common acceptance that there is a Palestinian dimension to the Middle East problem, and if the Israeli Government—as its representatives have often told us during the past few days—is in favour of a peace

conference to negotiate a permanent peace, how then, in the name of reason, justice and the very peace of which the Israeli representatives are talking, can they justify omitting participation by the PLO representing the Palestinian people in such a conference?

41. It is to rectify that omission that the delegations of India, Malta, Senegal, Yugoslavia and Sri Lanka have proposed in document A/31/L.25 that we replace the operative paragraph in draft resolution A/31/L.24 by the following:

"Calls upon Egypt, Israel, Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Palestine Liberation Organization to participate in the Peace Conference on the Middle East, held under the auspices of the United Nations with the co-chairmanship of the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, in order to negotiate without delay the establishment of a just and durable peace in the Middle East as called for in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 and General Assembly resolution 3375 (XXX) of 10 November 1975."

42. We are reminded that the basic Security Council resolutions that we should take into account are only resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). The representative of Israel a moment ago suggested that General Assembly resolution 3375 (XXX) is being introduced for subtle reasons. There is no subtlety about introducing in this hall a resolution of this very body adopted less than 12 months ago, in which the rightful place of the PLO was recognized. Did the world stand still between 1967 and 1975 because the Israeli Government wished it to stand still? Has not the position in the Middle East changed since 1967? It changed between 1967 and 1973; it changed between 1973 and 1975; and, as we all know, it has changed between 1975 and 1976. We refuse to be ruled by writs and resolutions which may have been very relevant at the time they were adopted but which have to be adapted and taken into account in conjunction with later developments justifying later resolutions of both the Security Council and this Assembly. It is for that reason that the sponsors of the amendments in document A/31/L.25 have included reference to General Assembly resolution 3375 (XXX) in the operative paragraph proposed in place of that appearing in document A/31/L.24.

43. One final difference that will be noted is that, in addition to the preambular paragraph in the Israeli draft resolution referring to Article 2 of the Charter, we have proposed the insertion of a second preambular paragraph, reading: "Recalling all relevant United Nations resolutions concerning the Middle East".

44. It is, of course, somewhat ironic that in the Israeli draft resolution specific mention is made in the preamble to Article 2 of the Charter, recalling the obligations of all Member States to "settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security and justice are not endangered". We may perhaps wish to pause and consider who in the Middle East has created the situation in which not only international peace and security and justice are endangered, but also the territorial integrity of nation-States in that area has been interfered with.

45. Article 2 of the Charter contains several paragraphs, as we know. The Israeli draft resolution refers to one of them—paragraph 4. But that Article states:

“All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state . . .”.

46. We certainly have no objection to joining with Israel and every other Member State in recalling to ourselves the obligations of the Charter. But those over-all obligations must be applied from time to time to specific situations of international tension as and when they arise; and those specific international tensions are governed by relevant resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly, the Security Council and other organs. It is for that reason that we have suggested the inclusion in the Israeli draft resolution of a reference to all relevant United Nations resolutions concerning the Middle East.

47. I have thus far spoken on the amendments to the Israeli draft resolution. The representative of Israel made a fervent appeal that, in the name of peace, the General Assembly support the Israeli draft resolution in its original form. We make an even more fervent appeal. If what the Assembly wants is not just an *ad hoc* peace—meaning an absence of war, or a peace imposed, or a peace of the dead and the silent—then we appeal to this Assembly to provide the basis of a just peace, which will therefore be durable. That is why we have sought to redress the imbalance of the Israeli draft resolution; we have sought to make it a more balanced, fairer and more equitable approach to the problem facing the world in the Middle East. That is why we have suggested the replacing of the entire operative paragraph of the Israeli draft resolution by the one contained in document A/31/L.25.

48. On behalf of the sponsoring delegations, I commend these amendments to the serious and favourable consideration of the Assembly.

49. I come now to my duty as the representative of the current Chairman of the Group of Non-Aligned Countries to introduce draft resolutions A/31/L.26 and A/31/L.27, which have just been distributed. I take great pleasure, on behalf of the countries whose names appear in document A/31/L.26 and the countries whose names appear in document A/31/L.27, in formally placing these draft resolutions before the Assembly.

50. Draft resolution A/31/L.26 is a substantial one in the sense that it goes in some considerable detail into what we the sponsors and members of the non-aligned group of nations feel are the basic questions of the Middle East situation. What has given rise to the Middle East situation? As was stated in resolution 8, adopted unanimously by the Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries held in Colombo recently,

“ . . . a just and lasting peace in the Middle East must be based on the following:

“(a) the total and unconditional withdrawal of Israel from all the Arab territories occupied since June 1967;

“(b) the Palestinian people’s recovery of their national rights and the exercise of these rights, particularly that of establishing their independent State.”. [See A/31/197, annex IV, resolution NAC/CONF.5/S/Res.8.]

51. These are the two basic concomitants without a solution to either of which there cannot be and there will not be a just and durable peace in the Middle East in our time.

52. That resolution of the Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries went on, in operative paragraph 5, to call upon

“ . . . the non-aligned countries and peoples to adopt a firm stand against Israel’s obstinacy and its endeavours to maintain the state of ‘no war no peace’ and [noted] that these attempts constitute a threat to the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East and a grave danger to world peace, security and stability”. [Ibid.]

In operative paragraph 12, the Colombo resolution condemned

“ . . . Israel for persisting in its policy of forcing a *fait accompli* and for establishing colonies of settlements on Palestinian and all occupied Arab territories which is inconsistent with the principles of International Law, particularly that of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territories by force and which constitutes an obstacle to a just settlement of the Middle East question”. [Ibid.]

That resolution also condemned Israel’s actions in the alteration of the geographical, demographic and economic features of the territories occupied and annexed by Israel and the destruction of their cultural aspects.

53. Now, all these provisions have been included in the various paragraphs of the present draft resolution, A/31/L.26, which we are introducing this afternoon, because, while proclaiming from the housetops and before the Socialist International in Geneva its desire for peace, on the ground, on the fields, on the soil of other peoples’ territories, that same Government of Israel is proceeding to alter the demographic structures of those societies, to build permanent settlements, and to defend its actions publicly and unabashedly in the name of secure and defensible borders.

54. Are those the actions of an honest *bona fide* advocate of peace in that area? How can all this be reconciled by the representative of Israel? Let him come up to this rostrum and explain to this Assembly with the same fervour that he has shown in flaunting the word “peace” how peace can be achieved when permanent settlements are being introduced into those areas which are not, under any conception of international law, territory belonging to the State of Israel. How can this be done, unless it is a tongue-in-cheek offer of peace that is being made while back in the occupied territories great movement of forces and of population is being carried out under a calculated, consistent and persistent policy which, far from contributing to the success of a peace conference, regardless of who the participants are, will be a total and permanent obstacle to the realization of a just and fair negotiated settlement of the problems in the Middle East?

55. It is for those reasons that the sponsoring delegations of draft resolution A/31/L.26 have expressed their concern at that situation and affirmed in operative paragraph 1

“...that the early resumption of the Peace Conference on the Middle East with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 3375 (XXX) ... is essential for the realization of a just and lasting settlement in the region”.

Without that participation, it is our firm conviction that there will be no productive, long-term, useful results from any gathering of other States under whatever co-chairmanship or by whatever name it is called.

56. The draft resolution goes on to condemn “Israel’s continued occupation of Arab territories”. Just because there is a temporary lull in the situation in the Middle East in the sense that there is no active fighting, we must warn the international community not to be misled by this situation. We believe that, if territories belonging to nations have been by aggression physically annexed and occupied by another nation-State, until that root-cause of the problem is removed there can be no just and lasting peace; there can be no artificially organized arrangement whereby for the time being people will lay down their arms. If there is a problem, and if we really, honestly and sincerely want a durable and fair solution of that problem, we must go to the roots of it. And who in this hall, including the delegation of Israel itself, can deny that the root-cause of the problem in the Middle East is the annexation by Israel of territories to which it has never been entitled and will never be entitled and the removal and deprivation by Israel of the right of the Palestinian people to a State of its own and to the enjoyment of human rights, which are ensured to all of us except that people.

57. The draft resolution also condemns the “measures taken by Israel in the occupied territories to change the demographic and geographic character and institutional structure of these territories”.

58. We request once again “all States [who are so doing] to desist from supplying Israel with military and other forms of aid”; we request the “Security Council to take effective measures, within an appropriate time-table”. The representative of Israel almost sniggered at the phrase “within an appropriate time-table”. Are we going to continue to have the Middle East situation on our agenda for the next 31 years? Is another generation going to be victimized? Is another generation of representatives of our various Governments to come here and repeat the same arguments for another 31 years? A time-table is of the essence, because already we have waited far too long, watching without being able to take the necessary action the continued occupation of foreign lands by Israel and the Palestinians being deprived of their own rights to territory and to human standards of living.

59. Therefore, we request “the Secretary-General to inform the Co-Chairmen of the Peace Conference on the Middle East of the present resolution and to submit a report on the follow-up of its implementation to the General Assembly at its [next] session”.

60. I have the pleasure of introducing also, on behalf of the sponsors, draft resolution A/31/L.27, on the Peace Conference on the Middle East.

61. In operative paragraph 1 the Assembly would request the Secretary-General:

“(a) To resume contacts with all the parties to the conflict . . . , in accordance with his initiative of 1 April 1976, in preparation for the early convening of the Peace Conference on the Middle East;

“(b) To submit a report to the Security Council on the results of his contacts and on the situation in the Middle East not later than 1 March 1977”.

62. In operative paragraph 2 the Assembly would call for “the early convening of the Peace Conference on the Middle East, held under the auspices of the United Nations, not later than the end of March 1977”.

63. In operative paragraph 3 the Security Council is requested:

“...to convene subsequent to the submission by the Secretary-General of the report referred to in paragraph 1 (b) above, in order to consider the situation in the area in the light of that report and to promote the process towards the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the area”.

64. Operative paragraph 4 reads:

“Further requests the Secretary-General to inform the Co-Chairmen of the Peace Conference on the Middle East of the present resolution”.

65. It is my submission, on behalf of the sponsors, that this draft resolution reflects a genuine effort to convene the Peace Conference with the full participation of all the interested parties, having regard to all the relevant United Nations resolutions. We believe it reflects a genuine effort to get the peace initiative moving, using as a starting-point the peace initiative taken by the Secretary-General on 1 April 1976. We wish to ensure that there will be no procrastination, no delay. In our view, delay would spell danger - danger that would not be restricted to the region of the Middle East, if it were to explode.

66. We are firmly convinced that the Middle East situation should be the subject of vigorous and forceful peace efforts now. As the representative of Canada said this morning in the debate [89th meeting], we have an opportunity now. If we do not seize that opportunity, it may perhaps be too late for all of us to pluck the flower of safety from this nettle of danger.

67. The PRESIDENT: We shall now resume the general debate on this item.

68. Mr. GHEORGHE (Romania) (*interpretation from French*): The present debate on the situation in the Middle East has been made necessary because of the continuing impasse concerning the resumption of negotiations towards a just and lasting settlement of the problems in that region.

It reflects the growing concern not only of the States directly involved in the conflict, but also of the entire international community, with regard to the possible harmful consequences of prolonging the present state of affairs indefinitely. The history of the events in that part of the world shows that the lack of serious efforts to solve by peaceful means the problems at the root of the conflict between States and peoples in the Middle East has led to grave military confrontations. The fact that those problems have not been solved so far represents a serious threat to peace in the Middle East, and indeed to peace in general.

Mr. Türkmen (Turkey), Vice-President, took the Chair.

69. The constant threat to international peace and security that the Middle East conflict entails and the deeply negative influence it has on efforts to establish a new international economic and political order make it urgent that the greatest political and diplomatic resources should now be focused on eliminating the basic factors that keep the conflict alive.

70. Reaffirming Romania's position concerning the basic elements of a just and lasting settlement in the Middle East, and concerning the methods of achieving such a settlement, President Nicolae Ceaușescu stated a few days ago:

“Since we are neighbours of the Middle East countries, we speak out in favour of the intensification of the efforts to solve the conflict in that region by peaceful political means; we are in favour of Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories, of the recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to establish an independent State, and of guaranteeing the independence and sovereignty of all the States of the region.

“In that respect, we believe that the resumption at the earliest possible date of the Geneva Conference, with the participation of all the interested States, and including the Palestine Liberation Organization, is of particular importance.”

71. The withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Arab territories occupied at the end of the 1967 war is without doubt one of the basic prerequisites for the establishment of peaceful relations among all the nations of the Middle East. The unanimously recognized standards of contemporary international law offer no justification for the acquisition of foreign territory by force. There can be no reason, no pretext, for imposing and maintaining an occupation régime in the territory of another country. In fact, relations between States that are based on force can never give greater security to the party that seeks to impose its will. History proves only too eloquently that acts of force affecting the territorial integrity of one State or several States serve as justification for actions by the latter to recover the temporarily occupied territory. It was precisely by virtue of those standards and those facts that the Security Council proclaimed unequivocally in its resolution 242 (1967) the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and called for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Arab territories occupied at the end of the 1967 war.

72. Another basic prerequisite for achieving a decisive change in the relations between States and peoples in the Middle East is the solution of the problem of the Palestinian people. This presupposes the recognition of that people's inalienable right to self-determination, including the right to establish its own independent and sovereign State.

73. Giving expression to the widely held conviction that peace in the Middle East cannot be established without a satisfactory settlement of the Palestinian problem, the General Assembly spoke out clearly in favour of creating the necessary conditions to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights. The immediate and logical corollary was the Assembly's decision to invite the PLO to participate on a footing of equality in all efforts and in all deliberations and conferences concerning the Middle East held under the auspices of the United Nations.

74. Lastly, if a just and lasting peace is to be established in the Middle East, the independence and sovereignty of all States and all peoples of the area must be recognized and guaranteed, as well as their right to live in peace and security within secure and recognized boundaries. That requirement is clearly formulated in Security Council resolution 242 (1967) and represents one of the basic principles of a peaceful settlement between Israel and the neighbouring Arab peoples.

75. In the opinion of the Romanian delegation it is necessary to act without delay to resume negotiations within the framework of the Geneva Peace Conference with a view to arriving at an over-all settlement of the Middle East conflict.

76. In his report of 18 October last concerning the situation in the Middle East [A/31/270-S/12210], the Secretary-General states that there is a general agreement on the necessity of resuming negotiations for a just and lasting settlement of the Middle East problem—without, of course, underestimating the important differences of opinion among the parties concerned on certain questions, such as the participation of the PLO in the work of the Geneva Peace Conference, to which an adequate solution must be found before resumption of the Conference.

77. In these circumstances we believe that it would be especially important for the General Assembly, through the decisions it adopts at the end of the present debate, to encourage and facilitate the conclusion without delay of agreements on the main problems that have so far prevented the convening of the Geneva Peace Conference.

78. We believe that in the future, too, a particularly significant role could be played by the Secretary-General in the preparations for the convening of the Conference through the resumption and development of contacts initiated with the parties concerned.

79. The higher interests of the establishment of peace in the Middle East, and hence of the consolidation of international security and the affirmation of new types of relations based on equality and mutual respect among all the peoples of the world, demand of all the parties

constructive and unremitting efforts, flexibility and a spirit of understanding.

80. For its part, Romania will as always support any constructive action aimed at an over-all settlement of the Middle East situation, and it is ready to make a practical contribution to the establishment of a just and lasting peace in that sorely tried area of the world.

81. Mr. ABE (Japan): Year after year we have been discussing the situation in the Middle East and searching for a solution which has thus far eluded us. The situation in the area continues to be a source of grave concern to the United Nations, which has been involved with it for nearly 30 years. This is precisely why we must renew our determination to continue our efforts to find a solution, for the situation, if left to stagnate, would not lead to peace. On the contrary, it would intensify the frustration and encourage a revival of fighting on a more disastrous scale than before.

82. I am mindful of the fact that the United Nations, especially the Security Council, has this year been vigorously engaged in discussions of the Middle East problem, and in particular of the Palestinian question. In our view, the most significant meetings of the Council were those of last January,² when it most extensively examined the Middle East problem, including the Palestinian question, in all its aspects. Although the Council failed to adopt a resolution, those efforts assuredly made an important contribution to our search for a peaceful settlement of the conflict on a comprehensive basis.

83. My delegation wishes to emphasize that the situation urgently requires the early resumption of negotiations with a view to reaching an over-all settlement of the Middle East conflict. These negotiations must be based on the elements contained in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) together with the satisfactory implementation of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people under the Charter. This coincides with the principles which the Japanese Government considers essential for a just and lasting settlement. These have been stated on many occasions, but I shall repeat them briefly as follows.

84. First, the acquisition of territory by force is inadmissible, and therefore Israeli armed forces should be withdrawn from all the territories occupied in the 1967 war.

85. Secondly, the integrity and security of the territories of all countries in the area should be respected and the need for measures to guarantee them should be recognized.

86. Thirdly, the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people should be recognized and respected in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

87. Those three principles are equally indispensable. All three must be accepted and implemented in any just and lasting solution of the Middle East problem.

88. In our long struggle for peace the most important need at this stage is to find common ground between the respective positions of Israel, the Arab States directly

concerned and the PLO, and then to create an atmosphere which will lead each side to enter into negotiations with an understanding of the other's position. If the General Assembly can agree on this approach we shall make a real contribution to the start of such negotiations; and I would add that it is to be hoped that the major Powers will co-operate in achieving this long-sought development.

89. In the considered opinion of my delegation, there is overwhelming support in the international community for a settlement based on the resolutions and principles which I have just enumerated. Indeed, we cannot imagine any just and lasting settlement of this thorny question without Israel's withdrawal from all the Arab territories occupied in the 1967 war. At the same time, there can be no question of the support for the right of the State of Israel to sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. There is equal support for the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and independence, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. The question here is how to reconcile these competing rights. In the Security Council debate last January my delegation made a strong appeal to all the parties directly concerned to look squarely at the realities and be prepared to accept a practical solution that will realize their competing rights and claims to the maximum extent possible.³ In this connexion, we particularly wish to reiterate our appeal to Israel and the PLO to accept each other as an "*interlocuteur valable*" with which to conduct a dialogue, in whatever form may prove acceptable to both of them, with a view to facilitating a peaceful solution of the question.

90. It is now crystal clear that all the parties concerned earnestly hope for the earliest achievement of a just and durable settlement. During the current debate both the Arab representatives and the representative of Israel apparently have indicated their readiness to enter into negotiations leading to peace. It is obvious that the Palestinian people constitutes one of the parties directly concerned and therefore should be invited to participate in peace talks. We are encouraged by the fact that the situation in Lebanon has considerably improved. All in all, the statements made at the current session of the General Assembly by Israeli and Arab representatives, together with the constructive attitudes towards negotiations shown recently in their capitals, seem to indicate that a situation has developed which may encourage a negotiated solution. As we see it, current developments in the area offer a great opportunity for resuming the negotiations.

91. My delegation wishes to appeal to the Assembly to do everything it can to maintain the impetus from this encouraging development so that we can expect the early resumption of genuine and realistic negotiations among all the parties concerned.

92. Mr. GAUCI (Malta): Thirty years of unsuccessful effort to secure a just and lasting peace in the region is sufficient evidence, if any were needed, of the complexity of the question. It is also undeniable proof of the fact that the approaches of the past have not brought about the desired objective. The historical analyses given so far provide testimony that the turbulence and bitterness of the past have not secured the peace that all are apparently

² See *Official Records of the Security Council, Thirty-first Year, 1870th-1879th meetings.*

³ *Ibid.*, 1872nd meeting.

seeking. The essential question before us, therefore, is to search for the best approach to a peaceful solution that would respect the decisions taken by this Assembly.

93. It has been suggested that a solution cannot be found here at the United Nations, certainly not through the passage of countless resolutions which remain unfulfilled. It seems to me, on the contrary, that it is greatly encouraging that, despite their past disappointments, the protagonists in the crisis insistently come back in good faith to the United Nations; for an approach by this Organization is the best guarantee of a peaceful solution. An honest and objective analysis of the situation is not only our duty as Members of this Organization; it is also a clear responsibility which we owe to the parties to the dispute. It is also the clear responsibility of the United Nations to insist on the fundamental principle that relations between peoples should be regulated by reason, by justice, by international law and by negotiation, not by war, or violence, as has too often been the case in the past. Additionally, we have to make an effective contribution to a solution through enlightened self-interest, because previous experience has shown that the economic well-being and the peace of the entire world are directly affected by events in the Middle East.

94. It has been rightly pointed out that we cannot afford with each debate to sink into a morass of invective and bitter recrimination. That suggestion has not proved easy to follow. But it is evident that we can only act as honest brokers and hope to encourage progress in an atmosphere of calm objectivity. It has also been suggested that all those who are not directly involved should steer clear of the problem, as it is too complicated to resolve except by those who are experts on the region and know it best.

95. Let us consider the picture that emerges from observing the cumulative activities of the experts on the spot. In the history of the past 30 years, there is an overabundance of quotable material in documents, speeches, biographies and newspaper articles from which impressive extracts can be quoted in support of one side or the other. I do not propose to indulge in this unrewarding practice. Facts speak for themselves and need no embellishment. Therefore I intend to highlight only one or two essential features. The common objective has been the search of the peoples in the region for national identity and statehood, for peace and security. One people has attained its objective to secure statehood, and its right to an independent statehood has been endorsed and recognized by the international community. It is a fact of historical life. The other people is still wandering in a wilderness of oppression and want. Its inherent right to independence is supported by the international community, but the actual attainment of this right is obstructed both politically and physically. The territorial base for the exercise of statehood has so far been denied to it. Not surprisingly, major conflict has erupted on several occasions. Territories have been occupied, inhabitants made homeless, civil liberties suspended; imprisonment is rife, entire villages are destroyed, property is expropriated, and populations are shifted to make way for new settlements which benefit immigrants from other countries to the detriment of the indigenous population. Security is sought through militaristic control over civilian populations, and the acquisition of sophisti-

cated armaments is increasing at the alarming and economically ruinous rate of 20 per cent yearly—seven times the world average. Tension is rife, and the region is perpetually simmering at various levels of conflict.

96. Central to this approach is the so-called "homeland doctrine". Paragraph 322 of document A/31/218 states:

"... under this doctrine, territories occupied as a result of the June 1967 hostilities form part of the natural boundaries of the State of Israel and are not therefore considered as occupied territories within the meaning of international law. The same doctrine treats the civilian population living in these territories—the Palestinians—as being there only on sufferance. This doctrine is totally untenable and did not receive even implicit recognition in the General Assembly resolution that created the State of Israel."

The "doctrine" seems open-ended in territorial scope. This only adds to the fear and suspicion of future intent.

97. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that there is continuous civil unrest in the occupied territories, almost daily riots and frequent arrests. Sentences to imprisonment ranging from a few months to life are given out. The original objective had been to achieve a sense of security, but the sense of insecurity over the past years has not subsided. On the contrary, it has increased. The present practices are, in fact, contributing to the consolidation of opposition, and the prospects of peace are receding. The tragedy is that the bitterness is being passed on to the children of today, who will be the adults of tomorrow. I was particularly impressed by the measured, but eloquent, description of the feelings of the Palestinians given by the Ambassador of Jordan at our meeting last Friday, 3 December [88th meeting].

98. The situation is rendered even more alarming by the knowledge that long-term official plans exist that envisage a continuing pattern of establishment of new settlements in occupied territories over a period extending beyond the turn of this century. It is difficult to conceive of this approach as a formula for good-neighbourly relations or as a prescription for peace. Neither is it a policy which the international community is likely to endorse.

99. The changes in the region have been relatively swift and violent. In the circumstances of uncertainty and tension in the region, it is difficult to make an objective assessment of cause and effect to individual episodes. I therefore do not pass judgement on the actions of the past. But the enduring results are there for all to see. The best that can be said is that there is neither security nor peace. The situation remains potentially explosive, and will evidently remain so, unless territory illegally occupied as a result of hostilities is returned and so long as the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people are not attained.

100. In contrast to the relative swiftness of events on the spot, the movement of our ponderous Organization has been exceptionally slow. The Security Council, in particular, because of the gigantic pulling in opposite directions by the veto-wielding super-Powers, has been rendered ineffective on every occasion when concerted action could

have prevented an outbreak of hostilities or brought about an immediate cease-fire in the region. My own country, for instance, had urged a return to the 1967 borders long before the Security Council reached its historic agreement on the provisions of resolution 242 (1967). It took this Organization 30 years seriously to consider the question of Palestine on its own merits, and the qualified exhortations regarding the clear obstacle to peace posed by the establishment of settlements in the occupied territories were painfully slow in finding unanimous acceptance in the Security Council. Formulas for peace adopted by the Security Council remain unimplemented but are, on the contrary, used as pretexts for delay, and mandatory recommendations remain unfulfilled for years. The Security Council is not playing its authoritative and primary role in matters of peace and security as the Charter envisages. This situation calls for a change in attitudes on a question where respect for human rights, justice, self-determination and peace are at issue.

101. It is therefore proper that the Assembly should consider this question anew, since for the present the protagonists in the region and the Security Council are practically immobilized. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has indicated a way in which one side of the equation in an eventual peace settlement could be implemented in a graduated approach that takes into account the realities of today [see A/31/35]. Members of the Security Council have been asked to study the recommendations once again and will no doubt also be asked to consider the Middle East question in its broader perspective. There is an emerging consensus on the three basic parameters of a possible over-all solution which I will not repeat. It is about time that we stopped merely repeating those parameters and started putting them into a plan of action that would envisage a just and lasting solution safeguarding the interests of all States in the area but also rendering justice to the Palestinian people. The modalities can be any of a large variety possible, provided that no loss of time is entailed. The momentum for progress that seems to be emerging should be encouraged. A peaceful solution is not beyond our capabilities. What is important is that the parties to the dialogue should be sincere and responsive to each other.

102. A positive step forward would herald a new dawn of peace and progress in the area to replace the turmoil and despair of the past. I repeat the words of our outgoing President at the opening of this session:

“If the parties involved in this conflict rely on the work of the Security Council, and once they are given a guarantee to live in peace, that is, within secure and recognized boundaries, they should at last be able to meet openly to work out the means for a peaceful settlement which it would be vain, indeed irresponsible, to reject any longer.” [1st meeting, para. 22.]

103. My delegation will consequently support any draft resolution that gives expression to these concerns. Hence, our sponsorship of draft resolution A/31/L.25, so ably introduced this afternoon by the representative of Sri Lanka.

104. Mr. JAROSZEK (Poland): In several weeks we shall be entering a year of a sad anniversary, marking a decade since the Israeli aggression against the Arab States in June 1967. Much water has since flowed under the political bridge of world affairs. Membership in the United Nations alone has increased by 23 States. Many complex international problems, including grave military crises, have been successfully tackled. Though not without difficulties, the world did manage to enter a new era of relations among States marked by the growing processes of détente and development of peaceful co-operation among nations. Yet, the protracted conflict in the Middle East has not ceased to haunt our globe with the spectre of war. In fact, however silent the guns may be, the political situation obtaining in and around the Middle East is today as complex and, indeed, as complicated as before.

105. Prior to the aggression of 1967, the fabric of the Middle East conflict comprised mainly two geopolitical layers: one, Israel's attitude vis-à-vis the Arab States; the other, that of the problem of the people of Palestine, both of them being precarious enough to constitute a serious threat to international peace and security.

106. Today, the components of the crisis have even proliferated. In addition to the old tensions, on the one hand we are dealing with the occupation by Israel of the Arab territories taken by force in 1967 and, on the other, we are faced with the aftermath of imperialist intrigues to sow discord in the Arab world, the most glaring, though not the only, illustration of which has been the recent tragic developments in Lebanon.

107. It is this escalation of the aggravating quality of the situation in the Middle East that has split the problem into a number of items constantly appearing on the agenda of consecutive sessions of the General Assembly and numerous meetings of the Security Council, as well as of other organs of the Organization. This is how, in the absence of meaningful progress towards a lasting settlement, the victims of aggression seek justice among the international community. But even this Organization, with its peace-keeping and peace-making machinery has, in the case of the Middle East, so far proved unable to cope effectively with the machinery of aggression, occupation and intrigue.

108. One can hardly count how many words have been spoken, or how many resolutions have been adopted and, unfortunately, left unimplemented.

109. One can hardly realize the magnitude of the suffering and sacrifice the situation in the Middle East has brought down upon the victims of the policies of annexation and violence.

110. But the sooner one understands that half-measures, quasi-steps, dilatory actions or illusory hopes will not solve the intricate problem, the better for the cause of peace in the Middle East. Enough attempts to win peace through partial measures have already failed. They have failed because from the very outset they were doomed to do so, as they had not been set to remove the root-cause of the existing situation in the area—namely, the continued occupation by Israel of the Arab lands taken by force and illegally occupied since 1967.

111. For a problem of such gravity as that of the Middle East, any effective settlement must be comprehensive in scope, politically sound, morally just and historically fair. The necessary foundations upon which it should be based have not lost an iota of their validity.

112. The elimination of the effects of Israeli aggression—in other words, the withdrawal by Israel from all the territories it has occupied since 1967—continues to be the first condition for such a settlement.

113. The second indispensable political prerequisite for peace in the Middle East is the realization of the inalienable rights of the Arab people of Palestine, including their right to self-determination and the establishment of their own State. The recent debate in this Assembly on the question of Palestine has once again shown the lasting significance of a prerequisite so conceived.

114. The third integral component of a broad political settlement in the area will flow from the implementation of the previous two conditions, although the three of them form one indivisible entity, if one is really seeking a permanent solution to the conflict: it is the need for safeguarding the right of all States of the region, without exception, to security and to an independent existence and for granting them effective international guarantees.

115. The integrated settlement we look for will not come about through the efforts of a few. It must be a joint, co-operative undertaking by all—in the first place, by the parties directly concerned, including, naturally, the Arab people of Palestine. This is why it is so important that the work of the only forum acceptable to all the parties, the Geneva Peace Conference—a body which, through no fault of the victims of aggression, has for the last three years remained idle—should be resumed promptly, with a view to working out a commonly acceptable solution, embodied in an appropriate treaty form.

116. We believe therefore that the suggestions to this effect set forth in the proposal by the Soviet Union, contained in document A/31/257 of 7 October last, constitute a most realistic and hope-inspiring basis for meaningful and long-expected progress. The Polish delegation reiterates its full support both for the substantive parts of the proposal and for the time-table contained therein. The success of such a Conference would do justice to the victims of aggression. It would also be, I venture to say, in the best interests of Israel.

117. Aware as we are of the role every peace-loving State can and should play in contributing to the settlement of the Middle East conflict, Poland responded positively three years ago to the request by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to join the United Nations Emergency Force [UNEF] and the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force [UNDOF] in the Middle East. Ever since, several thousand young Polish men have served in the area as soldiers of peace under the blue flag of the United Nations. Lately, we have also agreed to yet another extension of the mandate of the Forces. But we realize full well that neither UNEF nor UNDOF has been conceived as an alternative to the active search for a settlement of the

conflict, and their presence in the area cannot be construed as a reason to perpetuate the existing state of affairs.

118. A lasting settlement is necessary. Such a settlement—based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as well as on the subsequent decisions of the Council and the resolutions of the General Assembly—is indeed possible, once all the interested parties meet together in a conference, now being unnecessarily delayed.

119. It is both for reasons of the requirements of a global consolidation of the processes of détente, as well as in the interests of all States of the region and for the sake of peace and tranquillity in the area that there should be no further delay in embarking upon the road towards the final solution to the problem. As the declaration of States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty, after the meeting of their Political Consultative Committee in Bucharest, put it several days ago:

“The conflict in the Middle East can and must be settled; this is necessary in the interest of all the peoples of the region, in the interest of general peace.” [See A/31/431, annex I, sect. V.]

120. Mr. ŠMÍD (Czechoslovakia) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Middle East conflict and the discussion in this forum on ways to resolve it have been continuing for almost 30 years now. The heart of the problem, which we have analysed so many times at General Assembly sessions, including this present one, is the Palestinian question. Although no one can doubt that this problem is of exceptional basic importance, naturally it cannot be settled in isolation. This fact is borne in mind by democratic world public opinion and by the overwhelming majority of States Members of the United Nations. Those are the States which are calling for a speedy and comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict—a conflict which has for so many years threatened the stability of that region and indeed the stability and security of the whole world.

121. Czechoslovakia, indeed like the majority of delegations present here, is ready to do everything to enable the crisis in the Middle East to be settled on a political basis, in a lasting and just manner. That aim can be achieved only if Israeli troops are withdrawn from all Arab territories occupied since 1967; if the legitimate inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are respected, including their right to establish their own State; if the right to an independent existence of all States and parties to the conflict, including Israel, is ensured; and if the state of war between the Arab States concerned and Israel is terminated.

122. Czechoslovakia, like other European countries, has since the Second World War lived through a period unprecedented in European history, a period of 31 years during which Europe has not been at war; instead of confrontation, Czechoslovakia, on the initiative of the countries of the socialist fraternity, chose dialogue, a dialogue which has resulted in the well-known Final Act of the Helsinki Conference⁴ giving peoples of Europe prospects for peace and development. We are convinced that a

⁴ Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, signed at Helsinki on 1 August 1975.

peaceful life and peaceful development cannot be the privilege of Europe alone. Peace is indivisible, and now this axiom is truer than ever before.

123. My delegation considers that until we eliminate the focus of tension in the Middle East and restore to the Arabs and Palestinians what rightfully belongs to them, there can be no talk of genuine peace.

124. The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, together with all other peace-loving States throughout the world, notes with satisfaction that United Nations efforts to achieve an over-all political settlement of the Middle East crisis are taking place at a time when the situation in that region has become calmer, when once again glimmers of hope have appeared for the settlement of this protracted problem. In this connexion, we are delighted to welcome the beginnings of a movement towards a peaceful settlement in Lebanon. We are in favour of an immediate settlement of the situation in Lebanon, a peaceful settlement of all the internal problems of the country by the Lebanese themselves, without any interference from outside, bearing in mind in particular the legitimate rights and interests of the Palestine resistance movement, represented by the PLO.

125. We are convinced that the time has come when the real conditions for peace should be realized by that State which, by its aggressive policy and the forcible expansion of its territory at the expense of its neighbours, has done its bit to foment the crises in that region, namely, Israel. It is absurd that Israel wishes to guarantee its right to existence by refusing that right to other peoples—in particular to the Arab people of Palestine. The time is ripe for that State to realize that its policy of aggression and refusal to implement the resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly will lead it into a deadlock. The time has come when Israel should also begin to view the situation soberly and realistically. There are two possibilities for Israel: first, to start negotiations for a peaceful settlement in the Middle East and thus to receive international guarantees for its own existence and security; and, secondly, to arm even further and to lower the standard of living of its people as it prepares for another Israeli-Arab war. The second possibility, with the risks and possibilities of provoking a world conflict inherent in it, will lead nowhere—except to the successful self-annihilation of Israel. Israel would as a result gain nothing and, losing international support, would itself call into question its right to its own existence.

126. Czechoslovakia supports and will continue to support in future the efforts of Arab States and peoples aimed at a just political settlement of the Middle East conflict. Work should be resumed in the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East as soon as possible with the participation of the PLO. The United Nations Secretary-General should for that purpose establish contact with the Co-Chairmen of the Geneva Conference.

127. We realize that the task is complex and that difficulties will be encountered by the participants in that Conference. But the conflict in the Middle East can and must be resolved; that is necessary in the interest of all peoples in that region and in the interest of universal peace.

128. Mr. MARTYNENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Middle East, where over the past 30 years blood has been shed in four separate wars, continues to remain a most dangerous focal point of tension and indeed threatens to explode again. That situation is cause for serious concern on the part of all peace-loving forces.

129. One of the main and obvious causes of the Middle East conflict was and remains the aggressive expansionist policy of Israel. The continuation of such a policy is an obstacle to the political settlement of that conflict on a just basis in the interests of all parties concerned to establish a lasting peace in the Middle East.

130. In the programme of further struggle for peace and international co-operation, and for the freedom and independence of the peoples, adopted at the Twenty-fifth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, it was stressed that as one of the priority tasks there was a need to “concentrate the efforts of peace-loving states on eliminating the remaining seats of war, first and foremost, on implementing a just and durable settlement in the Middle East”. So as to perform that important and urgent task, first and foremost the reasons for the explosive situation in the Middle East must be eliminated and the way cleared for a settlement. It is well known that the basic causes of that situation are the continuing Israeli occupation of Arab lands and the failure to settle the Palestinian problem as expressed in the violation of the inalienable rights of the people as a whole. That people has been turned into an expatriate people by the Israeli aggression. The Palestinians have been refused the right to have their own State and their own homeland where they were born and have lived since time immemorial.

131. It is precisely the Palestinian problem which is one of the major elements of the Middle East crisis. The heart of this problem has been clearly formulated in the decisions of many international forums. In particular, it was expressed in General Assembly resolutions in which in 1974 an overwhelming majority of States recognized the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination without external interference, as well as their inalienable right to return to their homes and property. These resolutions were reaffirmed at the thirtieth session of the General Assembly, in 1975, when the Assembly, in a special resolution, proclaimed that the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, was a prerequisite to achieving a just and lasting peace in the Middle East [*resolution 3375 (XXX)*].

132. The refusal of Israel to abide by United Nations resolutions to withdraw its troops from the occupied Arab territories, its continuation of the policy of aggression against Arab countries and its disregard of the legitimate national rights of the Arab people of Palestine constitute a threat whose consequences could seriously affect the international situation as a whole.

133. It is no secret to anyone that Israel's obstinate refusal to abide by United Nations resolutions means that Tel Aviv is entering into a position of confrontation with the

international Organization to which the State of Israel owes its very existence.

134. The Israeli leaders are using the absence of a settlement of the Middle East conflict to further their expansionist aims, to achieve their deliberate policy of colonizing and annexing occupied Arab territories and incorporating those lands into Israel. At the present session of the General Assembly data have been adduced concerning the forced expulsion of the Arab population from the occupied territories, thus creating the notorious "living space" which is the foundation of Israel's policy of settlements, aimed at the colonization and absorption of those territories. This is how we can explain Israel's endeavour to keep the whole Middle East settlement in a state of deadlock and its opposition to any real progress in this direction. This is how we can explain the refusal of the aggressor to return the lands which it has seized and to recognize the legitimate rights of the Arab people of Palestine. It is for the same reason that the Middle East conflict is artificially fomented by external reactionary circles, which are interested in maintaining their imperialist influence, eliminating the territorial basis of the Palestinian resistance movement and shattering the unity of Arab States against Israeli aggression. The events in Lebanon are abundant proof that the division and exhaustion of the anti-imperialist forces in long internecine conflict were very advantageous to the aggressor and its sponsors, as they distracted the Arabs from the struggle to eradicate the consequences of the Israeli aggression of 1967, opened up possibilities for achieving partial solutions to the Arab-Israeli conflict favourable to Tel Aviv, and permitted the continued occupation of Arab lands. Now it is clear to everyone that as long as this policy of territorial expansion by Israel is continued, as long as Israeli troops are stationed in occupied lands, no lasting settlement in the Middle East is possible.

135. When we speak of seeking a peace which is just for all peoples and countries involved in the Middle East conflict, the leaders of Israel refuse to be involved in that search. They do not like the idea that the achievement of a just peace for all necessarily requires that the aggressor give up the fruits of its criminal policy and recognize the legitimate interests and restore the flouted rights of the victims of the expansionist war of 1967 and of a half-century of Zionist geopolitics, carried out by the ejection and annihilation of the indigenous population of the colonized and annexed territories.

136. The expansionist aims of Israel are furthered by the policy of separate deals pressed by Israel itself and its patrons, or the so-called "step-by-step" diplomacy, which create the illusion that some sort of "progress" is under way but which in fact are only a substitution for a genuine settlement through negotiations.

137. The policy of separate deals deliberately ignores the resolution of the basic questions which are at the root of the Middle East conflict, including the Palestinian question, and allows Israel to gain time to carry out its policy of colonization and annexation of the occupied Territories. In the absence of a comprehensive settlement, Israel is cynically using the occupation of Arab lands as a bargaining point to obtain unilateral concessions from individual Arab

countries, to carry out its expansionist plans to prevent the solution of the Palestine problem, and further to exacerbate an already explosive situation in the Middle East.

138. This confirms the soundness of the position of principle of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, which have repeatedly stated that a radical and comprehensive political settlement in the Middle East would make it possible to solve the Middle East question and lay the basis for a just and lasting peace in that region.

139. The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR would like to stress here that any alternative to such a settlement, including the bankrupt policy of partial measures, would only amount to connivance with the Israeli policy of colonization and expansion and its disregard of the national rights of the Palestinian people. The whole history of events shows that further procrastination in arriving at a Middle East settlement means nothing other than indifference to the fate of the peoples of the Middle East and is inimical to general peace and international security.

140. The concern in the world caused by the protracted failure to settle the Middle East conflict and the potential danger of the widening of this hotbed of war is activating the search for ways and means to reduce the tension in the Middle East. As is well known, in recent years this problem has been repeatedly discussed in the Security Council, in the General Assembly and in a number of special United Nations organs. As a result, it has been possible to formulate the basis on which a Middle Eastern settlement can be achieved. The key elements are well known: first, the withdrawal of Israeli forces from all Arab territories occupied as a result of the 1967 aggression; secondly, the recognition of the legitimate demands of the Arab people of Palestine, including their inalienable right to create their own State; thirdly, international guarantees of the security and inviolability of the boundaries of all States in the Middle East and their right to an independent existence and development. This is the only possible way out of this threatening situation. This "threefold formula" could be the key capable of opening the door to a genuine, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, because it takes into account the interests of all countries involved in the Middle East conflict. It is just to the countries which have been subjected to Israeli aggression, to the Arab Palestinian people, and to Israel. It ensures, as was stressed by the statement of the Soviet Government of 28 April 1976, "conditions of peace and security within recognized frontiers" [see A/31/84-S/12063].

141. In this connexion our delegation would like to note, as we have on several previous occasions, that there exists not only a just and realistic basis for a settlement of the Middle East conflict but also international machinery for such a settlement, namely, the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East.

142. The speedy activation of this important machinery is in the interests of all the States and peoples of the Middle East. It would eliminate the Middle East conflict and establish a just and lasting peace. All countries would gain from this, and it would be to the benefit of general peace as well. In those conditions, the recent appeal made by the Soviet Union concerning the early resumption of the

Geneva Conference with the participation of all parties concerned on an equal footing, including the PLO as the only recognized, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and one of the main parties to the Middle East conflict is particularly relevant. The participation of the PLO, in the Conference, on an equal footing, is vitally necessary because, as has been recognized by the United Nations General Assembly, a just solution to the Palestinian problem is one of the key elements in the achievement of a just and comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict.

143. The Soviet Union has put forward an agenda and plan for organizing the work of the Geneva Peace Conference [A/31/257-S/12208], reflecting all the key aspects of a settlement and taking into account the legitimate rights and interests of all those directly concerned: the Arab States, the Arab people of Palestine and the State of Israel.

144. Any further delay in ensuring the resumption of the work of the Geneva Peace Conference is inadmissible from the point of view of the interests of international peace and security. The Israeli leaders who are using various pretexts to block the reconvening of that Conference and who refuse to recognize the rights of the Arab people of Palestine should understand that such a policy is against the long-term interests of Israel itself.

145. It is useless for them to count on enjoying the fruits of their aggression any longer, or on being able to keep the occupied territories for themselves, or on achieving territorial expansion at the expense of the Arab peoples. The sooner they realize this, the sooner they show a realistic approach, cease to obstruct a Middle East settlement and to disregard the rights of the Palestinian people, withdraw from the occupied Arab territories and give up their policy of aggression and territorial expansion, then the sooner will a just and lasting peace be achieved and the peoples of the Middle East will be able to live in conditions of peace, independence and freedom.

146. The Israeli Government's persistence in its present aggressive policy, including its ignoring of United Nations resolutions, has brought that country to a very dangerous impasse. A State's security cannot be ensured by aggression or the seizure of the territory of other States. The only alternative to the existing situation is a political settlement based on one of the fundamental principles of international life: the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force.

147. The elimination of this dangerous hotbed of tension and war in the Middle East is one of the tasks to which the United Nations must give priority in the efforts to strengthen international peace and security. That is in the interests of all the States and peoples of the region and in the interests of general peace. It is the duty of the General Assembly and all States Members of the United Nations to promote by all possible means a speedy solution to this important problem. For that reason, "freezing" the present situation in the Middle East is inadmissible and the existing machinery for negotiation—that is, the Geneva Peace Conference—should be brought into action without delay.

148. In the declaration of 26 November this year by the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty [A/31/431-S/12255,

annex I], it is stressed that the work of the Geneva Peace Conference should be resumed as soon as possible, with the participation of the PLO. The Middle East conflict should and must be resolved. That is required in the interests of all the peoples of the region and in the interests of peace as a whole.

149. Mr. GHORRA (Lebanon): The coming year—1977—is being described nowadays as the year of peace for the Middle East. We earnestly hope that that will prove to be true. Every few years we have witnessed renewed warfare, punctuated by periods of so-called efforts for peaceful solutions. For 30 years, constant calls have been made and initiatives undertaken here at the United Nations and elsewhere for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. But peace has evaded us; it has been a fleeting mirage which in the end it has proven to be most deceptive. So many chances have arisen and been lost—dashing the fervent yearnings and hopes for peace, and thus giving credibility to the opinion that the Arab-Israeli conflict is a succession of lost opportunities.

150. The peoples of the area have had their full share of illusions, disenchantments, and ensuing tragedies. There is no longer any excuse for any further diplomatic and political manoeuvring and delaying tactics. The Arab States and peoples are entitled to free themselves from the threats of recurring wars and to devote their energies and resources to the building of peaceful structures designed to ensure their security and progress and the well-being of their future generations.

151. As we stand on the threshold of the year 1977, the Lebanese delegation is encouraged to detect several factors which militate in favour of peace. The Arab leaders most directly interested have clearly reiterated their desire, shared by their peoples, to seek a global, final, just and peaceful settlement, ending the state of war and ushering in an era of peace for the Middle East. Israeli officials are professing their readiness to engage in the peace process. If their words are matched by action, there will be real prospects for progress.

152. We note another encouraging factor. In diplomatic circles and international public opinion, there exists a widespread realization that the time is ripe for determined, sustained and accelerated action to achieve a peaceful settlement. The debate during this session of the General Assembly has emphasized more than ever the grave danger of a renewed and wider war and, consequently, the necessity and urgency of acting as soon as possible to avert a new catastrophe. The belief is universally expressed that a real opportunity for peace is offered at present, an opportunity that should be seized and that should not be allowed to slip by once more.

153. The statements made in the General Assembly or brought to its attention during this session by the United States and the Soviet Union lead to the belief that the two major Powers are moving close to each other with regard to the resumption of the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East, with the objective of achieving a comprehensive settlement. Many other delegations have stressed the need to reconvene the Conference. These statements have given rise to renewed hopes for peace, and even the United

States Secretary of State, Mr. Kissinger, spoke of possible significant progress to be reported to the next session of the General Assembly [*11th meeting*].

154. Furthermore, President-elect Carter, in a statement about the situation in Lebanon made on 23 October 1976, said:

“Obviously, all people of goodwill can agree that it is long past time for a permanent peace not only in Lebanon, but throughout the Middle East. This is not an impossible dream. It can be a concrete objective, and it is one to which I will direct my efforts from the date I take office as a matter of very high priority and urgency.”

155. It was encouraging also to note that the newly designated United States Secretary of State, Mr. Cyrus Vance, commented that the question of the Middle East is something to which attention should be given very soon.

156. At this stage my delegation is justified in dealing with the situation of the Middle East from a Lebanese perspective, for the tragic events in Lebanon have poignantly dramatized the Middle East problem in all its traumas and dimensions and have brought home the urgency of finding a solution to that conflict. Statements made at this session have underlined the link between these events and the Middle East problem, notwithstanding the internal Lebanese factors. In the introduction to his report to the General Assembly, the Secretary-General states: “The relationship of the Lebanese crisis to the Middle East problem as a whole underlines its serious potential threat to international peace.” [*A/31/1/Add.1, sect. III.*]

157. Several Foreign Ministers, particularly those of France, Italy, the Soviet Union, Bangladesh and Sweden, have in one form or another established that the events in Lebanon are a direct consequence of the lack of an over-all settlement in the Middle East or that the connexion between the general Middle East crisis and the Lebanese situation clearly reveals the crucial need to reach a just solution of the Palestinian problem and the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole. These three questions, as the Foreign Minister of France, Mr. de Guiringaud, has said [*9th meeting*] are inextricably linked. The main conclusion reached was that the events in Lebanon were a forceful reminder that a comprehensive solution to the conflict in the Middle East should be found without delay.

158. It is true that we in Lebanon have no territorial problem with Israel. Our southern borders are internationally recognized and are not subject to any dispute. It is also a fact that our relations with Israel are governed by the 1949 Armistice Agreement, recognized by many United Nations resolutions and pronouncements to be still valid and in force and not subject to unilateral revocation. It can be superseded only by a peace agreement. And, finally, it is a fact that Lebanon has not been party to the wars of the Middle East.

159. Nevertheless Lebanon was caught in the merciless chain of events and became a principal victim of the Middle East conflict. In a way it became a microcosm of that conflict. All the controversies, contradictions and convulsions of the area were reflected on the Lebanese scene. It is

our belief that if a solution to the Middle East conflict had been found in the past, events in Lebanon would not have taken such a violent turn. It is not our intention here to dwell on the Lebanese crisis, but we want to stress a point made by President Sarkis recently, namely, that a just and lasting peace in the Middle East is a major prerequisite for the stability of Lebanon itself. Therefore we have a great stake in peace and in initiatives to be launched speedily to achieve it. We have reached a situation which gives us every justification to make a strong demand that the United Nations, and especially the Security Council, move forward. The principal members of the Security Council, endowed by the Charter with special responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security, must more than ever assume those responsibilities toward us.

160. While we can feel a great sense of relief that the situation has improved dramatically in the last few weeks in Lebanon thanks to an enforced cease-fire, we cannot confidently say that all our troubles are completely over. We still face many political, economic and humanitarian problems. We still have to work out efficient and lasting measures to ensure our independence, sovereignty and security. However, very encouraging developments have taken place. The infernal cycle of fighting, bloodshed and destruction has been broken. The process of pacification of the country is progressing well. The authorities and the people are now planning for the long process of rehabilitation and reconstruction and for the building of structures that will ensure for Lebanese society the fundamental freedoms and respect for all religious beliefs and human values.

161. The swift turn of events during the last month was made possible by the positive and determined stand of the Arab Heads of State who, at meetings held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, from 16 to 18 October, and at the summit conference held in Cairo on 25 and 26 October, resolved to lend their collective weight towards ending the tragedy of Lebanon.

162. The Arab action not only helped to restore peace to Lebanon; it also had the advantage of strengthening the spirit of brotherhood and solidarity among the Arab States. The Riyadh and Cairo decisions and agreements were reached within the Arab context and according to the pact of the League of Arab States, which is a regional organization empowered to act for the maintenance of the peace and security of its members.

163. The major decision of the two conferences was to establish an Arab deterrent force, to act within Lebanon under the personal command of the President of the Lebanese Republic, to restore peace and order to the country. Thus the League of Arab States has been performing a basic duty in the service of peace in the area, and its action falls within the purview of Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, which provides for regional arrangements to deal with matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security. The Cairo conference unanimously confirmed the commitment to safeguard the national unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Lebanon and non-interference in its domestic affairs.

164. Whatever difficulties we have had with Palestinians in Lebanon should not detract from the fact that the Palestinian people as a whole have a just cause that deserves every support. Lebanon has always supported their cause. I cannot do better than reiterate what President Sarkis stated in this respect on 23 September: "The Palestinian cause is Lebanon's cause, as it is the cause of every Arab State and as it must be that of every country that values right and justice." The Palestinians are entitled to enjoy and exercise their equal and inalienable rights: the right to return to their homeland, Palestine, the right to self-determination, to statehood, and to sovereignty within their own State. Those rights have been recognized in many resolutions of this Assembly, the last of which was adopted on 24 November last [resolution 31/20].

165. The Palestinian question can no longer be ignored in any consideration, conference or agreement relating to a global, definitive and just settlement of the Middle East conflict. This question has been the core of the conflict since its inception and continues to be so today. To skirt it and evade confronting it squarely is tantamount to laying a time-bomb on the track of peace in the Middle East, one that is more explosive and dangerous to the area and to its people, and to international security as well, than anything experienced so far.

166. Past warnings, counsels, resolutions and debates highlighting the dangerous situation in the Middle East have been to no avail. They have been described as idle rhetoric, blackmail and intimidation. The wars of 1967 and 1973 and their near brush with wider conflagration, made it abundantly clear that attitudes of international nonchalance, indecisiveness and procrastination had not only perpetuated a dangerous situation but had in fact added to its complexity and gravity.

167. Nearly 10 years have passed since the war of June 1967. Israel still occupies most of the territories it invaded at that time. Most of Sinai and the Golan Heights, the entire West Bank of the Jordan, including Arab Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip remain under Israeli military control. This has been done in flagrant violation of the principles of the United Nations Charter and of the many resolutions adopted by both the Security Council and the General Assembly which emphatically affirm the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and call on Israel to withdraw from the Arab territories occupied in the war of 1967. If Israeli leaders were now to show wisdom and responsiveness in heeding not only United Nations resolutions but also the advice of their own friends, peace could be achieved in the Middle East and future war prevented.

168. Arab leaders are asserting their willingness to reach peace agreements on the basis of United Nations resolutions guaranteeing to all peoples and States in the area the right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries. This has been confirmed in this debate by many representatives of the principal Arab parties to the conflict.

169. It is idle to talk of the majority of the States Members of the United Nations as being pro-Arab and anti-Israel, or about the transformation of the United Nations into an arena for Arab propaganda which consumes

time, effort and money. The Arab States and their friends, imbued with a spirit of fairness and justice, have no other recourse than to resort to the United Nations. If the United Nations forgoes its debates and the adoption of its resolutions regarding a question for which it is primarily responsible, then an alternative must be produced, and that alternative at this stage cannot be anything but the Geneva Peace Conference, which is to be reconvened under the auspices of the United Nations and to be guided by the basic resolutions adopted by the principal organs of our Organization—the Security Council and the General Assembly. Only then can we hope to clear our docket of the many items dealing with Middle East problems. The onus is on the Government of Israel. If it now takes a positive and constructive attitude in its approach to the Conference, it can clear the way so that the parties to the conflict can proceed to attend to the important and substantive order of business, which is the achievement of a peace settlement.

170. It is only at the Conference that a contractual peace can be achieved. The course for peace has been charted. Years of discussions and scores of resolutions have already clarified the law and the basic principles and guidelines that must govern the just and peaceful settlement. They have determined which are the parties to the conflict that must participate in the Conference. The General Assembly has called for the invitation of the PLO, the representative of the Palestinian people, to participate in this Conference. The Palestinians have the right to be a party to efforts, deliberations and agreements affecting their own rights and future. Certainly diplomatic ingenuity must not fail to produce a modality which will overcome the difficulty regarding the right of concerned parties to participate in that Conference. The Secretary-General is endowed with sufficient wisdom and resourcefulness to help produce that modality. The two Co-Chairmen can play a determining role in this respect. Surely their declared desire for peace should be transformed into willingness, willingness into action, and action into achievement.

171. The Conference is called upon to ensure the implementation of the provisions contained in the United Nations resolutions, namely, the withdrawal of Israeli troops from all the occupied Arab territories; the exercise by the Palestinian Arab people of their inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination and to the establishment of their own State in Palestine; the preservation of the rights of all the States in the area to live within recognized and secure boundaries; and the termination of the state of war between Israel and the Arab States.

172. We know that the Conference cannot speedily produce a solution to all these aspects of the Middle East problem. We have no illusions in that respect. However, there must be quick action to involve the parties to the Conference in the negotiating process that ultimately must lead to the solution. If the Conference is only allowed to convene; if procedural difficulties are overcome in a preparatory stage; if all the interested parties move forward in negotiations towards an elaboration in the early stages of at least a perception of peace; then a momentum can be generated, tension in the area can subside, and the prospects of peace may brighten.

173. We are satiated here with discussions, debates and resolutions. For every inch of dust accumulated on United Nations documents regarding the Middle East, a measure of blood has been spilled on its battlefields, and a ton of destruction and rubble piled up in its towns and cities. For every moment of neglect by the international community, ages of building and achievement have been turned to naught. We can no longer tolerate the perpetuation of a dangerous situation or let the living constantly face death and the cries of the dead ring in our ears. To the former, we must give hope, so that they can live in peace and dignity. For the latter, we must ensure that their sacrifices were not in vain. Surely peoples with the heritage of three great religions—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—can overcome the hatred generated by decades of war and can envisage a future of freedom, justice, peace and progress for those living now and for generations to come.

174. Mr. BALETA (Albania) (*interpretation from French*): The Albanian people is a true friend of the Arab peoples. The People's Republic of Albania has firmly supported the just cause of those peoples, and the position of principle it has always upheld on the Middle East question is well known. It is in this spirit that the Albanian delegation wishes briefly to put forward, within the context of the present discussion, its views on certain main aspects of the Middle East situation.

175. The Middle East problem arose and became more complex with each passing year as a result of the aggressive policy practised by the imperialist Powers in that region and the continued imperialist Zionist aggression against the Arab peoples and countries. The serious and explosive situation that continues to exist in the Middle East is a matter of great concern both to the Arab peoples and to the peace-loving and freedom-loving peoples of the whole world. Those peoples are profoundly interested in the Middle East problem and rightly demand that a just and lasting solution be found to it and that one of the most dangerous hotbeds of tension in the world be eliminated.

176. But the course of events shows that no true solution of the Middle East problem in keeping with the sovereign interests of the Arab people, and in particular of the Palestinian people, looms on the horizon.

177. Many contradictions persist in the Middle East, and events fraught with danger occur in that area. The Israeli Zionist aggressors, the two imperialist super-Powers and a number of reactionary forces have intensified their anti-Arab acts and are making efforts to implement their old plans and are readying themselves to impose anew on the Arab peoples partial and false solutions to the detriment of the vital interests and sovereign rights of the latter. The Israeli Zionists continue to occupy the land of the Palestinian people and the territories of the Arab countries, obstinately practise a policy of denationalization in those territories, declare arrogantly that they have not the least intention of renouncing their annexationist aims and cynically demand that the Arab peoples agree to bargain for their own rights. The two imperialist super-Powers—the United States of America and the Soviet Union—while alleging that they are making efforts to find a solution of the Middle East question, are actively engaged in constraining the Arab peoples to make concessions to the detriment

of their national sovereignty and to give up the struggle for their national rights.

178. The events of the past years offer clear proof of the foregoing. The Arab peoples won an important victory during the October 1973 war. That victory showed that they were in a position to stand up to the imperialist-Zionist aggression and to defeat their aggressors. In the course of that war, the Arab peoples saw from their own experience that the sure way to recover their rights was through armed struggle. They became further convinced of the need to enhance their fighting power in the struggle against a common enemy. Embarrassed by that victory, the enemies of the Arab peoples—headed by the United States of America and the Soviet Union—reacted immediately, using every means ranging from pressure to blackmail, scandal and crafty diplomatic machinations in order to undermine and weaken the struggle of those peoples, to destroy Arab unity, to divide the Arab peoples, to pit one against the other and to move them away from the main combat front and from the struggle against imperialist-Zionist aggression and the interference of the two imperialist super-Powers.

179. During the period that has elapsed since the October war, the two imperialist super-Powers have continued to increase their rivalry and bargaining in the Middle East and multiplied their plots and intrigues. The United States of America and the Soviet Union have engaged in deceiving the Arab peoples, to impose on the latter the idea that the Middle East problem could be settled only on the basis of the plans and formulas of the former.

180. The tense and explosive situation that still exists in the Middle East and the tragic events in Lebanon, in particular, testify clearly to the dangerous consequences suffered by the Arab peoples because of the rivalry of the two super-Powers and the bargaining in which they have engaged so as to establish their dominance and hegemony in the Middle East. No one is now unaware of the fact that the two super-Powers and the Israeli Zionists have provoked and exacerbated events in Lebanon in order, first of all, to strike at the liberation movement of the Palestinian people and to liquidate the Palestinian question, while at the same time creating difficulties in relations between the Arab countries and sowing discord among them. They seek also in this way to prepare the ground for new compromises and bargains in order to establish partial and incomplete solutions of the Middle East problem to the detriment of the Arab peoples.

181. The United States of America and the Soviet Union have no interest in or desire for a true, just and lasting solution of the problem of the Middle East. Quite to the contrary, the two super-Powers seek to perpetuate the situation of "no war, no peace" in the Middle East in order that they may at all times find a pretext for intervening in the interests of their own hegemony. They have undertaken great political, economic and military activities in the Middle East, but this is not done to assist the Arab peoples, as they falsely claim. It is for reasons that are very different that the two imperialist super-Powers are there and wish to remain there, politically, economically and militarily. It is out of rivalry and in order to create zones of influence, to ensure for each a position of dominance and to use it for

their own ambitions and neo-colonialist desires, and above all to take over the underground petroleum resources of the Arab countries and to use the strategic positions of those countries to further their own aggressive policies. That is why the United States and the Soviet Union seek to become arbiters in the Middle East situation and impose their *diktat* on the Arab countries. That is why they support and encourage the aggressive policy of the Israeli Zionists and endeavour to trap the Arab peoples.

182. The American imperialists have assisted and continue to assist Israel by every means so as to use it as a stronghold against the Arab peoples. But at the same time they do not cease to speak of their friendship for those peoples. They think that in that way they will more easily enhance their influence in the Middle East, strengthen their own positions in their rivalry with the Soviet socio-imperialists and weaken the struggle of the Arab peoples against the Israeli aggressors.

183. The Soviet socio-imperialists, for their part, do not remain passive. They agitate themselves as feverishly as the American imperialists but their action is more covert as they speculate on the Middle East question for their own hegemonic interests in order to compensate for the failures they suffered in one country and to strengthen their positions or to implant themselves in another country. It is precisely so as to achieve those objectives that the United States of America has established and practised its diplomacy of a "step-by-step" settlement and that the Soviet Union has spoken so much of the need to convene the Geneva Conference on the Middle East.

184. Encouraged by the policy of the two imperialist super-Powers and benefiting from the many forms of political, economic and military aid given it by the American imperialists and from human reinforcements sent by the Soviet socio-imperialists, Israel daily becomes increasingly arrogant in its annexationist claims over the Arab territories and continues obstinately to practise its aggressive policy while preparing for a new war against the Arab peoples and countries.

185. These circumstances make it even clearer how erroneous and dangerous it is to have the slightest illusion that the problem of the Middle East and that of Palestine, which constitutes its essential point, can one day be solved thanks to the goodwill of Israel or to expect that Israel will decide of its own will to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories, cease aggression against the Arab peoples and enable the Palestinian people to recover their national rights. It would be only illusory to believe that those problems would be solved thanks to any role that the two imperialist super-Powers might play or to depend on the projects which they are concocting either through diplomatic means or under their patronage.

186. The history of the struggle of the peoples of various parts of the world to achieve and defend their national rights and the experience of the Arab peoples prove that the problem of the Middle East will be solved thanks to the firm resolve of the Arab peoples to defend themselves against imperialist-Zionist aggression and against interference by the two super-Powers.

187. The Albanian delegation wishes to stress once more that in its view the American diplomatic policy of a "step-by-step" settlement, like the efforts and appeals of the imperialists and socio-imperialists to convene a conference at Geneva, will create many dangers for the Arab peoples. The two imperialist super-Powers are using these machinations so that the Arab peoples will renounce their struggle against Zionist aggression and accept bargaining to the detriment of their own rights. As was stated by the leader of the Albanian people, Enver Hoxha:

"The alleged plans for peace trumped up in the chancelleries of Moscow and Washington have as their aim to bury the true Arab question. Each of the initiatives taken by the United States of America and the Soviet Union in the Middle East seeks to strengthen the imperialists' positions and to enhance their influence".

188. The Albanian people and their Government have supported and continue sincerely to support the just cause of the Arab peoples. The Albanian delegation is convinced that the Arab peoples are themselves able to resolve the question of the Middle East through their struggle against imperialist-Zionist aggression by strengthening their vigilance against the intrigues and plots of the two super-Powers and strengthening their combat units.

189. Mr. PUNTSAGNOROV (Mongolia) (*interpretation from Russian*): In view of the vitally important task of eliminating existing hotbeds of war, we attach great importance to the General Assembly's examination of the question of the situation in the Middle East. Now that the process of international détente is under way and now that, as a result of the historic victory of the peoples of Indo-China, the aggressive war in South-East Asia has been ended, a just settlement of the Middle East problem will doubtless have a favourable influence on a further major improvement of the international situation as a whole.

190. Nevertheless, we must note with regret that, for as long as this problem has been discussed at past sessions of the General Assembly, no progress has been achieved in settling the Middle East conflict. Furthermore, other tragic events have taken place in Lebanon which are directly connected with the results of Israeli aggression and imperialist and Zionist machinations.

191. The continuing explosive situation in the Middle East requires the adoption of urgent, effective measures for the elimination of that conflict. The United Nations bears especial responsibility for ensuring peace and security in that region. It should be stressed that the reason for the tense situation in the Middle East lies in Israel's outright trampling underfoot of such basic principles of international relations reflected in the Charter of the United Nations as respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, non-aggression, non-interference in the internal affairs of States, the right of peoples to self-determination and independence, and the fulfilment of obligations under international law, among others.

192. Israel's policy of acquiring foreign territories by force is scandalously at variance with the spirit of the times, when a radical restructuring of international relations is taking place on the basis of the principles of peaceful

coexistence and the inadmissibility of any encroachment on the sovereign rights of peoples. Only on the basis of unswerving respect for these universal and generally recognized principles can peace and the security of all States be ensured and international law and order be established on a really just basis.

193. Nevertheless, Israel, flouting the appeals of the United Nations and world public opinion, continues to pursue its dangerous policy of expansion and annexation. This is demonstrated in particular by its intensive colonization of the expropriated Arab lands, by measures to ensure their economic integration with Israel, and by repressive actions vis-à-vis the Arab population.

194. The report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories [A/31/218] unmasks the crimes of the Israeli military clique in Arab territories. We must also point out that Israel is banking on its policy of dealing from a "position of strength" and, with the assistance given it by its imperialist sponsors, is stepping up its military preparations. As is well known, Israel ignores the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and aims at gaining possession—indeed already has gained possession, as has been shown many times in the American press—of nuclear weapons. But Israel's neighbours have signed that Treaty.

195. It is quite clear that, as long as Israel exacerbates the situation and pursues its expansionist policy, there are no chances for any peaceful settlement of the conflict.

196. That is why my delegation considers that a settlement of the Middle East problem requires the complete and immediate withdrawal of Israeli troops from all Arab territories occupied in 1967. An organic part of such a settlement should be the restoration of justice for the Arab people of Palestine exiled by the Israeli expansionists. The attempt of the Zionists, and of some others too, to deny the very existence of the 3 million Palestinians, and indeed the political nature of the Palestinian question, by treating it as a refugee problem, has been rejected by the international community as being completely unfounded.

197. The delegation of the Mongolian People's Republic supported the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-ninth and thirtieth sessions which reaffirmed the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, independence and sovereignty, and also recognized the major role of that people in the restoration of peace to the Middle East.

198. The PLO, which is leading the national liberation struggle against the Israeli expansionists, has received wide international recognition as the only legitimate representative of the Arab people of Palestine. The PLO, naturally, should be represented in the working out of measures to settle the Middle East problem on an equal footing with all other parties. We consider that recognition of the inalienable national rights of the Arab people of Palestine, including their right to constitute their own independent State, is a prerequisite for solving the problem.

199. The delegation of the Mongolian People's Republic advocates respect for the right of all States of that region to an independent existence, with international guarantees of their security. The course of events in the Middle East has already shown that, unless those provisions are respected, the Middle East problem cannot be solved, and the security of all States and peoples of that region cannot be guaranteed. So-called partial measures, which do not affect the main elements of the Arab-Israeli conflict, have not brought a peace settlement in the Middle East any closer and that convinces us that this problem should be solved on a comprehensive basis. For an over-all settlement of the Middle East crisis, it is important to bring into play the existing international machinery—that is to say, the Geneva Peace Conference. In this respect, the delegation of the Mongolian People's Republic supports the initiative of one of the Co-Chairmen of the Geneva Peace Conference, the Soviet Union, as well as the proposals made by several delegations for an early resumption of the work of that Conference with the participation of all those directly concerned, including the PLO.

200. The Mongolian People's Republic supports, as it always has done, the just cause of the Arab peoples. We sincerely hope for a speedy and complete normalization of the situation in Lebanon and for the strengthening of Arab unity in the face of the aggressors.

201. The positive changes in the international political atmosphere and the experience gained by States in resolving controversial and complex international problems open, in our opinion, real possibilities for a settlement of the Middle East crisis. Everything must be done to avoid letting these opportunities slip by us, and to create a solid basis for peace and stability in the Middle East.

202. The PRESIDENT: The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic has requested to be allowed to speak in exercise of his right of reply. Members will recall that the General Assembly, at its 4th plenary meeting this session, decided that such statements should be limited to 10 minutes.

203. Mr. ALLAF (Syrian Arab Republic): The representative of Israel used the opportunity granted him at the beginning of this afternoon's meeting to introduce the so-called draft resolution A/31/L.24, not really to introduce the draft resolution, but in fact to reiterate, as expected, his usual attacks on and vilification of the Arab countries. He introduced draft resolution A/31/L.24 in two words and addressed the remaining 99 per cent of his lengthy statement to distorting and attacking the two other draft resolutions, A/31/L.26 and A/31/L.27, even before they had been circulated or introduced. Then he reiterated the distorted, racist and evil Zionist version of what is really happening in the Middle East.

204. Today, as in his first statement in this debate [87th meeting], the representative of Israel did not even try to hide the real designs of his régime. Exactly as his Prime Minister did, he spelled out ever more shamelessly and clearly what the Zionists want to accomplish, that is, the legitimization of their aggressive occupation of the territories of others and the eternalization of the *status quo* in those territories.

205. After three years of obstructing, on various pretexts, the convening of the United Nations Peace Conference on the Middle East in Geneva the ingenious mind of Mr. Rabin has suddenly discovered the solution: forget about Geneva, let us have a conference parallel to the Helsinki Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. At the same time he was so generous as to state that that does not mean that Israel wants to keep or annex all the territories it occupied in 1967; maybe it will be satisfied with some or perhaps most of them. In other words, after 10 years of occupying the West Bank, Gaza, Sinai and the Golan, Israel finds that the time has now come, not to withdraw from those territories, as repeatedly requested by the General Assembly and the Security Council, but to annex the Arab territories altogether and thus end the Middle East conflict the Zionist way. In Israel's words: "You do not want the territories to remain under occupation, very well. Sit down with us to formalize and legalize their final annexation."

206. It is very significant in this context to hear Mr. Rabin and his ambassador here repeatedly use words and phrases such as: "the world as it really is"; "history cannot be reversed"; "*de facto* situations require responsible, reasonable and realistic solutions"; "tackle the reality of an imperfect situation founded upon Middle East realities", and so on. Those so-called realistic arguments are crucially needed, it seems, by the Zionists because for them realities, *de facto* situations and the irreversibility of history mean simply and purely turning the occupation of Arab territories into a *fait accompli* and forgetting about it.

207. It is very ironic to hear the Prime Minister of Israel—copied faithfully here by his ambassador—tell the world: "The conference must not attempt the impossible through a futile illusion that history can be put back." [87th meeting, para. 145.] Well, well, look who is affirming that history cannot be put back! I cannot believe my ears. A Zionist leader now admitting that history cannot be put back. This is quite a development, because for 50 years we have continually heard everywhere, and notably in this Assembly, that the Zionists are entitled to Palestine by the so-called right of history. Of course, for the Zionists it is not realistic to go back 10 or 20 years to ask the end of an injustice or an aggression; but it is very realistic to go back 2,000 or 3,000 years to claim the false Zionist right to Palestine.

208. It is also ironic to hear Mr. Rabin affirm to his European socialist colleagues: "... lasting peace is a matter of relations and exchanges between peoples. Not only Governments" [*ibid.*]. That is applicable in Zionist logic to any people, except the Palestinian people. For the Zionists, the Palestinian people does not exist, or, in the words of Mrs. Golda Meir, "has never existed".

209. None of the countries which participated in the Helsinki Conference was aggressively or illegally occupying the territories of other participants at the time of the Conference and none of the peoples represented at the Helsinki Conference was at the time homeless, uprooted and living in refugee camps or under alien occupation. At the very moment that its Prime Minister is calling for a Geneva Conference along the lines of the Helsinki Con-

ference, Israel is in fact constantly and flagrantly violating each and every one of the 10 principles of the Final Act of Helsinki.

210. So, before the Zionists talk about security, they would be much better advised to end their aggression against the security of others; and before they talk about co-operation, coexistence and human relations, let them end their inhuman practices and violations of the rights of more than 3 million human beings in the region.

211. As for the so-called Israeli draft resolution A/31/L.24, I do not have very much to add to what was brilliantly said by the representative of Sri Lanka. What I should like to say is only that it seems that there is no limit on how far the hypocrisy of the Israeli representative can go. It is amazing to see the representative of the militarist Zionist establishment introduce a draft resolution whose preambular paragraph bases itself on the commitment in Article 2 of the charter by States to "settle their international disputes by peaceful means". It is really ironic, when we realize that the author of the said preambular paragraph is none other than the representative of the régime which has committed three wars of aggression and hundreds of aggressive raids, attacks and massacres against the Arab countries and peoples through out the three decades since its creation in the Arab homeland.

212. The sole operative paragraph of the draft resolution illustrates the real reason for the existing tragedy in the Middle East, namely, Israel's continued ignoring of the rights and even the existence of the Palestinian people. Israel pretends to want the participation in the Conference which is supposed to establish the much hoped-for just and lasting peace in the Middle East of every party, except, of course, the Palestinian people whose problem, as already recognized by everyone except Israel, is the very root and core of the conflict.

213. Also, Israel continues to pursue its biased and selective approach to United Nations resolutions and decisions. It pays the usual lip service to Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), but never sincerely attempts to take any steps towards their implementation. In this connexion, it is enough to say that the overwhelming majority of the nations of the world, including most of the Western Powers, have recognized that, while resolution 242 (1967) is suitable as a basis for the solution of some important aspects of the Middle East problem, it needs to be complemented in a manner that takes into account the Palestinian element which is missing in that resolution, namely, the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people. That biased and selective approach has happily been remedied in the draft amendments in document A/31/L.25, submitted and brilliantly explained by the representative of Sri Lanka.

214. With reference to draft resolutions A/31/L.26 and A/31/L.27 which the representative of Israel has tried to distort, I reserve my delegation's right to comment on them at a later stage of this debate.

The meeting rose at 6.35 p.m.