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President: Mr. Paul J. F. LUSAKA
(Zambia).

AGENDA ITEM 36

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

1. Mr. MADADHA (Jordan) (*interpretation from Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General, for his valuable reports to the Assembly. I should also like to thank the Chairman and the members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. I wish to thank, too, the Chairman and members of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories for their valuable and objective reports, which have informed us all of the facts of what is currently taking place in the occupied Arab territories and the efforts to bring back the lost peace in Palestine and the Middle East.

2. I wish to express my condolences to the Yugoslav delegation and Government on the death of Mr. Becir Meholjić, former representative of Yugoslavia in the Special Committee, which has saddened me very much.

3. The Secretary-General, in his report on the work of the Organization, says:

"After the Second World War there was admittedly a certain over-confidence in the capacity of international institutions, born of a desperate desire to build a new and better world. It then seemed possible to establish, as a first priority, a system for maintaining international peace and security under the provisions of the Charter. If such a system could become effective, the main obstacle to disarmament and arms limitation, the insecurity of nations, would be removed, and the rule of law rather than the rule of force would at last begin to come into its own on the international level." [See A/39/1.]

The Secretary-General also states that: "There is also, on occasion, an apparent reluctance to make the effort required to use international organizations effectively." [Ibid.]

4. Two principles have become enshrined in international relations: the principles of the non-use of force in solving international disputes and the necessity of creating an international institution to establish the laws, organize them and ensure their effective use and implementation in human relations. These principles were established by mankind after the suffering in many wars, which led to the death or

dispersal of millions of people. Therefore, the League of Nations was set up, followed by the United Nations.

5. The principle of the non-use of force for the settlement of international disputes became one of the most important principles of the United Nations. Beginning in 1948, the year in which Israel was created, and continuing to this day—that is, for 36 years—the Organization has been attempting to ensure implementation of a resolution adopted in 1947 [resolution 181 (II)] which called for the creation of two States on the land of Palestine, one for Israel and the other for Palestine. Throughout all that time, Israel has derided and flouted the United Nations, which created it in the first place, and has disregarded the Organization's resolutions and decisions.

6. The first principle on which the United Nations was based, the principle of the non-use of force in solving international disputes, became the first principle, but in reverse, of the Israeli State created by the Organization; resort to force became Israel's main method of settling its disagreements with the neighbouring Arab States. The international Organization which established Israel became, according to Israel—and has been so declared by Israel's leaders and presidents—merely a group of poor and weak developing countries which have fallen under the influence of Arab money and blackmail. Right, in its opinion, has become something that can be bought with money and weapons, not decided by the rule of law and legitimacy. There are dozens of examples of what has been said and written by Israeli leaders and representatives concerning their opinion of the countries of Asia and Africa.

7. The most important principle in the Charter of the United Nations, that pertaining to the non-use of force, became the most important principle in Israeli practices but in a thoroughly distorted way. Israel's security, in its opinion, can be achieved only by force. Peace can be achieved only by force. It was witchcraft, therefore, turned against the witch; the innocent lamb which saddened the world because of its suffering at the hands of the Nazis and the Fascists during the Second World War turned into a ferocious wolf which eats everything in its way; force became the basis of everything and the Arabs were unable to understand anything else. That is the Israeli logic, and it has tried to convince the world of this logic. Whoever understands such logic becomes the wise man who sympathizes with Semitism; whoever does not accept such a principle and believes in something else becomes an anti-Semite who is subjected to Arab blackmail and money. Nazi sadism applied to Jews became Israeli sadism applied to Arabs. The Nazi ovens built for Jews have been turned by the Israelis into ovens for the Palestinians. In this respect, I

would recommend to anyone who wishes to know more about the sadistic Israeli theories the works of Ben-Gurion, Moshe Dayan and Menachem Begin describing the massacres by the Israelis in Deir Yassin, Qibya and Nahalin and elsewhere. When the Haganah and Stern terrorists killed and bombed, these activities were considered by the Israelis to be legitimate Semitic actions to eradicate the Palestinian people because it is an uncivilized people which does not deserve to live, but when a Palestinian takes action against those who have usurped his land and turned him into a homeless refugee, he becomes, in the eyes of Israel, a terrorist who must be punished by the international community.

8. With regard to terrorism, history shows that the first to use political terrorism in the region was Israel and its organizations—beginning with the assassination of British soldiers and officers during the days of the Mandate and acts of sabotage, such as the bombing of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem on 22 July 1946, the assassination of the United Nations Mediator, Count Folke Bernadotte on 17 September 1948 and dozens of terrorist activities that had been unprecedented in our region, such as the booby-trapped parcels that were mailed to foreign experts working in Egypt.

9. There is not enough time now to list the innumerable massacres, assassinations and other crimes perpetrated by Israel in the Palestinian refugee camps and against civilians in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. The worst and most heinous was the massacre two years ago in Beirut of the inhabitants of the Sabra and Shatila camps.

10. All those crimes, including massacres and other acts of terrorism, were carried out to protect Israel's security, according to the unusual Israeli logic, the logic that Israel presents to the world community to justify its aggression. Israel occupies the lands of others and kills, pillages and perpetrates massacres to protect its security and borders. Then it refuses to withdraw from the occupied territories, using the same arguments and rather strange logic in defining security. We still ask, as we have always asked: who needs security—the aggressor or the victim of aggression?

11. In response to Israel's policy of intransigence, hegemony and force, as well as its false idea of security, there are two schools of political thought in the Arab world. The first, which my country embraces, believes that hope of a political solution to our disputes with Israel has not been completely lost. We believe that there is still a chance to avoid war and the evils of war in our region and the world. That is why we have always sought peace through a comprehensive international solution acceptable to all parties.

12. There is another group that has ceased seeking peace with Israel. This group has become convinced that Israel, which was established by force, can only understand the logic of force. We still say to our brothers who have become exhausted by Israel's intransigence and continued aggression: "Remain patient, as we do. There is still some justice in the world." We have always said, and we continue to say to our friends and all peace-loving States, as we say in the United Nations: "Help us to stop Israeli aggression. Help us to change the Israeli logic of force and its mistaken understanding of security. Help us to attain peace so as not to lose the hope of convincing

those who have lost all hope of peace that it is not truly lost."

13. When Israel was created, it originally deluded the Jewish people into thinking that it had reached the end of its suffering and its historic plight, that now that it had returned to its homeland it would live in peace and harmony. It told that people that it was not to be afraid of the Palestinians and the other Arabs who lived in Palestine because Israel would chase them away, massacre them and terrorize them; it would be a matter of a few years and then the Palestinians would be reduced to silence and the Jews might begin to live in opulence.

14. What happened after that? The Palestinians did not forget their land and soil; they resisted, wanting to return to their homeland. Instead of enjoying a peaceful life in Palestine, the illusory life offered by the Israeli leaders, the Jews have lived in terror because of the Arab resistance. They live in a perpetual armed state. Since 1948, the Jewish people have known four wars, in which thousands of Jewish youth have fallen, but that people will continue to fight as long as its Government continues to follow a policy of imposing security and peace by force. That is why we say that if Israel wants real peace and security for its people, if it wants that people to live in brotherhood and harmony with the Muslims and Christians in Palestine, it must understand that peace cannot be attained by force. That is the logic of history, and it will remain so.

15. The deteriorating conditions of Palestinian Arabs under Israeli rule provide no hope regarding Israel's will for peace, especially in the light of the Israeli policy of which I have just spoken—the use of force in its relations with the Arabs and Palestinians.

16. In his letter of transmittal of the report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories, the Chairman wrote:

"The information contained in this report reflects the continuation of the policy of annexation and settlement which the Government of Israel has followed with increasing vigour in the territories occupied in June 1967. Settlements that were established in earlier years have been enlarged and consolidated, new settlements have been established and plans for further settlements have been announced extending into the next century. The number of Israeli settlers continues to increase . . ." [A/39/591, p. 5].

17. Since the report, which lists hundreds of continuing Israeli violations of the most fundamental human rights in the occupied territories, is before the Assembly, I will not go into its details, but I should like to draw attention to the following passage in the letter of transmittal:

"The Special Committee cannot but reiterate its hope that this report may serve as the base upon which the international community can assess the plight of the civilian population and the urgent need to improve their condition. Without meaningful and effective action in this respect the international community is allowing itself to get nearer to a situation in the region which it will find eventually very difficult to resolve." [*Ibid.*, p. 6.]

18. In a letter to the Secretary-General, the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People writes:

"The volume of evidence accumulated in the above-mentioned documents clearly indicates that the rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories are being flagrantly violated and that its situation has continued to worsen" [A/39/403, p. 2].

19. The report of that Committee says that its Chairman sent a number of letters to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council concerning Israel's violations of Palestinian rights, adding:

"Those communications, for the most part, dealt with practices and policies of the Israeli Government which, in the opinion of the Committee, were not only in direct contravention of international law and of the fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949, but were also contrary to the spirit of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on the subject and contradictory to the recommendations of the Committee itself.

"The communications thus expressed concern over the continuing Israeli occupation of the Palestinian and Arab territories and its policies of establishing illegal Jewish settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories, the confiscation of Arab-owned land and widespread and frequent violation by Israel of the rights of the Palestinian people. The communications also draw attention to reported plans of the Israeli Government to apply its legislation to the occupied territories. They also expressed the constant concern of the Committee over Israeli actions affecting the lives and well-being of Palestinians living as refugees in Lebanon." [A/39/35, paras. 20 and 21.]

20. While Israel sheds crocodile tears over the lost peace, while it heaps blame on the Arabs for refusing peace, it at the same time practises against the inhabitants of the occupied territories the harshest kind of repression known to mankind. The documents before the Assembly clearly show the policies of annexation, settlement and Judaization resorted to by Israel with one clear aim: to empty the occupied territories of their original inhabitants so as to attract immigrants from overseas and create more settlements. The report presented to the Assembly continues:

"The net result is that the economic policies of the occupying Power have created a situation of total dependence of the economies of the West Bank and Gaza, by controlling their production and reducing their capacity to create employment in such a manner as to diminish their potential for independent economic development." [Ibid., para. 35.]

21. The same report shows that Israel, up to the end of May of this year, 1984, had confiscated approximately half the area in the West Bank and that one quarter of those confiscated territories have been set aside for establishing illegal settlements. It states that:

"Estimates based on Israeli and Palestinian data indicate that, by now, almost all of the Jordan Valley's potentially cultivable land has been expropriated for new Israeli settlements." [Ibid., para. 24.]

Elsewhere in the same report the Committee states:

"There is at the same time an overall annual decline in residential construction in towns and

villages of the occupied territories . . . For many years, no low-income housing has been publicly subsidized. In addition, punitive demolition of houses continues at an accelerated rate . . ." [Ibid., para. 27].

22. These reports, written by international organizations and committees, point out the reality of Israel's colonization of the occupied Arab territories and its continued violation of human rights. In the field of agriculture, land is continually being confiscated and water courses diverted and confiscated. Israeli markets are being closed to Palestinian exports, while occupied Arab markets are being flooded with Israeli goods. As a result, the Arab landowner becomes a tenant farmer, dependent on Israeli farms to ensure his and his family's livelihood. In industry, there is nearly total stagnation because of lack of capital and the fact that the Israelis obstruct the arrival of investment capital by imposing taxes and high tariffs and by closing Israeli markets to Arab exports. In the field of tourism, foreign visitors are systematically diverted from Arab historical and tourist sites to Israeli sites. In the field of commerce, financial institutions are closed by force and high taxes are imposed on them. Unemployment is increasing and students are forced to accept any job.

23. The report of the Director-General of the International Labour Office on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories states:

"An examination of developments since the last report of the Director-General suggests that . . . there is growing cause for concern over the situation of Arab workers in the occupied territories . . ." [A/39/403, annex I, para. 68].

The report also states that "it is estimated that some 85 per cent of the East Jerusalem population do not have even the minimum needed to live without outside help" [Ibid., para. 41].

24. And that is not all. Universities are arbitrarily closed and students and lecturers continually harassed. University properties are pillaged and places of worship attacked. Municipalities are dissolved and elected mayors expelled. Inhabitants are arbitrarily detained and any Arab assistance to them prevented. The rights of unions are violated, their headquarters closed and their documents confiscated. Workers are discharged without compensation. All this is in addition to the conditions described in the two reports presented by WHO and UNESCO [Ibid., annexes II and III], which show the very bad health and educational situation of the inhabitants in the occupied territories.

25. What are the conclusions reached by all these reports based on data provided by international organizations and committees whose documents are above suspicion? They arrive at three basic conclusions: first, that there are two perfectly separate societies in the occupied Arab territories: the ruling colonial Israeli society and the Arab and Palestinian society, which suffers the worst kinds of humiliation and slavery at the hands of their colonizers; secondly, that Israel continues to practise its policies of force and terrorism against the Arab inhabitants of the occupied Arab territories; and thirdly, that Israel's claims that it wishes peace with its Arab neighbours are devoid of credibility and sincerity in the light of these rather bitter facts.

26. After five Arab-Israeli wars, after much bloodshed and destruction, and ensuing home-

lessness on both sides, we come back once again to the question already put by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Jordan before the General Assembly in the general debate at the current session [14th meeting]: What now? We believe that those wars taught us realities and basic lessons on which all of us, and in particular Israel, must reflect, so that we can find a path leading to a comprehensive and durable peace in this tortured area. The first of these lessons is that the Palestinian and Arab peoples are not belligerent warmongers, as Israel tries to portray them. They are like all other people in the world. They want to live in peace, without war and destruction. Israel must, in particular, become aware of this fact and must give them as well as its own people the opportunity of achieving this objective. The second lesson is that force is not a solution to international problems. Force cannot lead to peace and security. Occupation of the lands of others by force cannot provide security. As long as there is occupation there will always be resort to force and violence on both sides. The existence of such occupation, under any slogan used to justify it, be it "self-rule" or another name, will continue to be faced by rebellion, mistrust and ill intentions on both sides and in turn will lead to force and violence. The third lesson that we must accept, and particularly Israel, is that genuine peace is one that creates good intentions and trust between the two warring parties and that any treaties or agreements arrived at through force cannot produce good intentions and mutual trust, which are the real bases for any international or bilateral peace process. The fourth reality is that security guarantees must either be international or have international blessing so that their success and effectiveness can be assured. The United Nations has succeeded every time it has been entrusted with maintaining security based on trust and mutual goodwill. The important fifth factor which has been proved true and is clear to all is that the two super-Powers have interests and concerns in the Middle East, whether strategic or economic, and this means—because, if the peace process is to be realistic we cannot hide our heads in the sand like ostriches—that a comprehensive, not a unilateral, solution is required. Unilateral solutions that do not take into account the interests and concerns of other parties cannot succeed, because those other parties, in defence of their interests, will exert every possible effort to thwart such unilateral attempts and again we shall return to the vicious circle that we have mentioned of lack of trust, bad faith and resort to force. There would be opposition to that force and thus the avalanche of violence and instability would be set off again.

27. In his report on the work of the Organization, the Secretary-General says:

"The strongest peace-keeping operation would be one which had the unreserved support, political, diplomatic and financial, of *all* the Members of the United Nations and even the actual participation of the permanent members of the Security Council under the mandate of the Council. This may be unrealistic at present, but it is also the political truth which indeed applies across the whole range of the activities of the Organization." [See A/39/1.]

28. The sixth lesson which we must draw is one that we hope every Jew living inside Israel will be made aware of—every Jew who desires for his family, his children and his grandchildren a life of peace, without threats, violence, mutual killing—that it is

impossible to think that 4 million Palestinians can be eradicated. This lesson must be learned if the Jewish people want to live with Muslims and Christians in Palestine and in an Arab society of approximately 200 million, if Israel wants to live in peace and security. We must remember that Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories are rich in natural resources and are large enough for several times the present number of inhabitants. The Palestinians and Arabs have accepted the idea of two neighbouring States, in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories; Israel must therefore accept the territory allocated to it by this international Organization. It must give up the policy of greed, which in the long run will achieve nothing.

29. The seventh reality that we hope Israel will become aware of—and the world is convinced of this—is that no peace process can succeed without the participation of representatives of the Palestinian people. In the first place, the aggression has been against Palestine, not the Arab States, and the basic disagreement is an Israeli-Palestinian one. Therefore, there can be no peace without the presence of Palestinian representatives at the negotiating table. Since there is international unanimity between Arabs and Palestinians that the only representative of the Palestinian people is the Palestine Liberation Organization [PLO], Israel must heed the international will; it must recognize the PLO—and vice versa—and it must drop the claim, which has been rejected throughout the world, that the PLO is a terrorist organization and the demand that it delete from its charter the idea of driving Israel into the sea. Of what use would it be for the PLO to say that it was no longer a threat to Israel and to delete that phrase from its charter if that were done without good intentions and simply to embarrass Israel and force it to negotiate? We have already said that the basic precondition of real peace is the existence of good faith and mutual trust under international guarantees.

30. The last point that I wish to mention concerns an erroneous theory based on the false idea of peace to which I have already referred. According to this erroneous theory, Israel must be militarily superior if peace is to be achieved. But what peace could there be in the region achieved through super-armament? Those who advocate that theory say that as long as there was Israeli superiority Israel would feel more secure and that would increase its desire for peace, and that, as Arabs saw that Israeli superiority, they would feel the need for peace. Facts and events have proved how wrong that theory is. Indeed, the contrary is true, because while Israel increases its armaments it feels stronger, more intransigent and more hegemonistic; it does not feel any need for peace. It knows that it is superior, that it can attack others and that it can depend on an endless flow of weapons and money? On the other hand, with increasing Israeli armaments the Arabs feel a need for weapons—weapons which have become very easy to obtain—so as to protect themselves against Israeli aggression. And thus, again, we start that vicious circle of armaments at the expense of the poor people who are being killed, spending large sums of money for that purpose while development activities cease.

31. The Secretary-General, in his report, states that: "In the light of the deep tension in the Middle East and the emergence of new factors in the situation, nothing could be less realistic than to expect the

indefinite continuation of the present situation of no peace—no war” [A/39/600, para. 49].

32. Many peace proposals for the region have been presented since the adoption of Security Council resolution 242 (1967), including President Reagan’s plan, of 1 September 1982;¹ the Arab peace plan embodied in the Final Declaration adopted on 9 September 1982 at the Twelfth Arab Summit Conference, held at Fez;² the declaration issued at Venice on 13 June 1980 by the European Council;³ the Soviet proposal, made on 15 September 1982;⁴ and the Egyptian-French proposal submitted to the Security Council as a draft resolution on 28 July 1982.⁵ Israel has refused all those proposals, and thus we come back to the question of what Israel wants. Those peace plans all have one common denominator—the need for Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories and for security guarantees for all the parties in the region. There is a second fundamental question: if the world is unanimous on the matter of Israeli withdrawal, why has withdrawal not yet taken place?

33. Before concluding, I should like to quote from two important reports before us which give some facts about the painful realities in our countries while the international community continues its tortuous search for peace in the Middle East and Palestine. The Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People states the following:

“The Committee feels that, at this critical juncture, a concentrated effort to find a just solution to the question of Palestine and to end the unacceptable plight of the Palestinian people is long overdue.

“The Committee is convinced that the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, recommended by the Geneva Conference and endorsed in General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, will provide an opportunity for all parties concerned to participate in negotiations which should lead to a just solution of the problem. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommends that international action should henceforth concentrate on the preparations necessary for the convening of this Conference and contribute to its successful and peaceful outcome.” [A/39/35, paras. 159 and 160.]

34. The Secretary-General also says in his report:

“It seems obvious that the Middle East conflict, involving as it does complex interrelated issues, can ultimately be fully resolved only by a comprehensive settlement covering all its aspects. This fact needs to be kept firmly in mind by the parties concerned, since all the agreements that have been reached in the past, whether within the United Nations framework or outside it, were clearly intended as interim steps in the search for a comprehensive peace. I continue to believe that a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East will have to meet the following conditions: the withdrawal of the Israeli forces from occupied territories; respect of and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries, free from threats or acts of force; and, lastly, a just settlement of the Palestinian problem based on the recognition of the legitimate rights of the

Palestinian people, including self-determination. In this context, the question of Jerusalem also remains of primary importance.” [A/39/600, para. 38.]

35. In the same report, the Secretary-General provides some ideas which could be of help in finding a framework for a comprehensive and durable peace in Palestine and the Middle East. He says:

“Earlier this year, both in the Middle East and elsewhere, I discussed with a number of Governments concerned the possibility of using the machinery of the Security Council in a new way to work with the parties concerned on various aspects of the Middle East problem and to distil from the various proposals and plans that have been put forward in recent years the common elements that could help to work out the basis of a negotiating structure. I believed that such a process, if it could be initiated, might still have served to clear the ground and to prepare for a full-fledged effort to negotiate the problem.” [Ibid., para. 45.]

36. Mr. EL-FATTAL (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The item under consideration today, entitled “The situation in the Middle East”, should in fact be entitled “The question of Palestine”, because it is the result of the first Israeli aggression that has now expanded to encompass the whole of the Middle East. We debate this item, we submit texts and ideas, we engage in rhetoric, we acquaint ourselves with the reports of the Secretary-General on the Middle East, and we note that everything proceeds from the question of Palestine. We listen to statements on the question of the Middle East, we adopt resolutions one after another, and still we find ourselves examining the Palestinian question; that is why what we today call “The situation in the Middle East” reconfirms that the Palestinian question is the essence and the core of the problem of the Middle East. Any attempt to resolve the crisis without dealing with its central element, namely, Palestine, or to resolve it at the expense of that central element, would be an insidious and misleading attempt, leading us nowhere. It is impossible to resolve the problem of the Middle East without facing the core of the matter and without resolving the question of the Palestinian people in such a way as to restore to it all of its usurped rights. The Arab rejection of the Camp David agreements is evidence of Arab determination to preserve their inalienable rights.

37. Any constructive discussion of any aspect of this problem that is threatening international peace and security must go back to the very roots of the question which the General Assembly is considering. The roots of the Middle East crisis—which has given rise to the Arab-Israeli conflict—go back to the beginning of the century, to the conflict of interests of the colonialist Powers and their frenzied race in which they tried to divide the region of the Middle East and parcel out among themselves territories having great strategic importance and immense natural resources, as well as shipping lanes and air and land routes, of vital interest to the whole world. These colonialist designs completely overlooked the interests of the peoples of the region and even trampled underfoot the most sacred right of all, namely, the right of peoples to self-determination.

38. Thus the conflict was born when Palestine was partitioned, not to make out of it a homeland for its

people but a geographical sphere in which to test methods of applying a new and different type of colonialism, one with settlers of diverse nationalities, built on a racist doctrine and having destructive aims. The interests of the European Zionist movement converged with the interests of the colonialist countries, and thus was concluded "the great sale" sanctified by the Balfour promise of 1917 which provided for the establishment of a homeland for Jews in Palestine. To reciprocate, the Zionist movement—which is an outcrop of European colonialist societies—has undertaken to safeguard Western colonialist interests in this region by, above all, controlling the Suez Canal and rupturing the geographical continuity between the Arab East and the Arab West, the Mashreg and the Maghreb, thereby destroying the aspirations of the Arab people for unity, liberty and progress.

39. Accordingly, it is not possible for the General Assembly to discuss the Middle East crisis by proceeding from the most recent act of Israeli aggression against an Arab people, but must take an overall view and discuss the crisis since the first aggression. If we were not to do this we would be falling into the trap laid by Israel, by accepting the most recent of the *faits accomplis* established by Israel through its successive wars, the aim of which is to make the international community forget the results of the previous wars and centre its attention on the effects of the most recent one, its consequences, and so on.

40. It would be naive to believe Israel when it claims to have occupied southern Lebanon in 1982 in order to ensure what it calls "the security of Galilee". The occupation by Israel of part of southern Lebanon is the implementation of a plan elaborated in 1919 by the Jewish Agency and submitted to the Peace Conference in Paris. The occupation by Israel in 1967 of Palestinian and Syrian territories was part of that plan. The occupation of the territory of the Palestinian State, in conformity with the unjust partition resolution of 1947 [resolution 181 (II)], was not merely the beginning of expansion, but a stage in the absorption of Palestine as a whole by preventing the establishment of a Palestinian State in accordance with that resolution.

41. The General Assembly is now confronted with the continuing Israeli occupation of the whole of Palestine, the Golan and southern Lebanon and with the intransigence of Israel, which refuses to cancel its annexation of Jerusalem and the Golan and to withdraw forthwith and unconditionally from southern Lebanon, in accordance with Security Council resolution 509 (1982). Israel continues the expropriation of the Arab lands occupied since 1967 and the Judaization of them by establishing settlements and creating the necessary conditions to clear the West Bank of its Arab population, in conformity with its racist ideology based on the slogan "A land without people for a people without land". This idea is based on a false hypothesis transformed by the Israelis into a policy which it continues to apply daily in order to give retroactive effect to the idea. In an official statement, Yitzhak Shamir, the head of the Stern Gang—the assassin of the United Nations Mediator, Count Folke Bernadotte—confirmed this principle when he said: "Israel has not taken these territories from their legitimate owners by invasion; it has liberated them from the countries that invaded them in 1948." He added: "We have not annexed them and we shall never annex them, for they are part of

the land of Israel and you do not annex land which is part of your country."

42. Shamir in fact was expressing established Zionist thinking on the alleged right of Israel to expropriate, in the name of Zionism and Judaism, all the land between the Nile and the Euphrates, as if there were no Arab presence and no Arab rights there. Perhaps the best description of the nature and the role of Israel was given by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Senegal, in his capacity as President of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva in 1983. He said:

"Now, for the fifth time since its establishment in 1948, Israel is again at war with the Arab and Palestinian peoples. Although the pretexts for murder, aggression and invasion may change with time, the logic behind them remains the same: that of Zionist policy, whose final objective is to reduce the Palestinian people to obedience and to create what David Ben-Gurion called "the third kingdom of David", a "greater Israel" extending from the Nile to the Euphrates."⁶

43. As for those who have the right to inhabit Greater Israel, Zionism defined these by imposing Israeli sovereignty on Jews throughout the world, wherever they may be, and by binding them to the "Promised Land". The Zionist leaders, both lay and religious, have established the theory that whosoever is born of a Jewish mother, wherever in the world it may be, is an Israeli.

44. The American Professor Noam Chomsky, in his book *The Fateful Triangle*,⁷ in the context of a comparison he was making between the two Israeli parties, the Labour Party and the Likud, said that the two parties refused to recognize any Palestinian national right west of the Jordan. He added that: "The state of Israel, as the courts have determined, is not the state of its citizens. Rather, it is 'the sovereign state of the Jewish people', where the Jewish people consist not only of the people residing in Israel but also of the Jews in Diaspora."⁸ He ends by stating: "Thus, there is no Israeli nation apart from the Jewish people in this sense."⁹ That is what is being claimed by the judiciary in Israel. As for the legislative power, it has decided, according to Chomsky, "that the historic right of the Jewish people to the land of Israel, including the West Bank, is beyond challenge."¹⁰

45. Golda Meir summarized in one sentence the expansionist purpose of the laws when she claimed, incorrectly, that: "It was not as though there was a Palestinian people in Palestine considering itself as a Palestinian people and we came and threw them out and took their country away from them. They did not exist."¹¹

46. If we add to all of this the "law of return", which flagrantly violates both international law and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we can see that Israel is working systematically to annihilate the Palestinians in order to establish Greater Israel by bringing in Jewish settlers from all over the world. This has spread to the Golan Heights and to all the regions occupied by the Israeli army—the fifth most powerful army in the world, the Israelis claim.

47. In short, Israel is an expansionist entity which is gradually implementing its policy in Arab territory in order to create Greater Israel and gather there all the 20 million Jews in the world, whether they like it or

⁶Quoted in English by the speaker.

not, by attracting or intimidating them in the name of religion, race or history. Israel considers anybody who does not agree with this policy like a traitor to his religion because he does not participate in the crimes of State colonialism. One of the most recent victims of the Zionist dictatorship, the American Jewish writer Roberta Strauss Feuerlicht, described the Zionist dictatorship in her book *The Fate of the Jews*.⁸ She said: "In November 1982, three rabbis held a rabbinical court at a Holiday Inn in Tewksbury, Massachusetts, and excommunicated all the members of the Agenda, plus a number of important Jews, including several rabbis, because they had signed an ad criticizing Israel's invasion of Lebanon."* By way of example, I quote the celebrated American writer I. F. Stone, who opposed this treatment and said: "Any Jew who says a nice word about Arabs or peace is supposed to be having an identity crisis or be self-hating."*

48. It is paradoxical that the vast majority of Jews in the United States are advocating the separation of Church and State in their own country, whereas they advocate the contrary in Israel, while calling for the use of American taxpayers' money to protect what they call "the State of Israel", which they believe to be the incarnation of the Jewish-Christian heritage. They forget that Christianity has spread throughout all the countries included in Israeli expansionist designs in our region. They make no distinctions between Arabs, because Zionist animosity towards Christian Arabs is no less than their animosity towards Muslim Arabs. They forget, too, that Palestine is the cradle of Christianity and that the oldest church in the world is to be found in our region.

49. It is undeniable that the Zionist information service in the United States, thanks to the Zionist lobby at the United States Congress, has succeeded in persuading the public that Israel is an islet of democracy in the region and has only one goal—namely, peace with the Arabs who surround it on all sides—and that it is the Arabs who have rejected such peace.

50. It is not necessary to remind the General Assembly that Israel has thwarted all peace efforts and rejected the Arab peace proposals made at Fez.² It has even rejected the idea of the holding of an international conference on peace in the Middle East. It has barred the way to any efforts to establish a just peace, based on international legitimacy and United Nations resolutions, under the auspices and within the framework of the Organization. We refer the Assembly to the letter dated 26 April 1984 from the representative of Israel to the Secretary-General [A/39/214], which is but one small example of Israeli refusals. Israel has not only refused to participate in the conference but stated in that letter that the peace conference proposed in General Assembly resolution 38/58 C is a "hollow propaganda exercise" devoid of any meaning, and an attempt on the part of the General Assembly "to undermine Security Council resolution 242 (1967)", which, as everyone knows, denied the existence of the Palestinian question and all the rights of the Palestinians.

51. My Government has given its full support to the holding of this conference and has stated:

"Based on that position of principle the Syrian Arab Republic has spared no effort in urging the necessity of establishing a just and comprehensive

settlement of the Middle East question within the framework of the United Nations and on the basis of United Nations resolutions concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict and the question of Palestine." [A/39/416.]

52. It is on this basis that the Syrian Arab Republic agreed to Security Council resolution 338 (1973), affirming that the Syrian Government's understanding of the resolution is based on two essential elements, namely:

"(a) The complete withdrawal of Israel from all the Arab territories which were occupied in June 1967 and subsequently;

"(b) The safeguarding of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people in accordance with the resolutions of the United Nations."⁹

53. The Syrian Government also stated:

"In accordance with these convictions, which reflect the wishes of the international community, the Syrian Arab Republic supported General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, dated 13 December 1983, calling for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of all parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing with other parties in order to attain a just and comprehensive settlement of the question of the Middle East that would guarantee that Israel evacuated all the Arab territories occupied since 1967 and ensure the realization of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to return, the right to self-determination and the right to establish its own independent State in its national territory." [Ibid.]

54. Moreover, the Syrian Arab Republic approved and welcomed the Soviet peace plan.⁴

55. Whence has Israel drawn and still draws its capacity for continual defiance of the United Nations? We can find an answer to this in a similar refusal illustrating the position of the United States and stated in a letter dated 13 January 1984 from its representative, Mrs. Kirkpatrick, to the President of the Security Council [A/39/130, Appendix]. This double rejection of the holding of an international peace conference on the Middle East was mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General: "At present, however, it is clear from the replies of the Governments of Israel . . . and the United States of America . . . that they are not prepared to participate in the proposed conference." [A/39/130/Add.1, para. 4.]

56. The General Assembly has no other course than to condemn the United States and Israel for this refusal, which is contrary to the very bases of peace and the principles agreed to by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva in 1983. This refusal by Israel confirms the validity of the statement of the General Assembly in a resolution adopted on 5 February 1982 at the ninth emergency special session, and since confirmed at all regular sessions, that:

"Israel's record and actions confirm that it is not a peace-loving Member State and that it has carried out neither its obligations under the Charter nor its commitment under General Assembly resolution 273 (III) of 11 May 1949" [resolution ES-9/1, para. 11].

*Quoted in English by the speaker.

57. Israeli settlement practices in the occupied Arab territories, in spite of assassinations and terrorism both official and unofficial, and in spite of acts of deportation and detention, derive from the Zionist philosophy which has taken the form of the imposition of a *fait accompli* through which Israel believes that it can annex the West Bank, including Jerusalem, Gaza and the Golan. But Israel is wrong, because the Arabs have the will and the means to erase that *fait accompli* which runs against their national rights. History does not belong to Israel. We are convinced that our Arab nation is capable of changing the direction assumed by Israel. The struggle for the liberation of our soil and for the restoration of the rights of the Palestinians goes on, and that persistence of the Arab-Israeli conflict shows that the Arab nation refuses to bend to the will of Israel which is threatening our peoples as a whole and all the countries of the Middle East region, without exception.

58. The information contained in the report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories indicates that Israel has established, since 1967, 160 settlements in the West Bank, 19 in Gaza and 41 in the Syrian territory of Golan and has taken over 40 per cent of the land in the West Bank so that it might be exploited by the Israelis. The same report indicates that, David Levy, who was the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Housing said on 9 January 1984: "in the past year alone there was a 45 per cent growth in the Jewish population of the territories—from 20,000 to 29,000" [A/39/591, para. 254]. The report also notes that the Ministerial Committee on Settlement decided, on 10 June 1984, to establish two new settlements in the Golan, at Ein Kanaf and Dalot and that the head of the Jewish Agency's settlement department, Mattityahu Drobles, said that "there would be more than 100,000 Jews in the area [the West Bank and the Golan] by 1985" [*ibid.*, para. 246].

59. The report states further:

"On the basis of the information and evidence before it, the Special Committee notes that the general policy of the Government of Israel continues to follow the same lines as in previous years. This policy is based on the concept that the territories occupied by Israel in 1967 constitute part of the State of Israel and that, therefore, measures taken by the Government of Israel, such as the establishment of settlements and the transfer of Israeli citizens to the occupied territories did not constitute a process of annexation. Illustrative of this policy are statements by members of the Government of Israel made during the period covered by this report and reflected in section IV.B above. The Special Committee notes that statements of this kind, however formulated, reflecting an unequivocal intention of the Government of Israel to annex the territories occupied by it in 1967 are in violation of the obligations of Israel under the Fourth Geneva Convention." [*Ibid.*, para. 328.]

60. It is clear from the Committee's report that Israel is also preparing to occupy Jordan. It cites a statement by Ariel Sharon, responsible for the genocide at Sabra and Shatila in Beirut in 1982 and the genocide at Qibya in 1953, that "even if Israel did not currently claim those parts of Eretz Yisrael which comprised Jordan, we should always recall that,

though they are not in our hands, they are ours" [*ibid.*, para. 246]. All these statements confirm that Israeli policy is a chain of annexation, including the annexation of Jerusalem and the Golan.

61. It is well known that the transfer of population into the occupied territories and out of them is a grave violation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949.¹⁰ These grave violations are nothing but war crimes for which the culprits must be held responsible and brought to account one day by international justice. The Nuremberg Tribunal and all that flowed from it remind us of the need for this. Ariel Sharon, who has brought a suit against *Time* magazine because it told the truth about his direct involvement in the massacres of Sabra and Shatila, should be paying for those crimes himself instead of demanding damages of \$50 million.

62. Notwithstanding the flagrant violations of the fourth Geneva Convention, the United States Government has so far refused to regard the settlements as illegal, thereby encouraging Israel to press ahead with its policy of annexation openly and rampantly thanks to American financial support. Even so, United States leaders have been saying hypocritically that they are linked to the Arabs by bonds of friendship stemming from their interests in the region—as if the Arab people were obliged to accept United States hegemony, hidden beneath the veil of friendship for the Arabs, along with Israeli aggression.

63. In southern Lebanon, Israeli sadism is manifesting itself in the most horrendous forms. In the territory occupied by Israeli forces since 6 June 1982, killings and assassinations, kidnappings, torture and imprisonment have become everyday occurrences. The Israeli army has been increasingly ingenious in its acts of sabotage, terrorism, looting and theft of water resources. Israel has destroyed agricultural infrastructures in order to impose Israeli produce on the population, uprooting orchards to prevent the marketing of Lebanese produce and to spread famine and poverty among the local population. The destruction of the economic, social and cultural infrastructures is both a means and an end, the end being to empty the region of its Lebanese inhabitants and prevent the return of those who leave, by applying the Israeli expansionist idea, based on the slogan "A land without a people for a people without land". As for the means, as we have said, it is being done through sheer terrorism.

64. The Lebanese are now well aware that Israeli practices are directed against their very existence as a people and as a nation. The representative of Lebanon, in a letter to the Secretary-General, dated 29 May 1984 [A/39/282], described Israel's tyrannical barbarities. The Security Council considered Lebanon's complaint but failed to reach agreement because of the United States veto, cast against a purely humanitarian draft resolution, which read:

"The Security Council,

" . . .

"1. *Reiterates* its call for strict respect for the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries;

"2. *Affirms* that the provisions of the fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 apply to the territories

occupied by Israel in southern Lebanon, the western Bekaa and the Rashaya district, . . .

"3. *Calls upon* Israel . . . to respect strictly the rights of the civilian population in the areas under its occupation in southern Lebanon, the western Bekaa and the Rashaya district, . . ."11

Paragraph 4 of the draft resolution demands the elimination of "all restrictions and obstacles to the restoration of normal conditions in the areas under its occupation, in violation of the fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, . . ."11

65. According to the Western media, in southern Lebanon, Israel is in fact creating a new West Bank, a new Golan, a new Gaza Strip. By severing communications with the territories it occupies in southern Lebanon, Israel is flagrantly violating a fundamental principle of international law, namely, the right of every person to move around freely in his own country.

66. We wonder whether there is any difference at all between the Zionist practices in the Arab territories they have occupied since 1967 and the Nazi practices under which Europe suffered so much. Does the fourth Geneva Convention, which was drafted in light of the suffering of both Jews and non-Jews in Europe, apply only to Europe and to the United States, according to Israel's argument, and not to the occupied Arab territories? What is the difference between Israeli practices against the non-Jewish population and the practices of the Pretoria régime against the non-white citizens of South Africa and Namibia? That is why Israel has exploited the United States veto and viewed it as a reward for its violations of the rights of the people of southern Lebanon, humiliating them and ignoring all national interests.

67. We hail the struggle of the Lebanese people, which has thwarted the 17 May 1983 agreement and which will put an end to the Israeli occupation thanks to its heroic resistance, particularly in the south. It will succeed in ridding Lebanon of Israeli blackmail.

68. While the Security Council has been incapable of having its resolutions on Lebanon implemented, in particular resolution 509 (1982), Lebanese resistance, in exercising its well-established right to self-defence and to the liberation of its land, will for its part surely succeed in forcing the total and unconditional withdrawal of the Israeli forces from all occupied Lebanese territory.

69. Israel would not have been able to practise its aggressive and expansionist policy had it not been for the unlimited support of the United States in the political, diplomatic, military and economic spheres. The strategic agreement concluded in November 1982 between Washington and Tel Aviv has become a military-strategic alliance in the full sense of the term, an alliance directed against the interests of the Arab nation and its right to live in peace, free from all threats and foreign Zionist occupation, and against its right to establish its own foreign relations on the basis of equality, justice and mutual respect.

70. United States aid to Israel has now risen to astronomical heights: \$2.6 billion were handed over to Israel by Washington in the fiscal year beginning 1 October last. Almost half that amount—\$1.2 billion—was in the form of economic assistance and \$1.4 billion was in the form of military assistance. All this assistance is a gift from the United States Government and thus each Israeli citizen receives

\$672 a year in official American aid, the highest ratio in United States foreign aid to any State anywhere in the world. *The Christian Science Monitor*, on 24 October 1984, stated that in the current year the United States Congress had transformed all United States financial assistance into outright gifts and that since 1980 Washington had given Israel \$29 billion, of which \$11 billion was in the form of loans and the rest outright gifts. Moreover, the United States Congress in its budget legislation has called upon the Reagan Administration to pay \$1.2 billion to Israel during the current quarter of the fiscal year, whereas United States aid to other countries is spread out over the full fiscal year. The United States Congress made this request in order to help Israel overcome its liquidity problems, which are very acute, with inflation running at the rate of about 1,000 per cent. According to *The New York Times* of 21 November, the rate of inflation could reach 1,260 per cent in 1985.

71. According to official sources, Israel in real terms pays a very low rate of interest on the loans it obtains, which means that the volume of United States aid constitutes really three times its face value. In other words, during the current fiscal year, American taxpayers will be giving Israel \$7.8 billion. And if Peres had insisted on getting \$4 billion in the form of assistance for 1986, which would as usual be converted into gifts by the United States Congress, this would have meant that a total of \$12 billion would have been paid out by American taxpayers to Israel, thus securing to each Israeli citizen in the current year more than \$3,000 from the American treasury. To this official aid must be added \$1 billion in private tax-exempt aid per annum. It must also be remembered that Israel's foreign debt will rise from \$23 billion in the current year to \$41 billion by 1988. Israel's per capita foreign debt today is the highest in the world.

72. When we consider these figures we must take into account that the average per capita income among most of the States Members of the United Nations varies between \$300 and \$500 per annum. None the less, the Zionist lobby, known as the American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee, has been making the Americans believe that they are indebted to Israel. According to *The Christian Science Monitor* of 24 October 1984:

"The American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee, a lobbying group supporting Israel, contends that aid to Israel is vital to United States foreign policy objectives in the Middle East and important to Israel's survival as a free and independent ally. The political, military and economic interests of the United States, the Committee says, are served by strong alignment with Israel, the only politically stable democratic ally in the region. Foreign assistance is essential for sustaining and continuing the Middle East peace process; it represents America's ongoing investment in peace."*

73. Supplying Israel with financial aid on this scale means providing Israel with the means for aggression and expansion, enabling it to spread terror and destruction far and wide, and helping it maintain its occupation of the West Bank, the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip and southern Lebanon. It is not, as has been claimed, "an American investment in the peace process". Israel recognizes that the cost of its occupa-

*Quoted in English by the speaker.

tion of southern Lebanon is running to \$1 million a day in normal circumstances. Thus it is the United States which has been financing Israeli aggression and enabling it to maintain its occupation. In fact, the United States has no investment and very little interest in peace.

74. Notwithstanding the steady flow of sophisticated weapons that has been reaching Israel from the United States and the strategic alliance which has mortgaged American power and policy for Israel's advantage, we the Arab peoples are prepared to press on with our struggle to recover our usurped rights. The Syrian Arab Republic fulfils its national responsibilities with all necessary courage and sincerity, because American-Zionist plans are aimed against Syria just as much as they are aimed against all the other Arab nations. We will spare no effort to oppose the mounting Israeli aggression so as to contain it and repel it. Peace will be restored in the region only on the basis of justice, not through a peace imposed on the region by force so as to subjugate it to the dominion of United States imperialist interests in the shadow of Israeli intransigence.

75. The success we have had in our resistance against the designs of imperialism for our region shows clearly that victory of the Arab popular will is certain.

76. We wish now to tell the United States quite clearly—as our delegation did during the general debate [14th meeting]—that insistence on solving the Middle East problem and the Palestinian question on the basis of the Camp David accords or in separate partial deals is causing increased tension in the region and making the situation even more dangerous, while enabling Israel to extend its settlements policy in the occupied Arab territories and to strike out in all directions. Israel has annexed Jerusalem and the Golan Heights and has invaded Lebanon, continuing to occupy large areas of that country, while at the same time undermining the legitimate role of the United Nations.

77. We cannot better express the Syrian attitude than to repeat the words of President Hafez al-Assad, who, in addressing the Seventh Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at New Delhi in March 1983, spoke about the difficult situation with which Syria has to cope owing to the Israeli invasion:

“What Israel and the United States are seeking is a myth. The aspirations of the people to their homeland and legitimate rights cannot be buried by force of arms. The Palestinian people will continue to be a strong people defending its rights. The Palestinian cause will continue to be our cause—a cause that we shall defend with honour, without accepting compromise, without accepting its liquidation.

“As for the brother people of Lebanon, we shall remain faithful to our obligations to that friendly people and help it with all available means to defend its freedom, independence and land. Syria will be the fortress on which all the efforts of the American imperialists and Zionists towards expansion and for the subjugation and oppression of the Arab people will be dashed.

“Despite all appearances, I have confidence in a shining future and victory over the aggressor.”

78. For its part, the General Assembly has constantly shown its awareness of the situation and under-

stands what we have endured since our independence and the struggle in which we are engaged. We look for aid and assistance and appreciate what we have received. We seek from the current session understanding of our efforts to cope with this threat to the independence, freedom and territorial integrity of the Arab nations.

79. The resolutions of the General Assembly express the determination of the international community to find a just solution to the Middle East problem based on two fundamental principles underpinning the international order: the right to self-determination and the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force. It is therefore incumbent upon the Assembly—notwithstanding all the varied pressures on it—to have its relevant resolutions implemented. We are sure that the overwhelming majority has the political will to bring about the implementation of those resolutions, which strengthen international legitimacy, and will overcome the obstacles erected by circles hostile to the United Nations, primarily the United States and Israel.

80. Mr. NETANYAHU (Israel): I must confess to some surprise, and more than a little puzzlement, at the two Middle East debates, the two separate debates, which are currently on our agenda. The first is called “The situation in the Middle East.” The second is called “The question of Palestine”, a highly tendentious way of referring to the Arab-Israeli dispute. I am puzzled because what I perhaps too naively expected to hear today was a genuine discussion about the overall situation in the Middle East. What I have heard instead is a deliberate rehearsal for the later and presumably distinct debate on the Arab-Israeli conflict. The two previous speakers in their “brief” remarks would have us believe that the Middle East is a paradise on earth, disturbed only by the Arab-Israeli dispute.

81. Now, I am happy, even eager, to discuss the Arab-Israeli dispute, but, if we are asked here to discuss the general situation in the Middle East, then by all means let us do so; let us look at the conditions that obtain in the many countries of the region, let us ponder what drives the various conflicts, let us consider the level of violence and its sources.

82. The Arab-Israeli dispute, even if considered under the deliberately misleading rubric of the “Palestinian problem”, certainly merits appropriate attention. I intend to have my say on this matter in our upcoming debate on this topic. But at this time I should like to focus on the broader question which is the subject of today's discussion: the situation in the Middle East.

83. I plan to examine a single proposition that has been uncritically accepted by many—namely, that the “Palestinian problem” lies at the heart of the present unrest in the Middle East. Even many of those who know enough not to reduce the Arab-Israeli dispute to the much narrower question of the Palestinian Arabs still subscribe to the notion that in one way or another it drives or exacerbates all conflict in the region. We are frequently told that if we solve this problem, however it is defined, we shall have peace in the area, or at least a significant reduction in the level of violence and conflict. However plausible this idea may appear, it breaks down under closer examination.

84. In recent decades virtually every Arab State has been in conflict—in border disputes, subversion,

invasion or full-scale war—with at least one of its Arab neighbours. Not one part of the Arab world is an exception to this melancholy regularity.

85. In North Africa, Libya has clashed with Egypt and Tunisia, and, before its present bizarre marriage with Morocco, it supported the anti-Morocco Frente POLISARIO¹² forces. It threatens Sudan and recently bombed the Sudanese city of Omdurman. It has financed efforts to topple other Arab régimes and to assassinate Libyan exiles and other Arab leaders abroad. Egypt, in its radical days under Nasser, invaded Yemen and occupied it for eight years. It sought to subvert Jordan and destabilize Iraq and Syria. More recently, responding to Libyan attacks, it has clashed with Qaddafi, with whom it now trades threats. And Algeria, of course, has been waging surrogate warfare for years against Morocco, using the Frente POLISARIO in the Sahara.

86. What about the Arabian peninsula? There we have South Yemen, which regularly launches subversive forces into the Dhofar in an attempt to tear off that region from Oman. But the two Yemens, north and south, have been warring intermittently among themselves for years. And when not preoccupied with their fears of each other they worry about Saudi meddling and armed incursions into their territories. Saudi Arabia, while trying to buy off all potential enemies in the Arab world, in turn seeks to dominate not only both Yemens but the smaller States of the Gulf, against which it has pressed territorial claims. Kuwait frets over Saudi encroachment on its territory, but worries even more about Iraq, which invaded Kuwait in 1973 and still claims it in its entirety.

87. And in the heart of the Middle East, Syria's record rivals that of Libya. It has repeatedly threatened Jordan and even invaded it. It vilifies its fellow Baathists in Iraq and openly and tirelessly works to overthrow the régime in Baghdad. Its designs on smaller Lebanon are well known. These are not to topple a régime, already vassalized, or change a border, already ignored, but to swallow the country whole into a "Greater Syria". This is why Syria has never recognized Lebanon as a separate State since 1943, when both countries gained their independence, and why Syria today obstinately refuses to withdraw its troops from it. It has slaughtered those Lebanese who dared to oppose these designs—Christians, Muslims and Druze—with impeccable impartiality.

88. The object of Syrian hatred, Iraq, has been no slouch either. It has carried out an energetic campaign of subversion and terrorism against its Arab neighbours. While Iraq and Jordan are currently embracing each other, Iraq has sought to topple Jordan's monarch in the past, as it now seeks to overthrow Syria's Government, and from time to time it renews its claim to Kuwait.

89. Now, having considered the Arab régimes' behaviour towards each other, let us examine their record of behaviour towards their non-Arab neighbours. Let us look briefly at the three Arab States that are currently the most aggressive—Libya, Syria and Iraq.

90. Libya has invaded Chad, a non-Arab country, occupies a large part of its territory and refuses to pull out its troops despite specific promises. Qaddafi also trains special subversive units to bring down black African Governments. He has been implicated in plots as far afield as western and central Africa,

and among his allies have been the likes of Idi Amin. And as was recently uncovered by the Egyptians, he has been engaged in a conspiracy on a global scale, commissioning the assassination not only of fellow Arab rulers in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, but also of such non-Arab leaders as Margaret Thatcher, François Mitterrand, Helmut Kohl and Zia of Pakistan.

91. Like Libya, Syria's appetite is not limited to its fellow Arabs. Syria claims, for example, the region and city of Alexandretta which unquestionably belongs to non-Arab Turkey. Syria's Minister of Justice, Khalid Al-Malki, was quoted by the official Syrian Gazette, *Al Jarida Al Rasmiya*, of 9 December 1982, as saying that a recent extradition negotiation with Turkey "does not signify any recognition of the annexation of the Iskenderun district in Turkey or Turkey's control over that region." The Gazette goes on to quote Abdallah Shukri, a member of the Syrian Parliament, who helpfully explained: "We shall regain the district as soon as we settle the score with the Zionist enemy; we shall not tarry a moment."

92. And now we come to Iraq. In September 1980, Saddam Hussein perceived post-revolutionary Iran, another non-Arab country, as weak and ripe for plunder. He swiftly revoked the border agreement he had signed five years earlier with the Shah and invaded Iran's oil-rich provinces. The Iran-Iraq war has been raging now for more than four years, exacting a horrific toll in lives, and shows no sign of abating.

93. But the violence in the Middle East is not limited to aggression across borders. The Arab régimes have ready recourse to violence in dealing with internal opposition; thus, each Arab Government depends on force or the threat of violence to stay in power. A quick survey of the composition and record of the leadership in the Arab world demonstrates this point.

94. Libya is ruled by a colonel and a small clique of officers. The army runs Algeria. Hassan of Morocco depends on the loyalty of his military to sustain his rule. In Saudi Arabia not one, but two armies—they watch each other—protect the princes. In Syria an officer corps dominated by the minority Alawites suppresses dissent, sometimes with mass murder as at the city of Hama, where Assad's forces killed up to 25,000 civilians and according to *The New York Times*, "turned half the town into a parking lot". Hussein of Jordan relies on his Bedouin forces to subdue any threat to his rule. Hussein of Iraq depends on his secret police and army.

95. Furthermore, virtually every Arab leader has been the target of attempted or successful assassination. The list of victims and intended victims includes kings—Faisal of Iraq, Faisal of Saudi Arabia, Hassan of Morocco and Hussein of Jordan; presidents—Qassem of Iraq, Nimeiri of Sudan, Boumédiène of Algeria, Bourguiba of Tunisia, Gemayel of Lebanon, Sadat of Egypt, Ghamsi of Yemen, Qaddafi of Libya and Shishakli, Zaim and Assad of Syria; prime ministers—Tal and Majali of Jordan and Said of Iraq; and sundry untitled rulers such as Al-Hamdi of North Yemen. For the sake of brevity, I omit the countless successful and attempted assassinations of lesser ministers, opposition leaders, intellectuals, journalists, diplomats and minor officials.

96. Like the violence that extends across borders, domestic violence in the Arab world also extends to non-Arabs, for the Arabs regard the area from Morocco to the Persian Gulf as belonging exclusively to them, despite the presence of numerous peoples that make up a sizeable portion of the population—Berbers, Kurds, Copts, Druze, Jews, Circassians, Assyrians, Christians, blacks and others. These non-Arab or non-Muslim peoples can be accepted only in a state of subjugation, within a dominant Arab-Muslim domain, never as independent equals.

97. Those peoples who in past years have refused to accept such an arrangement were suppressed, often bloodily. Earlier in this century, in 1932, the Iraqi régime massacred the ancient Assyrian community and incited the Arab population to murder those who escaped the official slaughter and to plunder their property. More recently, the Kurds, another ancient non-Arab people with a distinctive history, culture and language, were mercilessly crushed by Iraq in their bid for independence. In its nine-year war against the Kurds, from 1961 to 1970, the Iraqi army killed tens of thousands, left some 200,000 homeless and forcibly resettled large numbers of Kurds in the Gezira region—and, by the way, they gave the property vacated by the Kurds to Arabs. Even so, despite the attempts to destroy them, the Kurds continue their efforts to achieve independence to this very day.

98. Even more tragic has been the fate of the 500,000 non-Muslim blacks in the southern part of the Sudan who perished in the nine-year rebellion, from 1963 to 1972, against the domination of the northern Arabs. Recently, new decrees by the Sudanese Government have rekindled fears of renewed bloodshed.

99. Perhaps most worrying about all this violence in the Middle East is that many of its practitioners recognize no limits, either in the means or in the targets chosen. As to means, it can hardly be a coincidence that two of the very rare cases in which gas warfare has been used since the First World War were both in the Middle East. Nasser used gas in Yemen in the early 1960s, and more recently Iraq has repeatedly gassed Iranian troops, as United Nations investigations have confirmed.

100. Nor does Arab violence appear to know limits in its field of operations. Radical Arab enemies of Egypt apparently mined the international waterway of the Red Sea, and the victims of their mines have been the ships of a dozen countries. In the Persian Gulf, the Iraqis have been openly—defiantly—bombing the neutral shipping of many countries, killing and wounding countless innocent seamen in the process. The Iranians, of course, have been answering in kind.

101. Finally, we should not forget that Middle Eastern export upon which no cartel has set limits—terrorism, whose practitioners everywhere emulate Middle Eastern models; but contrary to popular perception, the primary focus of Arab terrorism has been other Arabs. To quote Muhsen Muhammad, editor of the Egyptian daily *Al Gomhouria*, on 29 October 1984:

“The number of terrorist organizations in the Arab and Muslim world has grown. These are organizations which kill Arabs and Muslims everywhere . . . some of these were created by govern-

ments to kill opponents, adversaries, émigrés and refugees in all countries of the world.”

Indeed, Arab terrorism now encompasses the entire non-communist world. Its victims are as likely to be attacked and innocent bystanders killed on the streets of London, or Paris, or New Delhi, or Rio. No one and no place is immune from this plague.

102. What we now have before us is a picture that is unpleasant to contemplate but that must be understood. Violence is a fact of political life in the Arab world. It is the primary method of dealing with enemies, both foreign and domestic, both Arab and non-Arab.

103. No one, of course, should confuse Tunisia with Libya or Kuwait with Iraq. Not all Arab régimes are the same, obviously. Some are predatory, some are more often prey. But we cannot avert our eyes from the general record of assassinations, subversion, coups, terrorism and outright war—and the frequent absence of limits in the conduct of this warfare. This, I am afraid, is what we must examine first in considering the situation in the Middle East.

104. It will be noted that in my survey so far of the violence that pervades the region I have not mentioned the Arab-Israeli dispute. The reason is simple. None of the conflicts I have mentioned has anything to do with Israel. None of this violence has Israel as its target—Israeli leaders, I might add, did not even merit a position on Qaddafi's recent hit list—yet most of the discussions about achieving “peace” in the Middle East focus exclusively on the Arab-Israeli conflict and ignore the pervasive violence that characterizes the Arab world.

105. I am not suggesting—let me be clear on that—that the Arab-Israeli dispute is separate from this general pattern. I am suggesting that it is a manifestation of a larger problem. That problem consists of two elements: first, the propensity of Arab political culture to employ violence to resolve conflicts at all levels; and, secondly, the Arabs' refusal to contemplate any non-Arab sovereignty in their midst, whatever its borders—a refusal which remains, unhappily, almost unanimous.

106. While the specific enmity to Israel is deeply rooted in this general intolerance, Israel's sin is particularly odious in Arab eyes. For the Jews of Israel are the only non-Arab people to have successfully defied Arab domination and achieved independence. Thus, the very existence of Israel challenges the concept of a unified and uninterrupted Arab domain. Even the presumed champion of Palestinian statehood, Yasser Arafat—whose bitterly divided PLO, by the way, is a leading example of Arab internecine warfare and murder—has said: “The question of borders does not interest us. Palestine is only a small drop in the great Arab ocean. Our nation is the great Arab nation extending from the Atlantic to the Red Sea and beyond.”

107. It is this opposition to any non-Arab sovereignty in this “great Arab nation” that is at the root of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This is why for 30 years, before there was a Jewish State, before there was a single Arab refugee, the Arabs mercilessly attacked Jewish towns and villages. This is why they later went to war three times against the State of Israel before there was a single settlement, before there was a single Israeli soldier in the Golan Heights or in Judea-Samaria, as indeed both these territories were then firmly in Arab hands. The Arab campaign

against Israel is rooted not in a negotiable grievance but in the basic opposition to Israel's very existence. The problem of the Palestinian Arabs, therefore, even when considered within the proper context of the Arab-Israeli dispute, is not the root of that dispute but merely one of its results.

108. Could it be argued that, despite the evidence of other conflicts, the Arab-Israeli conflict none the less deserves our primary attention because of the level of casualties? Here, too, we must examine the facts. The total number of fatalities in all the Arab-Israeli wars over 36 years is some 50,000, Arabs and Israelis combined. While each life lost is a tragedy, the cost pales before the staggering losses elsewhere.

109. Let me explain what I am talking about. The Iran-Iraq war, in four years, has claimed a minimum of 200,000 lives, not to mention hundreds of thousands of persons wounded and permanently disabled. Egypt's invasion of Yemen and the civil war there claimed the lives of 200,000 Yemenis and some 30,000 Egyptian troops. The toll exacted by the Lebanese civil war was 100,000 dead. In the Sudan alone, half a million died. And nobody knows the exact number of Kurds slaughtered by Iraq.

110. So, the next time someone blithely assures us that the "Palestinian problem" is the "core" of the Middle East conflict, we have a right to demand of the speaker which conflict he has in mind. Let us, in fact, ask him some further questions. What does the Palestinian problem have to do with Nasser's invasion of Yemen? What does the Palestinian problem have to do with Iraq's massacre of the Kurds, its intermittent claim to Kuwait and its invasion of Iran? What does the Palestinian problem have to do with Algeria's support of the Frente POLISARIO¹² in the Western Sahara? What does the Palestinian problem have to do with Saudi Arabia's encroachment on the two Yemens? What does the Palestinian problem have to do with Libya's seizure of northern Chad, or its bombing of the Sudan, or its clash with Tunisia, or its conflict with Egypt? What does the Palestinian problem have to do with Syria's designs on Jordan? What does the Palestinian problem have to do with the slaughter of Sudanese blacks by Sudanese Arabs? What does the Palestinian problem have to do with Syria's claim to all of Lebanon? What does the Palestinian problem have to do with the explosive hatred between Damascus and Baghdad? What does the Palestinian problem have to do with the slaughter of Sunni dissidents in the Syrian city of Hama? We should ask all these questions because to ask them is to begin to answer them.

111. I began my remarks by observing that we have been called here to consider two questions: first, to

examine the general situation in the Middle East; secondly, to discuss what has been called the "Palestinian problem".

112. It is often suggested that the general turbulence and violence in the Middle East is a result of the Arab-Israeli conflict, that, in other words, the first question originates in the second. All of the evidence, however—and I have adduced only the most important facts here: facts, not opinions—suggests that the relationship is exactly the reverse. The Arab-Israeli dispute—or, as some would have it, the "Palestinian problem"—can only be understood in the general context of Arab political practice and attitudes. It is but one case, though clearly the best publicized, out of all the many examples of Arab violence and intolerance.

113. These are the forces which are responsible, as we have seen, not only for the Arab-Israeli conflict but for much else in the Middle East. The real focus of our debate should be the ways to control these underlying tendencies from claiming still more innocent victims and inflicting still more suffering everywhere from Morocco to the Gulf.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.

NOTES

¹See *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1982), vol. 18, No. 35, p. 1081.

²See *Official Records of the Security Council, Thirty-seventh Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1982*, document S/15510.

³*Ibid.*, *Thirty-fifth Year, Supplement for April, May and June 1980*, document S/14002.

⁴*Ibid.*, *Thirty-seventh Year, Supplement for July, August and September 1982*, document S/15403.

⁵*Ibid.*, document S/15317.

⁶*Report of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 29 August-7 September 1983* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.83.I.21), annex I, sect. H, para. 16.

⁷Boston, South End Pr., 1983.

⁸New York, Times Books, 1983.

⁹*Official Records of the Security Council, Twenty-eighth Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1973*, document S/11040.

¹⁰United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.

¹¹*Official Records of the Security Council, Thirty-ninth Year, Supplement for July, August and September 1984*, document S/16732.

¹²Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y de Río de Oro.