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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 30 November 1989, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. GARBA (Nigeria)
later: Mr. IOHIA (Papua New Guinea)
(Vice-President)

- Question of Palestine [39] (continued)

- (a) Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People
- (b) Report of the Secretary-General
- (c) Draft resolutions

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 39 (continued)

QUESTION OF PALESTINE

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE (A/44/35)
- (b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/44/731)
- (c) DRAFT RESOLUTIONS (A/44/L.43 to A/44/L.45, A/44/L.50)

The PRESIDENT: I should like to remind representatives that, in accordance with the decision taken at the 67th plenary meeting, the list of speakers in the debate will be closed today at 12 noon. I therefore request those representatives wishing to participate in the debate to inscribe their names as soon as possible.

Mr. PIBULSONGRAM (Thailand): I should like to express my delegation's appreciation to Ambassador Absa Claude Diallo, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, for the Committee's comprehensive and useful report. The valuable observations and recommendations therein deserve our careful attention and consideration.

The question of Palestine has been with us for far too long. It has remained the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict for over 40 years. The continuation of the Palestinian problem can only bring more pain and more suffering to all those involved. Concrete progress towards a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict is urgently needed.

In addressing the Palestinian problem my Foreign Minister said in his statement to the General Assembly on 29 September this year:

"The overwhelming majority of members of this Assembly have made clear what needs to be accomplished. The foundation for a possible solution has been established with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973)

(Mr. Pibulsonggram, Thailand)

as well as other Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and decisions. Let these serve as guidelines towards an eventual settlement of this problem, which for too long has held back peace in the Middle East."

(A/44/PV.13, p. 63)

The decision of the Palestine National Council of 15 November 1988 to accept Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), to reject and condemn terrorism in all forms and to accept the existence of Israel as a State in the region was a positive step in the direction of peace.

Throughout the past 12 months my delegation has followed developments on the question of Palestine very, very closely. The various diplomatic efforts have created a degree of optimism. We have seen new and important dialogues among some of the main actors. We have also seen several constructive proposals initiated by the parties concerned. The tireless efforts of the United Nations and the Secretary-General for peace in the Middle East have continued vigorously. We are hopeful that those various proposals and efforts will be translated into actual and concrete steps towards a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

(Mr. Pibulsonggram, Thailand)

Nevertheless, we note with regret that the situation which gave rise to the intifadah continues to exist in the occupied territories. The intifadah is about to enter its third year, yet no end to the suffering of the Palestinian people appears to be in sight.

As we commemorated the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People yesterday, I should like to reaffirm my delegation's steadfast support for the Palestinian people in their struggle to exercise their legitimate rights, including their inalienable right to self-determination.

The acquisition of territory by force is illegal and unacceptable. Arab sovereignty must be restored fully over occupied Arab territories. The legitimate security concerns of all States in the region must be assured.

In his message to the Palestinian people yesterday on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, my Prime Minister, General Chatichai Choonhavan, emphasized the following:

"Thailand firmly believes that the Palestinian people are entitled to exercise their inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), their sole and legitimate representative.

"To this end, Thailand supports all the efforts of the United Nations towards a comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian question in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and other relevant resolutions. We also support the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations."

Although Thailand is geographically situated far from the Middle East, we have not been passive on the question of Palestine. On 11 September 1989 in Cairo my Deputy Foreign Minister had a constructive meeting with Chairman Yasser Arafat. On 26 October 1989 Mr. Farouk Kaddoumi paid a visit to Thailand.

(Mr. Pihulsonggram, Thailand)

My Government has participated in the international efforts to help alleviate the miseries of the Palestinian people, especially the Palestinian refugees. Since 1960 Thailand has given financial contributions to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). We shall continue to do so.

Thailand was pleased to host the second Journalist Encounter on Palestine in Bangkok earlier this year. Members of the local as well as the international media participated in the programme. It contributed to the enhancement of public knowledge and understanding of the question of Palestine. We have no doubt that the plan of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to hold a regional non-governmental organization seminar and symposium in Kuala Lumpur between 18 and 22 December 1989 on the general theme "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people" will meet with the success it deserves.

In conclusion, my delegation is hopeful that our work here in the Assembly this year on the question of Palestine will come to a successful conclusion. May the spirit of understanding and reconciliation prevail thus enabling us to move the peace process forward.

Mr. MOHAMMED (Iraq) (interpretation from Arabic): This is yet another occasion when the international community undertakes the heavy responsibility it shoulders vis-à-vis a major issue, the details of which relate to the major principles of the United Nations Charter on the maintenance of international peace and security, the reaffirmation of the right of peoples to self-determination, the promotion of human rights, the combating of racial discrimination, the ending of foreign occupation and the prevention of the use of force to solve international problems.

(Mr. Mohammed, Iraq)

Those are the broad lines of the international community's responsibility as we take up the question of Palestine - a question that has been under discussion for decades - particularly as we witness the persistence of occupation and the escalation of the racist Zionist terrorism, in the absence of any indication that the forces of occupation can in any way whatsoever respond to the logic of right or justice or, indeed, to any of the courageous peace initiatives put forward by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) - initiatives which reaffirm the Organization's commitment to international legitimacy and endorse the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

Thus, the international community must once again deal with Zionist obduracy, as it faces the dilemma of the Israeli refusal to implement United Nations resolutions on the establishment of peace in the region and resolving the question of the Palestinian people through ensuring their right to self-determination, ending the occupation and holding the International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

Given this situation, we believe that this international responsibility must be discharged in conformity with the principles of the United Nations and with reality on the ground. Hence the international Organization must take into consideration Israel's continuing rejection of the Organization's resolutions. The United Nations must take into consideration the fact that this issue will again be debated at the next session when, once again, the international community will have to take a position on the continuing abhorrent occupation of Palestinian land and the continuing tragedy of the Palestinian people. Here we must wonder how much time the international community needs to undertake its true role, namely, to end the suffering of the Palestinian people and the foreign occupation of its territories, its homeland.

(Mr. Mohammed, Iraq)

It must be stressed in this context that most States of the world have endorsed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. That support has been enshrined in the resolutions of the forty-third session of the General Assembly, part of which was held in Geneva following the unjustified refusal of the United States of America to grant an entry visa to the President of the State of Palestine, Yasser Arafat.

(Mr. Mohammed, Iraq)

That support has also been reflected in the increasing recognition of the independent State of Palestine, which has so far been recognized by more than 100 States.

The continued occupation and the consequential acts of killing, oppression and terrorism against the Palestinian people, in conjunction with Zionist intransigence, are the root cause for the Israeli refusal to accept the irrefutable, blatantly obvious fact that the Palestine Liberation Organization is the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. To ignore this fact is directly to reject peace and deny the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to establish its independent State with Holy Jerusalem as its capital. This in turn signifies the continuance of the threat to international peace and security and the heightening of tension, violence and instability in that vital part of the world.

Therefore, international responsibility, as we consider the destiny of a tormented people, demands full recognition of the role of the Palestine Liberation Organization, as the representative of the Palestinian people, to negotiate on its behalf.

Persistence in occupation, the perpetration of crimes, denial of the human rights of the Palestinian people, and negation and disregard of the role of the Organization stems from a reactionary, aggressive attitude that runs counter to logic and history. This is a stance hostile to the principles and values on which the Organization and contemporary international life are based. It is therefore the responsibility of the States Members of the United Nations, particularly the members of the Security Council, to give effect to the relevant Articles of the Charter by adopting measures that would prevent the Zionist occupation forces from perpetrating further crimes and put an end to the occupation and their aggression.

(Mr. Mohammed, Iraq)

In this context, my country is convinced that a grave responsibility falls squarely on the shoulders of the United States with regard to Israel's persistence in its policy of occupation and terrorism and its continued rejection of all peace initiatives. Since the United States, as is well known is the major source of weapons and technology for the racist Zionist régime, guarantees its political protection and provides it with material aid and moral support, it is called upon, in the light of the continuing suffering of the Palestinian people, to change those policies which it has pursued for several decades. We call on the United States to deal directly with the Palestinian people on the basis of its free will and with the Palestine Liberation Organization as its sole, legitimate representative. It must also recognize, without hesitation or reservation, the right of the Palestinians to self-determination and to establish their own independent State.

Further, it is incumbent upon the United States to fall into line with the international community in supporting the convening of an international peace conference, with the participation on an equal footing of all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization. The United States must shoulder its responsibility by putting pressure on the occupier to heed the international will, end the occupation and enable the Palestinians to enjoy their inalienable rights, including the sacred right to self-determination.

The succession of events since the seizure of Palestine clearly indicates that failure to reach a just and comprehensive solution of the question of Palestine, which is the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, can be attributed essentially to the Israeli rejection of any kind of solution.

Israel insists that it will not recognize the existence of the Palestinian people as a living population with a deep-rooted history. It even refuses to acknowledge that the well-defined Palestinian homeland is under occupation.

(Mr. Mohammed, Iraq)

Developments in the region, of which the whole world is well aware, daily reaffirm the grievous truth that the rulers in Tel Aviv see only one solution to the problem: the liquidation of the question of Palestine and the definitive elimination of the Palestinians. Indeed the extermination of an entire people following the usurpation of its rights and territory has been the objective of the racist Zionist movement ever since it came into being.

By adopting this criminal objective the Zionist movement merely confirms its racist nature and the fact that it seeks to achieve its colonialist-expansionist objectives at the expense of the Arab and Palestinian peoples. The entire world is aware of the aggressive nature of the Zionist régime and its policy of invasion and occupation, whether of the land of Palestine or of that of other neighbouring States, including Lebanon, not to mention its arrogant attack on Iraq in June 1981 and its attacks on Tunisia and other Arab States.

Such policies of aggression necessarily lead the Zionist régime to the use of force and the waging of war to achieve its evil objectives. Furthermore, that régime is attempting to emerge as the major military Power in the region and for that reason has acquired and is stockpiling nuclear and chemical weapons.

(Mr. Mohammed, Iraq)

The régime does so in order to perpetuate its occupation of the land of Palestine and to impose its hegemony over all the countries of the region. This is a further explanation of the strategic co-operation with the racist South African régime. The news of co-operation between the two racist régimes in the nuclear field and on the production of ballistic missiles continues to echo in the world media today. This nuclear co-operation has unquestionably reached such a serious level that the United States is now bringing more pressure to bear on the Zionist régime. The question was raised with Shamir during his recent visit to Washington in November. It was raised by the highest levels of the United States Administration. Shamir was forced implicitly to admit the co-operation, in response to great pressure from United States Congressmen. He promised that when he returned he would look into the question once again. This was reported in The New York Times on 17 November in an article by the American journalist Thomas Friedman.

This policy of the Zionist régime means that tension will persist in the region. It means, further, that the game of arms-trading development of missiles and aircraft is a game whose consequences cannot be predicted. If such activities were in keeping with the policy of the cold war and the strategy of confrontation between the major Powers, they cannot be in keeping with the policy of concord we see in the world today, with a feeling of optimism. Obviously it is inadmissible for any country to try to evade that policy of concord.

The leaders of the racist Zionist régime, in order to achieve their objective - actually an impossible objective - of liquidating the question of Palestine, believe that time will in itself put an end to the resistance of the Palestinian people. Furthermore, they do not respect international public opinion and the resolutions of this international community. At the same time, they resort to force to implement their consistent policy of genocide. Thus we see that the

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Zionist policy is essentially based inter alia on the idea of gaining time. This is done by manoeuvres and ambiguous proposals and also by creating illusory and contradictory positions as between the different paths of the Government and parties in the Government. Then a discussion of different plans takes place and amendments are made, and other methods are used - and all the while the policy of killing and terrorizing the courageous Palestinian people continues. .

The leaders in Tel Aviv have rejected all the courageous peace initiatives put forward by the Palestine Liberation Organization. They have rejected all other attempts put forward by other parties. Instead, they have concentrated their efforts on containing the valiant intifadah of the Palestinian people. They have sought to contain its consequences in order to suffocate it.

My delegation, speaking from this rostrum, is pleased to pay a tribute and to bless the valiant Palestinian intifadah, which is going forward with all its historical weight, with all its noble symbols. It is now entering its third glorious year, continuing the struggle amidst the worst kinds of killing, torture, and unnatural and inhuman acts.

The valiant intifadah, which stands up to iron and steel armed only with the free will of the courageous Palestinian people, each day scores victories against the soldiers of occupation, with all their modern weapons as well as their racism and hatred. The intifadah thus stands out in our contemporary history as the most glorious people's revolution against occupation. This is a revolution that is escalating every month, an intifadah whose principles are further entrenched each day, reaching the consciences of people in every part of the world. The Arabic word "intifadah" has become an international word, written in all parts of the world, using the letters of every alphabet. The intifadah has shot down the Zionist entity's claim of humanity and democracy - those claims it has always made

(Mr. Mohammed, Iraq)

in attempting to blackmail the world. The obnoxious occupation has shown its true face, and the number of those defending the intifadah has become so large that Zionist propaganda, with all its potential and its multifaceted means, cannot drown out the message of the intifadah and the legitimate, honourable resistance to occupation.

The American journalist Anthony Lewis, wrote in The New York Times on 19 November 1989, that some Americans who supported Israel complained that the media gave unwarranted attention to Israel's faults, but that what had happened in the Palestinian village of Beit Sahur clearly showed that the oppression by the occupiers was not so well known either to Israelis in general or to foreigners; if they knew what was taking place, if they knew that those Palestinians who wanted a peaceful solution were being punished, more Israelis would be more prepared to put an end to the occupation.

The ending of the abhorrent occupation, the holding of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East with the participation of all parties, including the Palestine Liberation Organization - the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people - in order to solve the question of Palestine, in order to restore to the Palestinian people its inalienable rights, including its right to self-determination and the establishment of its independent State - that is the only way to achieve a just solution of this problem that has remained unsolved for far too long.

(Mr. Mohammed, Iraq)

Iraq will, as it has always done, work faithfully to support and assist the Palestinian people in its just struggle to regain its usurped inalienable rights. Iraq reaffirms its full and consistent support for the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

Mr. OUDOVENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): For many decades efforts to resolve the Palestinian problem have been a priority in the work of the United Nations. I think that I express the feelings of many representatives when I say that it is difficult not to give some thought to the age of this problem and the length of time it has been considered in the United Nations. Since May 1947 the General Assembly alone has adopted more than 230 resolutions, which are either directly or indirectly concerned with various aspects of the Palestinian problem. Considerable attention has been paid to this matter by the Security Council, which since March 1948 has adopted more than 160 resolutions and more than 80 decisions on this matter.

Nevertheless the problem of Palestine, which is extremely complex politically, legally, morally and ethically, remains to be solved. Since it is at the core foundation of the Middle East conflict, I do not think it would be an exaggeration to say that if the problem persists it may lead to serious consequences, including on a global scale.

In so far as the Middle East conflict as a whole is concerned, we cannot but recall the craven assassination of the President of Lebanon, Mr. René Moawad. Speaking on this subject a few days ago as Chairman of the Special Committee at the current session of the General Assembly, I stated that this tragic event provided further proof of the inherent dangers in outbreaks of terror and violence in the Middle East region. We are also alarmed by news that Israel intends to use the assassination of the President of Lebanon to justify the occupation of part of

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Lebanese soil. This was clearly indicated by one of the military leaders of Israel, Mr. Shomron, when he spoke in Tel Aviv to the Foreign Press Association. He described that assassination as a tragic event; however, he emphasized that "it indicated the need for the armed forces of Israel to protect our northern border", and also to prevent the creation of what he called a terrorist infrastructure in Lebanon.

At the same time the difficult events in the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel have reached a critical point. This was convincingly indicated by the numerous facts, objective evaluations and unbiased conclusions to be found in the Secretary-General's reports and in other United Nations documents and in reports of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. These data are constantly being supplemented by information from the media reaching us from the occupied territories of the West Bank of the Jordan, the Gaza Strip and Jerusalem.

According to recent accounts, virtually the entire population of the West Bank and Gaza was involved in the general strike as a sign of solidarity with the tens of thousands of Palestinians languishing in prisons and concentration camps. There were brutal clashes with the oppressors in which many Arabs were wounded. Despite the severe repressive measures, meetings and demonstrations are continuing.

In the past two years the Security Council has frequently expressed grave concern regarding the situation in the occupied territories; it condemned the Israeli policy of deportation of Palestinians and demanded their immediate return to their homeland. Nevertheless, official statements by the Israeli leadership leave no shadow of doubt that they intend to continue their policy of annexation and to rule the occupied territories with an iron fist.

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The acts of the Israeli administration continue to be at variance with the provisions of the United Nations Charter and the numerous relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. They are indeed a direct violation of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and other fundamental international legal documents. Hence it is not surprising that the report presented in February this year by the State Department of the United States containing facts attesting to the violations of the rights of the Palestinians caused such anger in Israel. The gravity of those violations was also reflected in the report of the Special Committee (A/44/599), which called for an investigation of Israel's actions affecting the human rights of the population of the occupied territories.

It was felt in Israel that the time the occupation had lasted was working for them, that there would be a weakening in the resistance to expansion. But the opposite happened. The intifadah finally unravelled the efforts that had been undertaken for more than 20 years to have some influence on world public opinion about the myth of the blessings of the Israeli occupation and that the Palestinians were becoming adapted to it. The Palestinian peaceful uprising clearly indicates that the present situation is intolerable and that the status quo cannot be maintained. At the same time, it served as a catalyst for profound and positive changes in the Middle East.

For the first time in the many years of the history of the Palestinian problem there is a glimmer of hope that some agreement might be reached for restoring normal conditions for people to live together in this region. I am thinking chiefly of the diplomatic steps at the recent session of the Palestine National Council, where a decisive choice was made in favour of a political settlement on the basis of coexistence with Israel while granting the Palestinian people an opportunity to enjoy its right to self-determination. The Palestine Liberation

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Organization (PLO) and its leadership have through practical actions shown their resolve to continue along the path they have chosen.

We are pleased to note that the struggle of the Palestinians for their inalienable rights has reached a new stage. A Palestinian State has been proclaimed, and it has been recognized by more than 90 countries. The tremendous rise in the national self-awareness of the Palestinians, the inability of the occupiers to bring the situation under control, the serious dissent in Israeli society regarding the peace process and a settlement are the results of the two years of struggle of the Palestinians for their legitimate rights. The truth is being gradually realized in Israel that the policy of violence is fraught with serious consequences, that the Palestinian uprising cannot be put down by force of arms and that new approaches are required if the Palestinian problem is to be resolved on the basis of peace, equality, justice and respect for the legitimate national rights and the mutual interests of the two peoples who live side by side.

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We could give a long list of the difficulties which today are impeding progress on the path towards a Middle East settlement. However, we should not underestimate the positive and encouraging aspects. The Ukrainian SSR was very heartened to note the important decisions with the aim of resolving the conflict in the Middle East adopted in Casablanca this summer by the Extraordinary Arab Summit Conference. It is extremely important that the meeting supported the policies of the PLO and favoured the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. The intention to take practical steps towards the convening of such a conference was indicated by the establishment of the Tripartite High Committee by the League of Arab States for the purpose of actively promoting the peace process and preparing for the Conference.

In present circumstances, in view of the gravity of the Palestinian problem, it is extremely important to conserve the positive results which have been achieved with such difficulty in efforts to settle the Middle East problem. This will require patience and wisdom, and a realistic and well-thought-out approach. The Ukrainian SSR believes that it is essential that the political settlement of the conflict be comprehensive. It should include the resolution of territorial, political, humanitarian, military and legal aspects of the matter on a mutually acceptable basis, and ensure a balance of interests. It must be collective in nature and should be reached by agreement between all those involved in the conflict, with the assistance of other interested parties and the world community as a whole.

It is essential that the Palestinian people be enabled to exercise their right to self-determination and that this be guaranteed just as it is guaranteed to the people of Israel. One cannot demand that others acknowledge one's own rights while at the same time denying this recognition to one's neighbours and occupying by

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force the territories of other States and not allowing them to make a free choice. All States in the Middle East, both Arab States and Israel, should be guaranteed an opportunity to live in conditions of peace within secure and recognized boundaries.

It is our profound conviction that the best possible forum for the quest for mutually acceptable solutions to all aspects of the Middle East conflict would be an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations. The vast majority of Member States of the United Nations favour the convening of such a conference, in accordance with resolution 43/176, adopted at the last session of the General Assembly. In practical terms, it is extremely important to take specific steps to implement operative paragraphs 5 and 6 of that resolution, which, respectively, request the Security Council to consider measures needed to convene such a conference and to start preparatory work for it and request the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned in preparing for the holding of such a conference.

The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR believes that representatives of all the parties involved in the conflict could participate in the conference, including the Arab people of Palestine, as well as the permanent members of the Security Council. There can be no doubt today that the PLO is the legitimate representative of the Arab people of Palestine and that the key to resolving the Palestinian problem is within the grasp of the parties to the conflict.

As far as the United Nations is concerned, it appears to us that the role of the permanent members of the Security Council and all those that wish to show goodwill in this matter, should be to create a favourable and constructive political climate for the peace talks and to give as much help as possible to the parties directly involved in the conflict. At the same time, no one can impose on the parties directly concerned any decisions which are not acceptable to them. The

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Ukrainian SSR favours flexible and comprehensive efforts, both multilateral and bilateral, which would lead to the initiation of peace talks and pave the way for convening an international conference. We must take advantage of all the Security Council's possibilities by stepping up consultations among the five and making the best possible use of the peace-making potential of the United Nations and its Secretary-General in order to ensure interaction between the parties directly involved in a settlement. We believe that fundamental assurance of the success of this preparatory stage could be achieved by arranging a direct dialogue between the PLO and Israel. Recently, there have been many attempts by, among others, certain Western European States, to encourage the beginning of such a dialogue. The PLO, as is well known, has expressed its readiness to negotiate with Israel at an international conference. The ball is now in the court of the Israeli leadership.

We reiterate our appeal to the Government of Israel to join in the international consensus in favour of comprehensive international efforts to bring about a just and lasting peace in the Middle East that takes account of the interests of all the States and peoples in that region, including the State of Israel and its people.

The Ukrainian SSR, which has been a member of the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian people since it was founded, continues to hold a consistent position on the question of Palestine. On numerous occasions and in various international forums the Ukrainian SSR has expressed itself as in favour of a political solution to this problem and of broadening and enhancing the role of the United Nations in the peace-making process. As a member of the Committee the delegation of the Ukrainian SSR has frequently made proposals for the further improvement of its activities by more active participation in efforts to ensure the speedy convening of an international

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conference on the Middle East, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 43/176.

We fully support the wide-ranging activities of the Committee, under the leadership of the Permanent Representative of Senegal, Mrs. Diallo, for the purpose of mobilizing world public opinion in support of efforts to find a Middle East settlement. The extent of that support has been amply borne out by the regional seminars organized by the Committee, as well as the symposiums of non-governmental organizations and other important events. The fact that more than 700 representatives of non-governmental organizations participated in the Sixth United Nations International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine, held in Vienna this year, is striking testimony to this.

A new kind of situation has arisen in the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel through the peaceful uprising there. The widespread international support for that uprising, the plans and proposals put forward last year concerning a mutually acceptable solution to the problem, and changes in public opinion in Israel all go to indicate that the time has now come for a real breakthrough towards peace in the Middle East. The United Nations has demonstrated in practice that its machinery for dealing with conflicts and maintaining peace provides the most effective means today of ensuring peace and security in all corners of the world. It is essential that we draw on this United Nations potential. The ripples of the wave of encouraging changes throughout the world should extend to the shores of the Middle East. It is our common task to make peace in the Middle East a reality today, not to bequeath this task to coming generations.

Mr. AL-SHAKAR (Bahrain) (interpretation from Arabic): The Palestinian people has suffered great injustices since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 181 (II) - the resolution providing for the partition of Palestine. Under the resolution, the Jewish State was established on Palestinian land, while the Arab Palestinian State did not receive similar treatment. But that resolution continues to provide international legitimacy for the Palestinian people's right to national independence and sovereignty.

For more than four decades the Palestinian people has continued its struggle for its legitimate rights to self-determination, national independence, sovereignty and freedom.

This year the General Assembly has been discussing the question of Palestine at a time when the heroic Palestinian intifadah is ending its second year, still at the peak of its strength. The intifadah confirms the will of all sections and strata of the Palestinian people to oppose Zionist occupation and settlement in all forms and aspects, in order to put an end to the historic injustice suffered by the Palestinian people over more than four decades. It will continue until the Palestinian people can exercise its inalienable national rights and until an independent Palestinian State is consolidated.

The period covered by the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (A/44/35) has given confirmation of the continued intensification of the determined resistance of the Palestinian people to the escalating arbitrary and oppressive Israeli measures which attempt to stifle the intifadah. Israel has used barbaric, horrifying, inhuman methods to try to end the intifadah, by murder; the mutilation, breaking of limbs and arrests of Palestinians; forced deportations; collective punishments; exile; and the closing of schools, health centres and humanitarian services. Israel has also imposed an economic blockade on Palestinian cities, camps and villages. It has stepped up

(Mr. Al-Shakar, Bahrain)

attacks on Palestinian towns and camps by night and flagrantly violated all basic human rights in order to keep the Palestinian people under the yoke of occupation. All this happens daily in occupied Palestinian land, while concerted international efforts are being made to eliminate hotbeds of tension and confrontation and cases of occupation and aggression, and to resolve regional conflicts by peaceful means through the United Nations, in order that the cause of peace and stability may triumph for the good of peoples and in order to promote understanding and confidence between peoples through respect for the authority and prestige of the United Nations.

The inhuman practices are increasing, and new methods and means of barbaric oppression are being devised. None of this can weaken the will and determination of the Palestinian people, which is more determined now than ever before, to continue its struggle, armed with its unshakeable faith in its inalienable rights and relying on the support and assistance of the international community and of peace- and justice-loving countries, which constantly and rightly reaffirm that the rights of that militant people to independence, self-determination and freedom must be respected.

The current year has witnessed more suffering by the Palestinian people, because of stepped-up Israeli arbitrary action to stifle the intifadah, and because of the continuation of the racist settlement policy on the whole of Palestinian soil, which takes the form of usurpation, annexation and tyranny. All sections of Palestinians - men, women, children, the elderly, workers, employers, farmers, craftsmen, academics, journalists - have suffered from Israel's iron-fist policy. No section of the Palestinian people has escaped that policy; all have been under the yoke of occupation and the Israeli attempt to break down the intifadah by sowing despair and frustration among the Palestinians, who are resolutely standing

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up to Israel's military machine, including occupation soldiers and armed settlers, and maintaining their unshakeable national unity, rallying staunchly behind the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), their sole and legitimate representative, with no fear of the bullets of the racist-Zionist usurpers.

The heroic epic of sacrifice recorded by the intifadah and the dignity with which it has been conducted over the past two years confirm that the flame of the Palestinian struggle will continue to burn, regardless of the arbitrary actions of the Zionist occupiers, regardless of the intention behind their escalating acts of oppression and persecution. The will of the Palestinian people will never be bent, and its just struggle under the leadership of the PLO, its sole and legitimate representative, will not end until it can exercise its legitimate rights and attain its national aspirations, including the end of occupation and the establishment of its own State on Palestinian national soil.

Israel must understand the message of the intifadah - that the intifadah is not a passing event, as Israel claims, but, rather, the expression of the will of a people which rejects occupation, defies the occupier and is struggling for its legitimate rights, for its own identity and existence on its national soil.

(Mr. Al-Shakar, Bahrain)

The intifadah has rightfully won the admiration and tributes of international public opinion because of its resistance to Zionist arbitrariness.

That resistance has not weakened. The most recent evidence of this was the courageous attitude shown by Palestinians in the village of Beit Sahur towards the crimes committed by the occupying authorities, whose fear and disarray are increasing because of the moral triumph of the Palestinians.

Instead of seeing certain influential States exerting pressure on Israel to put an end to its arbitrary and inhumane policies; its rejection of all international values and norms, and its flouting of a fundamental norm of international law - the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, instead of seeing necessary international measures taken to protect Palestinian civilians in occupied Palestinian territory, instead of seeing measures taken to prevent Israel from expelling them, from deporting them, from destroying their homes and seizing their property, what we see is one of those influential States, a permanent member of the Security Council, using the right of veto more than once this year alone, to prevent the adoption of resolutions that had gained the consensus of the Security Council - resolutions condemning Israeli practices in Palestinian territories, denouncing the expansionist nature of the racist Israeli policy, calling for respect by Israel for the Fourth Geneva Convention and its application to the occupied Palestinian territories, and asking that the international protection of Palestinian civilians in the occupied territories be guaranteed.

At its session in Algiers in November 1988, the Palestine National Council adopted a new, realistic and well-balanced programme and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) expressed its willingness to undertake negotiations in the framework of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East to resolve the Israeli-Arab conflict, on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967)

(Mr. Al-Shakar, Bahrain)

and 338 (1973) and recognition of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, especially its right to self-determination. Yet that is apparently not enough to make Israel begin a dialogue with the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people on the future of that people, which is under the yoke of Israeli occupation, to prepare it for its independence and a safe life in the framework of a Palestinian State as defined by General Assembly resolution 181 (II), adopted at the second session, within secure and internationally recognized boundaries, and to solve the problem of the Palestinian refugees in conformity with General Assembly resolution 194 (III), adopted at the third session, and subsequent relevant resolutions.

Under Israeli criteria the Palestinian people has no right to self-determination and independence because it lost that right under occupation, by virtue of Israeli policy, regardless of concession after concession made by the Palestinian people. As Israel sees it, the solution is to expel that people from its homeland and deliver it up to its own Diaspora. The intifadah in its two years of existence has waged a solitary combat against the Israeli occupying authorities, but it is high time - and indeed has been for some time - for a clearer and more effective international role to be played regarding Israel and its policy in the occupied Palestinian lands. That policy, in the final analysis, aims at imposing Israeli peace conditions and depriving the Palestinian people of the fruit of its struggle and combat. The representative nature of the Palestinian people's leadership is being denied, in an attempt to undermine internationally agreed norms enshrined in General Assembly resolution 43/176 with a view to a just and lasting settlement of the problems of the region, including the withdrawal of Israeli occupation forces from the Arab lands occupied since 1967 and the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights.

(Mr. Al-Shakar, Bahrain)

The United Nations, which has a special responsibility vis-à-vis the Palestinian people, is duty-bound to associate itself with the Palestinian people, in its struggle against Zionist plots that aim at the liquidation of its cause and against attempts to disregard its sole and legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization.

I repeat: Israel must understand the message of the intifadah. As is rightly stated by the Secretary-General in his report to the General Assembly:

"the message of the intifadah is direct and unequivocal, namely, that the Israeli occupation, which has now been in effect for 22 years, will continue to be rejected and that the Palestinian people will remain committed to the exercise of their legitimate political rights, including self-determination".

(A/44/737, para. 36)

The support that has been given to the PLO by the Palestinian people in the occupied territories is evident to anyone who sees facts as they are. It is a complete and overwhelming support, recognized the world over, and reflected daily in the resistance by the people of the occupied territories to Israeli plots to conclude certain deals which exclude and disregard the PLO. Any dialogue that does not take the PLO into account as the rightful representative of the Palestinians, that attempts to form, a Palestinian delegation, whether inside or outside Palestine, in any future talks with Israel to decide on the future of the occupied Palestinian territories, will be doomed to failure.

(Mr. Al-Shakar, Bahrain)

No initiative will succeed unless it is in keeping with the peace initiative already outlined in General Assembly resolution 43/176, which is based on international legitimacy, with a view to the holding of an effective international peace conference on the Middle East, the only appropriate framework for negotiations leading to a just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict in accordance with United Nations resolutions.

It goes without saying that the only sound approach to the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the establishment of a just and lasting peace is Israeli recognition of the existence of the Palestinian people - which is under Israeli occupation - and its legitimate national rights like those of all other peoples: the right to self-determination and to establish its own independent State on its national soil in accordance with the Charter.

History teaches us that justice always triumphs. Since our Organization was established to serve the cause of peace and justice, my country - which is committed to the cause of the Palestinian people and is doing all in its power to support that cause so that peace and justice may prevail in the region - invites the international community to quicken the pace of its efforts to meet the Israeli challenge and establish peace through concerted action to avoid peace in the Middle East remaining hostage to Israeli whims.

We must thus put an end to the injustice done to the Palestinian people, free it from the yoke of occupation of its land and end the suffering it has endured now for over 22 years. This will be accomplished only when the Palestinian people is able to exercise its national inalienable rights to self-determination, independence and genuine sovereignty in its own independent Palestinian State, whose creation was declared by the Palestinian people last year and welcomed throughout the world. That is the real challenge and the only guarantee for peace.

Mr. OLHAYE (Djibouti): The General Assembly is once more seized of the monumental tragedy of this century. This is the fifteenth consecutive year since the Assembly first reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to self-determination, as set out in resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 1974. The implication here is crystal clear: there can be no lasting peace in the Middle East unless the core problem, the illegal occupation of Palestinian territories by Israel, is fully and squarely addressed; the Palestinian people become fully involved in all peace processes; their national rights are totally restored; and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, is recognized and involved as an equal and indispensable partner in all peace negotiations. To further enhance the peace process, the General Assembly several years ago elaborated on the elements for a lasting solution to the conflict, within the framework of an international peace conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and all parties to the conflict. Like the preceding Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), this General Assembly resolution too was rejected by Israel, thus blocking all initiatives towards co-operation and compromise.

The status quo in the occupied Palestinian territories is not sustainable and cannot be justified on any ground - moral, legal, political or humanitarian. Reprehensible as it may be, it also represents the single great anachronism of our time: a provisional military occupation slowly but surely transforming itself into a formidable permanent superstructure that is instituting demographic and institutional changes, besides extending its jurisdiction and administration in the occupied territories. Such measures serve as a definite prelude to a de facto annexation. The Security Council and the General Assembly bear full responsibility not only to thwart all kinds of illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied

(Mr. Olhaye, Djibouti)

territories but also to muster sufficient courage to end forthwith this humiliating and outdated occupation once and for all, consistent with its own resolutions and decisions.

The feelings of a young Jewish boy may help to reveal the curious nature of Israel's blind and often fanatical obsession with only its own security to the detriment and total exclusion of the basic rights of the Palestinians. After the cease-fire in the June 1967 war, this young boy patiently listened to the exclamations of his mother - "What a triumph"; "Israel is finally safe". The 12-year-old boy, skeptical of his mother's wisdom, made these rational observations: "Why is Israel any safer than before?" "Does not conquering more territory just mean making more enemies?". Indeed, enemies are made. An entire generation of Palestinians born and raised in refugee tents have grown up with a sense of dispossession and outrage. Such a grim, dismal and impotent future invariably provided the force that transformed the spontaneous outburst of rage into a sustained, organized resistance.

Israel's obstinacy and implacability could not, contrary to its convictions, smother or stifle the spirit of nationalism and steadfast determination of the Palestinians.

The intifadah in the occupied territories represents the true culmination and reaffirmation of this long, arduous and bitter struggle not only to confront Israeli ruthlessness and harsh repression but also to demonstrate their unity towards attaining the freedom the Israelis enjoy but seem determined at all costs to deny them. The cost of the intifadah is incalculably awesome in terms of lives lost, injuries, maimings, imprisonments, expulsions, property destruction, economic hardship, disrupted education and collective punishment. The world can no longer remain deaf to it. The intifadah brought out the horrible truth about Israeli repressive policies and practices in the occupied territories.

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The popular civil uprisings provided a profound strategic dimension to the diplomatic and political landscape of the conflict, bringing into focus the substance of human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Israel is obliged under international law to act in accordance with the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which, however, it consistently chooses to flout in pursuit of its unilateral objectives.

The problems in the Middle East cannot be resolved by the administration of flimsy political palliatives or by the streams of "quick-fix" plans; much less can they be resolved by Israel's simply focusing on how to break the backbone of the resistance. Nothing could be less possible. It is high time to recognize the value and merits of responsible political action. Only a properly structured, comprehensive dialogue based on realism and pragmatic wisdom and in consonance with a proper legal framework can lead to a settlement in the interests of all States in the area, including an independent Palestinian State.

The Palestine National Council, in Algiers in November 1988 and again in Geneva in December last year, adequately demonstrated its complete readiness to work for a negotiated settlement on the basis of the two-State principle, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 181 (II), of 1947, and other relevant United Nations resolutions, coupled with the clear and unambiguous rejection by the PLO of all forms of terrorism, including State terrorism. It is regrettable, therefore, that this historic political evolution, this rare window of opportunity, which every country on the globe agreed was the foremost positive step ever taken by any side, should face the Israeli guillotine, which has thus quashed any hope of resolving this conflict, that has for many years overshadowed the international situation.

Israel prides itself on being the only democracy in the Middle East, but a democracy that is not inclusive, that is selective in its methods and application

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and in the administration and delivery of justice, can, on the contrary, lay claim only to unlimited abuse of power. In the words of G. K. Chesterton, "Power can only make ugliness uglier". It is hard to believe that reliable security can be maintained without tolerance and willingness and agreement to live together while remaining different. The train of change, of free choice and freedom, that is sweeping across the frontiers of the nations in Eastern Europe, and elsewhere should be given a chance to make a brief stop in this troubled area too, so that it may impart, or perhaps inject, our shared common vision.

In conclusion, I should like to acknowledge the commendable efforts of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Absa Claude Diallo of Senegal. That Committee has made an effective and concrete contribution by consistently highlighting the plight of the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation and by recommending to the Assembly the implementation of an action programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to build its own State in its own land.

Mr. SALLAM (Yemen) (interpretation from Arabic): On this historic day, which marks the withdrawal of the last British soldier from southern Yemen, on the very day when the leaders of the two parts of Yemen are meeting in Aden to agree on a formula to restore the unity of Yemen, I am honoured to speak here on behalf of both parts of the country on the question of Palestine.

This year the General Assembly is discussing the persistent agenda item on the question of Palestine at a time progressively characterized by positive developments in international political relations, a growing improvement in the international climate and a general conviction of the need to resort to dialogue and peaceful options to solve regional conflicts, renounce confrontation and take practical measures to alleviate tension and arrive at a just political settlement. These positive developments have together paved the way for more favourable

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circumstances that have enabled the United Nations to carry out its task and step up its positive role with regard to international relations as the basic forum for the maintenance of international peace and security and the fostering of international co-operation.

The serious stand taken by the international community in respect of many hotbeds of tension in our world has led to these being contained and quenched by means of just political settlements. The question of Palestine, however, has not yet been the subject of such a serious attitude, despite the fact that it is one of the items that has been on the agenda of the Assembly for the longest time, and is the crux of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the corner-stone of the Middle East problem, which daily grows worse and becomes increasingly dangerous and tragic.

The situation in the Middle East resulting from Israel's aggressive policy against the Palestinian people is so grave that it threatens peace not only in the region but throughout the world. The heroic intifadah of the Palestinian people is entering its third year, despite the aggression and repression of the Zionist occupation forces against that people in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip simply for standing up for its legitimate rights. The occupier resorts to killing, imprisonment, torture, displacement, demolition of homes, confiscation of property, starvation, deprivation of education, and many other brutal acts that run counter to international customs and laws and to the principles of human rights.

(Mr. Sallam, Yemen)

Even so, some countries - which constantly appeal for respect for human rights - continue to ignore all those brutal practices. A super-Power, a permanent member of the Security Council, shirks its commitments under the Charter; it supplies Israel with military matériel and money to help it continue its occupation and inhuman arbitrary practices against unarmed Palestinians.

Since the beginning of the intifadah, on 9 December 1987, Israeli repression has been characterized by bloodthirsty ferocity and by atrocious violations of the rights of the Palestinians. The desperate attempt to crush or contain the intifadah is designed to perpetuate the settler occupation and eliminate the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people. The so-called Shamir plan is inimical to the rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people and constitutes a new form of political manoeuvre designed to abort or circumvent the intifadah.

The heroic intifadah - the Palestinian people's struggle to regain its territory and its legitimate national rights - marks a qualitatively new phase of the conflict. It has shown the international community that Israel's bloody repression and occupation and its iron-fist policy cannot destroy the resolve of the Palestinian people or its struggle to put an end to Israeli settler occupation and establish an independent Palestinian State on its national soil under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

The Palestinian leadership has responded positively to détente and other favourable developments in international relations. It has spared no effort to achieve a peaceful, comprehensive and just solution to the question of Palestine through a judicious and realistic policy aiming at providing the favourable conditions necessary to launch the process of dialogue and establish peace. That was demonstrated in the historic resolutions adopted by the Palestine National

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Council last November in Algeria, foremost among them being the formulation of the Palestinian peace initiative and the proclamation of the Palestinian State, which has gained widespread international recognition.

Thus, we now have a historic opportunity to achieve peace in the region. But Israel's arrogance and its engrained fear of peace continue to impede serious efforts to find a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine. Israel obdurately persists in rejecting peace initiatives and by its repeated political manoeuvres, it hampers the peace process in the Middle East.

Widespread international support for and recognition of the State of Palestine and the Palestinian peace initiative reflect the international community's desire to take advantage of the opportunity to reach a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine. Making good use of favourable circumstances and a real potential requires today more than ever before that peace-loving States demonstrate their solidarity with the State of Palestine and help it take its natural place among States.

It is therefore high time the United States of America adopted an approach in line with the favourable international situation and with the well-established reality brought about by the Palestinian intifadah.

The intifadah is an expression of the justice of the Palestinian cause and emphasizes the need to reach a just, comprehensive, peaceful solution to the question of Palestine. Such a solution can be brought about by exerting pressure on Israel to take part in peace negotiations in the framework of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and the other parties concerned, including the PLO, the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

(Mr. Sallam, Yemen)

In the light of positive developments in international relations and the continued improvement in the international political climate, and thanks to the laudable efforts of the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, the United Nations has proved that it can perform its role as an effective instrument for the maintenance of international peace and security and the settlement of international human, cultural, social, economic and political problems. Therefore, the two Yemen delegations welcomed the joint communiqué issued on 3 November 1989 by the United States and the USSR, in which they affirmed their commitment to and respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter, and pledged joint efforts in the Security Council to uphold peace, restore order and strengthen the role of the Organization in the maintenance of international peace and security.

On behalf of the delegations of the two parts of Yemen, and in the light of the need to enhance the role of the Organization and bring to the fore democratic principles and the principles of human rights, I call on the United States of America to conform to the majority opinion. The United States should not stand alone as a stumbling-block on the road to free democratic expression, as embodied in the international consensus in the General Assembly and the Security Council that Israel must be impelled to accept the principle of negotiations with the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to inform delegations that four draft resolutions have been issued as documents A/44/L.43, A/44/L.44, A/44/L.45 and A/44/L.50, under the agenda item on the question of Palestine.

Mr. SUTRESNA (Indonesia): A year ago the forty-third session of the General Assembly met in Geneva to take up the agenda item "Question of Palestine." Those plenary meetings were considered to be of such significance that many delegations, including Indonesia's, were represented at the ministerial level. In his statement in Geneva the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, Mr. Ali Alatas, said:

"The unprecedented decision to convene the General Assembly in Geneva in order to hear the views of Chairman Arafat is not only an appropriate honour bestowed on him, but also fitting homage to the PLO, recognized by the United Nations as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

"These meetings, moreover, are an expression of international solidarity and support for the intifadah, the popular uprising in the Palestinian occupied territories in heroic defiance of the Israeli colonial occupation."

(A/43/PV.78, p. 118)*

Indeed, the statement by Chairman Arafat at that important session concerning the historic decisions taken by the Palestine National Council at its nineteenth Extraordinary Conference was hailed by an overwhelming number of Member States. The proclamation of the independent Palestinian State and the bold peace initiative taken by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) were welcomed as singular contributions to a peaceful and comprehensive settlement of the conflict in the Middle East.

Indonesia is heartened to note the further consolidation of the broad-based support that the declaration of independence adopted by the Palestine National

* Mr. Lohia (Papua New Guinea), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

Council has gained over the course of the past year. In this regard my delegation is pleased to announce the inauguration at Jakarta on 19 October 1989 of the Palestine Embassy as a concrete manifestation of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Indonesia and the State of Palestine.

On that auspicious occasion the Foreign Minister of Indonesia stated that that step was but the logical consequence of Indonesia's long-standing policy of unflinching support for the valiant struggle of the Palestinian people, under the leadership of the PLO, their sole and legitimate representative, to regain their inalienable national right to sovereignty and independence. He also underscored Indonesia's deep conviction of the pressing need to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East to consider all the essential elements of a just and comprehensive solution, a need that has become increasingly obvious to everyone.

It is to be regretted that the acceleration of the peace process we all so fervently hope for had hardly commenced when the international efforts to initiate negotiations under United Nations auspices and in accordance with its resolutions were overshadowed by the extremely dangerous situation in the West Bank, Gaza, Jerusalem and other Arab territories occupied since 1967. In fact, the Security Council has had to be called into session urgently no less than three times during the past year - in February, June and November - to deal with the inhuman policies and practices of the occupation forces against the innocent civilian population. Moreover, the General Assembly, at the outset of its forty-third session, expressed its deep concern at the alarming situation. And, when it reconvened in April, the Assembly rightly moved to adopt, by an overwhelming majority, resolution 43/233, in which it reiterated the demand in earlier decisions that Israel abide by the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and demanded an end to the carnage in the occupied territory.

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Instead of responding positively to the international outcry and condemnation, Israel, in its customary manner, further intensified its iron-fist policy of attempting to bludgeon the Palestinians into submission. For the murderous attacks, the mass detentions and tortures, the deportations and humiliations, the confiscations and demolitions have continued unabated and constitute nothing less than a war of annihilation against the Palestinian nation and its leadership, the PLO. Indeed, the magnitude of the death and destruction, which have been duly catalogued in the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and in other relevant documents of the Organization, defies description. We are also all apprised of the extreme suffering and hardship of the Palestinians under Israeli occupation by the daily reports of killings of defenceless civilians, including children, of raids and mass arrests, of increasing use of collective punishment and of tolerance and even encouragement by the Israeli civilian and military authorities of unchecked vigilante violence by Israeli settlers.

Yet, despite the barbarous methods employed to curb the intifadah, the heroic Palestinian revolution cannot be quelled. Clearly, the powerful wave of popular indignation against the repressive measures has swept through all segments of the population. Through their great sacrifice and heroic resistance over the past two years the Palestinian people have demonstrated their unwavering allegiance to the PLO, as their sole and legitimate representative and as the sine qua non party in the search for a just solution to the question of Palestine. Thus there is and can be no alternative to the PLO. Israel must reconcile itself to this undeniable reality. Similarly, if there is to be any hope of peace Israel must abandon the dangerous delusion of living with the intifadah and treating it as the status quo.

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

It is indeed a telling indication of Israel's arrogant reliance on military might and unqualified support from its powerful benefactor that it is still unable or unwilling to accept what has long been evident to the overwhelming majority of the international community. Indeed, owing to the determination of the Palestinians themselves to achieve recognition of their inalienable national rights it is now universally acknowledged that there can be no peace without the involvement of their legitimate representatives. Even Israel's other traditional friends in the European Community and elsewhere today support the position that the only viable path to peace is through the involvement of all the parties directly concerned. In this regard my delegation has welcomed the initiation of contacts between the United States and representatives of the PLO. At the same time we join in the call for further consolidation of the dialogue leading to a greater balance and objectivity in the approaches to the peace process.

After more than four decades and four wars, and after immense hardship and humiliation, an irreversible turning point has been reached. As I have already noted, many momentous developments of a far-reaching nature have taken place. It has been evident to the non-aligned and other nations that the Middle East conflict is not amenable to a military fait accompli, conquest or annexation. The situation calls for a political settlement through sustained and meaningful dialogue and negotiations. In the interim, the rapidly deteriorating situation in the occupied territories calls for the initiation of actions to provide international protection to the civilian population. In this connection, we concur with the need to place all Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, under United Nations supervision.

Now is the time for Israel to demonstrate the necessary realism, pragmatism and moral determination, while acknowledging the national and human rights of others. We therefore join members in urging Israel to rise to the occasion and

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adopt a constructive policy in order to find ways and means whereby progress towards peace may be achieved and the injustice and oppression to which people have been subjected may be redressed. Peace in the Middle East is in the interest of all concerned, not least Israel. My delegation would like again to call upon Israel to take measures that will initiate a new era in the Middle East, an era marked by genuine and lasting peace.

In this regard the PLO has been direct and forthcoming in its decision to work for peace with Israel through the single internationally recognized framework for negotiations, the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, as called for in General Assembly resolution 38/58 C.

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The PLO has been clear also in its support for a comprehensive and lasting peace as enunciated in General Assembly resolution 43/176, adopted in Geneva, especially Israeli withdrawal from all territories occupied since 1967; security for all States in the region, including those named in resolution 181 (II) of 1947; the solving of the Palestinian refugee problem in accordance with resolution 194 (III) of 1948 and other relevant United Nations decisions; the dismantling of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories; and the guarantee of freedom of access to the holy places. Those indeed constitute the essential elements which address the legitimate interests of all parties; therefore we appeal to Israel's friends and supporters to institute the necessary policies and adopt appropriate measures which could induce Israel - for its own sake - to come to the negotiating table and match the historic gesture of reconciliation with the PLO.

Indonesia shares the fervent hope that this unparalleled opportunity should not be squandered, for the alternative can only be further suffering for all sides from the incessant strife and turmoil, violence and war. Let us therefore move forward by redoubling our collective efforts to ensure the end of the nightmare of occupation that has been the daily lot of the Palestinians for too many years. Nothing should deter the fulfillment of their dream of sovereign independence in Palestine and peace and security for all States in the region. For its part Indonesia pledges to spare no effort in the realization of those noble objectives.

Mr. DIAKITE (Mali) (interpretation from French): The Middle East, which is the historic cradle of civilizations and cultures among the most brilliant and fertile humanity has ever known, has unfortunately since 1948 been synonymous with tension, war and destruction and the continuing violation of international laws, human rights and the rights of peoples. This tragic situation is the direct consequence of Israel's refusal to abide by the relevant resolutions of the United

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Nations, which was instrumental in its creation. By refusing to respect the rights of peoples and States in the region, by rejecting any dialogue which might lead to just and durable peace, by blindly using military power against peoples and States, Israel has created in the Middle East a situation which constitutes a permanent threat to international peace and security.

The question of Palestine, as my delegation has always stated, is at the very heart of the Middle East conflict. The problem has always been the central focus of our Organization's concerns since it was created. Indeed, it was in the United Nations that the question of Palestine was born and it is in the United Nations that it can and should be settled, with the assistance of all Member States.

Since 1948 the question of Palestine has been the subject of discussions and resolutions in this Organization. For more than 40 years the Palestinian people, whose rights have been flouted and whose dignity has been injured, has been fighting to recover its plundered homeland.

The Charter of the United Nations is binding upon all Member States. Equality, justice, the peaceful settlement of disputes, co-operation and the preservation of peace and security are fundamental rules which are accepted by all Members of our Organization. Although a State Member of our Organization, Israel is behaving in Palestine like an occupying power, rejecting the obligations incumbent upon it under the Charter, international conventions and the pertinent resolutions of our Organization.

The growing deterioration of the situation in occupied Palestine and the tragedy which is the daily lot of the Palestinian people in the refugee camps in Gaza and the West Bank of the Jordan are of concern to the international community. The policy of occupation, the annexation of territories, the imposition by Israel of its own laws, jurisdiction and administration and the various kinds of violence which are practised upon old people, women and children among the

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Palestinians, the exploitation, the plundering of the natural resources of the occupied territories, the installation there of Jewish settler colonies and all the physical and moral brutalities that are deliberately inflicted on the inhabitants of the occupied territories - arrests, arbitrary sentencing and deportation, the laying of siege to towns, the demolition of the houses of the Arab inhabitants who refuse to accept the laws of the occupier - all these are a daily illustration of the behaviour of the occupying Power, which is deliberately violating the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

Faced with this situation the people of Palestine have risen as one against oppression, pillage, injustice and occupation. The heroic people of Palestine are in a state of revolt, of legitimate defence against Israeli occupation. The struggle waged by the Palestinian people is part and parcel of the struggle being waged by all oppressed peoples. The millions of Palestinians, whether or not they live in Palestine, are all freedom fighters and those who struggle for dignity; they are patriots, not terrorists.

For almost two years now the superiority and invincibility complex of the Israeli repressive forces has once again been successfully challenged by the heroes of the intifadah. As Mr. N'Golo Traore, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation of Mali, said in this Assembly on 9 October

"that revolt of the people in the occupied territories which has mobilized Palestinians into the streets, including a large number of women and children, who are standing up unarmed to the Israeli occupation forces which ... are committing acts of torture and carrying out massacres". (A/44/PV.24, p. 57)

The intifadah is thus seen as a popular uprising, both legitimate and invincible, which has helped our Organization and the international community to

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understand better the tragedy of the Palestinian people and search for the most appropriate way of finding a final solution to the nightmare inflicted upon the Palestinian people.

We are convinced that victory for the Palestinian people is inevitable because it is well known that no Power, no tyrant, can quell the struggle of a people which is resolved to live and flourish in honour and dignity. Through its heroic struggle, supported by the international community, the people of Palestine has made itself felt. Its participation and its necessary role in creating a peace based on a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of the Middle East are recognized by all.

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the new Palestinian State, which my country recognized as soon as it was created, are the only direct and mandated bargaining parties in everything concerning satisfying and guaranteeing the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. Those rights were recognized by the United Nations, and it is for our Organization to ensure that they are fully enjoyed.

Here I should like to pay a tribute to the United Nations peace-keeping forces and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, whose actions in that region are indeed necessary and in accordance with the spirit of the Charter.

The Republic of Mali has never spared any effort or any contribution in recognizing and ensuring the enjoyment of the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people and their return to their own homeland. Mali will continue, as in the past, to work for dialogue, understanding and co-operation among the peoples and States of the entire world, while strictly respecting their sovereignty and territorial integrity. As in the past, the Government of Mali will continue to give its unstinting support to the PLO.

(Mr. Diakite, Mali)

My country was indeed gratified when, on 15 November 1988, Chairman Yasser Arafat announced on behalf of the PLO that it would accept Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and declared its readiness to undertake direct dialogue with Israel and to take part in the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. In Geneva on 15 December 1988, during its forty-third session, the General Assembly in its resolution 43/176 took note of that historic declaration and quite properly expressed the view that the Conference would be pointless without the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination.

In response to the well-thought-out requests of the United Nations and the entire international community the PLO courageously and intelligently made concessions that are indeed of historic proportions. These concessions should have influenced the Israeli position.

Unfortunately, despite this breakthrough Israel is still refusing to undertake constructive dialogue with the legitimate representatives of the Palestinian people, a dialogue which would have the result of guaranteeing its peace and security. It is high time Israel faced the facts and stopped impeding processes which can lead to peace.

It is essential that we work even more vigorously to put an end to 40 years of violation, destruction and intransigence and the existence of refugees and exiles. Neither the first two special sessions of the General Assembly on Palestine nor resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 and 194 (III) of 11 December 1948 nor all the equally pertinent resolutions of the Security Council or other political and legal bodies have been able to solve this problem.

(Mr. Diakite, Mali)

Mali believes that enough guarantees have been given to Israel, notably the guarantee of its right to live within secure and recognized boundaries. The United Nations, and more particularly the Security Council and the General Assembly, must shoulder their full responsibilities. The situation in Palestine and in the Middle East is an emergency which requires the implementation of the appropriate steps laid down in Chapter VII of the Charter.

Mali will continue to support the relevant resolutions, recommendations and decisions adopted by our Organization, by the Organization of African Unity, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and any other organization working to bring peace and security to the Middle East. We welcome the efforts and actions which have been carried out with such courage, objectivity and devotion by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar.

Mali appeals to all peace-loving and justice-loving States to work even harder together in order to bring to Palestine and the Palestinians the benefits of the general atmosphere of détente, trust and co-operation which is progressively emerging in international relations, in particular between East and West and specifically between the two super-Powers, the United States and the Soviet Union.

Mali supports the Palestinian peace initiatives and trusts they will continue. We repeat that there is no substitute for direct dialogue. We should give every encouragement also to action undertaken by the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the States of the European Community to put an end to what Professor Arnold Toynbee described in 1968 as the "local Palestinian tragedy which affects the entire world because it is an injustice that threatens the peace of the world".

To avoid any further deterioration of the situation in the area and to allay the suffering of the Palestinian people, it appears to us to be indispensable to

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speed up the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. Such a conference must necessarily take into account the contents of General Assembly resolution 43/176 of 15 December 1988 - in other words: ensuring Israel's withdrawal from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories; guaranteeing arrangements for the security of all States in the region, including the State of Palestine, within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; solving the problem of the Palestine refugees; dismantling the Israeli settlements in the territories occupied since 1967; and guaranteeing freedom of access to the Holy Places and other religious buildings and sites.

In keeping with its history and its traditions based on wisdom, tolerance and solidarity, the people of Mali, together with all the other peoples in Africa and the world, will always be ready to make its contribution to bringing about a world of peace and justice. The peace, justice and solidarity we are seeking should be of benefit to all mankind.

Mr. SCHORI (Sweden): Before I start my statement, I wish to underline that the continuation of the delicate peace process in the Middle East requires restraint from all sides. It is most regrettable when major parties seem to lock themselves into positions which could seriously affect the peace process and even the proper functioning of the United Nations. I am convinced, however, that with imagination and understanding it will be possible to overcome the present difficulties.

The part of the General Assembly session that was held in Geneva last year was characterized by remarkable progress. The Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Yasser Arafat, explained that the PLO was prepared to negotiate with Israel a comprehensive peace settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) within the

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framework of the International Peace Conference. The PLO recognized the right of Israel to exist in peace within secure and recognized borders. Mr. Arafat also renounced terrorism in all its forms. As a result of those declarations, a dialogue between the United States and the PLO was opened. This created a new situation in the Middle East.

International support for the Palestinian people and for the PLO policy of peace and negotiation has dramatically increased. All over the world people now look with clearer eyes and with greater understanding at the plight of the Palestinians.

The fact that the PLO and the Palestinians have chosen the road of peace and reconciliation has gained them international sympathy and support. The Arab world has now confirmed its support for this policy. The PLO strictly adheres to this road in spite of the continuing suffering of the Palestinian people.

Also in Israel voices of reason are gaining strength. A growing number of Israelis and of supporters of Israel all over the world are realizing that the present situation is untenable and that the time has come to recognize the Palestinian people's right to exist, right to self-determination, and right to their own land.

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The Government of Israel has for the first time this decade presented a peace initiative of its own. This initiative is still a long way from the universally recognized and basic principles for a solution, such as the principle of land for peace, contained in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1978), and the principle of Palestinian self-determination; but it reflects a growing awareness also in the Israeli Government that the status quo is not acceptable.

A year ago the focus was on establishing a dialogue between the United States and the Palestinians. Today efforts are focused upon conditions for a dialogue between Israel and the Palestinians. Israel is for the first time facing the need to address the Palestinian people directly. The United States is, together with Egypt, actively engaged in efforts to bring about such a dialogue. We support these efforts. Never before has a direct dialogue between Israel and the Palestinian people been so close. It would be a tragic mistake not to use the current spirit of reconciliation among people and nations all over the world. This historical opportunity must not be lost.

A dialogue between Israel and the PLO is an important step, but it is not an end in itself. By dealing with elections in the occupied territories and with negotiations about the peace process it can lead to further steps on the road to peace.

It is in our view self-evident, and a basic democratic right, that the Palestinians themselves determine who shall represent them. For someone else to claim this right is not only democratically unacceptable but also politically unwise.

We appeal to the parties to seize this opportunity. The Palestinian leadership has accepted talks as the only viable means to reach peace. The PLO is ready to talk to Israel. Israel must inevitably, sooner or later, talk to the

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PLO. Can anyone seriously believe that a Palestinian organization whose representative status has been confirmed by almost the entire membership of the United Nations can be permanently excluded from influencing the negotiation process?

"We have got to talk to the enemy. Our bullets and their stones cannot solve the problem";

Those words are Abie Nathan's, the prominent Israeli peace activist, now in gaol for talking to the PLO.

The intifadah has shown that the Palestinian people will not submit to Israeli occupation. There can be no return to the situation before the outbreak of the intifadah.

Sweden is committed to the existence and universal recognition of Israel. And Sweden has for over 40 years supported Israel's right to live in peace. That support will remain unchanged, but this obviously does not mean automatic support for Israel's policies. We have on a number of occasions criticized Israel's practices in the occupied Palestinian territories. It is with great dismay that we note that the harsh policies of the occupying Power continue unabated.

The brutal methods by which the Palestinian population is suppressed are not compatible with Israel's status as a democracy. For the Palestinians who are arbitrarily detained and harassed, whose houses are demolished - while the illegal Israeli settlement policy is still being pursued - whose olive groves are destroyed, and whose children are randomly shot at: for these people Israel's iron-fist policy has very, very little to do with democracy.

Not only is the Palestinian people being harassed by the occupying Power; United Nations institutions are being attacked. When a West Bank school of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) was recently shot at by Israeli troops, the event was witnessed by visiting Swedish parliamentarians here present.

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The Palestinian people needs protection. The Geneva Convention relative to the protection of civilians in occupied territories is applicable to all the territories held by Israel since 1967. Israel's claim that this is not the case because the territories are - allegedly - administered rather than occupied must be firmly rejected.

Israel's continued violation of the Palestinian people's human rights must again be condemned. For the sake of peace and democracy, in the interest of the Israeli and Palestinian peoples, we call on the Israeli Government to abandon these policies now.

A year ago my Foreign Minister appealed to the Israeli Government to declare openly in the Assembly that Israel has no intention to acquire territory or remain in the territories taken by force in 1967. I now, on behalf of the Swedish Government, renew this appeal.

Mrs. FLOREZ PRIDA (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): For decades now in the United Nations we have been involved in the search for a peaceful and just solution to the problem of the Middle East and its core, the question of Palestine. Thus far we have not achieved that objective, mainly because of the obstructionist attitude of a few who attempt to stop the irreversible march of history.

It might seem that the injustice committed against the Palestinian people cannot be redressed and that that long-suffering people is doomed to live displaced from its homeland, discriminated against and oppressed in the land of its birth, and deprived of all its national rights, including that to self-determination.

There has been a great deal of talk about the prospects that are opening up for a peaceful solution to many regional conflicts through negotiations. But everything seems to indicate that there are forces that reject an agreement of this

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type in respect of the Middle East crisis, in spite of the positive steps taken by the Palestine Liberation Organization as an expression of its will to negotiate in order to resolve, through political means, the conflict afflicting its region.

The declaration made by the Palestine National Council in November 1988, in which it recognized Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) as a basis for negotiation in the search for a solution to the conflict is a clear demonstration of that fact.

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Israel, on the other hand, has not responded with equal flexibility, and, at the same time as it tries to gain time through diplomatic means and to distort the legitimate proposals to begin a peace process in the region, it has continued to carry out unacceptable measures to deny the Palestinian people its nationality and its culture and to uproot it.

The heroic intifadah, the Palestinian national insurrection, emerged as a response to these actions by the Israeli occupier and as a reflection of the growing yearning for freedom of a people that has its own culture, its own traditions and its own national identity. Israel's acts of plunder against the Palestinian people in the occupied territories, its promotion of Jewish settlements on Palestinian land, the destruction of homes, the levying of taxes, the difficulties in gaining their livelihood imposed on Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank of the Jordan, the detentions, torture and assassinations are all part of a preconceived plan to jeopardize the Palestinian people's basis of survival.

The Government of Israel and its supporters must realize that this situation cannot continue and that there is no longer any place for the policy of fait accompli that the State of Israel has imposed on the Arab and Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem.

Cuba reiterates its support for the just struggle of the Palestinian people against the Zionist invader and for the State of Palestine as proclaimed by the Palestine National Council. At the same time, it demands the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Israeli occupation forces from all occupied Arab and Palestinian territories. My country believes that in the present circumstances it is essential to step up the efforts aimed at the convening of an international conference on peace in the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations and

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with the participation on an equal footing of the five permanent members of the Security Council and all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. We believe that the expressed will of virtually all the members of the international community in favour of the holding of such a conference should provide those that oppose it with food for thought.

We believe that the time is ripe for the beginning in all seriousness of a genuine peace process in the region that will have positive effects not only on the Palestinian people, its national dignity and its conditions of life but also on the other countries of the Middle East. However, for this purpose it is essential that there be compliance with the principles which, in the opinion of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, as reaffirmed at its ninth summit Conference, in Belgrade, should guide the achievement of comprehensive peace in the Middle East. These are:

"(a) the withdrawal of Israel from all the territory of the State of Palestine, including Jerusalem, occupied since 1967, and from all the other occupied Arab territories;

"(b) guaranteeing arrangements for the security of all States in the region, including the State of Palestine, within secure and internationally recognized boundaries;

"(c) resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with United Nations General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948 and subsequent relevant resolutions;

"(d) dismantling the Israeli settlements in the territories occupied since 1967; and,

"(e) guaranteeing freedom of access to holy places, religious buildings and sites" (A/44/551, p. 39).

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Cuba, as a member of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, supports these principles unconditionally and rejects any plan to begin a peace process in the region without the full and free participation of the Palestinian people, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, since that would from the outset thwart any effort at negotiation aimed at a political settlement of the conflict.

We believe that the time has come to press forward in that direction. My country is prepared to work with the rest of the international community to bring about peace in the Middle East by means of fair and lasting agreements.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.