



General Assembly

PROVISIONAL

A/44/PV.65

6 December 1989

ENGLISH

Forty-fourth session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SIXTY-FIFTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 28 November 1989, at 10 a.m.

President:

Mr. RIVERA
(Vice-President)

(Costa Rica)

later:

Mr. NAVAJAS MOGRO
(Vice-President)

(Bolivia)

- Tribute to the memory of Claudio Teehankee, Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations
- The situation in the Middle East [37] (continued)
 - (a) Reports of the Secretary-General
 - (b) Draft resolutions

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the Official Records of the General Assembly.

Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, within one week, to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Department of Conference Services, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

In the absence of the President, Mr. Rivera (Costa Rica), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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

TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF CLAUDIO TEEHANKEE, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PHILIPPINES TO THE UNITED NATIONS

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I have learned with deep sorrow of the passing away of Ambassador Claudio Teehankee, Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations.

Ambassador Teehankee was widely admired and respected as an international legal scholar. Before assuming his important responsibilities as Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations, Ambassador Teehankee had served since 1968 as an Associate Justice and later Chief Justice of the Philippine Supreme Court. His unwavering faith in the United Nations and his statesmanship commanded wide respect in the international community.

May I extend to the members of his family as well as to the Government and people of the Philippines my most profound condolences.

I now call on the Secretary-General.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I have heard with deep sadness of the passing of Ambassador Claudio Teehankee, Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations. He brought to his office a great depth of experience and devotion to the rule of law as a most distinguished and respected member of the judiciary. He was a man of wide culture and I was greatly struck by his wisdom in our many discussions together. We shall long cherish his memory.

I wish to extend to the Government and people of the Philippines, and to Mrs. Teehankee and the other members of his family, the profound condolences of the United Nations and my own very sincere sympathy.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I would now invite representatives to stand and observe a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of Mr. Claudio Teehankee.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I call on the representative of Lesotho, who will speak on behalf of the African States.

Mr. PHOFOLO (Lesotho): The darkness that descended over this Hall last week still lingers; it seems reluctant to give way to dawn.

Speaking on behalf of the Africa Group and on my own behalf, I wish to state that we learned with a sense of great loss and sorrow of the passing away yesterday morning, due to illness, of our dear friend and colleague the Philippine Ambassador, Permanent Representative to the United Nations, and former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Republic of the Philippines, Mr. Claudio Teehankee.

The death of Ambassador Claudio Teehankee is not only a loss to the people and Government of the Republic of Philippines but also a great loss to all of us who have known and worked together with him since his assumption of his duties here in September 1988, who have enjoyed the warmth of his friendship and valued his brilliant contribution to the work of the General Assembly.

Many of us in this Hall were moved at one time or another by the wisdom of his words in defence of the ideals we all hold dearest to our hearts. We could scarcely hide our admiration for the wealth of his experience in matters of law and for his personal integrity and the vigour with which he set himself to the performance of his duties as the Permanent Representative of his great country.

Both here and at home his reputation will survive him. The Philippine people will remember him for the firmness of his stance in defence of democracy during the

(Mr. Phoofofo, Lesotho)

difficult times and for his invaluable contribution to the legal profession in his country, the feats for which he was deservedly rewarded with numerous honours and awards by the Government, institutions and the people of the Republic of Philippines.

At this dark hour of sorrow and need the Africa Group wishes to extend its sincere condolences to the delegation, the people and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines on this great loss. Our hearts are mainly with the bereaved family, the relatives and the other loved ones. We wish them the true consolation of the Almighty.

May his soul rest in peace.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I call on the representative of Brunei Darussalam, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Asian States.

Mr. JAYA (Brunei Darussalam): In my capacity as Chairman of the Group of Asian States for November, I wish to express our sadness on learning of the recent demise of Ambassador Claudio Teehankee, Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations.

Ambassador Teehankee served his Government with distinction, and prior to his appointment here in New York, he was Philippine's Chief Justice of the Supreme Court from 1986 until his retirement in April 1988, at which time he was awarded the Philippines Legion of Honour "in grateful acknowledgement of the valiant role he played in the dark days of dictatorship". As a true son of the Philippines, he will be greatly missed by the people.

Ambassador Teehankee was a dear colleague to all of us who knew him; he was well respected for his wise counsel and affable personality. As a personal friend of mine way back during my tour of duty as Ambassador of Brunei Darussalam to the Philippines, he will be remembered with affection.

On behalf of the Group of Asian States and on my own behalf, may I extend to the delegation of the Philippines, and through it the bereaved family of the late Ambassador, our deep condolences and heartfelt sympathy.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I call on the representative of Czechoslovakia, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. ZAPOTOCKY (Czechoslovakia): Speaking on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States, I wish to express our sincere condolences to the delegation of the Republic of the Philippines over the demise of

(Mr. Zapotocky, Czechoslovakia)

Mr. Claudio Teehankee, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations. All of us have known very well and highly appreciated the excellent diplomatic skills and personal qualities of Ambassador Teehankee. His passing away is a great loss for his country and for the international community as represented in the United Nations

I take this opportunity to request the representative of the Republic of the Philippines to convey our sincere sympathy to the bereaved family of the deceased and to the Government and the people of the Republic of the Philippines.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I call on the representative of Norway, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States.

Mr. TELLMANN (Norway): It was with deep distress that the members of the Group of Western European and Other States yesterday learned of the untimely death of Mr. Claudio Teehankee, Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations. Ambassador Teehankee presented his credentials to the Secretary-General in September 1988. Owing to a serious illness, he was thus allowed to serve as his country's representative to the United Nations only for a relatively brief period.

Ambassador Teehankee, who served as Chief Justice to the Philippines's Supreme Court prior to being appointed Permanent Representative to the United Nations, had a long and very distinguished career in the service of his country. Colleagues at the United Nations were fully aware of both his outstanding diplomatic skills and his human qualities. Ambassador Teehankee will be sorely missed by his colleagues at the United Nations.

On behalf of the Group of Western Europe and Other States, I should like to convey our most sincere condolences and profound sadness to the bereaved family, to the people and the Government of the Philippines, as well as to our colleagues in the Philippines delegation.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I call on the representative of Kuwait, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

Mr. ABULHASAN (Kuwait) (interpretation from Arabic): The Arab Group at the United Nations in New York learned with profound grief that a colleague very dear to us had passed away. The loss of Mr. Teehankee, Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations, is deeply felt by the Arab Group. It is a loss that is equally felt by all our colleagues at the United Nations. He was a colleague who throughout the time - albeit short - he spent with us provided the very example of the experienced, capable statesman representing his country with great talent. He highlighted the active role his country, the Philippines, has been playing in this international forum.

The deceased had a deep conviction of the lofty principles, aims and objectives of the United Nations. He devoted his time and efforts to the cause of peace, progress and justice throughout the world.

The Arab Group, in acknowledging the vacuum left behind by such a dear colleague, would like to convey to the delegation of the Philippines its most sincere condolences and sympathy. We hope that the delegation will convey to the bereaved family of our late colleague and to the Philippine Government the sentiments of the Arab Group and their sorrow at this irreparable loss.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I call on the representative of the United States.

Mr. PICKERING (United States of America): It was with great sadness that my delegation learned of the untimely passing of our distinguished colleague Ambassador Claudio Teehankee, Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Philippines.

(Mr. Pickering, United States)

Ambassador Teehankee will be remembered by those of us who had the privilege of working with him as a kind and thoughtful friend who embodied the warmth of the Philippine people. He will be remembered by history as a towering figure in the cause of justice and human rights.

His record as a Justice of the Supreme Court of the Philippines was one of integrity and honour. "The great dissenter", as he was known, was not afraid to oppose injustice and his principled stands more than once came at great personal sacrifice. His distinguished record, which includes numerous human rights awards, was recognized by President Aquino, who chose Ambassador Teehankee to administer the oath of office at her inauguration and thereafter named him Chief Justice.

His subsequent appointment to the post of Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations was a credit to this Organization, and his passing is our deep loss. Ambassador Teehankee will be missed by all of us.

On behalf of the United States Government and all of the American people I wish to extend our sympathies to his family, to his delegation and to the people of the Republic of the Philippines.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I now call upon the representative of the Philippines.

Mr. SUAREZ (Philippines): On behalf of the Government and people of the Philippines, the Philippine delegation and the family of the late Ambassador Claudio Teehankee, I should like to thank the President, the Secretary-General, the chairmen of the regional groups, the representative of the host country, and all the other representatives in the Assembly for the tribute paid to Ambassador Teehankee and the sympathy extended to his bereaved family.

The Philippines has suffered the loss of one of its most outstanding and illustrious citizens. For Ambassador Teehankee was not only an able diplomat: he was a brilliant legal scholar, lawyer and jurist, and above all a man of singular courage, a man of principle and integrity.

The kind words we have heard in this Hall today help assuage our loss - and for that I wish to express my thanks and gratitude.

AGENDA ITEM 37 (continued)

THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

- (a) REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/44/690 and Add.1, A/44/731, A/44/737)
- (b) DRAFT RESOLUTIONS (A/44/L.47 to A/44/L.49)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I should like to remind representatives that, in accordance with the decision taken yesterday afternoon, the list of speakers in the debate on this item will be closed today at 12 noon. I therefore request those representatives wishing to participate in the debate to inscribe their names on the list as soon as possible.

I now call on the representative of Cuba, who will introduce draft resolutions A/44/L.47, A/44/L.48 and A/44/L.49 in the course of his statement.

Mr. ORAMAS OLIVA (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): The crisis in the Middle East has been the focus of attention in the international community for more than four decades and has become one of the most serious, indeed dangerous, sources of international instability.

(Mr. Oramas Oliva, Cuba)

As a reflection of the trend that seems to be taking hold, and thanks to the efforts of the United Nations and some Member States, progress has been made in the quest for solutions to a number of regional conflicts by means of dialogue and negotiation. Unfortunately, these encouraging events have had no general effects that have led to the settlement of all the hotbeds of tension that, in one way or another, have a bearing on the attainment of international peace and security. Without any doubt the Middle East conflict is one of those which, rather than being settled, is becoming more acute each day. Hence it is a matter of the utmost importance that we double all our efforts, that we enlist the entire peace-making potential of our Organization in the task of achieving a just and honourable solution to a crisis whose existence goes beyond the boundaries of universal reason.

However, we must not forget that solving the Palestinian problem is a pre-condition for that, as it is the core of the problem. Unless the Palestinian people regains all its inalienable rights, including its right to return to its homeland, unless it is permitted to exercise its legitimate right to self-determination and to establish an independent and sovereign State in Palestine, it will be impossible to achieve a lasting peace in the region.

The just aspirations of the Palestinian people were expressed in concrete terms in the Declaration adopted on 15 November 1988 in Algiers, where in a solemn meeting the Palestine National Council proclaimed the Constitution of the State of Palestine, a State that has already been recognized by more than 90 nations. Cuba has the honour and the satisfaction of having been in the forefront of those nations.

In accordance with the Algiers proclamation, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) has taken important steps to foster a peaceful solution to the conflict. Among those steps was the acceptance of Security Council resolutions

(Mr. Oramas Oliva, Cuba)

242 (1967) and 338 (1973) as a basis for negotiations. The proposals put forward by Chairman Arafat to the forty-third session of the General Assembly were also important steps in that direction.

The flexible position taken by the PLO, which reaffirms that organization's commitment to the principles inherent in the achievement of a comprehensive solution to the question of Palestine - principles that were also recognized at the recent ninth summit conference of the Non-Aligned Movement in Belgrade - provided us with an opportunity that, unfortunately, has been undermined by Israel's stubbornness, indeed intransigence. Disregarding this historic opportunity to achieve harmony between the peoples of the region, Israel is insisting on imposing solutions that respond solely to hegemonistic interests which, sooner or later, will be swept aside by history.

The Palestinian national insurrection, the intifadah, which will soon be two years old, is the direct result of Israeli positions that have led to the stalemate in the efforts to achieve a dignified and honourable peace in the region. It confirms the Palestinian people's absolute determination to struggle against Israeli domination and occupation. Moreover, it is one more piece of evidence of its decision to exercise its inalienable national rights. Thus, we reiterate our support for the intifadah and condemn the measures used by the Zionist occupier in the occupied territories, including the brutal repression carried out in an effort to drown in blood the heroic uprising of the Palestinian people. We urge the General Assembly to reaffirm the unconditional support it offered in its resolution 43/21.

Solving the question of Palestine is, as we have indicated, the key element in solving the Middle East conflict, but it is not the only one. It is absolutely necessary that we also work to ensure the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the Israeli forces that are keeping under occupation the Syrian population of the

(Mr. Oramas Oliva, Cuba)

Golan Heights, the Lebanese living in southern Lebanon, and all the Arabs and Palestinians living in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem - thereby violating all the principles of international law and flouting the resolutions adopted by the United Nations that reaffirm the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force.

(Mr. Oramas Oliva, Cuba)

The solution of the conflict that has afflicted Lebanon for more than 15 years is also part of the comprehensive solution we seek. The recent assassination of President René Moawad, whose election appeared to put Lebanon on the path to peace - the peace that is so deeply desired by this suffering people - is a clear demonstration that there are forces that stand ready to use any means to prevent Lebanon from preserving its unity, sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-aligned character. Cuba reaffirms, in this forum, its strongest condemnation of this abominable crime - as the Security Council has done, and as the Non-Aligned Movement did just a few days ago.

Only by means of negotiation can a just, equitable and lasting solution to the Middle East conflict be achieved. Thus it is a matter of the imperative necessity that an international peace conference on the Middle East be convened, under the auspices of the United Nations, to provide the proper framework for the attainment of a comprehensive solution to the crisis in that part of the world. All the parties involved, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the permanent members of the Security Council, would participate on an equal footing. Cuba supports the convening of such a conference and considers that this Organization must concentrate its efforts on the removal of any obstacle to it. We are ready to commit our modest efforts to the achievement of that goal.

I have the honour, on behalf of the sponsors, to introduce to the General Assembly draft resolutions A/44/L.47, L.48 and L.49 on the situation in the Middle East.

Draft resolution A/44/L.47 addresses itself to the most general aspects of the Middle East situation and reaffirms the conviction, which the General Assembly has reiterated, that the question of Palestine is at the core of the conflict in the Middle East and that the full exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable

(Mr. Oramas Oliva, Cuba)

national rights and the immediate, unconditional and total withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967 constitute an overriding prerequisite for the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region. Moreover, the draft resolution condemns the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian and other Arab territories and rejects any action that contradicts the principles that should govern the search for a just and comprehensive solution of the conflict in the Middle East. Similarly, it considers the Arab peace plan that was adopted unanimously at the Fes Summit, and confirmed in May this year at the Extraordinary Arab Summit Conference in Casablanca, as an important contribution to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Draft resolution A/44/L.47 refers also to the negative effects on peace efforts in the region of the continued co-operation between the United States and Israel and the continued co-operation between South Africa and the Zionist régime, which demonstrates that the Arab and African countries are confronting a common enemy. Of particular importance is the fact that this draft resolution reaffirms the General Assembly's call for convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in which the five permanent members of the Security Council and all the parties to the conflict, including the PLO, would participate on an equal footing. We hope that this draft resolution will help to speed up the preparatory work for that Conference and will result in the removal of the remaining obstacles to its being convened.

Draft resolution A/44/L.48 addresses itself to the illegal Israeli occupation of the Golan Heights and to the decision of the Zionist authorities, on 14 December 1981, to impose their laws, jurisdiction and administration on that territory, which in terms of Article 39 of the United Nations Charter and of the provisions of General Assembly resolution 3314 (XXIX), constitutes an act of

(Mr. Oramas Oliva, Cuba)

aggression and, moreover, is illegal and therefore null and void and has no validity whatsoever.

Draft resolution A/44/L.48, above and beyond reiterating the demand that Israel rescind forthwith all the measures that have resulted in the virtual annexation of the Golan Heights, reaffirms the appeal to Member States to refrain from supplying weapons and military assistance to the Zionist régime, to refrain from acquiring any weapons or military equipment from Israel, to suspend any economic, financial and technological assistance to that country, and to sever diplomatic, trade and cultural relations with the Zionist State.

Draft resolution A/44/L.49, which deals with the illegal measures adopted by the Zionist Government to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the city of Jerusalem and with the decision of some States to transfer their diplomatic missions to that city, in violation of Security Council resolution 478 (1986), reiterates the request that those States abide by the provisions of the relevant United Nations resolutions, in conformity with the United Nations Charter.

Representatives will note that the three draft resolutions my delegation has the privilege of introducing on behalf of the sponsors have retained language similar to that in the texts of the resolutions adopted last year under item 40 of the agenda of the forty-third session, entitled "The situation in the Middle East". Hence, today, we urge all States and, in particular, the forces that are promoting a solution to the conflict in the Middle East by means of negotiation, to redouble their efforts to achieve a just, equitable and lasting peace in the region, which will enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination and independence and will enable the Arab peoples to regain the territories that were taken from them by force - territories whose status is today being changed to serve the purposes of the Israeli Zionist régime.

Mr. HOHENFELLNER (Austria): The recent tragic events in war-torn and internally divided Lebanon loom large over this year's debate on the situation in the Middle East. The abhorrent murder of President René Moawad, whose election held the promise of a better future for his country, came as a shock to us; it can never have any justification. More than a decade of civil war and external interference have seriously endangered the very existence of Lebanon. We do hope that the Lebanese people will finally reach the goal of their very basic aspirations: full sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

The item "The situation in the Middle East" and its core problem, the related item "The question of Palestine", have been on the agenda of the community of nations for several decades now. During this time the United Nations has spared no effort in the search for a political solution to the problem. The Security Council and the regular sessions of the General Assembly have dealt with it since 1948. There have also been special sessions and emergency special sessions of the General Assembly, and numerous conferences and seminars on Palestine. One of the most recent in the series of supporting events was the Sixth International And Third European Regional Meetings of United Nations Non-Governmental Organizations on the Palestine question, held in Vienna last August.

All those efforts have helped in devising formulas for achieving a just and lasting peace in the Arab-Israeli conflict. To this day they serve as the basis for constructive diplomacy and diplomatic initiatives. In spite of all the efforts undertaken by this Organization and by others a comprehensive solution to the Middle East problem has so far eluded the international community. Peace will become possible only when Israel realizes that occupation of foreign territories and peace with its neighbours are irreconcilable. Israel might do well to remember that the Palestinian people simply is its main partner in the peace process, with all the consequences deriving from that crucial fact.

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

In our view, peace cannot be achieved through a policy of the iron fist but must be built on respect for international law. Austria regards the following elements as vital for a comprehensive, just and lasting solution: observance of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), based on the principle of peace for land, which to this day provide the most widely accepted basis for a solution; withdrawal from occupied territories; respect for the right of all States, including Israel, to exist within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; and recognition of the national rights of the Palestinian people and participation by its legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), in the negotiating process.

Austria believes that the early holding of the International Peace Conference under the auspices of the United Nations should be vigorously pursued as the most promising path to a peaceful, comprehensive and just settlement of the conflict.

The problems of the Middle East are multifaceted. They have political, military and legal as well as humanitarian aspects. The violation of human rights in the territories occupied by Israel is a particularly important aspect of the problem. Just and lasting peace cannot be achieved without respect for human rights. The continuing Israeli settlement policy is a matter of serious concern to Austria. We urgently call upon Israel to change its policies in the occupied territories and live up to its obligations under international law.

All States except Israel acknowledge that the Israeli authorities are legally bound to ensure the application of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 relative to the protection of civilians in time of war. Austria deplores those policies and practices which violate the human rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories. We urge Israel to apply the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War to the occupied territories and to abide by that Convention in all areas.

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

As far as collecting taxes is concerned we should remember the slogan "No taxation without representation". Let us not forget that we are meeting in a country whose independence began with a tax strike. Beit Sahur is not Boston, but maybe it also marks a new approach. In any case Israel must desist from practices and policies likely to increase the tensions between Israelis and Palestinians and abide strictly by the provisions of international law and humanitarian standards.

Given the prevailing conditions, Austria supports the idea of on-site monitoring of the situation in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, by a personal representative of the United Nations Secretary-General.

We have to convey to the Palestinian population under occupation that they are not being left alone in their daily hardships resulting from occupation and coercion, and to help the population under occupation and the refugees in their day-to-day struggle for the bare necessities of life. Let me in this respect pay a special tribute to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which operates under the most adverse conditions and whose crucial activities have been hampered by actions of the occupying Power on a number of occasions. UNRWA merits our full support and my Government, giving priority to increasing its contribution to humanitarian aid and development, has recently made an extraordinary contribution in addition to our regular one.

The intifadah, now entering its third year, has to be viewed in the context of the stalemate in the search for a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It has shown that even more than 20 years of occupation cannot destroy the aspirations of the Palestinian people. One year after the historic decisions taken by the Palestine National Council at Algiers on 15 November 1988, which reflected a change of policy, a new sense of moderation and an increased willingness on the part of the PLO to accept a compromise solution, it is now

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

incumbent on Israel to respond in a constructive way. Future generations would not forgive our letting opportunities for a peaceful settlement pass by.

Austria has consistently recognized the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including the right to a State of their own. My country has furthermore, in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions, recognized the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. It was therefore only consistent with that position that we recognized the decision of the Palestine National Council of 15 November 1988 to proclaim the creation of a Palestinian State as an expression of their right to self-determination.

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

At a time when we see walls come tumbling down after many years, when openness and the restructuring of outdated concepts prevail world wide, it is high time for the mental barrier separating Israelis and Palestinians to be torn down to open the way for better understanding and a just solution.

Austria has taken note with interest of the Israeli plan for elections in the occupied territories. The additions to this plan provided for by President Mubarak of Egypt and Secretary of State Baker are, in our view, a remarkable step towards overcoming the present diplomatic deadlock. Austria hopes that these efforts will lead to a direct and open dialogue between the two main parties to the conflict, Israel and the rightful representative of the Palestinian people, which in our view is the PLO.

First steps, such as a Palestine-Israeli dialogue, however, are not an end in themselves and must be geared to further progress in a comprehensive peace process. As already stated, we consider the international peace conference, with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and the permanent members of the Security Council, the most suitable framework for bestowing international weight on the negotiating process and provide the necessary guarantees for an agreed solution.

There can be no doubt that last year's session of the Palestine National Council in Algiers has generated a new momentum in the diplomatic process. Unfortunately, Israel has so far not reached out through this new window of opportunity and demonstrated its readiness to talk to the Palestinians. We therefore call on the parties, and especially on Israel, to make use of those new possibilities. Time is pressing.

Mr. JAYA (Brunei Darussalam): All the statements made during the general debate at the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly have acknowledged and welcomed the relaxation of tensions and manifestations of reconciliation among adversaries. Unfortunately, the trickle-down effect of such a development does not permeate the ever dire situation in the Middle East. It is therefore of particular concern that, despite increasing international efforts to arrive at a just and lasting solution to the problem, peace and stability in the Middle East remain elusive.

The perpetuation of the problem stems mainly from the flagrant disregard by Israel of the United Nations Charter. Israel has not recognized that its presence in the West Bank, Gaza, Jerusalem and the Golan Heights constitutes occupation. In its endless preoccupation with and continuous pursuit of its dream of Greater Israel, Israel has been transformed into an occupying Power. Israel enforces its right to annexation in total defiance of international law, the international community and United Nations resolutions. Consequently, so long as Israel remains an occupying Power in Arab territories, including Palestinian territories, it is inevitable that the Arab States will be in a constant state of belligerency with the régime.

The deteriorating situation prevailing in the occupied Palestinian territories has been caused by Israel's continued occupation and arbitrary practices. The cries for justice and freedom in the occupied Palestinian territories, including the numerous resolutions on the same subject in various international forums, continue to be ignored. Israel remains obstinately committed to suppressing the legitimate and inalienable right of the Palestinian people to independence and a homeland.

(Mr. Jaya, Brunei Darussalam)

The dimensions and significance of Israel's repressive policies are unlimited and obvious. The purpose is simply to insult, humiliate and crush the valiant intifadah of the Palestinian people. This was clearly demonstrated by the recent incident in Beit Sahur in which houses of defenceless civilians were ransacked, properties were confiscated, public utilities were disrupted and roads leading to towns were closed. The decades of Israeli occupation have brought economic and social disorder to the occupied areas. In addition, it has been reported that the Israeli authorities have mobilized and organized groups of heavily armed settlers, the so-called company of settler militia, to carry out aggressive actions against Palestinians. The recent manifestations are nothing new, but Israeli policies are becoming more repressive, with premeditated schemes to deprive the people of their land and eliminate their national identity.

In the light of all this, my delegation would like to reiterate its belief that a just and comprehensive peace cannot be achieved unless the Palestinian issue is settled on the basis of the immediate, total and unconditional withdrawal of Israeli forces from the territories occupied since 1967. The Palestinians must be allowed to exercise their full, inalienable national rights, including the right to return, to self-determination and to establish an independent Palestinian State on their own territory.

Accordingly, Brunei Darussalam, together with the overwhelming majority of the members of the Assembly, continues to affirm that the appropriate way to bring about peace in the Middle East is to convene an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations. The conference should be held with the participation of all the parties involved, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the five permanent members of the Security Council, on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and all other United Nations resolutions relating to the rights of the Palestinian people and

(Mr. Jaya, Brunei Darussalam)

the Arab-Israeli conflict. We believe that no settlement plan will prove acceptable unless it takes into consideration the right of the Palestinian people to exercise self-determination and to establish their own independent State in Palestine.

The Palestinian people have endured many years of struggle and made great sacrifices. They have made even greater sacrifices in order to promote peace, in pursuit of which their leadership initiated positive action by calling for a meeting of the Palestine National Council at Algiers at the end of last year. Brunei Darussalam once again affirms its well deserved support for the creation of an independent Palestinian State, in accordance with the declaration of the Palestine National Council in Algiers. Since then, the support of other countries, especially European States, as illustrated in particular by the Madrid Declaration, has been very encouraging. Despite the overwhelming support of the international community for the Palestine National Council's peace initiatives, peace is still an aspiration that Israel rejects, and it continues to obstruct the attainment of this objective.

Another problem that still persists in the Middle East is the crisis situation in Lebanon. We welcome the positive results reached by the Arab Tripartite High Committee and the acceptance by the Lebanese parties of the Committee's proposed peace plan. The maintenance of peace, however, remains the responsibility of the Lebanese themselves, especially through understanding, brotherhood and an honest desire to resolve outstanding problems without involving foreign elements in the civil affairs of Lebanon.

(Mr. Jaya, Brunei Darussalam)

In this regard the Assembly should continue to assist Lebanon in regaining its full independence and restoring its full sovereignty through the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), calling on Israel to withdraw from southern Lebanon. Without this undertaking, and if Israel does not cease its interference in the internal affairs of Lebanon, prospects of stability, security and peace will not prevail in the country.

A further dimension of Israel's threat to the Middle East and international security is its possession and unregulated capability of producing weapons of mass destruction. This could effectively turn the Middle East region into a single battlefield for Israel. Israel's unabated capability of building rockets and nuclear, chemical and bacteriological weapons is contrary to the universal spirit of general disarmament. Such weapons of total annihilation must be destroyed in their entirety. The long-range missile that the Israeli authorities have fired at the Libyan coast is just an example that confirms that peace and security based on rational considerations are not in the minds of Israel's leaders. To the consternation of the international community it is reported that Israel has assisted the South African régime in acquiring nuclear-weapon technology.

In reviewing the situation in the Middle East, I would be remiss if I did not express our tribute to the United Nations and its agencies delivering humanitarian services and assistance, especially to the refugees in Beirut, southern Lebanon and the occupied territories. The report of the Economic and Social Council on assistance to the Palestinian people (A/44/637) clearly enumerates the many valuable activities of the United Nations agencies, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World

(Mr. Jaya, Brunei Darussalam)

Health Organization (WHO) in alleviating the misery of victims of Israel's aggression.

In conclusion, it is imperative for this body to ensure the full implementation of the resolutions and decisions urging Israel's compliance with the acceptable international norms of behaviour and standards. To sanctify Israel's perpetuation of crimes and inhumanity would be a moral defeat of the principles on which this body was established more than 40 years ago.

Mr. BLANC (France) (interpretation from French): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 12 States members of the European Economic Community. The Twelve, whose many historical, political, economic and cultural ties serve as a link to the countries and peoples of the Middle East, cannot remain indifferent to events affecting a region to which they feel so close, events that have negative consequences for international peace and security. The Twelve are particularly sensitive to the suffering that many of those peoples are enduring as a result of the persistence of conflicts and tensions in that region of the world.

The European Community and its 12 Member States note that the improvement in the international climate and the progress made in the settlement of regional crises in the world, in particular as a result of the efforts of the United Nations, have given hope and deepened the conviction that peace everywhere is possible; hence they are bound to strengthen our determination to spare no effort in pursuing negotiated solutions to the disputes that remain in the Middle East, whether the Israeli-Arab conflict, the situation in Lebanon or the state of "neither peace, nor war" still prevailing between Iran and Iraq.

The position of the Twelve with respect to those disputes is based upon the purposes and the principles set forth in the United Nations Charter and the principles of international law, in particular the rejection of the threat or use

(Mr. Blanc, France)

of force, as well as the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, and of the modification of the status of occupied territories.

The position of the Twelve concerning the Israeli-Arab conflict was defined in the Venice Declaration of June 1980 and in the Madrid Declaration of last June. It is based upon the affirmation of the right of all States of the region, including Israel, to security - that is to say, to live within secure, recognized and guaranteed borders, and the right to justice for all the peoples of the region, including the recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to self-determination with everything that that implies.

The Twelve reaffirm that a peaceful solution based upon those principles must be found within the framework of an international peace conference under the auspices of the United Nations, which is the appropriate forum for direct negotiations between the parties concerned, with a view to arriving at a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement.*

We are of the opinion that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) must participate in this process.

The Twelve, which have always reaffirmed their resolve to participate actively in the search for a settlement, support all the efforts, in particular those of the permanent members of the Security Council, aimed at drawing the parties closer together and establishing a climate of confidence between them that would encourage the convening of the international peace conference. In this respect, the Twelve note that developments last year had raised great hopes with regard to the possibility of emerging from the deadlock that had prevailed for a number of years.

* Mr. Navajas Mogro (Bolivia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Blanc, France)

The Twelve thus welcomed the decisions adopted a year ago by the Palestine National Council to accept Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which resulted in the PLO's recognition of Israel's right to exist and its explicit rejection of terrorism. We were also pleased that the Extraordinary Arab Summit conference at Casablanca supported those important decisions.

Furthermore, we welcomed the efforts of the United States in their contacts with the parties concerned, in particular the opening of a dialogue with the PLO.

The Twelve believe that advantage must be taken of the new framework created by those favourable circumstances so that the spirit of tolerance, negotiation and peace may prevail.

To the Twelve, a peaceful settlement seems to be all the more urgent as the situation in the occupied territories has continued to deteriorate during the past year. The Twelve, which have recently spoken on this subject in the Special Political Committee, consider that the chain of violence in the occupied territories, whatever its origin, must be broken; they renew their appeal to Israel to put an end to its repression and finally abide by the international conventions, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention, as it is earnestly called upon to do in Security Council resolutions. In this respect they consider as null and void the unilateral decisions taken by Israel to modify the status of Jerusalem, a city holy to three religions, and reaffirm that freedom of access to the Holy Places must be guaranteed in any settlement.

During the past few months, efforts have been centred on Israel's proposal to hold elections within the occupied territories. The Twelve have already spoken on this subject. They believe that, to be effective, such elections must form part of the process of a comprehensive settlement and take place in the occupied

(Mr. Blanc, France)

territories, including East Jerusalem, with adequate guarantees for freedom.

Furthermore, no solution should be rejected, and the final negotiations must be in keeping with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) based on the principle of exchange of territories for peace.

(Mr. Blanc, France)

It is on the basis of these same principles that the Twelve have acclaimed Egypt's contribution to the promotion of the peace process as expressed in the 10 points proposed by President Mubarak. Today the Twelve encourage the ongoing efforts, which they believe should constitute a useful step towards convening an international conference.

Any settlement must take account also of the Syrian Golan territory occupied by Israel since 1967. The Twelve reaffirm in this connection that all measures adopted by the Israeli authorities for the imposition of their laws, jurisdiction and administration in that territory are null and void.

The Twelve call solemnly on the parties concerned to grasp every opportunity to work towards peace, which can be achieved only on the basis of respect by each party for the legitimate rights of the other.

The dastardly attack that cost the life of the President of the Lebanese Republic, Mr. René Moawad, has once again drawn attention to the tragic situation in Lebanon and the serious risks to its independence, sovereignty and unity. The Twelve, which have paid their tribute to the memory of President Moawad, reiterate their unreserved condemnation of this odious crime, which took place at a time when the recent election of a Head of State had given Lebanon the opportunity for a new start. Everything must be done to avoid Lebanon's being precipitated into a new tragedy.

In this respect the Twelve reaffirm their consistent support for the efforts of the Arab League and emphasize in particular the need to maintain and pursue the process started at Taif, under the auspices of the Arab Tripartite High Committee, to bring about national reconciliation.

The Twelve are very happy that the Lebanese Parliament has been able to face the situation by proceeding to the election of a new President of the Republic. In

(Mr. Blanc, France)

congratulating President Elias Hrawi and paying a tribute to him for the dedication to his country that he has shown by taking on his important, heavy, responsibilities, the Twelve assure him of their determination to support all the efforts he must now make to promote national reconciliation, the establishment of rehabilitated institutions and the restoration of Lebanon's sovereignty over all its territory, free from any non-Lebanese armed presence. The Twelve hope that all the Lebanese will rally to these objectives so that Lebanon, in independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and newly found freedom, may once again be fully master of its own destiny.

The persistence of Israel's occupation of part of Lebanese territory, in disregard of pertinent Security Council resolutions, in particular, resolutions 425 (1978), 508 (1982) and 509 (1982), is an obstacle to the country's return to normality and stability. That is why the Twelve have consistently given their firm support to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and insisted on the need for the Force, three of whose units come from the European Community, to be in a position to fulfil its mandate in the best possible security conditions. They again deplore the fact that soldiers of the Force have been the targets of attacks by Israeli forces or their allies or by other armed groups, that have resulted in many casualties. They draw the attention of all Member States to the Force's financial difficulties and appeal to them to discharge their obligations in this regard.

Lastly, the Twelve again express their grave concern with respect to the fate of the hostages still held in Lebanon, among whom are several from the Community, and call urgently for their immediate liberation. They reiterate their profound indignation at the news of the assassination of Lieutenant-Colonel Higgins, who was captured while on mission in connection with the peace-keeping operations.

(Mr. Blanc, France)

More than a year has elapsed since the establishment, through the combined efforts of the Secretary-General and the Security Council, of a cease-fire between Iraq and Iran. While welcoming the fact that the cease-fire had held, the Twelve do not consider the present situation of "neither war nor peace" satisfactory. They call on the two parties to give all the necessary co-operation in the efforts of the Secretary-General and his collaborators to ensure the full implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1987) and to bring about just, honourable, comprehensive and lasting peace. The Twelve reaffirm their full support for the actions of the Secretary-General in this respect.

The Twelve express their satisfaction with regard to the Secretary-General's plan to organize meetings in New York in December with the Foreign Ministers of Iraq and Iran. They hope that these meetings will have tangible results and that the two parties will demonstrate the necessary flexibility.

The Twelve intend to continue to follow with the greatest attention the development of the situation in the Middle East. They will continue to spare no effort, in particular through the close contacts that they intend to maintain and develop with all the parties concerned, to promote the peaceful settlement of conflicts that are ravaging a region to which they are bound by a common destiny and whose stability is, as they see it, essential.

Mr. SUTRESNA (Indonesia): Before I begin my statement on the agenda item before us, permit me to express my delegation's profound sorrow at the death of one of our most distinguished colleagues, Ambassador Claudio Teehankee, Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations. During his brief tenure here he attached special importance to the strengthening of the Organization so that it might be, as he saw it, mankind's best hope yet of transforming its yearning for global peace and prosperity into reality. I express our heartfelt

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

condolences to the delegation of the Philippines and I should be greatly indebted to them if they would convey these sentiments to the Government and people of the Philippines and to the bereaved members of the family in their hour of sorrow.

The situation in the Middle East continues to be fraught with tensions, and poses a serious threat to international peace and security. This, regrettably, is the undeniable reality in the region and it has eclipsed four decades of international preoccupation.

Events, especially as they pertain to the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, namely, the question of Palestine, throw into stark relief the seemingly limitless lengths to which Israel is willing to go in the pursuit of its aggressive and expansionist policies. In fact, the further escalation of the wanton brutality and violence directed against the innocent civilian population in the occupied territories confirms that Israel still has no intention whatsoever of entering into the peace process. Thus, Israel's continuing refusal even to consider ending the occupation of the Arab lands seized since 1967 or to recognize the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people and its sole, legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), is and always has been the crux of the deadlock in the Middle East.

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

It has become a dangerous delusion for Israel to believe that it can indefinitely continue to dictate the course of events in the region through reliance on its military might. For there has emerged a qualitatively different situation both on the ground in the occupied territories and on the diplomatic front in the international arena that has radically transformed the strategic and political dimensions of the conflict.

In this regard, Israel's extreme actions in attempting to subdue the intifadah, the heroic popular uprising of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, have shocked even its apologists, who had grown accustomed to Israeli disregard for the norms of civilized behaviour. Moreover, having withstood every attempt to subdue it and now entering its third year, the intifadah has convinced not only Israel's friends and protectors but also many in Israel itself that the occupation must end. Indeed, the iron fist of the occupation has only exposed how truly bankrupt Israeli policy has always been.

The fact of the matter is that today it is the Arab Palestinian people who, through their heroic resistance, are demonstrating before the world the indomitable will to be the determinants of their own future. By its persistence, scope and depth, the uprising has nullified the previous status quo of the occupation, making the occupied territories ungovernable and carrying with it serious economic, social and political repercussions for Israel. In economic terms alone, the intifadah has dealt Israel a severe blow. By boycotting products, withholding their labour and refusing to pay taxes, the Palestinians have forced the Israeli economy to pay a heavy price. Socially, the daily spectre of Palestinian youth confronting the heavily armed Israeli soldiers, only to be killed, maimed or detained for their stones and chants of freedom, has graphically brought home the moral price of occupation that Israelis are increasingly loath to bear.

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

Similarly, on the political front the Palestinians have seized the initiative and have registered historic strides in their liberation struggle. By its positive actions, the Palestine National Council, meeting in Algiers in November 1989, broke the stalemate in the search for a peaceful settlement under United Nations auspices to the Arab-Israeli conflict. It did so by proclaiming the independent Palestinian State in the Palestinian territory of the West Bank and Gaza, with Jerusalem as its capital. The Palestine National Council also launched a courageous peace initiative based on compliance with General Assembly resolution 181 (II) and recognition of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

In this way the Palestinian people have, through realism and moderation, demonstrated their readiness to remove the barriers to peace and justice with their neighbour, thus facilitating the search for a comprehensive settlement on all the other basic elements of the Arab-Israeli conflict as an integrated whole, including: Israel's total withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem and the Syrian Arab Golan; exercise by the Palestinian people of their legitimate rights of self-determination and sovereign independence in the Palestinian territory; and ensuring of the basic need for all States in the region, including the independent State of Palestine, to live in peace within secure boundaries, free from aggression and foreign occupation.

My delegation need hardly reiterate its long-standing support for those elements as the foundation on which to build a durable structure for peace and justice in the Middle East. In this regard as well, we are proud to have been among the first to accord recognition to the newly proclaimed independent State of Palestine and to establish diplomatic relations with it. Furthermore, Indonesia has steadfastly supported the Arab States and regards the Final Communiqué issued by the Special Arab Ministerial Committee at its meeting in Tunis on 12 January 1989 as a constructive contribution to peace.

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

Consequently Indonesia remains convinced, as do the Arab nations and the international community as a whole, of the need to resolve the various interrelated aspects of the conflict through a comprehensively negotiated settlement to be achieved at the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. We further concur that such a conference, held under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of all the parties involved on an equal footing, including the PLO, as well as the involvement of the permanent members of the Security Council, and in accordance with all resolutions relating to the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the Middle East conflict, is the only viable avenue to peace in the region.

Unless Israel's present course is arrested and turned around and the international consensus on the peace process prevails, there will be only more suffering, instability and violence. Israel must be convinced that it cannot occupy Arab land and have security, violate the most fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter and be accepted as a worthy Member of the Organization, inflict death and destruction on others and have peace. What is urgently needed is recognition by States in a position to do so to compel Israel to cease its war of annihilation in the occupied territories and to observe the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, followed by direct negotiations with the PLO and all the other parties to the conflict at the International Conference.

Lebanon too remains a victim of the Middle East conflict and of sectarian strife and turmoil. The Lebanese people have had to endure great suffering owing to the absence of peace in the country. My delegation expresses sincere condolences at the tragic demise of President René Moawad. Indonesia has followed the situation in Lebanon with concern and has supported all international efforts

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

to achieve a political solution. In this regard, we laud the efforts exerted by the Arab Heads of State Tripartite Committee in bringing an end to the civil war. Specifically we endorse the Taif agreement reached between the Lebanese legislators. It is our fervent hope that the positive conditions that have been created will lead to further progress on lasting agreements for peaceful arrangements and national reconciliation.

In the same regard, sovereign Lebanese territory remains under the illegal military occupation of Israel, which is accompanied by incessant acts of further aggression deep inside the country by Israeli ground, air and naval forces. Indonesia has repeatedly condemned these actions as systematic violations of the elementary principles of international law. It is essential that Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity be restored and respected. For this, Israel must immediately withdraw to the internationally recognized boundaries. Consequently the Security Council is in duty bound to compel compliance with its own decisions on Israel's aggression against Lebanon, including resolution 425 (1978).

Mr. COMISSARIO (Mozambique): I wish to begin my statement by expressing my delegation's deepest condolences to the people and Government of Comoros at the tragic assassination of President Ahmad Abdallah Abderemane. It is our firm belief that the people of Comoros will spare no effort in working for the re-establishment of calm and tranquillity in their country.

(Mr. Commissario, Mozambique)

Likewise I wish to extend my delegation's condolences to the delegation of Philippines on the loss of our colleague their Permanent Representative.

The present situation in the Middle East continues to be a matter of grave concern to the international community. The current deteriorating security situation in the region bears within it a threat to international peace and security.

The Middle East conflict is one of the most challenging issues pertaining to regional security which the United Nations has on its agenda. Indeed, the political atmosphere prevailing in the Middle East does not seem to be evolving in a manner compatible with the existing climate in the international arena, which encourages settlement of disputes through peaceful means. The Secretary-General has accurately elaborated on this issue in his report on the work of the Organization. My delegation shares his views and wishes to commend him for the untiring efforts he has devoted to the cause of peace in the area.

Since the General Assembly discussed this issue last year, unfortunately there has been little to celebrate with regard to the political situation in the Middle East. As a matter of fact, we have continued to witness developments which constitute a serious breach of international law. In the region Israel continues to pursue its occupation of Palestine and Arab territories and its acts of aggression against neighbouring States, in total disregard of the United Nations Charter and of the relevant resolutions and decisions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council.

We believe, like the overwhelming majority of this family of nations, that the core of the conflict in that region still lies in the denial to the Palestinian people of the enjoyment of their birthright, their right to self-determination. We are convinced, therefore, that above all an appropriate and just solution must be found to this issue.

(Mr. Comissario, Mozambique)

The occupation of the Arab territories has created a situation where Palestinians are increasingly becoming refugees in their motherland. The United Nations has devoted its energy to mitigating the suffering of the people of Palestine. These efforts have continued in spite of all the difficulties resulting from the military occupation.

The violation of human rights in those territories has reached unprecedented proportions, despite condemnations by the international community. We strongly believe in the applicability of the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, as repeatedly urged by the Security Council. In this context, we call for scrupulous observance of its provisions.

The international community has time and again expressed its condemnation of the practices and atrocities perpetrated by Israel in dealing with the uprising in the occupied territories. The continuation of the uprising, despite repression of the Palestinian people, constitutes a clear indication of the need for respect of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination. The intifadah is a clear indication that the military option will not work; it will only escalate the conflict.

The momentum created by the historic decisions taken by the Palestine National Council at Algiers in November 1988, including the acceptance of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the diplomatic pragmatism displayed by the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) has brought about a new climate favourable to a peaceful settlement of the Palestinian question.

In this regard, on 15 December 1988, the General Assembly adopted resolution 43/176, which called for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation on an equal footing of all parties to the conflict, including the PLO and the five

(Mr. Comissario, Mozambique)

permanent members of the Security Council. It further outlined fundamental principles for the achievement of a comprehensive settlement of the conflict in the region. Those principles, inter alia, called for the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, and for security of all States in the region within secure and internationally recognized boundaries, in accordance with resolution 181 (II) of 1947.

Unfortunately, as the Secretary-General states in his report:

"sufficient agreement does not exist, either within the Security Council or among the parties to the conflict". (A/44/731, para. 5)

We believe that only a comprehensive political approach which takes into account the interests of all parties concerned can bring about a lasting and just solution to the question of the Middle East. We call upon the international community, in particular the five permanent members of the Security Council, to work on the differences which have so far impeded the convening of the Conference. In that regard we wish to express our endorsement of the need for the early establishment of a preparatory committee to deal with outstanding issues relating to the Conference. Above all, the parties concerned must display a true sense of political will.

The continued acts of military aggression against neighbouring States, which have resulted in widespread human suffering, are not only a violation of the most elementary norms governing relations among States but also are contrary to the diplomatic and political momentum I referred to earlier for the convening of the Conference. These acts should not be tolerated. We condemn them and we call for their cessation forthwith.

Lebanon has not known peace since its territory was brutally invaded in 1982. Its martyred people have been condemned to a life of uncertainty and grief because of the constant raids against their country. The tragic events of 22 November

(Mr. Comissario, Mozambique)

which claimed the life of President René Mcawad cast a dark shadow over Lebanon's prospects for unity, sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence. My delegation wishes to express its full support for the efforts currently being undertaken by the Tripartite Committee of the Arab Heads of State. We are convinced that with the collaboration of all parties the efforts of the people of Lebanon to put an end to bloodshed will be crowned with success. We also wish to pay a special tribute to the Lebanese people for their courage and determination. We express our full solidarity with them in their struggle for the achievement of unity and full sovereignty through dialogue and without external pressure and interference.

(Mr. Comissario, Mozambique)

My delegation wishes to seize this opportunity to commend those who have spared no efforts in the search for a political solution to the conflict in the Middle East. We welcome and encourage all positive and constructive contributions by the international community, including those of the Arab Republic of Egypt, the United States of America, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and others, which could lead to a just and comprehensive settlement of the conflict in the Middle East.

It is our conviction that the solution is to be found through a negotiated settlement and not through confrontation, violence and the military defeat of one of the parties by the other. History has shown that the security and stability of a country cannot be based upon aggression against and occupation of other sovereign States. Aggression and occupation are always sources of conflict, hatred and mistrust.

The existence of the State of Israel and of the State of Palestine is an undeniable reality. It is absurd and unwise for one to try to exist by destroying the other. In this context, let me quote President Joaquim Alberto Chissano of the People's Republic of Mozambique, who, when he addressed the ninth summit Conference of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, in Belgrade last September, said:

"In the Middle East there will be no peace so long as the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people are not recognized."

We therefore call on Israel to heed the voice of the international community and accept a negotiated settlement, so that a just and lasting peace may be achieved in the Middle East.

Mr. OKEYO (Kenya): A poet once asked:

"What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up, like a raisin in the sun, or does it explode?"

(Mr. Okeyo, Kenya)

The dreams and legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people, whose cause is the core of the problem in the Middle East, have been deferred. Our hopes and our actions must ensure that these dreams do not dry up in the sun or explode again in a violence that would engulf the whole of the Middle East region.

Kenya's clear and unequivocal position on this matter was underscored by our Foreign Minister's strong commendation, in his statement in the General Assembly on 28 September 1989, of Palestine's internationally recognized representatives and leaders for

"the positive steps they have taken towards a resolution of the Palestinian question." (A/44/PV.10, p. 71)

Kenya's position on the Middle East draws its logic from its position on the Palestinian question. For us the two are inseparable. I take this opportunity to reaffirm unequivocally the Kenyan Government's continued support for the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination and for their aspirations, as well as for the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which has had a resident diplomatic presence in my country since the 1970s.

On the issue of Lebanon, Kenya's Foreign Minister, Robert Ouko, also called urgently for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Lebanese territory and expressed support for all the efforts of the Arab League to resolve this tragic crisis. He called on the entire international community to respect fully Lebanon's territorial integrity and its right to exercise its sovereignty within its internationally recognized boundaries.

While the possibilities of the peaceful solution of these Middle East problems remain bleak, certain recent developments, quite apart from the Iran-Iraq cease-fire, provide my delegation with a muted sense of optimism. The election on 5 November 1989 of the late René Moawad as President of Lebanon was a very hopeful sign, in the opinion of the Republic of Kenya. Mr. Moawad undertook, during his

(Mr. Okeyo, Kenya)

short-lived presidency, a detailed and extensive consultative process in an attempt to overhaul the national political structure to reflect current demographic and religious realities in Lebanon. We also hoped that General Aoun's oft-stated commitment to peace and national reconciliation would lead him to provide President Moawad with badly needed support as he struggled to bring reconciliation and peace to that much troubled land.

These hopes for a peaceful Lebanon were brutally dashed and the sense of optimism that had begun to prevail changed to despair and pessimism when, on 22 November 1989, President René Moawad was savagely assassinated in Beirut. My delegation takes this opportunity to convey its deepest and most heartfelt condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of the late President, as well as to the people of Lebanon. The Kenyan Government views this assassination as a major setback in the search for peace in Lebanon. It is hoped that the untimely death of René Moawad is indeed the sacrifice that will nourish the seed of hope, enabling the tree of peace to flourish, sturdily rooted in the earth of the hearts and minds of the war-weary Lebanese people. We are confident that Elias Hrawi, recently elected Lebanon's President, will guide the nation into a process of negotiation and eventual peace.

It is within this context that the parties to the conflict that forms the Middle East problem, and the international community, must seek solutions. The emergent rapprochement of the super-Powers within the framework of their need to preserve peace and restore order in the world must be brought to bear on the almost intractable problems of the Middle East. It is our ardent wish that some attention be diverted from the interesting developments in Eastern Europe and refocused on the Middle East and southern Africa.

(Mr. Okeyo, Kenya)

How can this be accomplished? First, we must bring to the multilateral level the successful dimensions of bilateral diplomacy and relationships between the USSR and the United States, between the United States and Israel, between the United States and the PLO and so on. The successful aspects of these relationships and dialogue must be allowed to spill over into a combined diplomacy that will begin to address comprehensively the Middle East problem by extending bilateral détente to bear on regional problems within an international framework. In this regard my delegation urgently calls for, and strongly supports, the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

It is inconceivable that this Conference should still not have taken place despite the existence of useful precedents in this regard. The General Assembly and the Security Council have attempted to revive the necessary political will by adopting numerous resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973, which called for a peace conference on the Middle East that convened in Geneva on 21 December 1973 under the chairmanship of the then Secretary-General, and 339 (1973) and 340 (1973) of 23 and 25 October 1973 respectively. The Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) also unanimously endorsed this call for an international conference, in its resolution 1211 (L) in July 1989. On 23 February 1987 the European Community, meeting in Brussels, also strongly reaffirmed that call. The Foreign Ministers of five Scandinavian States and the Non-Aligned Movement meetings of 25 to 26 March 1987 and 14 to 15 April 1987, respectively, also joined that consensus. Kenya can only once again add its voice to that unanimous demand for an international conference to be held on the Middle East.

Secondly, in keeping with the realities of the situation and the need for a step-by-step approach, my Government endorsed the 10-point plan advanced by the

(Mr. Okeyo, Kenya)

current Chairman of the OAU, President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, and subsequently the five-point plan of the United States Secretary of State, Mr. Baker, which, after some hesitation, the Israeli Government approved. The Baker plan essentially provided for elections to produce a Palestinian delegation with which Israel would negotiate an interim period of Palestinian self-rule in the occupied territories, allowing final settlement of the territories' status to be negotiated only after that period of autonomy. Our optimism over this approval was clouded when it became apparent that this endorsement would necessitate the delivery of written assurances by the United States that the Palestine Liberation Organization would be excluded from the process. We are gratified that this Israeli position is not entrenched, and we hope that the laudable mediation efforts of the United States of America, which my Government fully supports, will bear some fruit.

It is inconceivable that any peace process can even be imagined without the direct or indirect presence of the legitimate representatives and leaders of the Palestinian people and nation, namely, the Palestine Liberation Organization. In any negotiation, parties to a conflict must be represented by persons who can adequately represent their views, positions and aspirations. To assume that the Palestinian people are any different and do not need such representation is not only a dubious act with regard to the process of negotiation but also an insult to the intelligence and inherent rights of the Palestinian people and the demands of the international community. The intifadah, which started in late 1987, reflects the determination of Palestinians to demand justice in their own territories. That struggle cannot be lightly dismissed as merely stone-throwing; it is, in fact, resistance to Israeli occupation so that a peaceful resolution of the crisis can be worked out. My delegation insists that each side to the conflict choose its own representatives to the negotiations. We urge those directly affected in the negotiations to avoid hard-line, intransigent positions.

(Mr. Okeyo, Kenya)

Thirdly, my delegation encourages any concrete interim measures or confidence-building measures that would lessen the rhetoric and the reality of hate, including the justifiable violence of the intifadah, in the Middle East. We applaud the dialogue that has been going on between the United States and Palestinian representatives since the beginning of this year. We also note with satisfaction, for example, the return by the United States Government of \$567 million in frozen assets to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the remaining \$243 million being retained by the United States Government ostensibly to offset further United States claims. Another confidence-building measure is the willingness of the United States to compensate the families of Iranians who died in the accidental downing by the United States of an Iranian passenger aeroplane in July 1988. Although the compensation offer of \$250,000 to the families of wage earners and \$100,000 to those of non-wage earners is arguably low, it does create a positive environment and foundation within which a structure of peace can eventually be built, which ultimately augurs well for the Middle East. Furthermore, the United States Government's encouragement to a United States oil company to pay the National Iranian Oil Company \$325 million for Iranian crude oil delivered, and the release of 17 Iranian travellers in August this year through United States leverage, add to the general positive climate of confidence-building measures. We are confident that such measures will continue to be sought in order to lessen the antagonism that exists between protagonists in the various conflicts in the region. We strongly urge our friends on both sides of numerous conflicts that make up the Middle East crisis to limit even further the verbal attacks they may hurl at each other not only in this Assembly but also in other forums.

As my delegation demands that external forces stop meddling in the problems of the Middle East region, we call upon the international community to continue its efforts to bring peace to the region.

(Mr. Okeyo, Kenya)

In the course of deliberations during this session we have noted with satisfaction that some of the regional conflicts in the world have been resolved peacefully. We have also noted with appreciation the attempts that are under way to resolve the remaining conflicts. It is the hope of my delegation that the same spirit and political goodwill will be applied in the efforts to solve the Middle East problem, which remains a threat to international peace and security. We draw strength from the fact that there is still hope among those struggling to bring to fruition the elusive but achievable goal of peace in the Middle East. In this regard, Kenya's support will not be wanting, and we pray that at some point peace will prevail in the Middle East.

Mr. PAWLAK (Poland): In contrast to promising developments in many areas of the world and some tangible results that have been achieved during the past year with a view to the settlement of a number of regional conflicts, the situation in the Middle East continues to cause grave concern. Despite the momentum generated at the diplomatic level by the peace initiatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) at the end of 1988, the deadlock in the Middle East peace process continues.

The serious consequences of the lack of progress in the search for a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine, are only too evident. The Palestinian uprising, which is a direct result of the stalemate in the search for a peaceful settlement of that conflict, has been going on for almost two years now.

We are gravely concerned at the continuing deterioration of the situation in the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel. This deterioration is a result of increasingly harsh measures taken by the Israeli authorities to suppress the Palestinian uprising. As the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices in the occupied territories concludes in its report:

(Mr. Pawlak, Poland)

"the situation in the occupied territories has been marked by a dangerous level of violence and repression, which has constantly escalated since the start of the uprising of the Palestinian population against occupation in December 1987." (A/44/599, para. 329)

The measures taken against the populations of the occupied territories - measures additional to those applied in previous years for the purpose of establishing settlements and expropriating property - included the closure of schools and universities, expulsions and detentions on administrative grounds, and other forms of collective punishment. Such policies and practices continue to prevent the Palestinian people from exercising its inalienable rights and pose grave obstacles to international efforts to negotiate a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

The duration and explosive nature of the Arab-Israeli conflict underlines the need to intensify efforts towards a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict and the Palestine question. The present international climate, which is characterized by increasing co-operation and by the political will to solve regional conflicts peacefully through negotiations, is especially conducive to the search for such a settlement.

We welcomed the constructive decisions that were adopted by the Palestine National Council in Algiers on 15 November 1988 and the Palestine peace initiative that was announced in Chairman Yasser Arafat's address, delivered in Geneva in December 1988, to the General Assembly at its forty-third session, whereby the PLO recognized Israel's right to a secure existence and expressed its readiness to negotiate with that country, within the framework of an international conference. Those decisions and that initiative have opened up prospects for a realistic search for a settlement of the Middle East conflict, and they call for a constructive response by all the parties concerned.

(Mr. Pawlak, Poland)

We note with interest the Arab States' commitment to seek a settlement of the problem through political means, as confirmed by the Arab summit held at Casablanca, Morocco, in May 1989. Another welcome development was the initiation of a dialogue between the United States and the PLO, which has helped to redress the imbalance between the parties.

As the Secretary-General stated in his message of 13 March 1988 to the meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of the Islamic Conference,

"The fact that there are now contacts between each of the five permanent members of the Security Council and all the parties is a new and positive development, and we must capitalize on this."

The response of Israel to those various initiatives has so far been inadequate as it has missed some of their essential points. Israel's own initiative is equally inadequate. Elections in the occupied territories would be meaningful if they were aimed at articulating the will and aspirations of the Palestinian people and if the Israeli proposals were to include the proposed convening of the International Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations. The Palestinian question can be solved only by political means that take into account all aspects of the problem and the legitimate concerns and interests of all parties.

Poland supports all efforts to have the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, convened at an early date. All parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), should participate on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council should also take part. This would be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and on recognition of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily their right to self-determination. The complexity of the Arab-Israeli conflict calls for joint action as an efficient

(Mr. Pawlak, Poland)

means of searching for solutions that take into account the legitimate interests and rights of all parties.

Poland stands for a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict - a settlement based on recognition of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, as well as the right to independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of all the States of the region, including Israel.

We support the efforts of the Secretary-General and the steps he is taking with a view to the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict - a settlement that will ensure stability in the region.

Mr. KAGAMI (Japan): The world is witnessing the dawn of a new era. Decades-long confrontation among nations and peoples is giving way to reconciliation. The super-Powers are embarking upon a path of co-operation on a range of issues, including the search for solutions to regional conflicts in various parts of the world.

One region that has so far seemed to be resistant to the beneficent contagion of peace and reconciliation, however, is the Middle East. In that part of the world hostilities rage intractably and in some areas the flames of violence burn with even greater intensity. In view of the generally encouraging developments that we are witnessing elsewhere in the world the situation in the Middle East is all the more distressing.

That is not to say, of course, that efforts to find peaceful solutions to the conflicts in the region are not being made. We note and deeply appreciate the dedication with which the United Nations, the League of Arab States and a number of key United Nations Member States, as well as the parties directly involved, are striving to bring peace and stability to the region. Nevertheless, the complexity of the situation demands that even greater efforts be made by the international community, in particular the United Nations, bring about regional peace and stability. Indeed, we earnestly hope that the emerging international trend towards reconciliation and co-operation - a trend whose limits have already extended far beyond our realistic expectations - will become apparent in the Middle East as well.

In addressing the issues relating to the situation in the Middle East I feel compelled first of all to touch upon the question of Palestine, although my delegation wishes to address this issue in greater detail when it is taken up by the plenary Assembly later this week. As we work to attain a comprehensive peace in the Middle East we must never lose sight of the need to resolve the question of

(Mr. Kagami, Japan)

Palestine; for, until that question is resolved and Israeli forces are withdrawn from all the territories occupied since 1967, the Arab-Israeli conflict will not be settled. The question of Palestine can be resolved only if the Palestinians are guaranteed their right of self-determination, including the right to establish an independent State. At the same time Israel's right to exist must also be recognized. Finally, any realistic peace process requires the involvement of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which represents the Palestinian people.

Significant progress towards peace has been made following the meeting of the Palestine National Council in Algiers in November of last year. The Government of Japan appreciates in particular the courageous initiative which PLO Chairman Arafat took during the meeting of the General Assembly in Geneva last December. Among other things the PLO's clear acceptance of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), its recognition of Israel's right to exist and its renunciation of all forms of terrorism are heartily welcomed. This new initiative resulted in the commencement of a dialogue between the United States and the PLO - a truly significant development in the search for peace.

We are aware of the serious efforts being made at present by all the parties concerned to initiate, as a first step towards a comprehensive settlement, a dialogue between Israel and the Palestinians. The Government of Japan joins other member States which support and encourage such efforts. At the same time my Government maintains the view that the convening of an international conference on this issue would help to promote negotiations for peace.

Although commendable efforts are being made, we cannot but feel that the pace of the peace process is unacceptably slow, especially when we consider the suffering and the danger to which the Palestinian people in the occupied

(Mr. Kagami, Japan)

territories are subjected in the course of their daily lives. The worsening situation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is particularly distressing. Violence by any side must be condemned. As in any situation where tensions are high and violence is endemic, restraint by all the parties concerned is crucial.

It should be stressed, however, that, as the occupying Power, Israel bears the responsibility for protecting the civilian population in the occupied territories. In this context the Government of Japan once again urges Israel to comply fully with the fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

The Government of Japan would also urge Israel to respect the activities conducted by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in providing humanitarian assistance to Palestine refugees in the occupied territories. It is a matter of great concern that, as Commissioner-General Giacomelli of UNRWA states in his report,

"A number of local staff were arrested and detained without charges being levelled against them or the Agency being informed of the reasons for their detention." (A/44/13 and Corr.1 and Add.1, para. 12)

In particular, the Government of Japan is deeply disturbed by the incidents on 18 October in which Israeli soldiers broke into the premises of UNRWA installations in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, detaining staff and confiscating documents.

UNRWA's operations provide an invaluable service not only in easing the plight of Palestine refugees but also in maintaining a degree of stability in the region, and they must not be jeopardized. UNRWA deserves the support of the entire international community. The Government of Japan reiterates its intention to continue to support UNRWA financially and in every way possible and calls on other Member States to do so as well.

(Mr. Kagami, Japan)

The tragic assassination of President René Moawad, who only 17 days earlier had been duly elected President of the Republic of Lebanon by its Parliament, is only the most recent and dramatic example of the violence and chaos that have convulsed the country this past year. The late President, whose election was made possible through the tireless efforts of the Arab League, and particularly its Tripartite High Committee, as well as by the determination of the Lebanese people themselves, was a symbol of peace and national unity. The Government of Japan condemns this outrageous act of terrorism in the strongest possible terms. The assassination was particularly egregious in that it was committed just at the time when the Lebanese people, with the support of neighbouring States, were beginning to achieve a degree of unity in their government and to regain full sovereignty over all Lebanese territory.

(Mr. Kagami, Japan)

The gravity of this act notwithstanding, we are heartened that the Lebanese Parliament succeeded, just two days later, in electing Mr. Elias Hrawi as President of the Republic. The prompt election of a new President is an encouraging indication that the people of Lebanon are committed to working together to restore to their country respect for the values for which Lebanon was once known and admired. The Government of Japan commends the Parliament for its vigorous efforts, under extremely difficult conditions, to restore normalcy to the Government. My delegation joins the Secretary-General of the United Nations in appealing to the Lebanese not to resort to further violence, but to adhere to the Charter of National Reconciliation which was adopted by the Parliament earlier this month. We urge all sectors of the population to come to the support of their new President so that the unity, independence and sovereignty of Lebanon will be restored throughout its territory.

The situation in southern Lebanon likewise remains volatile and requires our constant attention. It is imperative that we pursue more vigorously implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which calls for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanese territory, the restoration of international peace and security, and the re-establishment of the Lebanese Government's effective authority in the area.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my Government's profound gratitude to all United Nations peace-keeping operations in the Middle East for the indispensable role they are playing in ensuring a degree of stability in the region. The Government of Japan pays particular tribute to the soldiers of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), who often face great personal danger in carrying out their responsibilities. We were reminded of this fact again this year as we heard the tragic reports that Colonel Higgins and several other

(Mr. Kagami, Japan)

members of the peace-keeping forces had lost their lives and that many other soldiers had been injured.

I am also saddened by the fact that during the past year we again witnessed a series of terrorist incidents, including the taking of hostages. The Government of Japan condemns these criminal and cowardly acts against innocent people, and calls upon all parties concerned to do their utmost to prevent further acts of this kind. We demand that all those being held hostage in Lebanon be released unharmed and without delay.

Now let me turn to a related and equally distressing issue, the situation between Iran and Iraq. More than two years ago the Security Council adopted unanimously resolution 598 (1987), in which, among other things, it demanded that, "as a first step towards a negotiated settlement, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq observe an immediate cease-fire, discontinue all military actions on land, at sea and in the air, and withdraw all forces to the internationally recognized boundaries without delay". (Security Council resolution 598 (1987), para. 1))

Although a cease-fire between the two countries was put into effect in August last year, a comprehensive peace in the region has yet to be attained. And we are all only too well aware of the fragility of the present cease-fire. The need to secure the implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1987) in its entirety cannot be overemphasized.

In this respect my Government highly commends the efforts being made by the Secretary-General and his Personal Representative, Ambassador Eliasson. My Government once again urges both countries to co-operate to the best of their ability with the Secretary-General, who has the firm backing of the entire international community.

(Mr. Kagami, Japan)

Precarious as it may be, the present cease-fire provides a precious basis on which both parties can build mutual confidence. The parties' efforts to honour the cease-fire should be commended and further encouraged. In this connection my Government pays a high tribute to the United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG) for the role it has been playing along the border between Iran and Iraq, and calls on both countries to co-operate fully with this effort.

Situated at the crossroads of several great world civilizations, the Middle East has a unique potential to play a stabilizing role in the international community. It is our sincere hope that all the parties in the region will draw upon the wisdom of their rich heritage to overcome the age-old enmities that have inflicted untold tragedy and suffering on their people. Let us all redouble our efforts to ensure that the countries and peoples of the Middle East can contribute to and enjoy the blessings of the more peaceful and stable world that is evolving with each passing day.

Mr. RANA (Nepal): The situation in the Middle East has been the foremost concern of the United Nations ever since the Organization came into being. The United Nations has been instrumental in arranging a cease-fire after each of the many destructive wars fought in the region. It has adopted scores of resolutions on various aspects of the problem and has mounted a number of peace-keeping operations in different sectors in the region. While these efforts underline the continued concern over the volatile situation in the Middle East, they represent also the interest of the international community in finding a just and lasting peace in the region. Over four decades of sustained efforts have also made it clear that the involvement and efforts of the United Nations can be effective only if the parties concerned demonstrate the political will and spirit of accommodation necessary to ensure that peace is to be extended to the Middle East.

(Mr. Rana, Nepal)

The war between Iran and Iraq provides an example. This tragic conflict caused enormous destruction and suffering in both countries and contained the seeds of wider conflagration, threatening international peace and security. For over a year now a cease-fire, however tenuous, has been holding; it is being supervised by the United Nations observer mission in the area. This fragile arrangement is the result of the confidence placed in the United Nations by both Iran and Iraq - confidence in the ability of the Organization to promote a negotiated political settlement that will ensure a just and lasting peace in the region and progress and prosperity for both countries. Fundamental differences between the two sides have, however, thus far stalled all efforts to implement other aspects of Security Council resolution 598 (1987). My delegation fully supports the Secretary-General and his Special Representative in their efforts to break the deadlock. We reiterate our appeal to both Iran and Iraq to display the political will and a spirit of co-operation in transforming the fragile cease-fire into a lasting peace.

(Mr. Rana, Nepal)

The deepening tragedy of Lebanon is yet another instance of the danger in allowing the status quo in the Middle East to continue. The fratricide in Lebanon has been a matter of deep concern to us all. The recent assassination of President René Moawad has once again demonstrated that the road to peace and reconciliation in Lebanon is extremely difficult. Nepal condemns this brutal and barbaric act and unequivocally supports the heroic efforts of the Lebanese people to uphold the constitutional process, despite tragedies and grave threats.

We also reiterate our support for the Taif Agreement, as we are convinced that the full implementation of the constitutional process without outside interference is the first necessity in Lebanon now. The success of the process demands respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Lebanon by all. Nepal's commitment to the independence and the territorial integrity of Lebanon is reflected in our continued participation in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

We are approaching the second anniversary of the uprising of the Palestinian people in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967. The uprising symbolizes a spontaneous rejection by the Palestinian people of a life under alien occupation. Nepal deeply deplores the resort to excessive force and repression by the occupying Power to quell the popular uprising. We also strongly deplore the refusal by Israel to comply with its responsibilities under the Fourth Geneva Convention, despite repeated demands by the General Assembly and the Security Council.

The immediate challenge before the international community is to ensure protection of the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation. A comprehensive peace in the Middle East will, however, remain elusive as long as the basic realities are not acknowledged and addressed. We reiterate our conviction that a just and lasting political settlement can be achieved only through negotiations undertaken in good faith and on the basis of the principles set forth in Security

(Mr. Rana, Nepal)

Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). The negotiations would have to address the two fundamental and valid concerns of the two peoples - the realization of the rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to a State of their own, and ensuring the right of Israel to live in peace within recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force. The settlement would also have to ensure the withdrawal of Israel from the territories occupied since 1967.

Decades of wars and violence have left a terrible legacy of hatred and mistrust in the Middle East region. Bold and imaginative statesmanship is required to break the vicious cycle and to give peace a chance in the Middle East.

We are witnessing unprecedented changes in international relations. The visible relaxation of tensions has enhanced the capacity of the United Nations to work even more effectively towards solutions of outstanding regional conflicts, including that of the Middle East. My delegation believes that we should seize the opportunity afforded by the new climate in international relations and convene an international conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations. Such a conference, with the participation on an equal footing of all the parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, offers the best hope for peace in the Middle East.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.