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

AGENDA ITEM 27

Question of Palestine (*continued*):

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

1. Mr. BOULOM (Lao People's Democratic Republic) (*interpretation from French*): For the honour of its own Charter, which is the foundation of its very existence, it is encouraging that the United Nations, despite the manoeuvres and attempts which have been made for more than a quarter of a century now by imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism and expansionist zionism with a view to using the rostrum of the General Assembly and those of the other bodies of the United Nations to distort the truth and stifle the voice of reason of the oppressed peoples and the other peoples of the third world, thus discrediting both the national liberation movements and the just and legitimate claims of the immense majority of the population of the world, should this year again be taking up the fate of the courageous people of Palestine and giving this question fundamental importance and priority in the search for a just and lasting solution to the Middle East problem.

2. The United Nations and the world in general not only are today more aware than ever before but also unequivocally acknowledge that the question of Palestine—or, in other words, the question of the true and effective exercise of their most sacred and inalienable rights by the Palestinian people—is at the very centre of the settlement of the Middle East problem. Unfortunately, in order to reach that point four murderous wars have been necessary, involving much pointless loss of human life and material goods on both sides and, above all, almost 30 years of physical and moral suffering, frustration and humiliation for the Palestinian people, which, without having committed any wrong, has been cruelly condemned by the perfidious manoeuvres of imperialism, colonialism and expansionist zionism to the cruellest fate any people has ever suffered—that is, the loss of its country to the aggressor.

3. The United Nations, the embodiment of the great ideals of justice and fairness, and the world itself cannot very much longer close their eyes to such a serious and flagrant injustice, which increasingly weighs upon the conscience of all peoples. The time has come for our Organization to correct its mistake by restoring to the Palestinian people all its fundamental national rights without undue delay.

4. The Palestinian problem is an old problem, as old as the United Nations itself. My delegation does not wish to take time rehearsing the history of this problem, which has already been described repeatedly by many of the speakers who have preceded me at this rostrum and in other United Nations bodies. Peoples throughout the world that love peace and justice and the peoples of the world in general are well aware of the origins of this problem and its tragic consequences. Henceforward it will be vain to try by means of absurd and shameful propaganda manoeuvres to deceive world opinion, as has been done in the past 25 years, and to perpetuate lies which can only complicate the solution of the Palestinian problem and the problem of the Middle East as a whole. The question of Palestine has always been and remains the cause of the tension existing in that part of the world. Consequently it must be the key to a just and lasting peace between Israel and its neighbours.

5. It could not be otherwise, because for no people is there any situation or any consideration which takes precedence over the ability truly and effectively to exercise its rights to self-determination, independence and sovereignty and its right to have its own country and State. The Palestinian people was not conjured up out of the blue. It was not created artificially. It is a political, legal and historical entity with a status equal to that of the other peoples of the Middle East. The Palestinian people has an age-old history. It is an heroic people which has struggled and is struggling fiercely for the triumph of its just cause, which is equally the cause of all the national liberation movements and all peoples which love peace and justice.

6. The struggle being waged by the Palestinian people under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization [PLO], its authentic representative, has received the powerful aid and support of the countries of the third world, the non-aligned countries, the socialist countries and other countries which love justice. This help and support is growing and expanding ceaselessly, thus every day consolidating and strengthening the position of the PLO both at the national level and in international political forums.

7. The PLO is now recognized by all the countries of the non-aligned movement, of which, moreover, it is a fully-fledged member. In addition, being one of the members of the Co-ordinating Bureau of Non-Aligned Countries, it plays an active part within the non-aligned movement. In

the United Nations, its prestige and the support it receives have been developing spectacularly, especially since this Assembly's adoption of resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, which defined with crystal clarity the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

8. Continuing its ardent pursuit of redress for the injustice committed against the Palestinian people, the General Assembly at its thirtieth session adopted two resolutions, resolution 3375 (XXX), in which the Assembly requested that the PLO be invited to take part in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East held under the auspices of the United Nations on an equal footing with the other parties, and resolution 3376 (XXX), which established the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, composed of 20 members, including my own country, the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Our presence in that Committee testifies to our militant solidarity and our determined support for the Palestinian people and for the other Arab peoples in their struggle to erase the consequences of imperialist Zionist aggression.

9. The title of the Committee established in accordance with resolution 3376 (XXX) is highly instructive. For the first time the United Nations determined to move on to action. This is only a first step, but it is an important step. The Committee's task was to prepare a programme of action for the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people as defined in resolution 3236 (XXIX). This means, on the one hand, the right to self-determination, independence and sovereignty and, on the other hand, the right of the Palestinians to return to their homes and to recover their possessions. Those rights are indissolubly interlinked, although they occur on different planes. In the first place, we are dealing with the collective right of the Palestinian people to self-determination without external interference and its right to independence and sovereignty and, on the other hand, with the absolute, individual right of every Palestinian to return to his home and to recover all the goods of which he was deprived.

10. No one could really dispute the legitimacy of those rights of the Palestinian people, except Israel and its protector—and they are wrong, you may believe me. But it must be clearly stressed that, as far as the right of return and the principle of compensation are concerned, Israel itself explicitly recognized them when it subscribed to General Assembly resolutions 181 (II), 194 (III) and 273 (III). Moreover, the fact that that right of return is not subject to any conditions whatever is clearly stipulated in Security Council resolution 237 (1967), which was adopted unanimously by the Council.

11. In proposing a two-phase programme for return in its report [A/31/35], which is at present before the Assembly, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People took care to act in accordance with the spirit of the resolutions I have cited. At each of the stages of the implementation of the plan drawn up, the United Nations would, either directly or through its specialized agencies, supervise the action taken. This role assigned to the United Nations is a guarantee that the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people will take place in full harmony with the profound aspira-

tions of the Palestinian people and with the no less profound aspirations of all the peoples and all the countries of the region.

12. Therefore it is clearly in the interests of all the peoples and countries of the region to facilitate, collaborate in and ensure the implementation of these proposals, notably that for the repatriation of the refugees, their return to their homes and their economic and social rehabilitation, as well as the payment of adequate indemnity for the goods of those who decide not to return to their former homes.

13. To facilitate this return, it is essential that Israel should evacuate all the territories it has occupied since 1967. In this connexion, nothing would be more serious or more dangerous for the future of international relations and, in particular, for the security of Israel itself than to disregard one of the well-established principles of international law that deals with the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force. Scrupulous respect for that principle, which is reaffirmed in the Charter and in various United Nations resolutions, is mandatory for all Members of the Organization and especially for Israel, which owes its very birth to the United Nations. No consideration of any kind can or should be invoked to justify Israel's continued occupation of the territories of other peoples.

14. Furthermore, Israel cannot and should not claim any sovereignty over any part of the territories occupied since June 1967 and, hence, it must renounce, under the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, the establishment of new settlements and must dismantle those which have already been established and it must strictly respect the provisions of the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949.

15. These are the basic conditions for the settlement of the Palestinian problem which will lead to the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

16. My country, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, having been the victim of the worst aggression of imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism and now having completely recovered its independence, peace, unity, freedom and dignity, firmly supports the just struggle of the Palestinian people for the full exercise of its most inalienable national rights. My country, having learned from the experience, is profoundly convinced that any struggle in a just cause will sooner or later triumph, and that the struggle of the Palestinian people, which I have just described, will certainly triumph in the end.

17. However, victory by force of arms, which imposes enormous sacrifices, is not the only means of satisfying national aspirations. There is also virtue in dialogue. But clearly for dialogue to take place it is absolutely necessary that the parties to the dispute should consent to sit down at the same negotiating table. Here Israel must give up its stubborn and arrogant attitude towards the PLO and treat that organization as an authentic and equal partner in the efforts to establish a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

18. Israel, which since its creation has waged three wars of aggression and has experienced the shock of a war of

liberation waged by its opponents, must understand that it is in the higher interests of its own people, which in the past have also suffered grave injustice, to end the deadlock and to decide with determination and realism to seek a solution to the Middle East problem. It is not by perpetually defying the fundamental principles of international law and morality and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly—least of all, by disregarding the sacred and inalienable rights of other peoples, in this case the Palestinian people—that Israel can claim to ensure the security that it so desires.

19. In any event, the time has come for our Organization to correct the very grave injustice committed against the Palestinian people. We have already lost too much time in doing this. Thus every day we are pushing the Palestinian people further into the deepest despair. Yes, we have already lost too much time, but "better late than never". Thus my delegation would like to recommend to this Assembly that it support overwhelmingly the proposals made in the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, as these proposals will make it possible to establish a just and lasting peace in the Middle East and, more particularly, to return to the martyred Palestinian people their homeland and to give the Palestinian nation a State, the independent and sovereign State of Palestine.

20. Mr. ALARCON (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Almost from the founding of our Organization, the problem of Palestine has been with us and has had an impact on our activities. In many ways it has run through the work of the Organization and, in particular, the work of the General Assembly. However, the consideration of this issue on this occasion is taking place in conditions that are radically different from those that characterized it in the past. For the first time it is being carried out in a situation where the Assembly is in a position to make a real contribution to the solution of one of the most crucial, most complex and most pressing questions for the United Nations.

21. For several decades the problem of Palestine has been with us in the Organization; none the less the United Nations did not tackle it in an appropriate manner. The Palestinians appeared and disappeared in our debates. As they had become refugees, we considered the humanitarian repercussions of their grave national problem, which is the essence of the item that we are now considering; or else they cropped up tangentially in our debates in an indirect manner when we debated more general issues relating to the Middle East.

22. However, since the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly, when it adopted resolution 3236 (XXIX), which recognized and affirmed the inalienable national rights of that people, the United Nations began a new phase in dealing with this question, which, last year, culminated in the adoption of resolution 3376 (XXX), which established the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Now the General Assembly is considering the result of the work of the Committee it established last year.

23. First and foremost, we should like to state that our experience with regard to the work of that Committee

convinces us that all those who participated in its work, under the effective and skilful guidance of Mr. Fall, made a serious effort to submit to this Assembly proposals which, on the one hand, are consistent with the aforementioned resolutions and in keeping with the views of the overwhelming majority of this Organization; and, on the other, could be a practical means for the United Nations to chart a course towards a just solution of the question of Palestine.

24. We believe that the Committee has succeeded in meeting that goal. The programme of action that it has submitted to the Assembly is a series of coherent, viable measures which are in line with the rules of international law, consistent with the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and conceived as a working method to enable the Organization to promote the effective exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in peaceful conditions.

25. Consequently, we believe that the programme adopted by the Committee and the decisions which, in that regard, will be adopted by the Assembly may well be of historic significance and could place the United Nations in a position to redress a phase when this Organization disregarded the fundamental rights of a people and committed a grave injustice against it. Thus the United Nations would be given an opportunity to repair the damage that it inflicted upon that people and salvage its own moral authority and prestige.

26. The rights of the Palestinian people defined by this General Assembly are the same as those which the international community recognizes as appertaining to every nation: the right to self-determination without external interference and the right to exercise national sovereignty and independence on one's own land.

27. We recall that, when the Assembly becomes involved in the consideration of the question of Palestine on the new bases laid down during the twenty-ninth session, it does so at a time when the world is witnessing the crumbling of colonialism and racism everywhere, at a time when it is no longer possible to continue to disregard the inalienable rights of any people whatsoever to be master of its own destiny, to decide freely what that destiny is to be, and to receive the necessary support of the United Nations in giving effect to that universal aspiration.

28. In that sense, we are certain that the programme of action proposed by the Committee, which we trust this Assembly will support and adopt, may well represent an important step towards the consolidation of international peace and security and towards the promotion of a peaceful solution of the problems of the Middle East, of which it has often been said that the question of Palestine is the very crux. Precisely because it is the central aspect of the Middle East crisis, and because there is a universal consensus in favour of redoubling efforts to solve that crisis, we believe that at this time the General Assembly should take such decisions as will permit progress in the consideration of the question of Palestine to continue along the lines already laid down and will ensure that in future our Organization may be in a position not merely to define the national rights of that people, not merely to draft a programme for the future exercise of those rights, but also to adopt the

necessary measures to guarantee genuine and effective implementation of those rights.

29. We are convinced that the General Assembly will now approve the recommendations of the Committee and will adopt other decisions which, next year, will enable us to continue to deepen our study of this matter and follow the just course charted since the twenty-ninth session.

30. Many of the preceding speakers have stressed the universal nature of the question of Palestine, and have also emphasized the links between that problem and the general aspiration of third-world peoples to economic and political emancipation. Indeed, the cause of Palestine is one of the questions to which the third world attaches priority, because for the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America it is clear that the struggle waged by the Palestinian people is inseparable from their own struggle to consolidate their independence and to exercise their rights. This view was clearly reflected in the decisions adopted in that connexion by the Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, this past August. At that Conference the non-aligned countries, through their highest representatives, reiterated their complete support for the cause of the Palestinian people and requested our Organization to adopt the relevant measures in favour of the rights of that people. Moreover, they symbolically expressed the support of the non-aligned countries for the Palestinian cause by electing the PLO to membership on the Co-ordinating Bureau of Non-Aligned Countries.

31. Indeed, the PLO has in recent years gained widespread international recognition that is particularly marked among emerging countries. In the view of those countries, no one but the PLO has the right to represent the Arab people of Palestine, and that organization should participate on a footing of equality, along with the other parties, in any discussions or negotiations on the Middle East problem.

32. There is one aspect of the Committee's report which we should like to stress before this Assembly: the development of the international debate on the Palestine problem has clearly shown that this is a difficult issue which has encountered numerous obstacles over the years and whose solution is constantly confronted with especially acute difficulties and impediments, not because the principles applicable thereto are difficult to define, or because the international community believes that the right to independence and self-determination can be applied in a discriminatory manner or is not applicable to the Palestinian people, but rather because of the complex of political, military and economic factors that are characteristic of the policy of imperialism in the area, which is attempting to use the State of Israel as a tool for penetration into, and domination over, the Arab peoples, and is turning the Palestinian people into the first victims of that policy.

33. This explains why the people of Palestine must face not only the national plight that has beset it throughout its history, but also a hostile campaign aimed at distorting its true meaning and at isolating it from other progressive forces, and which attempts to disregard it as a factor in any solution to the problems of the Middle East.

34. Consequently my delegation believes that one of the main tasks that the United Nations should henceforth further is that of clarifying the true nature of the question of Palestine, a task for which the report is a useful instrument, and of mobilizing the various sectors of world public opinion to offset that anti-Palestinian international action. The task of mobilization is particularly necessary, as is evident, in those countries of the so-called Western world which are the main supporters of Israel.

35. We should like to conclude by reaffirming my Government's support for and solidarity with the people of Palestine and with the PLO. We should also like to greet the presence in this room and the participation in our debate of its representatives, headed by Mr. Kaddoumi. Their presence in our midst as we consider the question of Palestine is an augury of what must inevitably in due course be consecrated by history when the legitimate representatives of the Palestinian people take their rightful place with full rights in the international community and when they will be able to speak freely without shackles or any foreign pressure as the true spokesmen of a heroic and long persecuted and oppressed people. This, therefore, lays on us the inevitable duty of taking here the relevant decisions to support their national effort.

36. Mr. MARPAUNG (Indonesia): Indonesia's position on the question of the Middle East has been made clear on many previous occasions. For that reason I do not believe that it is necessary for my delegation to reiterate that position, one based on our unswerving support for the Arab cause and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. I will therefore confine my remarks to the most recent developments affecting Palestine.

37. My delegation has been privileged to serve as a member of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. The Chairman of the Committee has already presented the report of the Committee to the General Assembly and discussed its recommendations in detail [66th meeting]. The report represents, in our view, a pragmatic and realistic approach to the problem of the Palestinian people and at the same time serves the interest of all parties concerned in the region. The recommendations and valuable proposals advanced by the Committee would, if implemented, constitute a first, though significant, step towards the solution of this long-standing problem.

38. The Security Council, in the course of its deliberations last June, considered the recommendations contained in the report. Although those recommendations were not adopted, as a result of the negative vote of a permanent member, the broad support accorded the draft resolution which incorporated them and which was proposed by the non-aligned countries¹ is indicative of their validity and of the sentiments of the international community.

39. I should like to review briefly the salient features of those recommendations.

40. The international community considers it intolerable that any portion of mankind should be condemned to

¹ See *Official Records of the Security Council, Thirty-first Year, Supplement for April, May and June 1976*, document S/12119.

suffer the indignity of refugee camps for generations. Lasting peace in the Middle East cannot be achieved so long as the Palestinian people are deprived of their inalienable rights and fundamental freedoms. In this context, the report of the Committee contains a proposal that the return of the Palestinian people to their homes, lands and property should be facilitated without linking that question to any other issue.

41. The right to return of the Palestinian people must be recognized and implemented without further delay, as set forth particularly in General Assembly resolution 194 (III) and Security Council resolution 237 (1967). The Committee recommended that, as a first phase in the settlement of this problem, those refugees who left Palestine in the aftermath of the 1967 war should speedily be given an opportunity to return to their homeland. Such a return could be begun next year, the intervening period allowing sufficient time for the preparation, funding and other necessary arrangements to ensure smooth implementation. In this connexion, the resources of the International Committee of the Red Cross and of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East should be utilized in order to facilitate the return of the refugees.

42. My delegation also envisages a vastly increased role for the United Nations and the specialized agencies. That would be valid not only in promoting a solution of the over-all question but also in facilitating the transitional period that would inevitably follow the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Committee.

43. Such a role might include the establishment of special United Nations machinery—for instance, temporary peace-keeping forces—to facilitate the transition. Regional organizations could also make an important contribution to this process by renewing their efforts for peace. Whatever the modalities may be, an independent Palestinian entity, born of the sacred right to self-determination, will constitute an indispensable element in the establishment of a lasting peace in the region.

44. The General Assembly, in its resolutions 3236 (XXIX) and 3376 (XXX) has recognized the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty. It is imperative, in the view of my delegation, that a time-table be established providing for the withdrawal of Israeli occupation forces from all Arab territories occupied since 1967.

45. My delegation recognizes that a durable solution has to take due account of the legitimate rights and aspirations of all the parties in the area. All States in the area have a right to exist and to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries. To this end, however, it would be necessary for Israel to agree to negotiate without pre-conditions.

46. It is the belief of my delegation that the present time is most opportune to reconvene the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East with the equal participation of all interested parties, including the PLO. In order to maintain the momentum towards an over-all settlement

that has already been achieved, it is essential that ways and means be found by the two super-Powers to bring about a reconvening of the Conference as early as possible. As the Committee recommends, the Conference should devise measures leading to an over-all settlement of the Middle East question and thereby establish a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

47. Pending a lasting solution, it is imperative that Israel desist from the establishment of new settlements in the occupied territories and refrain from changing the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure or status of the occupied territories. The Holy City of Jerusalem must be returned to Arab custody and Israel must rescind all measures it has taken to alter the status and character of the city. Adherence to the consensus statement adopted by the Security Council on 11 November 1976² would do much to create an atmosphere conducive to further progress and would represent an opportunity which should not be wasted. Further to this end, pending Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories, all Governments should scrupulously observe all relevant United Nations resolutions and particularly the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949.

48. My delegation sincerely hopes that the General Assembly will endorse the proposals of the Committee in order to promote a settlement of this outstanding question. It is my delegation's further hope that the Members will fully co-operate in implementing whatever measures the Assembly recommends to implement the Committee's proposals. It might well constitute the first step towards the solution of the question of Palestine. The international community has long recognized through the United Nations that the question of Palestine is of central importance for the solution of the Middle East crisis. It is in this context that my delegation feels that the General Assembly should use its powers under Articles 10 and 11 of the Charter to endorse the recommendations adopted unanimously by the Committee.

49. Mr. SALLAM (Yemen) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Every year renders the tragedy of the Palestinian people more acute and more complex because of the fact that Israel persists in refusing to implement the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

50. The children of Palestine, who were born at the very time when the tragedy of 1947 took place, are now about 30 years old and those children who were 10 years old then are now in their fourth decade of suffering. The young who witnessed that tragedy now have white hair and are living in despair in refugee camps, sleeping on the hard ground. This is another tragedy of the twentieth century, the tragedy of man, and it is another tragedy that the United Nations, which has set for itself the task of correcting that tragedy and restoring to the Palestinian people their fundamental rights, their dignity and their soil, has not succeeded in that task. It is an irony of fate that the Jewish people, which experienced a similar tragedy, should itself be the cause of this other tragedy.

² *Ibid.*, Supplement for October, November and December 1976, document S/12233.

51. The people of Palestine were in the land of Palestine more than 3,000 years before Christ. Israel invaded Palestine, or the land of Canaan, 1,200 years before Christ, but it did not succeed in occupying the whole of the territory because of the struggle waged by the Philistines in the south and centre of the territory. That was due also to the struggle of the Phoenicians, the ancestors of the Lebanese in the north, to protect their homes against the invaders and aggressors. The Israelis, after a long period, were forced to live in peace with the peoples of the region. The Bible says:

“And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites and Jebusites:

“And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods.”
[Judges 3:5-6.]³

52. Thus the Israelis and the Canaanites coexisted in peace with other peoples. The Israelis in that period of history created the Kingdom of David, which lasted only 80 years, at the end of which the Kingdom was split into two parts, the Kingdom of Israel in the north and the Kingdom of Judea in the south. That lasted until the Assyrians destroyed the Kingdom of Israel in 721 B.C., and its people had to leave the country. The Kingdom of Judea was destroyed by the Babylonians in 587 B.C. and its people were established in Babylon. That marked the end of the existence of the Israelis in Palestine.

53. Mr. Georges Friedmann, in his book *The End of the Jewish People?*, says:

“The twelve tribes were deported to the Caucasus, Armenia and in particular Babylonia, and disappeared; and with them the Jewish people, in the plenitude of its existence as a simultaneously ethnic, national and religious community also disappeared forever.”⁴

54. Thus the presence of the Hebrew tribes in Palestine continued for a mere 613 years and not throughout 4,000 years as the Zionist liars claim. If the presence of Israel in Palestine for six centuries is supposed to confer on the Zionists the right to possess the land of Palestine for ever then, in accordance with this limping logic, the Zionists should grant to the Arabs the right to possess for ever the land of Spain, where the Arabs lived for eight centuries.

55. In 587 B.C. all Israeli presence ceased in Palestine until the beginning of the twentieth century, at the time when the immigration of certain Jewish religious groups began to take place in Palestine—and I would say that the Arabs welcomed this movement of immigration in order to live in peace with those people in the land of peace—until the illegal and evil Balfour Declaration appeared proclaiming a national homeland for the Jews in Palestine.

56. Since that time the tragedy has taken on enormous proportions. Rather than ask the United Kingdom, the

Mandatory Power and initiator of the Balfour Declaration, to give Palestinians their right to self-determination and independence, the United Nations established the Zionist State of Israel, an action which was quite incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter, ignoring the protest of Orthodox Jews and others against the establishment of the State of Israel.

57. The Western European Powers and the United States of America have continued to give assistance and support to that Zionist entity, although the Zionists themselves recognized the Arab character of Palestine. In this connexion I should like to quote a statement made recently by General Moshe Dayan to schoolchildren in Haifa:

“There is not a single Jewish village in this country that has not been built on the site of an Arab village. The village of Nahalal took the place of the Arab village of Nahloul . . . Gifat took the place of Jifata, and so on.”⁵

58. There are many such examples, but I shall not cite them because of lack of time.

59. The United Nations assumed a heavy responsibility to history because it decided on the partition of Palestine into two States—an Arab State and a Jewish State; for the purposes and principles of the Charter do not permit the establishment of situations such as to threaten international peace and security. Quite the contrary, these purposes and principles are designed to create favourable conditions so that justice and respect for the obligations arising from conventions and other instruments of international law will prevail. Was the General Assembly resolution on the establishment of Israel compatible with this principle, especially since it was adopted when neither the blood of innocent victims of the Second World War nor the ink on the Charter of the United Nations had yet dried? Was the creation of Israel in keeping with Article 1 of the United Nations Charter, which invites the nations of the world to bring about by peaceful means and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes? Was it just that a group of foreign colonists should install themselves in the land of a people which had been there since ancient times?

60. On 18 November [70th meeting] the representative of Israel spoke at the morning plenary meeting on behalf of the Jews, but he can really speak only on behalf of the Zionists. The Jews do not recognize the State of Zion. This has been mentioned by thousands of American Jews and Jews from Europe and the East, as well as others, in the following terms: “Zionism is a complete falsification of Judaism and the Zionist State cannot represent the Jewish people.”⁵

61. Zionism is a political idea aimed at establishing a client State at the very heart of the Arab world. To invoke humanitarian principles in protection of the Jews is but a manoeuvre being shamelessly used by Zionism in order to mystify those who are unaware of its true nature.

62. The representative of the Zionists spoke to complain to the world, but he is well aware that Israel takes refuge

³ Quoted in English by the speaker.

⁴ Georges Friedmann, *The End of the Jewish People?* (Garden City, New York, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1967), p. 263. Quoted in English by the speaker.

⁵ Quoted in English by the speaker.

behind humanitarian principles, principles which Israel has never practised.

63. For example, and merely to remind the Assembly, I would recall that Mr. Franklin Roosevelt, the President of the United States during the Second World War, proposed the settlement of 150,000 Jews in the United States of America in order to save them from nazism. But the Zionists themselves rejected that proposal and compelled the President of the United States to give up his proposal, because, according to them, they wanted the Jews to emigrate to Palestine even if the Jews themselves did not want to do that. At that time, *The New York Times* wrote: "Why in God's name should the fate of all those unhappy people be subordinated to a single cry of statehood?"⁵

64. The humanitarian criterion has never prevailed in the behaviour of the Zionists. Moreover, the top leaders of the Zionist political movement repeated at that time that:

"If we do not have enough victims, we shall have no right to an independent State. One cow in Palestine is more important than all the Jews in Poland. The old will await their fate. They are economically and morally of no consideration."⁵

65. Is that the humanity to which the representative of Israel was referring as he wept crocodile tears? Is land more important than the lives of tens of thousands of Jews? Is one cow in Palestine more important than the lives of all the Jews in Poland? Did Chaim Weizmann believe in humanitarian considerations when he said, with regard to the Jews who were being put in gas chambers during the Nazi era, that he wished to save only 2 million young Jews and that, because of economic and moral considerations, the old had to suffer their fate?

66. We the Arabs feel affection and esteem for the Jews. We respect them. We respect their religion and we venerate their Holy Scriptures. Their ancestors were our ancestors. Their security is part of our own security. But these Zionists, these invading colonists, with their arrogance and cynicism, have brought to our part of the world customs and traditions with which we are not familiar. They act in an inhuman way. It is as though they had come from outer space to sow hatred everywhere, among brothers, between father and son, between Jews, Moslems and Christians. We all belong to a single race; we are all monotheistic. But the Arabs recognize the right of the Israelis to coexist with them in peace, in the land of peace, provided the Israelis implement all the United Nations resolutions, withdraw their aggressive troops from all the occupied territories, respect the inalienable rights of the Arab people of Palestine and recognize that people's right to be an independent entity in its own land.

67. The report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People [A/31/35] contains recommendations for the consideration of the General Assembly. The United Nations must support those recommendations and adopt urgent measures to restore peace to the Middle East. The chances for peace are probably greater today than ever before.

68. On behalf of my country, I appeal to all the main parties to the conflict and to all other interested countries

to take this opportunity to act in all sincerity in the service of peace. It is my fervent hope that the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East may be resumed, with the participation of all the parties concerned. We are convinced that there are enormous chances for the success of that Conference, provided Israel displays goodwill towards the attainment of a comprehensive and just solution to the Middle East problem.

69. Mr. MESTIRI (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): It is 30 years since the problem of Palestine first came before us, but it is still one of the main concerns of the international community, creating a hotbed of dangerous tension in the Middle East and threatening international peace and security.

70. That means that the question of Palestine is one of the most important items on the agenda of this Assembly and that the need to find a just and lasting solution to it is becoming increasingly urgent. These past 30 years have shown the pointlessness of attempts to impose a solution by force. After many diplomatic and military vicissitudes, the adversaries of the Palestinian people have not managed to rid themselves of that people, whose constant struggle is today, after countless difficulties, being crowned with more and more victories on the diplomatic and political level as well as on the level of armed resistance. Only a few years ago that people was regarded by many as a mere group of refugees living on international charity. But today the Arab people of Palestine has emerged as a national entity, conscious of its own personality and resolved to regain all its rights, particularly its right to exist on territory which has always belonged to it and its right to self-determination in a free and independent State.

71. The inalienable nature of those rights is clear from the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Tunisia is one of the 20 members of that Committee. As a member of the Committee it is not for us to sing the praises of the report on the Committee's work, but it is our duty to pay a tribute to the Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Fall of Senegal, whose talents, objectivity and energy are well known to everyone. Indeed, most of the representatives who have participated in this debate have expressed their appreciation and esteem for the Committee, which carried out the letter and spirit of the terms of reference given it by the General Assembly. Only—or almost only—the representative of Israel felt that he had to attack the Committee, and the least that one can say about his attack is that it smacked of violence and untruth. We regret that in an atmosphere that we wish to see calm and constructive our Israeli colleague took such a negative approach. His accusation that the Committee's recommendations sought the "dismemberment" of the State of Israel and its "effective disintegration" is simply contrary to the facts. All the representatives here can verify that the report in more than one place expresses the Committee's concern that the independence and security of all the States of the region, without any exception—including, of course, the new Palestinian State—should be guaranteed, as well as their right to secure and recognized boundaries. In fact, the Committee does not deny Israel its right to exist; it denies Israel the right which it wishes to arrogate to itself, to occupy the land of and dominate the neighbouring peoples, and particularly the people of Pales-

tine, whose existence Israel denies. Or perhaps we must understand that Israel considers that withdrawal from the Arab territories occupied in 1967 would be a dismemberment of its territory. If that is true, it amounts purely and simply to Israel's total rejection of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which it repeatedly mentions.

Mr. Florin (German Democratic Republic), Vice-President, took the Chair.

72. Indeed, the report contemplates the establishment of the Palestinian State only in the territories occupied since 1967, whereas General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 1947 which created the State of Israel drew its frontiers in a much more restrictive manner.

73. Moreover, in our view any serious negotiation based on sound legal considerations should take as its starting point the 1947 resolution which sanctioned the partition of Palestine and made possible the creation of a Jewish State.

74. The President of the Republic of Tunisia, Habib Bourguiba, has since 1965 been advocating such negotiations on that basis, and he did so in a famous statement to the Palestinian refugees in Jericho, on Palestinian soil. Let no one say we have said what we have never said. We do not advocate the return of Israel to its 1947 frontiers as a prior condition for negotiations. Rather, we continue to believe that the resolution is a good point of departure for negotiations among the parties concerned and, more particularly, between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

75. President Bourguiba made the following explanation during a press conference in Istanbul in May 1965, in reply to a question asked by the correspondent of the Israeli newspaper, *Ma'ariv*:

“My being an Arab leader does not mean that I should define how to solve the problem of Palestine. It is up to the Palestinians to do so themselves. As for us, we simply propose methods and solutions.”

76. Decried by some when they were put forward—and history has shown that they were presented at the appropriate time—the ideas of Tunisia and its President in the matter have made much progress. In Israel, however, they have from the beginning been badly received; this says a good deal about the intentions of Israel vis-à-vis the Palestinians and the Arabs. Those intentions became apparent shortly after, during the aggression of 1967.

77. In fact, the suggestions of President Bourguiba left Israel very little choice. In the book devoted to what he has called “the challenge of President Bourguiba” entitled *The Search for Peace in the Middle East*, an Israeli author, a former member of the Knesset, Mr. Samuel Merlin, describes at length the embarrassment of Israeli leaders whose speeches on peace were at one stroke revealed to be nothing but propaganda. He describes their hesitations:

“To take a stand would have revealed the cornerstone of Israel's policy: Peace at no price. It would demonstrate

that Israel was either unwilling or unable to concede anything, or to compromise.”⁶

Later, he adds:

“... the reason for the bewilderment and confusion of the Israelis in the face of Bourguiba's challenge can be summed up: He offered a single package containing two elements. One of them the Israelis liked: recognition of Israel and peaceful coexistence. The other they disliked—they were afraid of even the thought of it: the peace would have to be negotiated on the basis of mutual concessions.”⁷

78. In the light of that analysis, written in 1968, it can be understood why the representative of Israel now turns his back on the constructive proposals contained in the report and addresses the past more than the present, recalling at length that the Arabs have rejected the United Nations resolution creating Israel, repeating that they did not wish to recognize the Jewish State in 1947, and so on.

79. But the Arab States and the Palestinians have never concealed that they considered the creation of the Israeli State unjust and iniquitous. However, today they can go beyond that negative attitude and work towards a peace which, though it may not be ideal, would at least be acceptable. Is Israel ready to do the same? Is it ready to negotiate seriously on the basis of United Nations resolutions—those of the General Assembly and those of the Security Council? Is it ready to return the territories occupied by force? We have never heard a responsible Israeli Government official make specific proposals for a peaceful solution. Peace seems to be a very abstract concept for the Israeli leaders. Very often they refer to conditions for and the modalities of negotiations, but they never refer to their point of departure or to a possible goal.

80. What part of Palestine occupied after the partition are they ready to return—that occupied before 1967, that occupied after 1967, or neither? And let it not be said that the Israelis wish to go to the negotiating table without any prior conditions, because as Mr. Samuel Merlin says “their own demand for ‘no pre-conditions’ is in effect a pre-condition.”⁸

81. We wish to remain optimistic because it seems to us that the international community, including Arabs and Israelis, can hardly continue to remain blind to a danger which turns the Palestinian problem into one which jeopardizes international peace and security. Its solution is the key to the settlement of the Middle East question, of which it constitutes the decisive element, the very essence of it. For there is nothing else that divides the Arabs and the Jews; contrary to the Zionist legend, history shows there has never been any ancestral hatred between them. It is unfortunately true that the Jews have been subjected to a holocaust and to odious persecution on a vast scale, but that did not happen in the Arab world or in the Moslem

⁶ Samuel Merlin, *The Search for Peace in the Middle East* (Cranbury, New Jersey, Thomas Yoseloff, 1968), p. 201. Quoted in English by the speaker.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 209. Quoted in English by the speaker.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

world, where such treatment would be simply inconceivable. The restoration of the rights of the Palestinian people—their right to exist, their right to their own homeland, to dignity and to independence—is not a matter of settling scores.

82. Israel should understand this better than anyone because the representative of the Jewish State has, after all, referred to mutual respect and to restoration of the grandeur of our common Semitic civilization. He has, moreover, mentioned his wish to take a step forward. Let this step be the recognition, proclaimed here, of the Palestinian people and its right to a free and independent State on its ancestral land.

83. Mr. PAPOULIAS (Greece) (*interpretation from French*): Repeatedly and most categorically Greece has stated that the Palestinian problem lies at the heart of the Middle East crisis. In other words, it is a crisis directly linked to international peace and security.

84. This indeed is the reason why the Greek delegation has on many occasions expressed its solidarity and sympathy with the Palestinian people, a people which is part of the great Arab nation, with which my country has historic links of friendship and a common heritage going back to the distant past. In more recent times, when the Arab peoples reaffirmed their rights, it was only natural that Greece should be at their side.

85. On this occasion I should like to recall what the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece said in the general debate at the beginning of the present session of the General Assembly:

“As to our relations with the Arab countries, with which so many ties bind us, they are becoming closer in all sectors, and this gives me an opportunity to stress once again that the position of Greece on the problem of the Middle East is based on the principles of the Charter and first and foremost upon the principle of self-determination, as well as upon the resolutions adopted by the Security Council and the General Assembly. This policy is not dictated by circumstances; it is based upon immutable principles, the primacy of law over lawlessness, the right of all peoples to an identity of their own and of all States to a peaceful life behind inviolable frontiers.

“It follows, therefore, that we are against the acquisition of territory by force and therefore we are in favour of the evacuation of all the occupied Arab territories. We also consider that any solution to the problem of the Middle East must take into account the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.” [*12th meeting, paras. 162 and 163.*]

86. We believe that the debates in the thirtieth session of the General Assembly which lead to the adoption of resolutions 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX), which were supported by Greece, and the later debates in the Security Council and the present debate in this Assembly amply and clearly demonstrate the great importance of the Palestinian problem and are proof, if proof were needed, of its seriousness.

87. This being the case, I wish to restate that Greece's position on this problem is based on the following principles: first, the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territories by the use of military force; secondly, the withdrawal by Israel from all the Arab territories occupied in June 1967; thirdly, the recognition of the legitimate inalienable rights of the Palestinians, including their right to self-determination and to a national identity; fourthly, a solution guaranteeing the sovereignty and independence of all the States of the region; and fifthly, support for all efforts at negotiation designed to bring about a just, lasting and peaceful settlement in the Middle East in accordance with the aforementioned principles, including the reconvening of the Geneva Peace Conference, with the participation of all the interested parties. I should like to recall that Greece voted in favour of resolutions 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX), in which the General Assembly requested that the PLO, the representative of the Palestinian people, should be invited to participate in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East held under the auspices of the United Nations, on an equal footing with the other parties. More specifically, paragraph 3 of resolution 3375 (XXX) provides that all necessary steps should be taken to secure the invitation of the PLO to participate in the work of the Conference as well as in all other efforts for peace.

88. Another essential aspect of the problem is the one which was referred to in paragraph 2(b) of resolution 3376 (XXX), namely, the return of the Palestinians to their homes and property from which they have been displaced and uprooted.

89. This position of Greece, although predating the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People [A/31/35], is, as can be seen, in conformity with the principles stated in that report with regard to the settlement of the Palestinian problem. Therefore we think that the Committee's work and its report constitute an important contribution to the search for a just and lasting solution of the problem within the framework of the United Nations and in conformity with the resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

90. Moreover, my delegation would like to stress the importance of the consensus statement made on behalf of the Security Council by its President on 11 November 1976 at the end of the debate on the situation in the occupied Arab territories. By that statement the Security Council marked its grave anxiety and concern over the present serious situation in the occupied Arab territories as a result of continued Israeli occupation. *inter alia*, the Council strongly deplored any measures that alter the demographic composition or geographical nature of those territories and particularly the establishment of settlements. The Security Council also deplored in a general way the failure of Israel to show any regard for the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly.

91. As the Council recognizes, the situation remains explosive in the Middle East and continues to jeopardize seriously international peace and the stability of the region.

92. However that may be, we express the hope that all the interested parties will demonstrate political wisdom and a

sincere desire to negotiate, for these are the essential conditions if we wish to find a fundamental and comprehensive political settlement for the Middle East problem and establish a just and lasting peace.

93. Mr. M. H. KHAN (Bangladesh): Some 50 years ago there was no Palestine problem—only Palestine itself, an Arab homeland, continuously inhabited by Arabs for over 2,000 years. Today the situation that obtains in Palestine is essentially a *de facto* and illegal situation, based on the unacceptable fact of occupation by force. It is a situation which violates international law and the Charter of the United Nations, an untenable and, therefore, volatile situation liable to erupt unpredictably into violence and war. It remains a continuing grave threat to international peace and security.

94. However, the heart of the Palestinian problem is remarkable in its simplicity. A people deprived of its natural birthright, forcibly uprooted by aliens, is now demanding the correction of a monumental injustice. It is essentially a political problem: the struggle of a people for its right to self-determination and the achievement of legitimate national rights. The tragedy of the situation was compounded by the fact that this reality had been obscured and confused by the treatment of the problem, not as a political one, but as an essentially humanitarian one.

95. For 25 years the United Nations had dealt with the problem with indifference, ignoring the rights of the people of Palestine, its existence as an entity and its status as a people, and had treated it to the indignity of the status of helpless refugees, permanently dislodged and pitiable objects of international charity. Those who remained behind in the territory or became the victims of further illegal occupation were reduced to the level of second-class citizens under the glare of the permanent suspicion of an armed occupation. Their position, furthermore, is far from passive. In recent years these people have exploded periodically into violence as a result of the unilateral measures taken by Israel to change the legal, demographic and cultural status of the territories it has illegally occupied through a systematic denial of basic human rights.

96. There is a new and defined impetus for the Assembly's meetings today. After a quarter of a century of diffused and piecemeal deliberations on the problem of Palestine, the Assembly is finally dealing with the question in its totality, encompassing all aspects—historical, political and juridical. By an overwhelming endorsement in resolution 3236 (XXIX), the Assembly also recognized the right of the Palestinian people to present their own case and to participate in the deliberations through their duly acknowledged representative, the PLO, which has secured for Palestine such specific recognition as PLO's full membership in the non-aligned Conferences, in the Islamic Conferences and in the League of Arab States. Most important of all, by the adoption of its historic resolution 3376 (XXX), which set up the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the Assembly has provided a pragmatic framework for collectively moving towards a final solution of the problem, not through discord and acrimony and not through a disarray of incompatible approaches, but through a process of objectivity and constructive participation.

97. Those developments are a reflection of the basic realities of the situation and the crystallization of the views held by the great majority of States Members of the United Nations. They underscore qualitative changes that have taken place in the Middle East and the compulsion to find an urgent solution of a problem that is balanced on the thin edge between a durable peace and dangerous confrontation.

98. My Government's stand on the question of Palestine has been consistent and unequivocal; it is based not on political expediency but on our firm belief in the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter. It is founded on our enduring commitment to the cause of oppressed people everywhere who are struggling to free themselves from the bondage of colonialism, racism, aggression and exploitation. It is rooted in the ideals of tolerance and the conviction that men and women of all religions and all races can live together harmoniously in an environment of peace, justice and equality. It is within this vital perspective that we view the Palestinian problem and reiterate our total solidarity with the cause of the Palestinian people.

99. We have therefore very closely studied the report that has been presented by the Committee on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. We congratulate the Chairman of that Committee and its Rapporteur for their excellent presentations [*66th meeting*], which have been characterized by moderation and a welcome quality of balance and pragmatism. We are, in particular, struck by the guiding motivation of the members of the Committee who believe that implementation of their recommendations would "constitute a contribution within the framework of the United Nations and would complement efforts towards the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region" [*A/31/35, para. 58*].

100. Bangladesh fully supports the recommendations of the Committee. We believe that the two-phase programme governing the return of the refugees and the proposals for securing the exercise of the inalienable rights of self-determination of the people of Palestine do, indeed, constitute, as the Rapporteur of the Committee so eloquently phrased it, a viable "graduated approach containing concrete, constructive and realistic suggestions which could advance progress towards peace, redress injustice, satisfy legitimate aspirations and allay genuine preoccupations". [*66th meeting, para. 46.*]

101. Bangladesh believes that peace is an essential imperative for the survival of mankind, but for such a peace to endure it must be based on justice. Justice requires the undoing of all acts contrary to the principles of the Charter—and, in particular, of acts of aggression and the denial of fundamental human rights, chief among which is the right of self-determination of all peoples. It is in this context that my Government considers it indispensable that any just and durable political settlement in the Middle East include the return of the Palestinian people to their homelands and the restoration of their rights and properties, the free exercise of their right to self-determination, and the vacating and restoration of all territories illegally occupied by Israel through force.

102. The Committee's recommendations have paved the way for a realistic achievement of these ends. The time has

now come for the international community to take forthright action with determination and optimism. The choice before this Assembly is clear: it is presented with a crucial opportunity of charting a realistic path to a durable and just peace through timely and concerted action or, by failing to do so, of opening the door to further military conflict and global conflagration.

103. Bangladesh is confident that, given the necessary will, the choice of peace can and must prevail.

104. Mr. BENGELLOUN (Morocco) (*interpretation from French*): Ever since Israeli forces occupied almost all the territory of Palestine in 1948 the problem of Palestine has been dealt with sometimes from a humanitarian standpoint with the aim of alleviating the sufferings of the Palestinian refugees and sometimes within the general context of debates on the problem of the Middle East. Thus the delegation of Morocco can only express its profound satisfaction at seeing the General Assembly embarked today on a search for a means of arriving at a just and equitable solution of the problem of Palestine and of redressing at the same time the injustice it had done to the people of Palestine in 1947.

105. Now I should like to recall that the Palestinian people has been in the vanguard of the peoples who are waging a war of national liberation. Between 1920 and 1939, these brave people rose up against the occupying Power on seven occasions, on the most important of which, in 1936, the struggle lasted more than six months and constituted the greatest movement of civil disobedience in modern history.

106. Unfortunately, that people, which has struggled heroically to accede to independence, fell victim to the adverse consequences of a plot whose objective was to establish on Palestinian land a new foreign occupation.

107. In fact, the partition decision, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 29 November 1947 [*resolution 181 (II)*], was adopted despite the stubborn opposition of the overwhelming majority of the Palestinian population and at a time when most of the countries represented in the United Nations had a somewhat esoteric understanding of the legitimate rights of peoples to independence and national sovereignty.

108. That tragic decision constituted a flagrant injustice because it accorded to the Jews of Palestine 56 per cent of the total area of Palestine whereas they had been in possession of only 6 per cent of it. Moreover, the Jewish State thus created out of nothing was to encompass an Arab population larger than the Jewish population. We know that when Zionism succeeded in 1917 in obtaining the Balfour Declaration the Jewish population of Palestine represented hardly 8 per cent of the total population despite the efforts at settling Jewish colonists, who could only lay claim to 2.5 per cent of the land.

109. Since then, Israel's policy has consistently been based on the physical and political elimination of the Palestinian entity and on its replacement by an artificial settlement of Jewish populations arbitrarily uprooted from their original communities.

110. The failure of this policy, fortunately, is beginning to loom on the horizon. Indeed, today we see signs of disenchantment among the Jewish populations that are victims of this policy of uprooting. Israeli immigration and emigration figures speak for themselves. I avail myself of this opportunity to recall the decision of His Majesty King Hassan II concerning the right of any Moroccan citizen of Jewish faith who, under the influence of a systematic propaganda campaign, had emigrated to Israel, to return to his homeland. The necessary instructions have been given to all our diplomatic and consular missions to facilitate the repatriation of our Jewish fellow citizens. I am gratified to note that some of them have welcomed with profound relief the royal pronouncement which has thus enabled them to return to their homes and to resume their normal lives within their national communities.

111. Moreover, His Majesty King Hassan II, replying only yesterday evening to several journalists during a broadcast over the radio station Europe No. 1, *Le Club de la Presse*, declared, in this connexion:

"I desire the return to Morocco of Moroccan Jews, particularly as I had never asked them to leave the country. Quite the contrary."

112. The Palestinian people has never admitted defeat. Perseveringly and with determination it has uncompromisingly opposed all forces of evil. Convinced of the justice of its cause, it has been able to resist the language of force and has maintained its existence thanks to its undying faith in the justice of its cause. Thus for decades that people has been subjected to pressures to abdicate its existence and to renounce its national identity. But, dispelling the hopes of its enemies, it has constantly affirmed its right to life, thus providing an example, which first roused the interest of the international community and later won its respect and admiration.

113. The resolutions adopted by the General Assembly in 1974 indeed marked an historic turning-point in its assessment of the Palestinian problem. In our view, they consecrate the victories won by the Palestinian people in all areas. Moreover, they faithfully reflect the new developments in the Middle East situation; they also represent a first step towards the redress of the injustices suffered by the Palestinian people ever since the General Assembly adopted its famous resolution on 29 November 1947.

114. The fact that international legal status has been conferred on the Palestinian entity in no way means that that entity has existed only since adoption of those resolutions: it is an historical entity that has existed for milleniums and that has kept its own identity, despite the fact that the Zionist invasion has attempted to efface its identity and eliminate it from the face of the earth.

115. At the summit conference held in Rabat from 26 to 29 October 1974 on the initiative of His Majesty King Hassan II, the Arab Heads of State highlighted the vanguard role assumed by the PLO, recognizing that liberation movement as the only legal representative of the Palestinian people. Since then, the PLO has become the undeniable spokesman of the Palestinians in all international forums.

116. The ever increasing international recognition of the PLO, its admission to many international forums and its election as a member of the Co-ordinating Bureau of Non-Aligned Countries stress the role of that organization in the concert of nations.

117. Hence I am glad to be able to stress the satisfaction of the delegation of Morocco at seeing Mr. Kaddoumi, head of the political department of the PLO, and the other members of his delegation participating constructively and positively in our debates.

118. The Moroccan delegation now wishes to pay a tribute to the work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, particularly to its Chairman, my brother and friend, Mr. Médoune Fall of Senegal, who has tirelessly striven to highlight the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, and who, in a brilliant statement before the Assembly, not only set forth the Palestinian problem since its inception, but also drew certain conclusions that will enable us to arrive at a just and durable solution of that problem. We also extend our warmest congratulations to all members of the Committee on the objectivity and impartiality that characterize their report, which thus constitutes a contribution to the efforts undertaken by the United Nations to reassert the rights of the Palestinian people.

119. The Moroccan delegation has most carefully studied this report, which we found very discerning and moderate, indeed. We approve, therefore, of its guidelines and its programme of action.

120. We note with satisfaction the conclusions affirming that only a solution of the Palestinian problem can be a *sine qua non* for any settlement of the Middle East problem. The report has not failed to draw attention to the gravity of the consequences of Israel's annexationist policy, which is reflected in the establishment of hundreds of settlements in the occupied Arab territories. Aware of the fact that this policy can only contribute to complicating the situation in the region, the Committee has justly demanded that Israel put an immediate end to the establishment of such settlements.

121. I wish also, on behalf of the Moroccan delegation, to express our warmest gratitude to the Secretary-General for his constant, sustained efforts aimed at implementation of the resolution concerning the invitation to the PLO to participate in the Security Council's deliberations on an equal footing with all its members.

122. We venture to hope that the Security Council and the General Assembly will take account of the recommendations set forth and designed to create practical means for the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights.

123. Unfortunately, we can only deplore the stubbornness and arrogance with which Israel continues to treat this problem. We roundly condemn this policy, which is designed to crush the Palestinian people under the weight of injustice and to keep it in a state of perpetual exile.

124. Is there any need to recall that, after having occupied the whole of Palestine, Israel continues, to this day, to

harass the Palestinians every time it has an opportunity to do so? Raids, attacks, the expulsion of their leaders, assassinations, kidnappings—nothing has been spared them.

125. Morocco considers that the persistence of this Middle East tragedy, at a time when colonialism is expiring in its last strongholds, is a challenge to all freedom-loving peoples.

126. Thus it is intolerable to see that colonialism is still rearing its head in the deliberate policy of occupation, annexation and expansion pursued by Israel.

127. In a peaceful and holy land known throughout its age-old history for its religious tolerance and for the coexistence of its different communities, it is paradoxical to witness a reversal of values characterized by the most retrograde selfishness and religious intolerance.

128. We note with some satisfaction that at its 1969th meeting, on 11 November 1976, the Security Council reached a consensus in which, in addition to stating its grave anxiety and profound concern over the situation in the occupied Arab territories, it deplored the activities of the Israeli authorities in disregard of all the resolutions adopted by our Organization.

129. Morocco, which participated in the Security Council debate, of course welcomes the unanimous decision adopted by the Council which fully demonstrates the seriousness of the situation and highlights the nature of the acts perpetrated by Israel.

130. We are compelled to note that, during these past 30 years, the Palestinian people has never ceased to endure all sorts of evils inflicted on it by the Israeli occupiers. This situation has resulted in the establishment of a permanent hotbed of tension, which is a danger for international peace and security. To this day our Organization has, as I said, above all, tried to ease the suffering of the Palestinians whereas it should have been taking effective measures to attack the evil at its roots. The Palestinians want no more of international charity, which can never constitute a solution of their problem.

131. It is high time that the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people be restored to it. Those inalienable rights necessarily imply the recognition of the Palestinians' national identity.

132. The identity of a people cannot be the subject of negotiation or compromise. Thus we are convinced that any attempts to view the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people as a matter for negotiation will be doomed to failure.

133. The only solution lies in the unconditional return of the Palestinian people to its homeland, where it must enjoy guarantees of the exercise of its sovereignty and independence.

134. It is for the United Nations, which recognizes the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, to consolidate that recognition by envisaging a sound and appropriate solution that would do justice to the Palestinians. The

achievement of such a solution, since the present circumstances are favourable, is the most urgent and essential task, for otherwise an even more explosive situation might be created, whose human and political consequences will be incalculable.

135. It is thus urgent that the relevant resolutions of the United Nations should be respected, and to that end we should take into account the conclusions of the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the measures proposed by the Organization of African Unity and the non-aligned movement, for those measures reflect our common and legitimate concern to break out of the inertia which has characterized the United Nations attitude to this grave question.

136. The Kingdom of Morocco believes that Israel cannot indefinitely deny the existence of the Palestinian people, for a true and lasting peace cannot be found unless a solution is found to the problem of Palestine.

137. That is why the Moroccan delegation is convinced that the PLO must be present at all international meetings and conferences which deal with the problem of the Middle East.

138. The efforts of the international community must henceforward focus on the substance of the problem, in order to secure the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

139. But, pending that inevitable settlement, we think that it is the duty of the international community to bring pressure to bear on Israel and, in particular, to prevent it from pursuing its policy of changing the nature of the authentic national heritage of the Palestinian people and altering the demographic and physical character of the occupied Arab territories.

140. The PLO, need I recall, has given tangible proof of its political maturity by assuming fully its historical responsibilities in the serious search for a political settlement. The statement by Mr. Kaddoumi, the head of the political department of the PLO, in this Assembly [66th meeting] demonstrates forcefully that the Palestinian people, while being determined to recover its rights to a national existence, is looking to the future, because it intends to live in a climate of peace, justice and tolerance.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.