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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Letter dated 11 November 1977 from the Permanent Representative of
Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the following statement, broadcast over television by the Prime Minister of Israel to the people of Egypt on 11 November 1977:

"Citizens of Egypt: This is the first time that I address you directly, but it is not the first time that I think and speak of you. You are our neighbours and always will be.

"For the last 29 years, a tragic, completely unnecessary conflict continues between your country and ours. Since the time when the Government of King Farouk ordered to invade our land, Eretz Israel, in order to strangle our newly-restored freedom and independence, four major wars took place between you and us. Much blood was shed on both sides. Many families were orphaned and bereaved in Egypt and Israel. In retrospect, we know that all those attempts to destroy the Jewish State were in vain, as all the sacrifices you were called upon to make - in life, in development, in economy, in social advancement. All these superfluous sacrifices were also in vain. And may I tell you, our neighbours, that so it will be in the future.

"You should know that we came back to the land of our forefathers, that it is we who liberated the country from British rule, and we established our independence in our land for all generations to come.

"We wish you well. In fact, there is no reason whatsoever for hostility between our peoples. In ancient times, Egypt and Israel were allies, real friends and allies, against a common enemy from the north. Yes, indeed, many changes have taken place since those days, but perhaps the intrinsic basis for friendship and mutual help remains unaltered.

"We, the Israelis, stretch out our hand to you. Ours is not, as you

know, a weak hand. If attacked, we shall always defend ourselves, as our forefathers, the Maccabees, did - and won the day.

"But we do not want any clashes with you. Let us say one to another, and let it be a silent oath by both peoples of Egypt and Israel: no more wars, no more bloodshed and no more threats. Let us not only make peace, let us also start on the road of friendship, sincere and productive co-operation. We can help each other. We can make the lives of our nations better, easier, happier.

"Your President said, two days ago, that he will be ready to come to Jerusalem, to our Parliament - The Knesset - in order to prevent one Egyptian soldier from being wounded. It is a good statement. I have already welcomed it, and it will be a pleasure to welcome and receive your President with the traditional hospitality you and we have inherited from our common father, Abraham. And I, for my part, will, of course, be ready to come to your capital, Cairo, for the same purpose: no more wars - peace - a real peace, and forever. It is in the Holy Koran, in Surah 5, that our right to this land was stated and sanctified. May I read to you this eternal Surah:

'Recall when Moses said to his people: Oh my people, remember the goodness of Allah towards you when he appointed prophets amongst you ... Oh my people, enter the Holy Land which Allah hath written down as yours ...'

"It is in this spirit of our common belief in God, in divine providence, in right and in justice, in all the great human values which were handed down to you by the Prophet Mohammed and by our prophets - Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel - it is in this human spirit that I say to you with all my heart: Shalom. This means 'Sulh'. And vice-versa: Sulh means 'Shalom'."

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 31.

(Signed) Chaim HERZOG
Permanent Representative of Israel
to the United Nations
