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Forty-first session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE EIGHTY-SEVENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 26 November 1986, at 3 p.m.

<u>President:</u>	Mr. CHOUDHURY	(Bangladesh)
later:	Mr. FERM	(Sweden)
later:	Mr. MOUSHOUTAS	(Cyprus)
later:	Mr. DOS SANTOS	(Mozambique)

- The situation in the Middle East: reports of the Secretary-General [37]

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 37

THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
(A/41/453 and Add.1, A/41/768-S/18427)

The PRESIDENT: I should like to propose that the list of speakers in the debate on this item be closed this afternoon at 5 o'clock. If I hear no objection I shall take it that the Assembly so decides.

It was so decided

The PRESIDENT: I request representatives wishing to participate in the debate to add their names to the list of speakers as soon as possible.

Mr. SALAH (Jordan) (interpretation from Arabic): A situation of "no war, no peace" in its most dire form at present dominates the Arab-Israeli conflict. The reason is that the real demands of Israel are indeed far removed from the claims spawned by its propaganda machine, that it wishes to live in peace and understanding. Israel moves on two levels, each complementing the other but both leading ultimately to the persistence of this State of no war, no peace, just as they were the origin of it.

(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

At the first level, Israel strives to undermine the chances of peace, locally, regionally and internationally; at the other, it pretends to manifest the desire to live in peace with its neighbours. This has had serious and dangerous results, the most obvious of which has been deliberate distortion of the reality of the Arab-Israeli conflict so that the world in general should not realize the extent of the responsibility borne by Israel for the absence of peace between it and its neighbours the Arab States.

Distortion of the realities of the Arab-Israeli conflict began at the outset and involved all political, economic, cultural, historical and even geographic aspects. Politically, Israel portrays the Palestinian people, the victim of aggression, as if it were the aggressor, and the Arab States that stand with the Palestinians to prevent their annihilation also as aggressor States. Similarly, Israel launched its various military campaigns against neighbouring Arab countries, and even non-neighbouring Arab countries, under the pretext of self-defence. Israel alleges that the Arabs do not recognize its existence, while it is trying determinedly to wipe out the very existence of the Palestinian people. It also claims that its security is under constant threat, at a time when it truly threatens the security of the Arab States. This operation of twisting facts takes place at all levels and in all fields.

In the occupied territories new settlements are being established under the guise of expanding existing settlements. Arab lands are being expropriated under legal and security pretexts. Palestinian civilians are being deported or harassed under the guise of alleged security prerogatives.

Israel is even trying to rewrite history in a distorted manner, using the method of twisting and stretching memory as far as possible or abridging it as much

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as possible and ignoring what lies in between the two extremes - that is, the truth - in a bid to transform the history of Palestine into its own history alone.

This applies to geography and to society as well. The Arab peoples, who are authentic in their national entities, their cultural identity and their regional frontiers, are not recognized, indeed, are totally disregarded, in Israel's view of the situation. Furthermore, Islam and its glorious heritage, its humanitarian civilization and its universal religious and social values, which are characterized by universality, tolerance and openness, are summed up under the title of fundamentalism, just as the struggle of the Palestinian people is stamped with the name of terrorism. Arab and Islamic historic rights in Palestine, especially Hebron and Holy Jerusalem, are considered to be merely transient and accidental.

This twisting of the facts of the Arab-Israeli conflict is not limited, as I have said, to the situation in the occupied territories, but goes beyond to reach the regional and international levels. Regionally, Israel seeks to create a situation of instability and tension in which it can exploit its destructive military capabilities in order to shake the authentic and legitimate foundation of the existing regional Arab system. Tolerance, openness and pluralism were all features of life in Palestine and in the region until Israel took the initiative of stirring up and fuelling factional and ethnic strife in various parts of the Middle East, all with the aim of creating a general situation of turmoil and chaos so that it might divide the region into small factional States in which it would be the overwhelming faction.

Israel's basic problem is that it regards the human political, economic, cultural and even geographic elements of the regional system, which have always existed, as illegitimate and not consistent with its racist, expansionist

(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

ideology. Therefore, those authentic elements must be undermined, and to justify the attempt to destroy them they must first be distorted. That is indeed what Israel is undertaking; it is trying to distort and then to destroy the Arab entity, rather than coexist with it.

Contrary to what Israel claims, the regional Arab system would be able to coexist with it if Israel were moderate and peaceful and if it accepted the principle of peaceful coexistence on the basis of mutual recognition and the mutual existence of it and the Arab Palestinian people in Palestine. The Arab States individually and collectively, have indicated this on many occasions. The Palestinians greeted the vanguard of Jewish immigrants at the turn of the century when those immigrants pretended to have come in peace, having fled persecution in Europe, and declared that their only ambition was to live in peace and security. In 1982 the Arabs manifested their desire for peace through the Fez summit meeting, which adopted a comprehensive peace plan which defined the regional and international bases and framework for the coexistence of Israel and the Arab Palestinian people in Palestine.

I mention this to remind the Assembly of a basic fact and that the desire for coexistence and the possibility of such coexistence indeed exist on the Arab side.*

*Mr. Ferm (Sweden), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

However, Israel wishes to portray the Arabs as being only rejectionists and extremists, and except for the word "No" it turns a deaf ear to everything they say. Indeed, it has created the myth of Arab rejection by its own prior rejection of every just, honourable and balanced solution, and especially by its denial of the legitimate rights of the Arab Palestinian people. In contrast to the Arab side's desire and possibility of coexistence there is a total absence of a desire or possibility of coexistence with the Arab Palestinian people on the Israeli side. The cause, and indeed the proof, lie in the way in which Israel defines its rights and envisages its regional and international role. Israel defines its rights as applicable to all Palestine; that means that it claims the right to deprive the Palestinian people of their legitimate national rights in their own land, and it sees its role as that of the policeman of the region. For this reason it believes that the outcome of the Arab-Israeli conflict over Palestine can be only the total victory or the total defeat of one of the two sides.

Representatives are certainly aware of the error inherent in such a view and of its danger. The danger of this view is apparent from a reading of history and from the facts of the situation. The lessons of history teach us that a people cannot be liquidated; its land cannot be occupied, however strong the aggressor may be. The era of colonialism has come to an end and the present membership of our Organization is indeed an excellent testimony to this obvious fact. Israel alone can save itself from the fate of the colonialists by accepting coexistence with the Palestinian people on a just, honourable and equitable basis within Palestine. As for the facts of the situation, I am sure they are even more eloquent than I could be if I tried to describe it in spite of Israel's attempts at distortion.

There are approximately 3 million Palestinians, 2 million of whom have the status of refugees, a status which is handed down from parent to child; the rest

(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

live in the Diaspora in various parts of the world. There are 2 million Palestinians under the domination of Israel; some live in a state of terror, turmoil and continuous repression, and others are third-class Israeli citizens. The region around Israel is in a permanent state of instability, which has so far given rise to five Arab-Israeli wars.

As for the danger of the Israeli belief that the Arab-Israeli conflict can result only in the total victory or total defeat of one of the two sides, this danger is inherent in the political and ethical implications of this view. Politically, such an attitude implies continuing violence, conflict and suffering for coming generations. It implies the misuse of energies and capabilities which could have been mobilized for construction and development. As for the moral danger, this is inherent in the continuous call for genocide and its perpetration by Israel against the other side.

Here I wish to reiterate what I said a short while ago. The political, cultural and intellectual nature of the Arab regional system is such that the principle of annihilation is alien to it. Israel's claim that the Arabs wish to destroy it is therefore untrue. Its attempts to liquidate the Palestinians, to deprive them of a political role and to deny their national rights in Palestine cannot be accepted under any circumstances by the Arab nation.

The Arabs therefore reject the status quo created by Israel, which is reflected in its efforts to liquidate the Palestinian people. The Arabs also reject the fallacy propagated by Israel, namely, that they allegedly want to liquidate it. This is Arab rejection, if the members of the Assembly wish to use the word. It is a rejection of the logic of annihilation, whatever its source and whatever the target.

However, Israel tries to distort this fact, so as to further its destructive, expansionist designs. One can appreciate the Arab situation, a situation which, as

(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

can be seen, is legitimate from the ethical point of view and possible from the political point of view. This position can save not only the Palestinian people but even Israel itself from the danger inherent in its aggressive policy towards the Palestinians.

This position adopted by the Arabs helps to reduce the international community's responsibility to face up to the aggressor, Israel, directly, because the Arabs stand up to Israeli schemes and Israeli aggression on behalf of the free, peace-loving forces in the world, wherever they may be, even within Israel itself. This legitimate position of the Arabs also relieves the international community of the guilt complex it would have if the world were to condone these irresponsible Israeli practices as a result of circumstances, selfish interests, or inability to confront this extremist State supported from outside.

The key to Arab acceptance of Israel is in the hands of Israel itself, and not in the hands of the Arabs, for this key is the Palestinian people. If Israel were to recognize this people and its legitimate rights in accordance with international law and if there were mutual recognition of the existence of both sides, Israel would be able to demand Arab acceptance of its own existence. But if Israel decides to neglect this key it will have lost for ever a chance to live in peace and mutual security with the Arabs.

Attempts to distort the reality of the Arab-Israeli conflict is not confined to Israeli practices against the Palestinian people, but indeed spills over into the broader regional context. As I have already said, its policy towards the Arab States is but an extension, a complement, of its policy towards the Palestinians. It claims that the Arab States seek its destruction while at the same time it strives and works with regional and international forces to dismember the Arab regional system.

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Israel's policy towards the Arab countries can be summed up as an attempt to create and deepen contradictions and to foment crises so as to undermine Arab countries and maintain them in a state of turmoil so that Israel may find it easier to execute its scheme, its plan to redraw the strategic map of the region. Its chosen method of doing so is the use of overt and covert military operations and the exaggerated use of armed force. Israel believes that the Arabs must choose between accepting the status quo and feeling the force of its military might. Israel considers the use of force as the only solution to its problems. Since those problems result from its own acts of aggression and aggrandizement, then the use of military force is the easier course for Israel to follow, regarding it as the least costly. Therefore it is no surprise that it stockpiles all forms of military hardware in the form of either conventional or nuclear weapons, in order to use them to launch wide-scale military operations, to occupy Arab countries, to carry out raids and reprisals, to mount a blitzkrieg or start a preventive war, or to threaten and blackmail, as well as resorting to other uses of military force in its relations with its neighbours.

Israel's complete reliance on force as the primary, indeed the only, option has resulted in a lack of any progress towards a just, lasting and honourable political solution. When Israel calls for direct negotiations, it puts forward no proposals other than surrender to its demands, under the threat of military aggression. This is the reason for the continuing turmoil, violence and suffering that characterizes the situation in the Middle East. This indeed is exactly what the Secretary-General describes in his report on the question. The only good thing about Israel's use of force in its relations with Arabs and Palestinians, is that it shows the neutral observer what Israel's designs really are in terms of its unchanging behaviour towards the Arabs. We all know that in the lexicon of

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international relations force is regarded as one means of conducting foreign policy. But the use of force is governed by the laws enacted by civilized countries, and is restricted to legitimate self-defence and the defence of the vital interests of States. Yet we find that for Israel foreign policy is an instrument in the hands of the Israeli war machine. Israel's foreign policy is part and parcel of its military campaigns, arsenals and expansionist plans. Therefore we can see no Israeli foreign policy towards the Palestinian people and the Arab countries other than a policy involving banishment, annexation, destruction, expansion, seizure of strategic facilities, and the fomenting of regional wars.

It is crystal clear that those are military concepts and not foreign policies. Even the regional wars of others are exploited by Israel to the benefit of its expansionist ideology, which is based on naked force. Therefore we can see no opportunity for peace as long as one of the parties has no foreign policy of peace. That is the reality of Israeli thought. Its leaders view every issue purely from the security and military angle, whether it is the return of the Palestinian refugees to their homes or even development projects in the Arab countries. There is no need to dwell on the Israeli concept of security policy, particularly its inability to distinguish between peace and war. Even the no war, no peace situation, in Israel's view, is a "war in its cradle", as described by General Rabin, the present Israeli Minister of Defence, or its "military operations in times of peace", according to his predecessor, General Dayan. Therefore the reason for the continuation of a state of war and the lack of any peace in the Middle East is the fact that Israel cannot distinguish between war and peace.

The crux of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is the denial by Israel of the rights of the Arab Palestinian people and its attempts to liquidate that people while claiming that it is doing nothing of the kind; it is the absence of any peace

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policy and Israel's inability to distinguish between peace and war, it is the stockpiling of enormous arsenals of conventional and nuclear weapons, and it is envisaging the conflict as one of survival in which the result can be only a total loss or a total victory for one side or the other. Furthermore there is a distortion of reality, a confusion between cause and effect within the framework of an integrated plot in which the Palestinian question is regarded as merely a demographic question, the Arabs are regarded as terrorists or agents of Islamic opportunism, and the world at large solely as either allies or enemies of Israel. For the Israelis world public opinion does not exist; no independent voice of human conscience exists to stand up for the right and to denounce aggression.

In the present circumstances, which are fraught with danger and can only give grounds for pessimism, we in Jordan have attempted as far as possible to consider the Arab-Israeli conflict in a rational, objective manner on the basis of coexistence, moderation and understanding. We have always maintained that there is a difference between war and peace, and that the fruits of peace are greater than the gains of war, even for Israel itself. This has been the guiding line of all our efforts, and the core of our foreign policy towards Israel. Unlike Israel, we have based our policy on a just and honourable peace, not peace at any price. We have even attempted to establish our institutions and infrastructures on a basis which can serve the aims of peace, moderation and understanding. We have proposed peace initiatives. We have co-operated with all peace-loving parties concerned with the question in working out a clear-cut political formula for a peaceful solution and establishing practical mechanisms for implementing it. We have proposed a regional mechanism in co-operation with the Palestine Liberation organization (PLO). Nevertheless, that did not achieve the desired effect, for obvious reasons. When that mechanism was blocked, a mechanism which was directed

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to overcoming the representational difficulties of some of the parties, we went back to reaffirming the importance of an international mechanism represented by the International Peace Conference on the Middle East to be conducted on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), with a view to arriving at a comprehensive, just and permanent settlement that would secure peace and security for all, including the Arab Palestinian people and Israel, in addition to the other Arab States.

(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

If the regional mechanism is not possible, then we have only one recourse, and that is to allow the international mechanism to play its role. I can think of no international organ more qualified than the Security Council, whose permanent members bear special responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. This is what we are suggesting, in co-operation with peace-loving States which champion understanding, stability and international co-operation. We hope it will secure the desired response from all.

Mr. AL-SHANFARI (Oman) (interpretation from Arabic): The General Assembly this morning concluded the general debate on the question of Palestine, the core of the Middle East conflict. The Special Political Committee last week adopted seven important resolutions condemning inhuman Israeli practices against the Arab population, the legitimate owners of the land, and supporting the Palestine cause and that of other Arab-occupied territories. In the same Committee eleven resolutions on the activities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) were adopted.

The General Assembly has before it now four draft resolutions on the question of Palestine and three draft resolutions on the situation in the Middle East, on Al Quds al Sharif, the Golan Heights, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, as well as on the importance attached to convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and establishing a preparatory committee for that conference.

The details of the situation have been repeated time and again since the creation of the United Nations, since the alien entity of Israel was established on Palestine territory and since the spreading of this destructive epidemic, after the defeat of 5 June 1967, to more and more occupied Arab countries on the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Syrian Golan Heights, as well as the regrettable civil war

(Mr. Al-Shanfari, Oman)

and the Israeli military intervention which led to the occupation of new territories in southern Lebanon.

This means that at every regular session of the General Assembly we adopt more than 25 resolutions, in addition to other important resolutions adopted by the Security Council, which all condemn Israeli practices and the illegitimacy of the occupation, demanding that their rights be restored to those entitled to them and that the international community, through the United Nations, should assume its humanitarian role, in accordance with the provisions of the Charter, with a view to bringing about a just, permanent and honourable peace in the Middle East, and to protecting international peace and security.

In spite of all this, Israel still obdurately refuses to comply with the wishes of the international community. It seeks to impress its negative attitude upon super-Powers that assume special responsibilities due to their permanent membership of the Security Council. That membership makes it incumbent upon them to comply with its resolutions, as well as those adopted by the General Assembly, inasmuch as they were parties to their unanimous adoption, beginning with General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 1947 on the Plan of Partition, and all relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, particularly Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

The reports of the Secretary-General dated 14 March 1986 and 29 October 1986 state that:

"the difficulties regarding the convening of the proposed conference - as called for by the General Assembly - have remained essentially the same".

(A/41/768, p. 9, para. 31)

(Mr. Al-Shanfari, Oman)

Why do these difficulties still remain? Who is responsible for creating them in order to obstruct the efforts aimed at achieving peace? The answer to this question is that all Arabs call for peace and Israel is the main party rejecting peace. Can nothing be done to restrain that country? We fully endorse the statement made from this rostrum by the late Mr. Tarik Alsaïd, the former Prime Minister of the Sultanate of Oman, on 7 October 1971, at the twenty-sixth session of the General Assembly, when he said:

"We have always closely followed the issues brought before this Assembly for its consideration and resolution. Often the effectiveness of the United Nations is minimized and its purposes defeated through the rejection by certain Member nations of its findings and their refusal to comply with its decisions. Here lies the greatest danger to this Organization and its very usefulness. We strongly believe that no nation should be allowed to challenge the will of the United Nations and that no nation should possess the right to veto its resolutions.

"We are an Arab nation, and we stand solidly with our brethren in seeking justice for the Arab causes and especially on the question of Palestine. We sincerely hope that the shameful injustice that has been inflicted on the Arab people of Palestine will not remain a blemish in the annals of the United Nations." (Twenty-sixth Session, Official Records, 1957th plenary meeting, p. 22, paras. 267-268)

This has been and still remains Oman's consistent position in accordance with the noble ideals of His Majesty, Sultan Qaboos bin Saïd.

Mr. BADAWI (Egypt) (interpretation from Arabic): No serious debates on the situation in the Middle East can take place without focusing on the Palestine question, for it is the core and crux of the conflict in the Middle East. If this question is resolved, many of the problems which beset the region today will find appropriate solutions. It is therefore no wonder that the General Assembly decided, in its evaluation of the idea of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, to examine that issue under the item "Question of Palestine", the debate on which we concluded this morning.

We are convinced that international peace and security is a whole that is affected in its entirety by what happens to its component parts; hence the linkage, in Egypt's view, between European security and the situation in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. My country also believes that efforts to achieve peace in Europe must not stop at or be restricted to the northern coast of the Mediterranean, but, rather, should embrace the entire basin, including the Middle East, a region which directly commands that vital seaway.

Egypt's hope and endeavour have been for movement towards peace and security in Europe that would go hand in hand with progress towards peace in the Middle East. Regrettably, this has not been the case so far despite all efforts. Close observation of the conditions obtaining in this historic and crucial region not only reveals the deadlock in the attempts to resolve the Palestinian question, but also highlights the continuous deterioration of the situation and the adverse consequences for international peace and security.

In his latest report on the Middle East, the Secretary-General put his finger on the very real dangers which the international community faces when he stated:

"There is a grave danger that if the present deadlock in the peace process is allowed to persist, major hostilities will break out again in the area as has happened several times in the past. In this connection, it may be recalled

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that the Egypt-Israel war of October 1973 nearly led to a direct confrontation between the two major nuclear Powers." (A/41/768, p. 10)

The deterioration we have mentioned, whose causes are well known to us all, does not affect the peoples and States of the Middle East alone, but threatens general stability on all sides of the Mediterranean. We have recently witnessed a spiral of violence and escalating threats of force, and we can even perceive a race - alas, only too natural in such circumstances - towards greater military build-ups in a bid to achieve parity and deter the opponent from acts of aggression. We find great Powers clashing with regional ones and threats and counter-threats fill the air.

Finally, we are confronted with a dangerous phenomenon which afflicts all alike: the confusion of the legitimate struggle of peoples to achieve their aspirations and blind acts of violence perpetrated at random by some. All this, in the words of Egypt's President, threatens

"all the achievements of the international community and human civilization over the ages and is contrary to all the precepts and tenets of divine revelations and God's law".

Everyone calls for peace. Everyone emphasizes the importance of a comprehensive, just and final settlement as the key not only to Middle East stability but to the progress and development of peoples the world over. Egypt has long striven to attain that goal, but it is well aware that such comprehensive peace can come about only if two indispensable and inescapable conditions are met: first, the ending of the policy of aggrandizement, the building of settlements and the continued occupation of the territory of Arab neighbours of Israel; and secondly, respect for the right of all peoples and States to live in security, peace and good-neighbourliness based on normal relations.

(Mr. Badawi, Egypt)

These two elements constitute the premise of Egypt's concept of a solution and the guiding principle in its negotiations with the Israeli party. In this, Egypt achieved success and gained experience which have borne fruit in the form of a peace agreement that will, it is hoped, serve as a model for future agreements between the other parties to the conflict within the framework of an overall settlement that will enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination.

Egypt expects all the parties to the conflict, as well as the other Powers concerned, to lay the firm foundations of a settlement within the context of serious and permanent peace initiatives. In this connection, the following points are of paramount importance. First, the Israeli society will have to make a decisive and definite choice in favour of peace that is not based on expansionism or historical or religious claims. Such a decisive choice will effectively put an end to the controversies arising from all the side issues debated on the Israeli side, which complicate peace efforts. The Israeli leadership's perception of future developments will have to be guided by the far sighted realization that peace and good-neighbourliness require a fair balance between rights and duties. Secondly, Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) will have to make a definite decision regarding the respective attitudes to the Jordanian-Palestinian agreement and commit themselves again to all its terms. This will require a firm and decisive Arab stand and a forceful and courageous declaration of Arab support for the agreement reached by those two Arab parties most directly concerned in the Palestinian settlement. Thirdly, the two super-Powers will also have to take a decisive stand on the question of their co-operation in resolving the Palestine question and the conflict in the Middle East. We are convinced that in the absence of such co-operation little progress can be made towards such a settlement.

(Mr. Badawi, Egypt)

This is why Egypt has supported all the efforts aimed at reaching agreement on the improvement of the super-Powers' bilateral relations. Such improvement would reflect on the international situation in general and damp down the hotbeds of tension which threaten international peace and security.

Once again I say that everyone calls for peace. Some believe that it can be achieved through a conference attended by all the parties concerned; others, including the Israeli side, speak of the need for direct negotiations.

(Mr. Badawi, Egypt)

In fact, we do not see any essential contradiction between these views. What we do see is a deplorable lack of the sincere will to move towards a final settlement that would give each party its due and the equally deplorable exploitation of procedural and formal issues in the interest of aims that have nothing to do with the peace we all seek.

The International Peace Conference on the Middle East, which we wish to be convened and which is unanimously considered by the international community to be the way to peace, and direct negotiations are in the final analysis two sides of the same coin. We cannot imagine or expect that the participants in the Conference will sit in separate rooms around separate tables when they meet to discuss the issues that separate them. We have not heard a single statement from anyone that would lead us to believe that this would happen. On the other hand, we see no obstacle or difficulty that would prevent two or more parties from holding a meeting or that would prevent a series of meetings within the framework of the Conference to resolve questions relevant to them so as to arrive at agreement thereon and thus contribute to the overall success of the Conference.

In its efforts to ensure the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, Egypt has been able to overcome certain difficulties. The former Israeli Prime Minister expressed his acceptance of the idea of the Conference on 12 September 1986 and demonstrated flexibility regarding its being held and the preparations for it.

Egypt calls for resumption of the dialogue from the point at which it was stopped, so that progress can be built on what had already been achieved. My country wants to encourage every action that can contribute to the first step towards preparations for and the convening of the International Conference. Hence, our support for the idea of setting up a preparatory committee in which all the

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permanent members of the Security Council would participate and whose mandate would include the consideration of matters relating to the parties that would participate in the Conference, the form of representation, the legal framework and other such.

The International Peace Conference, in trying to find a just and lasting solution to the Palestine question in all its aspects and to bring about a comprehensive peace between the countries of the Middle East, would inevitably in turn put an end to the tragedy of Lebanon, that sister Arab country whose territorial integrity and sovereignty must be fully preserved and from whose territory all foreign forces must be withdrawn.

The International Peace Conference on the Middle East would also have the task of reaffirming the Declaration of the Middle East as a nuclear-weapon-free zone, and ensuring that all other States, as well as the parties to the agreement, are committed to preventing the stationing of any nuclear weapon in the region and that Israel accedes to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Other agreements defining levels of conventional armaments arrived at during other phases of the International Conference must not be limited to the States now involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict but must also encompass in one way or another other neighbouring and surrounding countries.

Egypt is aware that many of the forces of extremism do not wish to see the Middle East move towards tranquillity and harmony. Therefore, at the slightest sign of real movement those forces hasten to deal a blow in order to abort any peace effort or deflect attention from the main issue to other regional conflicts. My country wishes to stress the importance of such attempts and obstructionist manoeuvres being rebuffed by the international community and all peace-loving Powers. Egypt will persevere in the dialogue with all the parties concerned in the

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hope of ultimately achieving the objectives to which all the peoples of the Middle East aspire, namely justice, progress and development.

Mr. ABULHASSAN (Kuwait) (interpretation from Arabic): The situation in the Middle East, which we have begun discussing today, is one of the most important problems weighing on all those who care about international peace and security, the sacred rights of peoples and the future of mankind. Through the ages the Middle East has been a centre of civilization and a strategic focal-point for many of the movements of world interaction. When the countries of the area rid themselves of colonialism in its many forms the colonialists directed all their efforts and energies to the implanting of a new colonialist base in the heart of the Middle East, the land of Arab Palestine.

The forces that created that base and implanted it did so by riding roughshod over the face of history, the rights of peoples and all international norms and principles. In imposing Israel with its aggressive nature, on the peoples of the Middle East, those forces introduced an alien, disruptive entity into a region that had been known for its harmony and organic integration since the dawn of history.

Ever since it was implanted in our region, that artificial entity, with its racist and expansionist ideology, has continued to commit acts of aggression against the Arab peoples. It has usurped lands, continued to trample Palestinian rights and adopted expansionist policies. It has been a permanent source of tension and insecurity at the international level and the direct cause of the losses and the suffering that have befallen the peoples of the area.

Not content with aggression and expansionism towards the neighbouring Arab countries, its continued occupation of the West Bank, Holy Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, its illegal annexation of the Syrian Arab Golan Heights, its attempts to stamp out the very identity of the Arab inhabitants, its invasion of Lebanon in

(Mr. Abulhassan, Kuwait)

1983 and its continued occupation of part of southern Lebanon to this very day, Israel, outstripped all its excesses and extended its aggression to other Arab countries such as Iraq and Tunisia. In doing this, it demonstrated that in pursuing its objectives, the Israeli régime is prepared to trample all the rules of international law and the very principles on which our Organization was established.

Thus the policy of violence and Israeli adventurism has been shown to recognize neither geographic boundaries nor historical realities. All Israel's actions bespeak the strategy of adventurism and terrorism on which the Zionist policy is based and whose aim is to suppress every form of Arab and Palestinian resistance and expand Israel's dominion over the entire region.

(Mr. Abulhassan, Kuwait)

Our international Organization which was established on a set of lofty and noble principles, has always considered the liberation of the oppressed colonized peoples and the restoration of their usurped rights, including the right to self-determination, one of its main goals. Hence the United Nations must not stand aside, adopt a hands-off position and content itself with condemning the continued Israeli violations and the unending attempts before the eyes of the whole world, to alter the physical and demographic character of the Arab occupied territories. This is a grave and blatant violation of the Geneva Conventions, the numerous international resolutions that have been adopted and the norms of international laws.

Kuwait believes that any assistance extended by any Member of this international Organization to an expansionist, aggressive racist entity like Israel, is tantamount to an endorsement of occupation and assistance to the oppressor of those vulnerable and weak peoples. This, in fact, is in stark contradiction to the simplest principles that any country took it upon itself to uphold when it joined the international Organization and decided to embrace its Charter as a rule of behaviour in its international conduct.

Kuwait, while condemning the aggressive and expansionist policies of Israel, declares its complete support of and assistance to the Palestinian people under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in their just struggle for their natural rights.

Kuwait, while paying tribute to the heroic role of the Lebanese national resistance in its stand against the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon, declares its continued support to that resistance and the struggle to maintain the independence, unity and territorial integrity of Lebanon. Kuwait salutes the

(Mr. Abulhassan, Kuwait)

heroic and courageous struggle against the forces of Zionist invasion. It rejects the unacceptable Israeli claim that such resistance is terrorism. This is legitimate resistance that is endorsed, nay, required by all international rules and supported by the experience of peoples who have achieved their independence and freedom through such resistance.

International peace is linked to a great extent to the achievement of a just peace in the Middle East. That just peace will not be achieved except by a complete and total withdrawal of the Israeli occupation forces from all occupied Arab territories, enabling the Palestinian people to exercise its natural rights to self-determination and the establishment of its own State on its homeland.

The Arab countries have opted for peace. They have shown that they are for peace. They believed in that option when they unanimously adopted the resolutions of the Fez summit in September 1983, which were later reaffirmed by the extraordinary Arab summit conference in Casablanca in August 1985. Based upon this, Kuwait has called and continues to call upon the United Nations to prepare for the convening of the International Conference concerning which several resolutions were adopted by the General Assembly. It now demands that a preparatory committee be set up to convene that Conference and that the Committee should include all the permanent members of the Security Council. Creation of such a relevant machinery would pave the way for the International Conference which would solve the Palestinian question.

We cannot understand the pretexts advanced by some major Powers that have shown reluctance to support this Conference although it has the support of the overwhelming majority of the countries of the world as the most relevant framework to tackle this question within the scope of international legitimacy, and through the complete participation by all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine

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Liberation Organization, the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Therefore, Kuwait appeals to those Powers to renounce their narrow-minded approach of siding with the aggressor entity and to join the international family in supporting this legitimate framework to solve the Middle East question.

The rejection by Israel of any peace initiative clearly exposes its aggressive and expansionist nature. Consequently, the international community, particularly those countries that have an influence over, and strategic interests with, Israel should urge it to renounce that aggressive stance and join the march towards peace, prosperity, stability and security in this important and sensitive area of the world.

Mr. TURKMEN (Turkey): When the General Assembly considered the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East last year, these twin and complementary items of the Assembly's agenda, there was an atmosphere of expectation. A serious and encouraging effort was then in progress to create among the parties concerned a political understanding which aimed at enabling them to move towards negotiations within a generally acceptable procedure and context.

Looking back, it is difficult to say today that this effort was given the support it deserved by all concerned. Consequently, the opportunities that seemed to exist then for taking a first step towards a comprehensive peace in the Middle East have now apparently diminished. This development, we believe, was not to the advantage of any of the directly interested parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict or to the benefit of the region. More recent efforts to reactivate the peace process have not yet generated the desired momentum and a lethargic mood has begun to settle in.

As we have stressed on many occasions, Turkey takes a special and direct interest in the peace and stability of the Middle East. Our geographical proximity

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to, and historical ties with, the Middle East as well as the friendly relations we enjoy with the people and countries of the region provides a direct link between our interests and those of the region.

We do not believe that it would be possible to relegate the Middle East problem to a secondary place among the international questions that are to be resolved. Such an approach would be totally misleading, and both the region and the world would be forced to pay a heavier price in terms of human misery, political and military confrontations and continued instability as a result of such self-deception.

The question of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli dispute which characterize the situation in the Middle East have always been causes of profound concern for us. For four decades, we have held the view that these questions arise from a basic injustice and that the perpetuation of this injustice is the main reason why the region has been unable to enjoy real peace for 40 years.

(Mr. Turkmen, Turkey)

Amid all the maze of rhetoric surrounding the problem it is always worth remembering that resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 recognized the right of the Palestinian people to their own State. We believe no useful purpose is served by ignoring that fact. On the contrary, resistance to or failure in dealing substantively with the root cause of the main problem in the Middle East have created a continuing threat to international peace and security.

The grave implications of the problem are in essence recognized by the international community. This fact necessitates the existence of a diplomatic negotiating mechanism through which all the substantive elements of a comprehensive settlement can be addressed. The immediate problem we continue to face, however, with regard to the central question in the Middle East is the lack of any such negotiating mechanism which could permit the parties to deal with the problem in a meaningful way with a view to achieving a comprehensive settlement. Various factors have constantly been and still are at work which are blocking the efforts to set in motion a sustained diplomatic process in the Middle East. One such factor is obviously the deep divisions not only among the opposing camps but also among the supporters of the same cause. We feel that this is an important dimension of the situation in the Middle East which will continue to hamper all constructive efforts to bring about a dialogue, unless greater cohesion is developed.

The present stalemate must be overcome and the negotiating process must be revived, with the participation of all concerned, as soon as possible. That is the only way to achieve a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute. We continue to believe firmly that a just and lasting settlement in the Middle East depends on the recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the withdrawal of Israel from the Arab territories under its occupation since 1967, including Jerusalem. The right to existence of all States

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in the area, including Israel, should be assured. All the interrelated elements of this complicated problem should be taken up and resolved in a manner that will satisfy the legitimate rights and interests of all the parties involved.

It should not be forgotten that, no matter how many plans of settlement may exist for peace in the Middle East, these can only be given life and implemented through negotiations among the parties under appropriate auspices. In this case, the concept of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East is considered by the General Assembly as a suitable vehicle for negotiating a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the question of Palestine. It goes without saying that such an approach cannot be expected to exclude any of the parties to the conflict. On the contrary, it must protect the right of all parties to contribute to the settlement on equal terms.

The complicated nature of the problem and the vital interests of the parties concerned require solutions to be sought through collective efforts that can take into account the legitimate rights and interests of all sides. The dangers inherent in the situation in the Middle East make it imperative for all to strive actively to resolve the present difficulties which stand in the way of substantive negotiations.

On the other hand, the situation in Lebanon has continued to be a tragic part of the Middle East scene. Violent acts have almost daily claimed yet more lives of people of all faiths and factions. It is clear that not a single factor, but a multitude of factors have contributed to the persistent instability in Lebanon. We hope the people of Lebanon will find the way to national reconciliation for their common good and co-operative effectively to re-establish harmony and peace in their country.

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Furthermore, the complicated situation in Southern Lebanon has not been resolved, and the deployment of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) to the international border has not yet been possible because of Israel's insistence on maintaining a security zone within Lebanon. In his reports on UNIFIL the Secretary-General has drawn attention to the dangers that arise from the continued Israeli military presence in Lebanon. Those dangers should be taken seriously and Israel should withdraw completely from Lebanon. The security of both countries should be assured along the international border.

As well as the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the central question of Palestine, there is another serious source of tension in the Middle East. For the past six years two Islamic nations, Iran and Iraq, have been locked in a devastating armed conflict which has further escalated in the course of this year. We have observed strict neutrality since the beginning of this deeply distressing war between our two neighbours and friends while maintaining our dialogue with both sides and remaining available for any assistance we could provide for a peaceful solution. As the war raged beyond our borders, we have always tried to look beyond the present conflict to the day, sooner or later, when it will come to an end.

We are especially concerned by the promotion of disruptive tendencies which will benefit no one. Whenever the war ends, the Iranian and Iraqi people must continue to live as neighbours. If stability in the region is not preserved there could be serious implications for both those nations. That cannot and should not be the outcome of this conflict. We would like to believe that both sides will take maximum care not to escalate their conflict to a point which could leave their countries and the region exposed to developments that it might be impossible to control.

Mr. SHIHABI (Saudi Arabia) (interpretation from Arabic): We have once again come here to review the problem of the Middle East. We have once again come here to reaffirm our position and to demand a firm stand in favour of the application of international laws against international outlaws, against the usurpers and the professional practitioners of aggression against States and peoples.

Some may ask, what is the use of repeating the discussion on the subject? Our answer to them is: achieve a solution to the problem of the Middle East and then the problem of the Middle East will not return, even should you so desire. Neglecting that solution amounts to adding fuel to the flames of conflict, for it is the prolongation of the problem which threatens the security of the region and the world. But that does not relieve the United Nations from its responsibilities every year, every month, and every day. We all know that the United Nations bears a special responsibility for the development of the problem up to the present day.

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

The problem of the Middle East has clear-cut characteristics and distinct components. The aggressor within it is known and has confessed. The aggressors, supporters and proponents are no longer ashamed to unveil their roles and secrets. The site of the crime stands out on the map of the world. It is in the Middle East, the land of the Arabs and Muslims. The ramifications of the crime are evident to anyone with eyes to see. It is Zionism and the Zionist entity, Israel, occupying Arab Palestine, and then expanding to occupy lands of other Arab peoples and States. It is a crime, sharply defined and with clear dimensions, steadily encroaching on Arab lands, beginning with Palestine, and stretching to all its neighbouring States. A Member of the United Nations is engaged in conquest and aggression. It is not ashamed nor is it afraid, because the authority of justice has not been imposed on it. If a peaceful and just solution is desired, it should be sought here. This is its forum and arena. As for conquest and despotism, the plunder of a country and the oppression of its population, this has happened throughout the course of history. Past precedents are among the shortest in the annals of history, irrespective of the number of weapons in the hands of the aggressors. Weapons could not in the past, nor can they in the future, defeat a believer in his right who is loyal to his belief. Is Israel ever going to understand that? Are its supporters going to understand? Is Zionism going to understand that there is no future for its policy in the Middle East, that of an oppressive and despotic power threatening countries and peoples? There is every indication that the Zionist authorities are unable to live in peace, and that they are incapable of understanding peace in the context of an acceptable and stable security.

It is shameful that the United Nations, as represented by its Member States, has allowed a problem whose elements are clear and distinct, and whose realities

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are obvious to all, to remain without a solution, merely because some influential States in the international community are neglecting to take the firm stand required by the Charter, to which they are committed. Why do we not perceive our responsibilities in respect of the Charter, and why do we not call for its implementation, unless the matter directly affects us? And why resort to the Charter, if it is not considered to be a standard applicable to all situations with similar features? They even perpetrate aggression, in the name of the Charter, and in spite of the Charter. If the Charter is our guiding light, then where is it, when it comes to the problem of the Middle East?

The Arab States proposed, in a collective stand taken in 1982, a peace plan for the Middle East, the Fez Plan, in order to save the lives of Muslims, Christians and Jews. They proposed it in full awareness of the sacrifices it entails. They proposed it hoping that the Zionist authorities would realize that there was no room for them to ask for more, no matter how long it took to succeed. Time, as Zionism knows, and as its supporters should know, is not on the side of Israel's dreams and the expectations of Zionism, because the Arab nation is not a dead nation, and the Arabs are not an extinct people. The Palestinian population has increased from 1.2 million in 1946 to about 5 million now, according to unofficial estimates; more than half of these reside in their own homes in the land of Palestine, and they are remaining there. The all-encompassing expanse of Arab and Muslim peoples, amongst whom Palestine represents but a small part, will ultimately have the last word, if Zionism fails to take heed of the opportunities now available, in order to establish the foundations of security in the region, and the basis for saving lives and sparing the region the outcome of a conflict imposed by Israel, and out of which it will never emerge as the final victor. All indications point to this end result, which the Israelis do not recognize or heed.

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Despite all our previous resolutions, the Zionist authorities in Israel have not displayed even a tentative desire to retract their criminal acts, or shown any regret for their actions against Palestine, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, or Tunisia, and against Arabs and Muslims as a whole. They have shown no regret; indeed they have persisted in declaring that they intend to continue their treachery and to threaten the near and the far with attacks and aggression.

The report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in the Middle East reflects the continued forbearance of the world towards the burdens imposed by Israeli Zionist crimes against the peoples and countries of the region. It also shows that the international peace-keeping force, whose expenses are borne by the United Nations in order to protect Israel, meet with rejection and non-co-operation from Israel, which even exposes members of the force to risks which threaten their safety.

The problem of the Middle East is that a series of crimes has been committed by Israel against a whole region, even against the United Nations itself and all the values, rights, duties and commitments it stands for. Is there no deterrence for this inhuman oppression? Is there no accountability or punishment for this international offence? Is Israel allowed what is denied to everybody else in the world? Has the world lost the ability to preserve values in the face of Zionist conspiracies against individuals, groups and even States? Is it permissible to allow terrorist gangs to wreak havoc in the Middle East, against the countries and States of the region? Can Israel commit all the crimes in the book and then sit here among us, among the judges? Is this a healthy sign for the international community? Or is it rather a proof of the preponderance of political oppression, whereby all methods are used to terrorize individuals, groups, and States? Let us ask the International Committee of the Red Cross about what is happening inside the

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prison of Al-Khiyam in South Lebanon, for which Israel hired a group of mercenaries that it calls the "South Lebanon Army". What is happening inside that prison where thousands of Lebanese and Palestinian youths are the victims of torture? The International Committee of the Red Cross does not know because the Israeli authorities do not want anyone to know what these prisoners are being subjected to.

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

This is the responsibility of representatives; it is the responsibility of all of us. The States and peoples of the Middle East will inevitably regain their rights; no matter how long it takes, those rights will be restored. But this does not relieve the United Nations of its responsibility to stand firm and protect the region from the tragedies of continued Israeli oppression, from which Israel will undoubtedly be the one to suffer most. If this is not terror, if this is not crime, what is it? It is in the nature of Zionism itself, which will also reap in kind the results of these crimes.

The aggressive designs of the Zionist authorities against the countries of the Middle East endanger regional and international peace. Everybody knows this. Israel appears to see in this method a path that leads to the sort of peace and stability that it desires. What kind of peace and security is it that Zionism dreams of achieving by this means, which is attended by every possible danger and pitfall? Ignorance, disregard and Zionist recklessness should not hide from the rest of the world the basic realities of the region. Israel cannot impose its will on the Arabs, no matter what it does. Its friends that cover up its crimes should advise it that the Arab peace plan for the solution of the Middle East problem is an opportunity that may never come again. A nation such as the Arab nation, which is united by the strongest bonds of solidarity, no matter what divisions there may be within its ranks or what differences there may be in its approaches over the short term, will nevertheless remain in agreement on the essentials. Differences will disappear in time, and Israel will find itself on some not too distant day trying to swim in a fathomless sea if it persists in confrontation as the basis of its existence and the means of its perpetuation. The danger to the Jews from the Zionist policy is greater than the danger that they would face from their enemies. Will reason one day prevail, one asks oneself.

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The problem of the Middle East is essentially the problem of the Zionist design to perpetuate itself in Palestine, the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon as a policy, a persistence, a psychology, a frame of thought and a programme, in perverse ignorance of the consequences. It is a problem caused by the Zionist invasion of the Middle East countries, beginning with Palestine and extending to neighbouring countries. It is aggression against Arabs anywhere, far or near. And Israel is not being stopped by any deterrent or disincentive from committing all the crimes of invasion and aggression in the book.

The United Nations bears a historical responsibility to adopt a firm stand on this issue, against this aggression, its design and its implementation, and against the escalation of crimes and the concomitant defiance, a stand in keeping with its responsibilities. The United Nations is but a reflection of the positions of the nations represented here. We hope that those nations will define their positions and take their stands in accordance with their commitments. So, are we going to address our responsibilities in accordance with these commitments? We certainly hope so.

Mr. BATIOUK (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): For decades the Middle East has been the common concern of the entire world. The question of the situation in the Middle East remains on the agenda of the sessions of the General Assembly and is of concern to everyone who is really concerned about the fate of the world.

As the Secretary-General justly noted in his report on the work of the Organization:

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"In the Middle East, despite efforts from many sides to advance the search for a just and lasting settlement, there is at present an alarming absence of a generally acceptable and active negotiating process. Experience shows all too clearly that such a stalemate encourages resort to extremism and risks the recurrence of wider violence." (A/41/1, p. 3)

The responsibility for the continuing tension in the Middle East lies fully with Israel, which continues to pursue an aggressive, expansionist policy, tramples underfoot generally recognized norms of international law and is sabotaging fundamental resolutions and decisions of the Security Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations on the Middle East. Israel is defiantly stepping up the activity of its occupation régime in the Palestinian and other occupied Arab territories and resorting to blatant force and acts of terror. The targets of its hostile actions over recent years have been Lebanon and Syria, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Tunisia and other Arab countries.

Israel is carrying out its aggressive actions having secured the unconditional protection and comprehensive support of the United States. The blame for the continuing conflict in the Middle East thus lies equally with the United States, Israel's senior partner in their strategic alliance. This particular characteristic of American-Israeli relations is nothing new. It is well known that it is American weapons, generous economic assistance and political support that have made it possible for Tel Aviv to pursue its expansionist line with regard to its Arab neighbours, which has brought untold misfortunes and suffering to the peoples of the Middle East. Never before has the Americano-Israeli collusion been so overt or been characterized by such a high degree of co-ordination of their common aggressive actions against the Arab States.

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The results of United States support for Israel are clear to the whole world. They are to be seen, for example, in Lebanon, which is tormented by Israeli aggression and by internal civil war fomented by the occupiers.

The Ukraine supports the efforts of the Lebanese people to strengthen the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of their country and assert their right to determine the form of their State and social system. The question of the complete cessation of the Israeli occupation and its return to its internationally recognized borders, in accordance with well-known resolutions of the Security Council, remains before us; it cannot be relegated to the background; it must remain at the centre of the attention of the world community and at the centre of the attention of the United Nations.

Further proof of Israel's aggressiveness has been provided by its piratical attack on Tunisia, which was followed by cynical statements by Israeli leaders in which they tried to arrogate to themselves the right to make similar attacks anywhere and at any time. Thus, unswervingly pursuing the line of State terrorism, Israel is trying to make the international community tolerate the non-existent "exclusive right" of Israel to commit aggression.

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In its attempts to achieve unchallenged domination in the Middle East the United States is not only supporting Israel's aggressive policy against the Arab countries but has itself carried out direct acts of armed aggression against Libya. The events relating to that country have demonstrated the threat to international security involved in the anti-Arab plots of imperialism. The actions taken against Libya go far beyond the limits of the Middle East and northern African areas. They have also affected the southern and western parts of Europe, a continent where all the major wars have originated.

Now, in line with the scenario used in preparing the actions against Libya, provocative actions are being taken against another country that Washington dislikes, namely, Syria. The campaign of blackmail and threats against that State have intensified, especially recently, when Syria again confirmed its determination to strive for a comprehensive settlement to the Middle East conflict. In general this strategy of intimidating the Arabs has been aimed at several members of the League of Arab States, which are constantly being subjected to bellicose threats.

The Palestinian people are still being denied something elementary, the exercise of their legitimate right to self-determination and to create their own independent State. This people has become one of the main targets for the policy of State terrorism. Against the background of the increasing aggressiveness of neo-globalism and reaction in the Middle East we can clearly see the full evil of the ambition to impose separate settlements of the problems of the area based on the Camp David model. Steps designed to divide the Arab countries, and the various kinds of partial settlements put forward legalizing Israel's seizure of other territories have nothing to do with a genuine Middle East settlement. The goal is to impose on the Arabs, through a military and political diktat a false solution to the Palestinian problem that would eliminate forever any prospect of creating a

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Palestinian State. In order to facilitate the achievement of their unseemly goals in the Middle East, the strategic allies are pouring fuel on the flames of the Iran-Iraq armed conflict. In the face of strong pressure therefore the question of the unity of action of all Arab States has become particularly important. The Ukraine is convinced that the establishment of peace in the Middle East is possible only through the collective efforts of all interested parties on the basis of the complete withdrawal of Israeli troops from all Arab territories occupied since 1967. It is essential to respect the inalienable rights of the Arab people of Palestine, including their right to self-determination and to create their own independent State, as well as the right of all States in the Middle East to live in conditions of peace and security.

As we have frequently stated in the Security Council and in the General Assembly, the Ukraine considers that the only effective mechanism for achieving a comprehensive and just settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict is the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East with the participation of all interested parties, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The proposal to convene the Conference put forward by the Soviet Union in 1984, together with the provisions on the need to intensify the collective search for ways to unblock the conflict situation in the Middle East contained in the political report of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union of the Twenty-seventh Congress responds to the realities of our time. They are aimed at settling complex problems through political means, through the efforts of the entire international community, of course with due respect for the independence and the rights of peoples themselves to determine their own fate. The speedy convening of the International Conference on the Middle East should also include the setting up of a preparatory committee for the Conference with the

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participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council. The fundamental points of the Soviet proposals on these points that were put forward in June 1984 coincide with the general Arab platform worked out at the summit Conference held in Fez in 1982. They were received favourably by all Arab countries and by the majority of other States. That was once again confirmed during the present discussion. Unfortunately, we have to note once again that the United States and Israel do not wish to revise their unyielding position, and are thus blocking a political solution to the Middle East problem.

Their appeals for so-called direct negotiations exclude any possibility of a real settlement in the Middle East, particularly since those two countries refuse to recognize the PLO and negotiate with it. Such a position gives rise to serious doubts about the sincerity of their desire for a settlement of the tense situation in the Middle East, which threatens general peace and security. The Ukraine considers that an integrated political settlement of the Middle East conflict is an urgent requirement of our time. The establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region will end the bloodshed in the Middle East and lead to an improvement in the international climate as a whole.

My delegation expresses its solidarity with the just struggle of the Arab peoples defending their independence and freedom. We hope that the decisions taken at the current session of the General Assembly on a Middle East settlement will serve the interests of the peoples of that region and ultimately those of international peace and security.

Mr. RANA (Nepal): There are few international issues as volatile and intractable as the Arab-Israeli conflict. Indeed, while it has resulted in a seemingly never-ending spiral of bitterness, hostility, violence and bloodshed in West Asia, it has directly affected the relevance and credibility of the United

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Nations itself. Although the world Organization has three on-going peace-keeping operations in the region and has continued to monitor the situation closely in that explosion-prone corner of the globe, a general sense of frustration and hopelessness prevails. This is inevitable, given the fact that it has not been possible to prevent the four major wars that have erupted in the region in less than four decades. Equally depressing is the prevailing tense and troubled atmosphere there and the generally shared feeling that the West Asian time-bomb is likely to explode once again - possibly with even greater devastation than in the past - unless the international community decisively intervenes and effectively defuses it.

(Mr. Rana, Nepal)

It is against such a sombre background that my delegation participates in the debate on the situation in the Middle East in the General Assembly. We should like, at the very outset, to underline our conviction that, as the question of Palestine lies at the very heart of the broader concern of West Asian peace, a comprehensive peace settlement in West Asia must be based, inter alia, on the recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to a homeland of their own in the region.

Similarly, my delegation wishes to underline, once again, what in Nepal's view are two of the essential elements of the West Asian peace triad. These are based as much on pragmatic considerations as on universally accepted principles of inter-State relations. Thus, Nepal believes that the reality of the existence of Israel - a full Member of this world Organization - must be accepted by all. But while we maintain that recognition of the right of all nations - including Israel's - to live within secure and recognized boundaries is a prerequisite for any just, comprehensive and lasting settlement of the West Asian conflict, we also believe that durable peace in West Asia cannot be built as long as Israel continues to occupy territories of other sovereign States or engages in a human settlements policy that seeks to perpetuate its occupation.

At this point, my delegation wishes to emphasize its firm opposition to Israel's policy of expansion and occupation and to the creating of so-called security zones within the territory of another sovereign State and neighbour. Nepal's position on this is straightforward, consistent and clear: we view such essentially colonial concepts as not only untenable and obsolete but totally inconsistent with the Charter principle of the sovereign equality of States. Phrased otherwise, we see no reason why Israel's security should be considered more precious than Lebanon's.

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Before moving on, we wish, at this stage, to explain that our vote on the relevant draft resolutions under this item will therefore be guided by our support for Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) as well as by the specific concerns and considerations of our West Asian policy just spelled out.

A dispassionate overview of the current situation in West Asia reveals that no peace process flourishes there; only a fluid status quo prevails. My delegation thus shares the Secretary-General's observation in his latest report that there is "an alarming absence of a generally accepted and active negotiating process" in West Asia (A/41/768, p. 10, para. 33).

Indeed, although Nepal continues to participate in United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) operations - as a modest contribution to the cause of peace in West Asia and as a concrete manifestation of our support and commitment to the United Nations - we are under no illusion that it can be a substitute for a comprehensive and lasting settlement of the deep and divisive problems besetting the region. My delegation is aware and appreciative of the continuing efforts of the Secretary-General to rekindle the peace process in West Asia and to promote the search for a lasting settlement. We share the Secretary-General's concern that the positions of the parties directly concerned are still wide apart as are also those of the major Powers. My delegation would support any peace initiative likely to promote the prospects for a lasting settlement, if necessary by stages. It was in this spirit that we welcomed the Camp David accords in the past and lent our full support to the Arab peace plan adopted at the Twelfth Arab Summit Conference at Fez and also to the proposal for an international peace conference attended by the parties directly concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole, authentic representative of the Palestinian people as well as by the permanent members of the Security Council.

(Mr. Rana, Nepal)

We therefore hope that the continuing disagreements regarding the conference's scope, timing and participants will be resolved through a demonstration of the needed flexibility and accommodation by all concerned. In that context, my delegation is encouraged to note, that many of the proposals relating to such a conference envisage a central role for the Security Council. Nepal will, as a matter of utmost urgency, support moves in that direction as well as any other means or avenues that the United Nations may explore to open new possibilities for a lasting peace in what is undoubtedly one of the most strategically significant and potentially explosive regions of the world today.

Mr. TANASA (Romania): Speaking from this rostrum last week, our delegation presented in detail Romania's position regarding the modalities, the ways and means, of settling the complex problems of the Middle East, aimed at ensuring conditions conducive to the elimination of the causes of their persistence, and at achieving a just and lasting peace in the region.

More than ever before, the Middle East remains one of the most unstable regions, one of the main sources of threat to international peace and security. The danger caused by the persistence of the Middle East conflict, the many questions it has raised, which have still not been settled in the region, is even greater in view of the particularly grave tension which characterizes the present international situation.

The state of confrontation that persists in the Middle East and the whole evolution of the Israeli-Arab conflict confirm the historical truth that peace and security cannot be achieved and guaranteed by the threat or use of force or by denying the right of peoples to a free existence and independence. It is an axiom that peace and security can be achieved solely on the basis of observance of the

(Mr. Tanasa, Romania)

legitimate rights of other peoples and of the new principles and norms in international relations.

Therefore, it is high time that all Member States assumed their political and moral responsibility so that the United Nations, whose primary function is the maintenance of international peace and security, can act more firmly with a view to reaching a global, just and lasting solution to this conflict, which has gone on far too long, bringing indescribable sufferings to the peoples of the region and seriously endangering the peace of the world.*

Romania, under its President, Nicolae Ceausescu, has been intensely active and has stood firmly for settling all conflicts and contentious problems among States solely through peaceful means in the form of negotiations. Romania starts from the premise that the existence of conflicts in various parts of the world leads to the continuous worsening of the international situation, to the increasing danger of their generalization and to the possibility of a world war with very grave consequences for the whole of mankind.

*Mr. Moushoutas, Cyprus, Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Tanasa, Romania)

No matter how long and difficult they may be, the negotiations and peaceful means, in Romania's opinion, are the only reasonable way of settling the contentious problems among States, the only alternative to conflicts and wars.

To this end, President Nicolae Ceausescu stated recently that Romania stands firmly for the settlement of the Middle East problems through political negotiations only. We consider that in current circumstances the best way to solve the Middle East problems is to organize the International Conference, to be attended by all the countries concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the sole representative of the Palestinian people, and, naturally, by Israel, by the permanent members of the Security Council and, possibly, by other States.

In preparation for that International Conference, dialogue between the countries concerned can be considered in order to reach agreement on the convening of the Conference and its aims and objectives. We hold the view that such contacts could be organized under the auspices of the Security Council or United Nations representatives. Since one stands for the International Conference, on the basis of the consideration only through negotiations can all the problems be solved, a preliminary dialogue becomes necessary within this framework between Israel and the PLO, under the auspices of the United Nations. There should be no fear of meetings and talks. He who wishes to solve his problems must understand that he cannot let others do it for him; he must assume responsibility for the way in which he solves the problems that are his concern. Certainly international conferences, and international support are necessary, but they cannot undertake the responsibility of the States and organizations directly interested in the settlement of the problems. As a matter of fact, everywhere in the world one can see that this is what is done.

(Mr. Tanasa, Romania)

On the basis of its position of principle, according to which the occupation of foreign territories, as well as their acquisition by force, is inadmissible, Romania has from the outset affirmed that a just and lasting, peaceful solution in the Middle East implies, first and foremost, the withdrawal of Israel from the Arab territories occupied after the 1967 war. This requirement has been clearly embodied in the resolutions of the United Nations bodies which have examined the situation in the Middle East. As is well known; we are resolutely opposed to any action by Israel to annex the Syrian Golan Heights. At the same time, Romania is in favour of the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon, the broad reconciliation of Lebanon's national political forces and guarantees of the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Lebanon.

The way in which the situation in the Middle East has evolved and the absence of progress towards a comprehensive solution have made it increasingly clear that a global, just and lasting peace cannot be achieved without the solution of the Palestinian problem. Such a solution includes as an essential element recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including the right to create its own State, and of the independence of each of the States directly concerned, that is, the new Palestinian State and Israel.

In the current circumstances in the Middle East region and in the light of the foregoing considerations, it is necessary that the United Nations play a more active part in the efforts aimed at finding a solution to the Middle East problems and providing the framework within which negotiations can be undertaken with a view to bringing about a just and lasting peace in that troubled region of the world that will be fully in accordance with the hopes and expectations of the peoples of the region and of the peoples of the world.

(Mr. Tanasa, Romania)

As far as it is concerned, Romania is determined to continue making every political and diplomatic effort, and doing its utmost to make its constructive contribution to the achievement of a global and lasting solution of the Middle East problem, the establishment of a just peace in the region and the consolidation of international peace, security and co-operation.

Mr. AMIR (Malaysia): Twenty-three days ago, on 3 November, Mr. Akram Hanniyeh, editor-in-chief of the Arabic daily A-Sha'b was arrested in his Jerusalem house by Israeli soldiers and informed that he was to be deported immediately. On the same day, heavily armed Israeli soldiers broke into the house of Dr. Gabi Baramki, Vice-President of Bir Zeit University, and he was forcibly dragged to the university campus. The Israeli soldiers then attacked the student residences and arrested scores of Palestinian students, whose whereabouts are still unknown. Earlier, on 19 October 1986, a 50-year-old Palestinian from the occupied Gaza Strip was savagely stabbed with a butcher's knife by an Israeli attacker.

These are just three typical examples of what Israeli policy has meant, a long-standing policy which has caused the volatile situation in the Middle East and the untold suffering of the Palestinian people. But, brutal as these crimes really are, what are we to make of the even more wanton brutality committed by Israel against the Arab people, more wanton in terms of the number of such crimes and the pain meted out? Beginning in 1948, when Begin was responsible for the Deir Yassin massacre in Palestine, exterminating the people down to the last child in the village, Israel has not relented in its resort to military force, violence, harassment, intimidation, terrorism and aggression against the Palestinian people. Its incessant terrorism and annexation of Arab land has left ever widening trails of injustice and destruction, which include five wars in the past 40 years,

(Mr. Amir, Malaysia)

Lebanon, Sabra and Shatila, Jerusalem, and a long record typifying Israeli arrogance and its total disregard of United Nations resolutions.

Compared to the terrorism, human suffering and injustices Israel has caused, the strong condemnation by the United Nations of its actions year after year would seem rather mild. Yet that would seem to be the strongest political weapon that the Assembly can muster. While there is no doubt that the Assembly will continue to use its strongest means of political persuasion, it is an irony that nothing more effective can be marshalled by the international community, among which sit the most powerful nations.

In keeping with the long-established position that the Government of Malaysia has adopted on this agenda item, my delegation endorses again the following observation of the Secretary-General:

"...the international community should not lose sight of the dangers inherent in this state of affairs. It should pursue and intensify its efforts in the search for a negotiated settlement of the Middle East conflict." (A/41/768, para. 3).

(Mr. Amir, Malaysia)

Most pertinent, the Secretary-General states that:

"... there is wide measure of agreement within the international community that such a settlement should be based on the following three considerations: withdrawal of Israeli forces from Arab territories occupied since 1967; acknowledgement of and respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all the States in the region and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries; and finally a satisfactory solution of the Palestinian problem based on the recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including self-determination. In this context, the question of Jerusalem also remains of primary importance."

(para. 35)

However, it is a matter of continuing concern for us that the major Powers, whose support is essential for the establishment of any lasting peace in the region, are divided.

Notwithstanding the political matrix reflected in the report of the Secretary-General, this Assembly will need to continue to address itself to two basic concerns arising from the situation that I have just described.

First, as to Israel, its recourse to military force and terror, particularly against the Palestinians, will not and cannot result in peace. The Palestinian people will continue to fight for their noble cause and to receive the important political support of the United Nations. History has already recorded the validity and righteousness of the Palestinian cause, and the Palestinians who have sacrificed themselves in defence of their homeland, their dignity and rights against Israeli aggression, have died valiantly. On the other hand, numerous United Nations resolutions have condemned Israeli crimes and military aggression, and nothing in Israeli power can hide that black mark on its history. And history,

(Mr. Amir, Malaysia)

as generated from the United Nations, will continue to say that Israel's policy of aggression and recourse to military might has never been, and never will be, right.

Secondly, the Security Council, as the most important United Nations organ for the maintenance of peace, will need to overcome its ambivalence and tackle the problem with greater firmness and determination. Israel has flagrantly violated international law, the United Nations Charter and the norms of civilized behaviour among States to such an immeasurable degree that it has caused serious conflicts and tension in the Middle East and threatened international peace and security. The Security Council can, I am sure, pursue a still more concerted diplomatic offensive that will be more consistent with its important responsibility under the Charter, provided all Council members demonstrate the required political will. The course towards peace in the Middle East has been clearly prescribed, as, for example, in resolution 40/168 A. We depend heavily on the Security Council to determine the necessary steps to be taken in order that the objective of that resolution is achieved.

Even on certain specific matters of limited purposes but designed to contribute to the lessening of tension in the Middle East, such as the United Nations peace-keeping operations, the situation as a whole has not been satisfactory. While the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force has continued to work well in the Israel-Syria sector, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon has been facing an increasingly difficult situation. Again my delegation notes and endorses the recommendation of the Secretary-General that the members of the Security Council, both collectively and individually, take urgent action to unblock the present impasse and make substantial progress towards implementation of resolution 425 (1978). The follow-up resulted in the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 587 (1986), which we doubt was the best it could do, as it

(Mr. Amir, Malaysia)

seemed to pass the hot potato to the Secretary-General. We consider it would probably be more effective for the permanent members of the Security Council to make concerted efforts regarding Israel directly with a view to pursuing the objectives contained in resolution 587 (1986), especially on the need for Israel totally to withdraw its military forces from southern Lebanon and thereby enable the deployment of UNIFIL to the international border. The argument that the Israeli authorities uses, namely that its forces in southern Lebanon and its concept of a so-called security zone are aimed at maintaining the security of Israel's northern border, should continue to be rejected as it violates Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

For the valuable efforts that the Secretary-General has made, which have in particular enabled UNIFIL to function in improved conditions, we should like to express our deep appreciation. We should also like to record our deep appreciation to the Governments which have contributed to the establishment of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization and to say that their contributions have indeed been very important.

Nevertheless, the situation that has been developing and the Israeli responses we have seen to numerous efforts of the United Nations emphasize the complexity of the problem. However, that does not mean that the question is locked in, without solution. The opening is there, if the members of the Security Council would collectively and individually take the bull by the horns and if Israel would really abide by the United Nations Charter. Just as the Assembly will never be taken in by false Israeli propaganda, we are confident that the Assembly will also continue to judge this problem on the basis of international principles and find ways and means of moving towards a just settlement. It is Israel's prerogative to continue

(Mr. Amir, Malaysia)

its present policy, but it will have to face continuing condemnation by the international community. And the international community will not tire of stating its overwhelming support of the Palestinian cause and the Arab people as they defend their rights and dignity against the immoral policies pursued by Israel.

Mr. BELONOGOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): How many times since its fifth emergency special session, held hard on the heels of the Israeli aggression against neighbouring Arab States in June 1967, has the General Assembly of the United Nations considered the question of the situation in the Middle East? Since then the General Assembly and the Security Council have adopted dozens of resolutions providing for the speedy achievement of a Middle East settlement and the eradication of all the reasons for the chronic armed conflict in that region.

Nevertheless the situation of dangerous tension and permanent instability in the Middle East has not only not been overcome but has worsened further, threatening to compound the deadlock in the achievement of a comprehensive and just settlement.

The problem of the Middle East must be one of the most chronic regional problems of today, and the lack of a solution is negatively affecting the political atmosphere not only in that region of the world but also throughout the international arena.

The military threat existing there is doing material and moral damage to all the States and peoples involved in the conflict and is leading to a dangerous confrontation with other States whose interests are directly or indirectly linked with the Middle East.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

The need to intensify efforts to find a way out of the situation in this region, a way out of this vicious circle of armed clashes and violence, is shown by the fact that the ever increasing arms race in the Middle East threatens to reach a qualitatively new level, involving nuclear missiles. In this connection we cannot but mention with great concern and disquiet the information recently published on the activities of the Israeli nuclear research centre in Dimona. This again emphasizes very strongly, inter alia, the vital need for effective measures to prevent the so-called horizontal spread of nuclear weapons, particularly in a region in which dangerous tension has existed for many years and there is the threat of a slide into armed confrontation, with unforeseeable consequences.

We hear, of course, that Israel is forced to acquire nuclear weapons because, apparently, its security is constantly under threat owing to the hostility of the Arab world, but such arguments do not stand up to criticism. All the world knows that it is not Israel but rather the Arab countries that are faced with the problem of ensuring their security, and that it is Israel that is carrying out ever more frequent acts of aggression against Arab States. Everyone also knows that for nearly 20 years now the Israelis have occupied the Arab territories seized in 1967 and that because of the position adopted by Israel the Arab people of Palestine, to whom the United Nations unconditionally recognized the right to self-determination and to create their own independent State, not only cannot exercise that right but are doomed to the tragic existence of people in exile. The right to security is a legitimate right, but it is also a general one. We cannot achieve our own security by threatening that of others. This is an axiom of modern reality, and to ignore it is to put one's own narrow, selfish interests - in this case the nationalist interests of the Zionists of Israel - above the interests not only of the peoples and States of the Middle East but of the entire world.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

The stubborn refusal of the Israeli rulers to respond positively to the frequent appeals of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that it undertake not to produce or acquire nuclear weapons and to place its nuclear installations under the IAEA safeguards system are a clear indication that in Tel Aviv they are clearly counting on the nuclear fear of their Arab neighbours.

It is not only in the aforementioned information in The Sunday Times that support for such a conclusion is to be found. The States Members of the United Nations have already pointed out the dangerous consequences for overall peace of the co-operation between Israel and the racist régime in South Africa in the development of nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles. There is widespread knowledge of many instances of the "illegal" acquisition by Israel of nuclear raw materials and the technical components necessary for producing nuclear weapons. We should also take into account what Israel has already received from the United States, such as F-15 and F-16 aircraft, and ground-to-ground missiles which can serve as delivery vehicles for nuclear weapons.

The aim of Israel's show of nuclear muscle, whether existing or potential, is to blackmail the Arabs and compel them to accept Israeli diktat and hegemony, that is, to acquiesce in Israel's usurpation of Arab territories and give up the demand that the Arab people of Palestine be enabled to exercise their national rights.

The Soviet Union has set as the primary aim of its foreign policy the achievement of the comprehensive elimination of all nuclear weapons by the year 2000, and cannot but express its concern over the nuclear ambitions of Tel Aviv. It is the responsibility of the world community as a whole to save mankind from nuclear weapons and the threat involved in them.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

The reason for the Arab-Israeli conflict, which has existed for more than a decade already, is clear to the overwhelming majority of States Members of our Organization. It is the aggressive, expansionist line pursued by Israel towards neighbouring Arab States and peoples, its continuing occupation of the territories seized in 1967 and its outright flouting of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, above all their right to self-determination and to create their own independent State.

Almost since the moment of the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, expansionism has been the characteristic feature of the policy pursued by the ruling circles in Tel Aviv. The West Bank, the River Jordan, the Gaza Strip, the Syrian Golan Heights, the so-called security zone in South Lebanon - these are the basic borders to which today the Israeli expansionists lay claim. Israel is ever ready to sacrifice more human lives on the altar of its predatory ambitions. This is proved by the Israeli Air Force attack on the headquarters of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in Tunisia, the unceasing military attacks on the cities and villages of Lebanon, the reprisals against the Palestinians in the West Bank and the continuing gross campaign of blackmail and pressure against Syria, which in the summer of this year again threatened to develop into direct armed confrontation. All these actions have been repeatedly and harshly criticized by the majority of the countries of the international community and have been condemned by the United Nations and other international organizations. Nevertheless, Tel Aviv has not given up its military adventures and its policy of State terrorism.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

It has not deviated from its obstructionist line on the question of a Middle East settlement. What is more, it constantly resorts to threats of the use of military force against sovereign Arab States. The reason underlying Israel's defiant aggressive course, contradicting the fundamental norms of international law, is an open secret. It is the political, military and financial support of the United States which has allowed Tel Aviv to act so insolently. It is the United States which has often provided its partner with services despite the condemnation of unseemly Israeli actions by the General Assembly, the Security Council and other international bodies.

I make no mistake if I say that this time, when the relevant draft resolutions on this question are put to the vote, we shall again see Israel and the United States, acting as one, take a negative stand opposed to the views of the international community.

Generous infusions into the Israeli military machine by Washington are encouraging its strategic ally to continue its aggressive action, fully in keeping with the imperialist hegemonistic plans of the United States in the Middle East.

The United States armed attack on Libya in April this year and the Israeli air force attack on Tunisia have clearly shown that Washington and Tel Aviv are acting as one. A new and dangerous factor of this strategic alliance has been the inclusion of Israel in the implementation of the so-called strategic defence initiative of the United States. Israeli participation in the Pentagon's plans for turning outer space into an arena for a possible star wars confrontation in fact opens up to military circles in Israel another sphere for a dangerous partnership, helping to exacerbate tension in the Middle East.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

Another aspect of the general obstructionist line of Washington and Tel Aviv is their desire to keep the Arab world in a state of fragmentation, by doing everything they can to provoke and inflame contradictions between Arab countries and tension within the Palestine Liberation Organization. They are doing that in order to weaken the will of the Arab peoples to oppose Israeli domination, to block any possibility of solving this key question of the Middle East conflict, namely the Palestinian problem, and to exclude the PLO from participation in the solution of the problem.

The Soviet Union has never had, nor does it now have, a biased attitude towards any of the countries of the Middle East because of its political system or the way of life of its people. It has never had any desires to impose its own views or ideology on other countries.

Equally, the Soviet Union has consistently respected the religious convictions of peoples, whether they be those of Islam or of any other religion. We firmly and consistently support normal relations with all Middle East States without exception - that is, relations that are equal and mutually advantageous, based on proper respect for sovereignty and independence and non-interference in one another's internal affairs.

In addition we are far from indifferent to the seriousness of the situation in this area, since any armed confrontation or other disturbance there directly or indirectly affects the situation on the southern borders of the Soviet Union and the security of its allies and friends.

We are profoundly convinced that the road of military confrontation between Israel and the Arab States has not led, and cannot lead, to peace and calm for the peoples of the Middle East. It has not brought us any closer to a final settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict; rather it has made it more remote.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

The Soviet Union adopts a very responsible approach to efforts aimed at working out the necessary political settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Two years ago the Soviet Union set out its own specific concept of the essence and the ways of achieving a settlement of the Middle East problem. At the heart of those Soviet proposals is the demand for unfailing observance of the principle of the inadmissibility of seizing territories by aggression, and respect for the rights of every people to self-determination. The proposals have been supported by many countries of the world which see in them a realistic programme for this process, capable of restoring peace and calm to this long-suffering region.

The principled position of the Soviet Union, based on the Charter norms and the relevant decisions of the United Nations is well known. We can state it briefly as being, first, the withdrawal of Israeli troops from all Arab territories occupied since 1967, namely, the West Bank of the River Jordan, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and also the southern part of Lebanon; secondly, ensuring the inalienable rights of the Arab people of Palestine, including their right to self-determination and to create their own independent State; thirdly, ensuring a peaceful and safe existence and independent development for all States and peoples of this region, including Israel.

The specific way to achieve such a settlement is, in the view of the Soviet Union, the convening of the International Conference on the Middle East with the participation of all directly interested Arab States, Israel, the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, the Soviet Union, the United States and certain other countries which are able to make a positive contribution to solving the Middle East problem. The idea

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

of convening the Conference is supported by most countries in the world, since they consider that only such a step could alter the unfavourable trend in the region which is capable of leading to a dangerous explosion.

The General Assembly also has frequently expressed its support for the International Peace Conference. This year the Soviet Union, aware of the need for appropriate organizational work for convening the Conference, put forward the idea of setting up a preparatory committee, with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

In our view, the effective activities of this Committee would create a favourable political climate, one that would promote the negotiating process at the international conference and lead to a settlement on a just and lasting basis, as the interests of all States and peoples of this region demand, as do the interests of peace and international security.

As the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, stated:

"The goal of the Soviet Union is not to incite regional conflicts, but rather to eliminate them through collective efforts on a just basis, and the sooner the better."

This is precisely the position of the Soviet Union in the Middle East.

Mr. KIKUCHI (Japan): The Middle East, as the crossroads of three continents, has a long and rich history. It gave birth to glorious civilizations and to three of the world's great religions. Today, however, it is the profound and seemingly intractable problems of this region that demand our attention. Particularly disturbing is the strife raging in Lebanon.

The Government of Japan regards it as essential that a climate conducive to the restoration of Lebanon's territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty be created as soon as possible. The most important element in restoring peace to Lebanon is the achievement of national reconciliation. Japan is well aware that the leaders of the various groups have indeed been making national efforts towards reconciliation for more than a decade. It is indeed regrettable that those efforts have not as yet produced the desired results, a fact which underscores just how deeply rooted are the divisions in Lebanese society. Japan encourages the Lebanese people to redouble their efforts to achieve national unity. It is indeed crucial that all the parties demonstrate flexibility, put aside their sectarian differences

(Mr. Kikuchi, Japan)

and co-ordinate their interests in order to achieve their common objective, the restoration of peace. Once the people of Lebanon restore peace and stability throughout their country, the Government of Japan is ready to co-operate actively in Lebanon's national reconstruction and economic recovery efforts.

The volatile situation in southern Lebanon continues to be a source of particular concern. The presence of Israeli troops in the area is clearly a catalyst for violence. As the Secretary-General has noted, there have been repeated attacks by the local inhabitants on the Israel Defence Forces and their allies, the South Lebanon Army, which in turn invite counter-attacks. We therefore urge Israel to withdraw its remaining forces from southern Lebanon without further delay.

I wish to take this opportunity to express our profound gratitude to all the United Nations peace-keeping operations in the Middle East for the indispensable role they are playing in ensuring some degree of stability in the region. Japan pays a 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 support the measures which the Secretary-General has taken to enhance their safety. At the same time, we call on all parties in the region to respect the United Nations peace-keeping forces and to co-operate in facilitating their work. Japan, for its part, will continue to support UNIFIL in the conviction that its presence in the region is helping to foster conditions in which the complex problems there can be resolved.

During the past year, we have 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 the parties concerned to do their utmost to prevent them. It strongly urges that the hostages held in Lebanon be released unharmed and without delay.

(Mr. Kikuchi, Japan)

Japan regards it as a fundamental obligation of Member States to work toward the elimination of such acts. At the same time, as is acknowledged in General Assembly resolution 40/61, we must not ignore the underlying causes of terrorism, which we should join together in an effort to eliminate.

All of these problems - the situation in Lebanon, which is closely related to the question of Palestine, and the recurring acts of international terrorism - underline the urgent need to find a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the problem of the Middle East. I should like here to reiterate Japan's position on this problem, which I outlined in my statement last Monday in the general debate on the question of Palestine.

First, peace in the Middle East must be just, lasting and comprehensive.

Secondly, such a peace should be achieved through the early and complete implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and through the recognition of, and respect for, legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination, under the United Nations Charter.

Thirdly, each and every path towards the realization of such a peace must be explored, with careful consideration given to the legitimate security requirements of the countries in the region and to the rights and aspirations of all the peoples in the region, including the right of self-determination of the Palestinian people.

Fourthly, Japan is of the view that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) represents the Palestinian people.

I wish to stress Japan's view that the question of Palestine can be resolved only when both Israel and the PLO participate in the peace process. Towards this end, Israel and the Palestinian people must strive to dispel mutual distrust and foster a will to coexist. Japan calls specifically on Israel's leaders to show flexibility and take immediate steps to withdraw its troops from the Arab territories it has occupied since 1967.

(Mr. Kikuchi, Japan)

Peace in the Middle East can only be achieved through a process of negotiation. But as the Secretary-General has noted in his report, there is at the present time a conspicuous absence of a generally accepted negotiating process. My Government shares his concern that, if the present stalemate in the peace process is allowed to persist, major hostilities could erupt again in the region. Japan believes that it is the responsibility of the international community to work together to foster an environment in which peace talks can take place. I wish to reaffirm Japan's readiness to co-operate with international efforts towards this end.

It is my Government's fervent hope that the peoples of the Middle East will look to their extraordinary heritage for the wisdom, strength and courage to enable them to settle their differences and to live together in peace and harmony.

Mr. NOWORYTA (Poland): I think there can be no better way to begin my statement on agenda item 37 than to quote the man in whom the entire membership of the United Nations has so recently unanimously reaffirmed its full confidence. In his report to the General Assembly on the work of the Organization - that is, to all of us present today in this Hall - the Secretary-General stated inter alia that in the Middle East:

"...despite efforts from many sides to advance the search for a just and lasting settlement, there is at present an alarming absence of a generally acceptable and active negotiating process."

And he went on to add:

"There is now a wide measure of agreement that peace in the Middle East can best be achieved through a comprehensive settlement that would cover all aspects of the conflict, including the question of Palestine." (A/41/1, p. 3)

That assessment by the Secretary-General has, of course, to be read in conjunction with the relevant parts of his report on agenda item 37 (A/41/768). In paragraph 35, the Secretary-General gives us the prevalent opinion of the international community on what the basic principles of such a comprehensive settlement should be:

"...withdrawal of Israeli forces from Arab territories occupied since June 1967; acknowledgment of and respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all the States in the region and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries; and finally a satisfactory solution of the Palestinian problem based on the recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including self-determination".

And in paragraph 37 he adds an observation concerning the modalities of the peace-making process: "... the idea of an international peace conference appears to be gaining wider support ...".

(Mr. Noworyta, Poland)

It is particularly pertinent to note in this connection the important endorsement the idea of an international peace conference has received in the Harare Political Declaration of the Eighth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, paragraph 167 of which reads:

"The Heads of State or Government stressed the urgent need to organize the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in conformity with paragraph 6 of the Geneva Declaration and United Nations General Assembly resolution 38/58 C of 13 December 1983, in order to achieve a just and comprehensive solution to the Middle East problem..." (A/41/697, p. 81)

It is universally known that Poland fully shares the views I have just mentioned on both the substantive principles and the modalities of a comprehensive peaceful settlement of the Middle East conflict, including the settlement of its essential element, the question of Palestine, on the basis of the inalienable right of the Palestinians to self-determination and the establishment of their own independent State.

We also support the struggle of the cruelly affected Palestinian people and its sole legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization. This position of ours has been expounded in detail on numerous occasions and in various forums both inside and outside the United Nations, including the General Assembly, the Security Council and the 1983 Geneva International Conference on the Question of Palestine. Similarly, we have supported all the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and have also contributed in a more tangible way by seconding a contingent to serve first with the second United Nations Emergency Force and subsequently with United Nations Disengagement Observer Force.

It is our considered view that, while indeed the "attainment of a just and lasting peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israel conflict in the Middle East continues to be elusive" (A/41/768, para. 33), such a settlement is within reach.

(Mr. Noworyta, Poland)

Virtually all its necessary premises are here: the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and of other important international bodies and a number of specific proposals on the principles and modalities, including the Soviet initiative of 29 July 1984. The only additional ingredients needed for success are the good will and political commitment of all the parties concerned.

Addressing the General Assembly on 25 September, the Foreign Minister of Poland, Marian Orzechowski, stated inter alia that:

"Further delay in achieving genuine negotiated solutions in the Middle East, southern Africa, Central America and other regions of the world is likely seriously to endanger world peace." (A/41/PV.10, p. 71)

A similar view has been expressed by the Secretary-General in the final conclusion of his report, although, for obvious reasons, he put it in a more specific perspective:

"Few international issues are as complex and potentially dangerous, or involve as directly the relevance and credibility of the United Nations, as the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East. The persistence of that conflict nearly four decades after it was brought before our Organization underscores the need to bring about a comprehensive settlement. It is therefore essential that every possible effort be made by the international community and individual Member States to achieve such a settlement as a matter of urgency." (A/41/768, para. 39)

For its part, Poland pledges its readiness to continue contributing by all means at its disposal to the search for a comprehensive, just and durable solution of the Middle East conflict, including its core element, the question of Palestine.

Mr. DOS SANTOS (Mozambique): The question of the Middle East has been with this Organization since its infancy. It is even admitted that we have probably devoted to this issue more time and more attention than to any other international problem.

However, until today, peace in the region remains as elusive as ever before. The policies and practices of Israel continue to be the source of the conflict and the main obstacle to peace in the region. The nature of these policies is already known to all of us, namely: Israel's continued occupation of Palestine and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem; and Israel's aggression against the Palestinian people within and outside the occupied territories, annexation, expropriation and the establishment of settlements, and other terrorist, aggressive and repressive measures, in violation of the Charter of the United Nations, the principles of international law and the relevant international conventions.

(Mr. Dos Santos, Mozambique)

The report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People mentions practices which it refers to as collective punishment. These include the shooting of demonstrators, the storming of schools and refugee camps, the destruction of homes, house-to-house searches, beatings, the closing of schools and the destruction of school property and other forms of intimidation.

It is obvious that the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied territories constitutes an essential element for the establishment of a comprehensive and just peace in the Middle East. Israel, however, has not only failed to heed successive demands that it withdraw from the areas it occupies, but it has further escalated violence in the region and elsewhere. The aggression against Lebanon, begun in 1982, continues unabated. Still fresh in our memories is the act of aggression perpetrated against Tunisia.

Addressing this issue last year, I pointed out the irony that lies in the fact that Israel, a State created by the United Nations, by a resolution of this Assembly, would stand here facing condemnations from the overwhelming majority of Member States of this Organization. In the not distant past, the credentials of its representatives have been questioned by some Member States.

It is Israel, a State founded by the survivors of centuries of persecution and extermination, that is at the centre of our debate and stands accused of policies and practices that appear to indicate that this sad page in mankind's history has been forgotten. Sabra and Shatila are registered in the annals of history as symbols of what man can do when he loses his humaneness. In accordance with some estimates, more than 70,000 people lost their lives, and more than 15,000 were held captive as a result of Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982. That occurred during two months of massacres and destruction. "Peace in Galilee", we were told, was the code name of the sinister operation that was aimed at "definitively solving the Palestinian problem".

(Mr. Dos Santos, Mozambique)

Despite this gloomy picture in the Middle East, the United Nations has not lost hope for a peaceful settlement. It is in this context that, pursuant to a mandate given to him by the General Assembly, the Secretary-General of the United Nations has continued his efforts with a view to convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

We are aware of the complex nature of the issues involved. However, complexity does not mean impossibility. We believe that the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, with the participation, on an equal footing, of all parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, offers an opportunity for a comprehensive and serious approach to the situation in the region. The United Nations constitutes a good framework that should be fully explored, taking for granted, of course, the support of the permanent members of the Security Council. As a matter of fact, the Conference could constitute a significant, if not a decisive, step towards the establishment of peace, justice and stability in the Middle East.

My delegation notes with satisfaction the overwhelming consensus on the usefulness of holding the conference as early as possible. To those members who assert that the conditions for its success do not yet exist, my delegation can only say that these conditions will never be secured unless those members commit themselves to play an active and positive role in genuine and collective efforts towards peace in the Middle East. Such steps could begin by their open and unequivocal support of, and co-operation with, the Secretary-General's efforts aimed at the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

My delegation is encouraged by the positive tone of the observations of the Secretary-General as contained in his report of last year and reiterated in the present report, document A/41/215. We have full confidence in the Secretary-General and we know that he will spare no effort to see to it that all

(Mr. Dos Santos, Mozambique)

obstacles are removed so as to clear the way for the early convening of the conference.

The growing collaboration between Israel and apartheid South Africa has been a matter of profound concern to all of us. The military co-operation between the two, particularly in the nuclear field, poses a great danger to international peace and security.

Both régimes are equally barbarous, aggressive and expansionist. They are régimes based on violence and discrimination. They destabilize their neighbours and generate tension and instability in their respective regions.

As is well-known, both régimes could not survive were it not thanks to the multifarious support they enjoy from their allies, which curiously happen to be the same. In the circumstances, while demanding that Israel cease forthwith its acts of genocide against the Palestinian people, one cannot but appeal to those States that sustain Israel to discontinue their collaboration immediately, especially in the military field, particularly in the nuclear domain.

All those who support Israel and South Africa, two isolated and discredited régimes in the eyes of the international community, become accomplices to the acts of genocide committed by them.

Peace in the Middle East can only be achieved on the basis of recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the establishment of a sovereign and independent State.

There will be no end to the Middle East crisis unless the question of Palestine finds a correct solution.

Israel must withdraw from occupied Palestinian and Arab territories and respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of States in the region, as well as their right to live in peace and freedom.

(Mr. Dos Santos, Mozambique)

It is about time that Israel should realize that genocide only heightens the conflict further. Israel can kill many Palestinians. Indeed it has massacred a lot of them, but it cannot kill all the Palestinian people. Hitler killed six million Jews but he could not kill all of them. The very existence of Israel attests to that.

One day, an independent State will be created in Palestine. It might take some time. It is even possible that it will not be in our lifetime. And until that State is established, Israel will not be free. The freedom of the people of Israel is intrinsically linked to the liberation of the Palestinian people. Until that moment, the people of Israel will live in a climate of fear they themselves have created.

Israel need not be a regional power for its survival. There is enough room for both Jews and Arabs and Palestinians in the Middle East. Let them learn how to live in peace and harmony with one another.

Mr. ENDREFFY (Hungary): Much to our regret we have to state once again that the past year has not brought about any progress towards solving the Middle East conflict. This is true regarding both the key issue, the Palestinian question, and the larger problem of arriving at a comprehensive settlement.

It has long been accepted by the international community that one of the basic conditions for peace in the Middle East is a solution of the Palestinian problem, based on the recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people including self-determination.

And what is the present situation instead? Not only their most fundamental political and national rights, but even their basic human rights are still denied to them. The gradual annexation by Israel of the Palestinian and other Arab territories continues, resulting in a growing spiral of conflict, tension and violence. This is no wonder, considering the repressive measures of the occupying authorities, such as arbitrary arrests, short-term detentions without any charge or trial, deportations, and restrictions on freedom of movement. Physical repression is supplemented by censorship against the Arab press and individual journalists, the closing down of newspapers on repeated occasions, and other measures designed to suppress all forms of Palestinian resistance and the political, social and cultural expression of the Palestinian people.

As if this were not enough, the occupying authorities are continuing their policy of establishing complete economic control over the occupied Palestinian territories, thus transforming them into a dependent entity that benefits Israel at the expense of the indigenous Palestinian population.

Disregarding generally accepted norms of international law, as well as the provisions of specific General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, Israel is continuing its illegal occupation of other Arab territories as well. The continued

(Mr. Endreffy, Hungary)

tension resulting from the occupation makes it necessary for the United Nations to maintain three peace-keeping operations in the area. Of these, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in particular had to face not only constant danger, but recurrent attacks against its personnel as well. This situation, and the unresolved issues described earlier, have created a sense of insecurity and a highly charged, volatile situation that is potentially dangerous not only for the region itself but for international security as well.

If there was ever a time to find a negotiated settlement and defuse the tense situation, this is it. And, paradoxically, as our Secretary-General points out in his report:

"there is at present an alarming absence of a generally accepted and active negotiating process." (A/41/768, para. 33)

I would even go further than that. Not only is a generally accepted and active negotiating process missing, but we do not seem to have any negotiating process at present.

The attempts at partial solutions, involving one or two parties to the conflict have not led anywhere. It has been proved once again that in this situation, where there are many parties to the conflict, involving complex and interrelated issues, one-sided, unilateral approaches do not work. It is high time to start the search for a solution through a comprehensive settlement covering all aspects of the conflict and involving all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

During the many years of discussion and negotiations a wide measure of agreement has emerged regarding the basis of such a comprehensive settlement: withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Arab territories occupied since

(Mr. Endreffy, Hungary)

June 1967; acknowledgement of and respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all the States in the region and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries; and recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including self-determination. In our view their right to establish their own independent State should also be recognized.

It seems obvious to us that the best way of arriving at a comprehensive settlement would be the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, with the participation of all interested parties, including the PLO. It is regrettable, but it is a fact, that there are still disagreements on the scope and the timing of the Conference and, especially, on the question of participation. We cannot wish away these differences; we have to overcome them. And we cannot overcome them without discussing these and other outstanding issues in proper form. In this context we support the proposal that a preparatory committee should be set up within the framework of the Security Council, with the participation of its permanent members. The adoption - and realization - of this proposal would in itself exert a favourable influence on the situation. It would mean the start of negotiations, if only on procedural matters; it would also mean the involvement of the Security Council, the principal organ of the United Nations with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

We do not expect miracles. A Middle East settlement is not just around the corner. It can only be the end result of a long and difficult diplomatic process. But recognizing the dangers in any further delay, we have to make a fresh start at this session of the General Assembly.

Mr. NETANYAHU (Israel): I will be brief, since we believe this debate should be brief. In fact, in its present form, we believe it should not be conducted at all. We have just ended this morning a debate entitled "The Question of Palestine". And this debate will merely repeat it. The question is: why have two debates? If the item "The Question of Palestine" was so designated in order to provide for a discussion of the Arab-Israeli conflict, well and good. We have heard their arguments; we have made our own proposals for a solution. But the present debate is supposed to discuss a different, much broader, subject, namely, "The Situation in the Middle East." Indeed, we believe that the overall situation in the Middle East does deserve the attention of the General Assembly.

But we all know that this is not going to happen here. We are not going to discuss everything that happens between the Sahara and the Persian Gulf. Mostly, what this debate will do will be to rehash the speeches of the "Palestine" debate. In a pre-set ritual, speaker after speaker - with a very few refreshing exceptions - will either totally ignore the entire array of conflicts in the Middle East or blame them on Israel - or, as the jargon has it, on "the Palestinian Problem." In fact, every groundless accusation imaginable will be levelled at my country.

If this is where this discussion is heading, and on the basis of what I have heard so far it is heading that way, then we could make a simple suggestion: Resubmit the "Palestine" speeches with a reworded title, have them published in the record, declare this procedure from this podium, and save the United Nations days of valuable time and \$100,000 to boot.

I am not about to compound those sins. Israel believes that the Middle East encompasses several serious challenges to regional and global peace that deserve this forum's attention. We also believe that there are ways to meet those challenges and improve the lot of everyone.

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

In dealing first with the challenges, let us confine ourselves to the events that have taken place in the region since our last debate a year ago. At that time we presented a calendar of Middle Eastern violence based on press reports culled mostly from Arab press sources by the Foreign Broadcasting Information Service. Last year's calendar, which was by no means exhaustive, was 10 pages in length and listed some 200 separate incidents. We regularly exclude those items in the press reports relating to Israel, because these, as we have said, come within the purview of the Palestine debate. So we are dealing only with those press items that do not relate directly to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The particular benefit of this calendar is that it is based on an impartial, actually an automatic, compendium, an automatic compilation of press reports, and since no single press report or incident can manipulate the total list, what we have here is a fairly good index of Middle East violence. What do we see in this year's report, which will shortly be distributed to all representatives? What we see is not very encouraging, I regret to say. This report is 39 pages in length and it lists 716 separate incidents. So without a doubt it describes a substantive escalation of Middle Eastern violence. This violence includes outright war, bombing of open cities, chemical and gas warfare, attacks on neutral shipping, border disputes, subversion, assassination, hostage-taking, kidnapping of journalists, murder of diplomats, wholesale massacres of civilians, car bombs and sundry other forms of terrorism.

The territory where this violence occurs stretches over a dozen countries from the Sahara to the Persian Gulf; the actual sites include mosques, churches, market places, Government offices, embassies, banks, schools, aircraft, ships; the victims include the nationals and facilities of over 30 countries, 17 of them outside the

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

Middle East. In order not to take up the Assembly's time, I shall just read out the first four items; members can read the rest for themselves, and it will take them a while to do so.

1 December, assassination attempt on PFLP-GC leader Ahmad Jibril in Damascus; 2 December, opposition leader kidnapped in Sudan; 2 December, Iraq attacks Kharg Island; 2 December, Iraq kills 50 Iranians; 2 December, SPLA kills 26 Sudanese. We have not yet arrived at 3 December. The bottom of the page reaches 12 December. The pages are full. Each line describes a separate incident. Then there is another page, and another; no commentary, just the culling of primarily Arab press reports about violence not related to Israel and the Middle East; 39 pages long, 716 incidents. In sheer numbers of casualties, the toll is staggering. In the Iran-Iraq war alone there have been over 100,000 additional casualties, dead and wounded, in the last year. In the Yemen, in one week's fighting in January over 10,000 were slaughtered.

Although the violence reaches everywhere, we can identify a few pockets where it tends to concentrate: first, the Iran-Iraq war, now about to enter its seventh year and fast approaching the distinction of being one of the bloodiest conflicts in this century; secondly, Lebanon - when I say Lebanon, I mean primarily Beirut and Tripoli - where Syria manipulates rival militia factions in a kind of murderous intra-mural slaughter; thirdly, the Sudan, where Libyan-inspired rebels seek to destabilize the régime; and, fourthly, the Sahara, where the SPLA and POLISARIO, which are backed respectively by Libya and Algeria, are seeking to subvert Moroccan authority.

So what we have is four régimes which emerge as the main engines of conflict in the Middle East, and they are those of Iran, Iraq, Syria and Libya. Along with the various terrorist groups, such as the PLO, that serve at the pleasure of some

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

of them - and, I should add, at the displeasure of others - they account for the overwhelming part of the violence. But, having said that, I should add that there is a whole category of violence that eludes this geographic categorization. For the sake of consistency we confined the list to violence occurring only in the Middle East proper, in the territory of the Middle East; we excluded all the Middle Eastern related violence that occurred outside the Middle East. If we include that we see that it comprises what can only be called a true harvest of horrors, because in the past year Syrian-, Libyan- and Iranian-sponsored terrorism has stormed uncontrollably in the capitals of Europe, and even beyond Europe. The only hopeful signs are that this form of covert warfare is finally being exposed, as has been the case in the trials recently in London, and yesterday in West Berlin.

Clearly, in the past year the Middle East has seen an enormous amount of human energy devoted to carnage. Lives have been wasted, property destroyed and peace obliterated. Towns and cities - in fact, entire nations, - live in fear. Whole economies are on the verge of collapse. And there does not seem to be any end in sight. Will any of this be discussed in this debate? Hardly. Will any resolutions be passed to seek relief, let alone solutions, to these conflicts? None.

If there is going to be any reference at all to what I have just said by the representatives of these warring countries - I should say also from these war-torn countries - they are going to admonish us for interfering, as they put it, in their "internal affairs". Cross-border violence, the use of illegal means of war, the threats to basic international standards, the suffering of millions - these are not legitimate subjects for review and discussion so long as they involve inter-Arab bloodletting; all in the family, so to speak. But, as we have seen, it is not all

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

in the family. It spills over quite readily beyond the Middle East, as far afield as London and Paris, Rome and Vienna, Berlin and Barcelona, Athens and Antwerp, Karachi and Istanbul. And even if it were limited to the Middle East, is not the proper focus of the United Nations and this debate the ways to resolve the entire spectrum of political and military conflict? Or do we draw a line and say "Stop all debate" if the perpetrators are Arab?

If members wish to restore the integrity and credibility of the General Assembly they should start right here with this debate. They must insist that, in the discussion of the situation in the Middle East, the situation in the Middle East is indeed discussed, not just a part of the Middle East, all of it. When we come to solve a problem the first thing to do is to recognize that there is a problem. I would therefore recommend that from now on representatives devote their presentations to discussion of these conflicts. I do not mean just a passing or oblique reference, but serious and detailed discussion of the kind they reserve for the Arab-Israeli domain. This is my first suggestion.

Secondly, we must recognize that all those in the Middle East which are threatened by the radical régimes have a common interest: to defend themselves against the political, military and ideological encroachments of the extremists. They also have an abiding interest in preventing further social and economic deterioration, which would facilitate a further spread of fanaticism.

Thirdly, the international community must take a clear stand on this issue. It must decide where its interest lies. Does it lie with the radicals or with the moderates; with the terrorists or with those that resist them? If we are to reject terror, we must politically isolate the extremists and condemn the terrorists. But we must do something else. Terrorists have no interest in peace and reconciliation, their interest is only in extreme solutions imposed by violence.

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

Violence for them is not a necessary evil and a last resort but a preferred means and a desirable instrument. So opposing extremism also means supporting peaceful negotiations between the parties.

I heard earlier in the debate the representative of one Arab country say that Israel is not interested in resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict. I now turn to that representative and say that I am authorized to speak to him at any moment, right now, about advancing the peace, finding ways to resolve the conflict, and I would hope that his Government would authorize him to do the same. But the fact that we know that it does not, that he cannot match that simple statement that I have just made, is the key to the larger problem that infects our area, and that is the tremendous power of intimidation of the extremism. There is a bond between the radical régimes and the terrorists to prevent any solution to any conflict anywhere in our region.

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

If this General Assembly wishes to make any contribution to improving things in our region, it should isolate the extremists. It should recommend measures against the terrorists. It should propose direct negotiations for the peaceful resolutions of disputes. But none of this can happen without the indispensable starting point: a recognition of the true situation of the Middle East, in all its complexities and dimensions, in all its many conflicts.

Mr. CHAGULA (United Republic of Tanzania): Once again the General Assembly is confronted with the discussion of the situation in the Middle East, as has been the case so often and repeatedly in the past.

At the very outset my delegation would like to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his very useful reports in documents A/41/768 and A/41/453 and Add.1, prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 40/168. These reports by the Secretary-General are, indeed, extremely helpful as they present to the international community as a whole an objective and unbiased assessment of the situation in the Middle East on which this Assembly can meaningfully focus. We shall refer briefly to certain aspects of the Secretary-General's reports later in our statement.

The Middle East crisis, which is nearly as old as our Organization, is definitely one of the major current sources of threat to international peace and security. The state of confrontation that has for long persisted in the Middle East, marked by acts of aggression and violence, confirm the historical truth that peace and security cannot be attained and guaranteed by the use of force and the threat of its use, or by denying other peoples their right to existence and self-determination.

Over the past four decades, the Middle East has become the focal point of all sorts of violence and regional wars. As the report of the Secretary-General

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Tanzania)

(A/41/768) indicates, the attainment of a just and lasting peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israel conflict in the Middle East continues to be elusive and it is the policies and actions of Israel in the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories which have remained at the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in particular the continued denial of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to their own independent State.

Since its very inception, Israel has been deliberately and systematically opposing every move aimed at bringing peace in the Middle East. This has been the case since 1947-1948 when the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 181 (II) which established the State of Israel, and equally required the establishment of an independent State of Palestine; but since then it has become Israel's policy to prevent the creation of a State for Palestine, although Israel itself, paradoxically, is a child of the United Nations. Instead, Israel has embarked on an expansionist course of absorbing and occupying every Arab and Palestinian land that it can lay its hands on, with a view to realizing its dream of a "Greater Israel". The annexation of southern Lebanon and the occupation of the West Bank of the River Jordan, the Gaza Strip and the Syrian Golan Heights are part and parcel of that policy. The imposition of Israeli laws, jurisdictions and administration on the occupied Palestinian and Arab lands, not only constitutes an act of aggression under the provisions of the United Nations Charter, but is illegal and should be regarded as null and void. The continued occupation by Israel of the Palestinian and other Arab lands, including Jerusalem, is in violation of customary international law and all the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. In this regard, Israel must also be reminded that its failure to restore the inalienable rights of the Palestinian

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people and to withdraw its troops from the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories, have been and remain the two greatest obstacles to the settlement of the Middle East conflict.

The situation is also far from satisfactory as regards the region as a whole. The harassment, arrests, killings and deportations of Palestinians in the occupied territories, have triggered one violence after another. The establishment of Israeli settlements in occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, and the denial of Palestinian rights, have continued to be the source of tension and violence ever since the State of Israel was created. Over the last four decades, the Palestinians have been denied their basic human rights and have been massacred in the occupied territories, in Lebanon and most recently in Tunis in October 1985. This state of terror will remain as long as Israel does not implement the relevant United Nations resolutions and continues to deny to the Palestinians their basic human rights, including their right to self-determination, and as long as the Israeli forces are not withdrawn from the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories.

Though Israel continues with its aggressive and intransigent policies, the freedom-loving nations have not abandoned their efforts to find a just and lasting solution to the Middle East conflict. The adoption of resolution 3236 (XXIX) by the General Assembly in 1974 was a breakthrough in those peace efforts. By that resolution, the General Assembly reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination, their right to national independence and their right to return to their homes and their property, and recognized that the Palestinian people is a principal party in the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. But, on the contrary, Israel responded by increased suppression of the Palestinian people,

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Tanzania)

indiscriminate killings of civilians and the destruction of their properties, thus vindicating the views of the Secretary-General that a just and lasting peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East is still as elusive as ever.

My delegation fully shares the concern of the international community at the dangerous situation obtaining in the Middle East. Over the years deliberations have been going on with a view to convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East where all parties concerned should participate, including the representatives of the Palestinian people, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the two super-Powers. It is however, regrettable that Israel has rejected outright the idea of the Conference.

(Mr. Chagula, United Republic
of Tanzania)

In view of that attitude, how should we understand Israel's position? Is it really after peace, or only paying lip-service to peace in the Middle East, as when it recently stated in one of the Main Committees of the United Nations General Assembly that Israel's hand is always extended for peace in the Middle East? Israel's past and present policies and actions in the Middle East force one to conclude otherwise.

Israel has been insisting on solving the Middle East problem by imposing on the Arabs separate deals with it. Israel still has the Camp David accords in mind, though they have become obsolete for some of us. Israel's insistence on separate deals with the Arabs is but a form of "divide and rule", a well known colonial strategy which can only serve to complicate the problem.

On the other hand, the Arab countries, for their part, made many concessions in the Fez Plan of 1983 to demonstrate their sincerity regarding the peaceful settlement of the Palestinian question and the Middle East conflict as a whole. The Fez Plan, which the General Assembly has already declared to be an important contribution towards the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, is based on principles that are of high significance - namely, the inadmissibility of the acquisition of its land by aggression and the need to ensure the inalienable right of all the States and peoples of the region to an independent existence and development. The Fez Plan is a great challenge to Israel, which should have responded by offering something positive in the interest of a peaceful settlement of the Middle East conflict. But it has not done so up to now.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to reiterate what the Secretary-General has quoted from General Assembly resolution 40/168, in particular the following.

(Mr. Chagula, United Republic
of Tanzania)

First, that the question of Palestine is the core of the conflict in the Middle East and that no comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region would be achieved without the full exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable national rights;

Secondly, that a just and comprehensive settlement of the situation in the Middle East could not be achieved without the participation on an equal footing of all the parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization;

Thirdly, that Israel must be condemned for its continued occupation of the Palestinian and other Arab territories, from which it must withdraw forthwith;

Fourthly, that the agreements on strategic co-operation between the United States of America and Israel and the continued supply of modern arms to Israel have encouraged Israel to pursue its aggressive and expansionist policies and practices and have had adverse effects on efforts to establish peace in the Middle East;

Fifthly, that the collaboration between Israel and South Africa must be condemned;

Lastly, that the International Peace Conference on the Middle East must be convened soon.

All these elements of General Assembly resolution 40/168 and others I have not listed are still as valid and urgent today as they were a year ago, and it is our sincere hope that Member States of our Organization, both individually and collectively, will take the actions required by that resolution without much delay. It is also the sincere hope of my delegation that the Security Council will soon take the necessary action for the early convening of the long overdue International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

Mr. AL-KAWARI (Qatar) (interpretation from Arabic): If the representative of Israel wishes to achieve peace, as he claimed just now, the representative of the Palestinian people is present here, namely the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The representative chosen by the people of Palestine, the PLO, which the world has recognized by giving it observer status in the world Organization, is seated on the right side of this Hall.

I challenge the representative of the Zionist delegation to approach that delegation and discuss the problem. But I am confident that the representative of Israel will not do so. After all, if he did so he would lose his job and be thrown into gaol under the Israeli law enacted by the Israeli Knesset.

His response to that challenge would in fact show whether there is any substance to his expressed desire for peace.

It is indeed disappointing that the United Nations, which succeeded in resolving many world problems, particularly problems of decolonization, in just a few years after its creation, continues to fail to find a solution for the situation in the Middle East although this issue has been before the United Nations year after year since the twenty-fifth session of the General Assembly without any glimmer of hope appearing on the horizon, any promise that an overall solution will be found that will achieve justice and preserve international peace and security directly jeopardized by the continued presence of this problem and the worsening of the situation, which has become a time-bomb, about to go off.

We express our appreciation for the attempts by the United Nations to achieve peace in the area. But we are in duty bound to say that they have had limited results, and that by their very nature they will not lead to an acceptable political solution of the situation in the Middle East and cannot be expected to prevent a dangerous explosion of the situation, as happened when the Israelis

(Mr. Al-Kawari, Qatar)

invaded Lebanon in 1982. Indeed similar Israeli invasions might recur unless a drastic, comprehensive and just solution is found for the Middle East problem.

In this regard we must emphasize the persistence and increasing gravity of the Israeli practices against the Palestinian people in the occupied territories, where universities have been closed, newspaper editors deported and racial acts of violence perpetrated against the Palestinians and their property. Efforts are being made to eradicate the Palestine problem through the building of illegal settlements, the expropriation of land and the introduction of demographic changes. These are aimed at transforming all facets of life in the occupied Palestinian territories, by encouraging Israeli terrorist organizations to perpetrate acts of aggression against the civilian population with a view to compelling civilians to abandon their land and to leave their homeland. We must also emphasize Israel's continued occupation of the Golan Heights, its illegal decision to annex them, and its continued occupation of part of southern Lebanon with its army and surrogate forces. Israel continues to oppose the legitimate Lebanese resistance and to misinform world public opinion by qualifying national resistance movements in southern Lebanon and other occupied territories as terrorists.

(Mr. Al-Kawari, Qatar)

The Israeli entity, which was itself born out of a philosophy of terrorism, is the very identity that has brought terrorism to our part of the world. It continues to practise terrorism against the Palestinian people and other Arab territories. That entity now strives to add to this record another crime, namely, distortion of the history of all peoples as it seeks to put on a par terrorism, which we all condemn, and the national liberation movements, which are a source of pride and dignity for any people that has been a victim of foreign occupation.

The right of peoples to rid themselves of foreign occupation and to determine their future with freedom and independence is a lofty ideal upheld by the international community, firmly and clearly enshrined in the United Nations Charter. Moreover, United Nations resolutions emphasized those rights, especially the Declaration of International Law Principles concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the United Nations Charter. That Declaration emphasized, inter alia, that any act by a people deprived of its right to self-determination, by heroic resistance, was a legitimate act and that it was the right of that people to receive every aid and assistance from outside in its legitimate struggle. All that is in keeping with the purposes and principles of the Charter.

No one can continue to deny or disregard the fact that the question of Palestine is the crux of what is now known as the situation in the Middle East. The continued absence of a solution to that problem is the root cause of all the painful aspects of life in the region. The General Assembly, in its resolution 40/96 D, reiterated its conviction that the question of Palestine was the root cause of the conflict in the Middle East. It also reaffirmed its endorsement of the call for convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in conformity with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C.

(Mr. Al-Kawari, Qatar)

My delegation joins the international community in its view that convening an international peace conference on the Middle East within the framework of the United Nations, in which all parties concerned will participate, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, as well as the permanent members of the Security Council, constitutes a major contribution towards the achievement of a comprehensive and just settlement based on the restoration of all the occupied Arab territories, including Al-Quds al-Sharif, the Holy City of Jerusalem, the exercise by the Palestinian people of its right to self-determination, its right to establish its own State on its national territory, like any other people of the world.

Once the General Assembly at the current session reaffirms its position on the question of the Middle East and on the methods of achieving a peaceful solution, my delegation hopes that all parties will respond favourably, respecting the will of the international community and the principles and provisions of the United Nations Charter and other international instruments which consider the right of peoples to self-determination the basic element in regulating the world community within the framework of the United Nations Charter. We fail to understand by what logic and for what purpose the Palestinian people is being singled out from among all the peoples of the world to be denied the exercise of that legitimate right.*

Mr. SHIKIR (United Arab Emirates) (interpretation from Arabic): Allow me at the outset, on behalf of the delegation of the United Arab Emirates, to congratulate the Secretary-General of the United Nations on his comprehensive report on the situation in the Middle East. The report of the Secretary-General reflects the tragic situation affecting the Middle East because of the lack of a peaceful, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

*Mr. Dos Santos (Mozambique), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Shikir, United)
Arab Emirates)

As one of the Arab States affected by that situation and watching it closely, we cannot fail to endorse the conclusion of the report that the attainment of a settlement continues to be elusive for well-known reasons. The conflict in the Middle East is one of the most volatile regional crises. It is a great source of suspicion, fear, action and reaction for the super-Powers. It poses a major threat to international peace and security.

Even a brief review of the development of the Arab-Israeli conflict will indicate that it is assuming new dimensions year after year. The dangers inherent in this conflict are becoming steadily worse, so much so that the magnitude of the suffering and the toll exacted daily on the Palestinian and Arab people may lead to a serious outbreak of hostilities that could affect the people of the whole area, jeopardizing their aspiration to independence, liberation, development and progress.

Perhaps the nature of the Zionist racist entity, which is aggressive, and its links, history and strategy, as confirmed by the events reflected in the occupation of the rest of the Palestinian territories and the Syrian Golan Heights, the invasion of Lebanon and the raid against Tunisia and Baghdad are ample evidence of the danger posed by this régime and the extent of its designs.

The Zionist acts of aggression have continued one after the other, taking new forms such as the tragedy of Sabra and Shatila, the destruction of the basic infrastructure of the Lebanese and Palestinian people, the wanton acts of aggression against the villages and Lebanese towns, provocative acts against Syria and against the international troops, the occupation of a part of the Lebanese territories on the pretext of establishing a security belt. All this has escalated the confrontation, which took the form of resistance operations on a daily basis, medium-sized wars and overall confrontation: the core of the Middle East problem is indeed the Palestinian question.

(Mr. Shikir, United)
Arab Emirates)

There cannot be stability or peace in the Middle East without recognition of the fact that Palestine is the central issue in any settlement of that conflict. It cannot be solved except on the basis of the resolutions adopted by the United Nations. So far Israel still refuses to deal with this issue, although it is responsible for the creation of the problem, inasmuch as it established its State by force on the land of Palestine and at the expense of the Palestinian people.

Israel would not have been able to impose a policy of fait accompli without the military, material and moral support it received from the United States of America and certain European countries. It was disclosed recently that those countries contributed to building Israel as a nuclear Power. By virtue of this generous support, Israel has become the fourth military Power in the world, according to estimates by the International Centre for Strategic Studies in London. Israel has also become a leader of what is described by Israeli newspapers as the fifth world, that is, the world comprising both the Zionists and the racist régimes. These have formed a military alliance, both conventional and nuclear, designed to bring about the capitulation of the African and Arab States. This militarization is all the more disquieting since it coincides with three developments at the international, regional and internal levels in Israel.

(Mr. Shikir, United Arab Emirates)

At the international level, there has been increased polarization, as manifested in the deterioration in the East-West relationship and the failure of the Reykjavik summit. At the regional level, Israel continues to exacerbate the situation by escalating its military activities and continuing its annexation of Arab territories in defiance of the resolutions of the Organization that gave it its birth certificate in 1947.

On the national level in Israel, the situation gives rise to pessimism. Extremism is on the rise. It is tragic not only for the peoples of the area but for all the peoples that the world's fourth largest military arsenal is in the hands of Shamir, that extremist terrorist member of a party that calls for annexation of the West Bank of the Jordan River. In 1948, the British Government issued a warrant for his arrest for having massacred Arab, British and Jewish civilians.

On the basis of the resolutions adopted at the September 1982 Fez Conference and on the basis of our conviction that the Middle East problem must be solved by peaceful means, my country supported General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, calling for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East as the only appropriate framework for achieving a peaceful, just and lasting settlement involving total withdrawal by Israel from the occupied Arab territories and the realization of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people, foremost among them the right to return to its homeland and establish an independent, sovereign State under the leadership of its sole legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

Israel continues completely to reject the convening of that Conference. It rejects the unanimous view of the international community. It rejects the rights of the Palestinian people. It rejects the demand for it to withdraw from the

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occupied Arab territories and renounce the establishment of settlements. It is untiring in pursuing its policy of expelling and torturing Arabs and confiscating their lands, and of pressing ahead with its military escalation.

The pretext of security so constantly invoked by Israel is a very elastic concept that tends to expand rather than to shrink. In the name of security Israel has displaced the Palestinian people; in the name of security it has occupied the West Bank and other Arab territories; in the name of security it destroyed the Iraqi nuclear reactor; in the name of security it murdered more than 30,000 Lebanese and Palestinians in 1982. In the name of security Israel has occupied parts of Lebanon, carried out raids against Tunisia, and violated Arab air-space. In the name of security Israel hijacks civilian aircraft and seizes neutral merchant vessels in international waters. It kidnaps Lebanese and Palestinian civilians and rejects all peace initiatives. In the name of security it closes universities, schools and hospitals in the occupied territories, and undermines the economy of those territories. If it continues to receive outside assistance, Israel will eventually, in the name of security, bomb every Arab school because, according to this bizarre logic, its graduates threaten Israel's security, and will destroy all Arab installations because they are a danger to the meek Zionist lamb. That flimsy excuse of security is utterly untenable. The fact is that Israel covets the Arab territories. It wishes to swallow up more Arab territories after depopulating them.

We live in a new age lit by the beacon of freedom, sovereignty, independence and the retreat of imperialism. One evidence of this is the increase in the membership of this Assembly from its original 51 to its present 159. That more balanced representation has come about through liberation from the yoke of

(Mr. Shikir, United Arab Emirates)

imperialism. Yet our international community continues today to suffer from some of the vestiges of imperialism, first and foremost the twin régimes of Israel and apartheid.

The supporters of Israel are supporting its expansion, and its imperial greed, which takes both open and covert form. That is in glaring contradiction to the strides made by freedom and the emancipation from the bonds of colonialism. Israel's record shows that it depends only on military might and is prepared to deal with others only by ruthless and brutal force, like other gangs destroyed by liberation and independence movements. So long as the military balance is tilted in Israel's favour, it will continue its hegemonistic policy of expulsion and expansion. The peoples of the region, foremost among them the Palestinian people, have rejected all attempts to make them capitulate, and to efface their identity. The people of Palestine continue to march along the path of freedom and sovereignty, with the support of the resolutions of this Assembly.

History teaches us that the balance of force can change. Israel's leaders, more than anyone else, should realize this: every day, as they carry out archaeological digs in Palestine, attempting to alter its Arab character, they find the remains of emperors in whose presence the likes of Sharon, Begin and Shamir are as midgets, and the ruins of empires far mightier than Israel's.

Mr. WIRYONO (Indonesia): Despite 40 years of unrelenting efforts by the international community in the search for a just and lasting solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, peace continues to elude the long-tormented region of the Middle East. Worse still, in the present stalemate even a generally acceptable negotiating process towards a settlement is absent, let alone the beginnings of a solution.

(Mr. Wiryono, Indonesia)

Since its inception, the United Nations has been constantly seized of the Middle East crisis in all its complexity. It has played an indispensable role in establishing the essential elements for a comprehensive settlement and in restricting the scope and intensity of the conflict. By facilitating and supervising armistice agreements, dispatching peace-keeping troops, providing humanitarian relief and a host of other programmes and activities, the Organization has proved its utility in preventing a wider conflagration and in mitigating the suffering of the people. Thus, the continuing lack of meaningful progress towards a durable solution can in no way be ascribed to the Organization. For the unavoidable reality is that the United Nations can do only what its competent bodies want it to do and can succeed only if its Members are committed to making it succeed.

The fact that United Nations resolutions on the Middle East remain unimplemented does not at all imply that the conflict has somehow receded into the background or that the resolutions themselves have lost their relevance. On the contrary, the General Assembly and the Security Council decisions remain eminently valid, for they represent the only sensible approach to a just and lasting peace in the region.

(Mr. Wiryono, Indonesia)

The implementation of those resolutions has always foundered on the arrogant intransigence of Israel. Encouraged by the almost unquestioning support of its traditional allies and protectors, Israel has habitually flouted the fundamental principles of our Organization and the most basic norms of international law and civilized behaviour.

As events during the past year have again demonstrated, Israel persists in its efforts to impose by force of arms its aggressive and expansionist designs on the region, in utter defiance of world censure. It persists in entrenching itself in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab lands, including the Golan Heights and the Holy City of Al Quds. It persists in its iron-fist policy of brutal repression and terrorization of the population in those occupied territories and in its inhuman practices of arbitrary mass arrest, torture, expulsions, dispossessions and confiscations. Those policies and practices have evoked widespread anger and bitter despair among the Palestinian people and, indeed, throughout the Arab nation, and have triggered an escalating spiral of violence and counter-violence, repression and armed resistance, which poses a constant threat to regional and international peace and security.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the ceaseless turmoil and upheaval that continues to ravage Lebanon. Four years after its massive invasion, Israel still occupies the southern part of that strife-torn country, in complete disregard of Security Council demands that it withdraw to the internationally recognized boundaries. It is also clear that Israel intends to perpetuate its military stranglehold over southern Lebanon through the illegitimate local forces it has set up as surrogates under its total control.

Israel has tried to justify the continued violation of Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity by arguing the need for a so-called security zone in the

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border area. But even that untenable and totally unacceptable position has been exposed for what it truly is - a pretext to use the zone as a springboard for brazen attacks inside Lebanon and as a base for its marauding bands of soldiers from which to lay siege to villages and towns and to perpetrate killings, harassment and the detention of innocent Lebanese civilians and Palestinian refugees. It is beyond doubt that Israel's ultimate design regarding Lebanon has all along been the de facto partition of that country and the eventual annexation of its southern part.

Another dangerous dimension to the illegal occupation of south Lebanon has been its deleterious impact on the functioning of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in the discharge of the tasks assigned to it by the Security Council. In this regard, Indonesia fully shares the grave concern expressed by the Secretary-General in his report on UNIFIL of last October that in these circumstances it has become impossible for UNIFIL to prevent its area of deployment from being used for hostile activities, with consequent danger to the Force's personnel, as was recently so tragically manifested. We fully concur that the situation of UNIFIL will become untenable unless early progress is made towards the implementation of Security Council resolutions 425 (1978), 508 (1982), 509 (1982) and 586 (1986).

The sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Lebanon must be restored. The legal authority of the Lebanese Government and the effectiveness of the Lebanese Army must be upheld. All further unilateral acts by Israel should be stopped, and UNIFIL should be allowed to fulfil its mandate.

While the tragedy in Lebanon has made that country into a major casualty of the Middle East conflict, the worsening plight of the Palestinian people continues to be a matter of acute concern to the international community. The quasi-permanent usurpation of the fundamental national rights and the persistent

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denial of the most basic human rights of an entire people, most of the members of which are now having to live under foreign occupation or exile, is totally unacceptable to Indonesia. The Palestinian issue remains the core problem and root cause of the prolonged crisis in the Middle East, which cries out for urgent solution. In its statement yesterday on the question of Palestine my Government outlined Indonesia's position on the fundamental elements of a just settlement, as well as our firm support for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. None the less, it bears reiteration that any solution that does not take into account the rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people will not contribute to a peace that is just and durable; nor can any negotiating process get off the ground without the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing with all the other parties directly concerned.

Today as never before there exists a broad consensus on the key elements of a peaceful political solution to the Middle East conflict in general and the question of Palestine in particular. There is also hardly any dispute that the most viable way of resolving the complex set of questions surrounding the Middle East conflict would be through the International Peace Conference. It offers the only realistic and comprehensive framework for dialogue and negotiation to secure the unconditional withdrawal by Israel from all the territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to return and the right to establish a sovereign independent State of their own in Palestine. Obviously, the path to peace through the Conference is fraught with many difficulties and uncertainties. That should not, however, dissuade us from initiating the negotiating process in a purposeful yet practical manner. To that end, my delegation fully endorses the

(Mr. Wiryono, Indonesia)

idea of setting up a preparatory committee within the Security Council and with the participation of all the permanent members of the Council. In the past we have allowed too many opportunities to be lost in moving towards peace and in breaking the unending cycle of armed hostilities and war.

At this crucial juncture for the future of the Middle East even more determined efforts are required to sustain the momentum and to remove the remaining obstacles in the path of peace. The Arab nation, including the Palestinians, has already demonstrated its support for a negotiated settlement within the overall framework of the International Peace Conference. It is therefore imperative for Israel finally to realize that the situation can brook no further delay. The only real option before us is to bring to bear the full authority of the United Nations and the machinery of the Security Council in order to start the process of genuine negotiations leading to a comprehensive, just and peaceful settlement in the Middle East.

Mr. GARAVITO HERNANDEZ (Colombia) (interpretation from Spanish): It has been said in this Assembly that the main problem in the Middle East is the question of Palestine. It is a matter not of describing the conflict in terms of its scope, but of understanding that the struggle involves the hope and the desire of one of the parties involved for a free country, independently administered, while on the other hand there is the presence and desire of the other party to remain in territories that are not part of its sovereign territorial integrity, having been designated by the United Nations territories assigned to the Palestinian people.

(Mr. Garavito Hernandez, Colombia)

Colombia stated in a recent intervention that the most appropriate solution would be a direct understanding between the parties to the conflict, viewed from an historical standpoint that would imply the presence of two religious systems with similar cultures sharing the same habitat. Such an understanding calls for policies of brotherhood and coexistence, inspired by the doctrines of the Jewish and Islamic religions.

Every speaker here has advocated a solution, but from time immemorial it has not been easy to find one. For many centuries Palestine has been at the centre of monotheistic religions, their promised land. When Christians read the Old Testament and we see names such as Judaea, Samaria, Jerusalem or Bethlehem it makes us feel as if we are entering our own homes. When we review Roman history we realize that the province of Judaea comprised the region from the Sinai to the north, in Galilee. "Palesteina Prima" referred to an ill-defined territory; "Palesteina Secunda" referred to the land around the Sea of Tiberias; and "Palesteina Tertia" was the desert area of the Negev.

It is said that the word Palestine has its origins in the word "Phalistine", the land of the Philistines. Peoples such as the Arabs and Abbassides arrived there. Varied cultural groups emerged, and, as usually happens in these cases, formed small communities, such as the Christians, the Druze, the Maronites, the Sunni, the Jews and the Shi'ites. Ultimately those who were born on that land felt a duty to claim their right to live in peace in their place of birth. It is no secret that Palestinians of Arab ancestry and the Jews born in the Palestine region have lived together for centuries and have together shaped the culture of that region in a more familiar sense. It is said that the one group uses the alphabet of the other, and between them they have taught the world the religions from which the culture of the western hemisphere has come.

(Mr. Garavito Hernandez, Colombia)

My statement would never come to an end if I tried to go into the details of the history of Israel and Palestine, and to do so would mean distorting the facts, since history is seen from one's own point of view. However, the problem of Palestine is not only the problem of the Middle East. It is worth asking how the limits of the Middle East conflict are to be defined, because what in 1948 appeared to be confined to Israel's war with some of its neighbours is today of greater geographical scope, and we see that the region is made up of more parts. In some of them there is an intensifying permanent conflict. There are some new factors in the area that endanger not only the political stability of the States involved, but also world peace - elements such as religious fanaticism and frenzied nationalism. Here we should recall the saying that patriotism is love of one's own homeland and nationalism is hatred of the homeland of others. There are also economic factors, when an island, a boundary or a trivial custom gives a geographical point of demarcation permitting those concerned to enlarge the zone of oil exploitation, with a view to strengthening their respective trade balances.

All of those factors are involved. As the Colombian poet Jorge Zalamea said in his famous poem "Sueño de la Escalinatas", having seen how human misery climbed up the steps leading from the Ganges to Benares, the number of those affected will continue to grow. The Middle East is today synonymous with many conflicts, many cultures and many hopes. Perhaps the region begins in Algeria and ends in Iran. More than half the world's oil-production capacity is there. Around 200 million people live in the region, people who belong to the third world and who hope, as we near the end of the twentieth century, that the civilized world will adopt an ideology that will save them from the stagnation, ignorance and poverty in which the weakest live.

(Mr. Garavito Hernandez, Colombia)

There is no reason for us to lose our heads and fail to find ways to peaceful coexistence, in order that we peoples of the third world may benefit from the economic surpluses of those nations privileged to have oil as a natural resource. There are nations, such as the Arab nations, with which we have links, from which we inherited our love of the arts and the spirit of research. Or we could receive the technology and sense of organization of the hard-working people of Israel. Lebanon should not be seen regularly on television only as a place of destruction, poverty and tears. Let us give the United Nations the powers that will truly make it a body that can restore peace to mankind as soon as possible, before we explode the bomb that we are sitting on.

If we truly want harmony - and not only in the Middle East - we must understand that peace is maintained through respect for the rights of neighbouring peoples. Communities involved in conflict must understand and accept that on the chessboard of international politics the poor and culturally weak nations are used as pawns in conflicts where the solution is to be found in their roots and not in their ends.

Leaders who start conflicts should be asked about the responsibility they bear when they subject their peoples to fratricidal struggles in which those peoples are used like guinea pigs. As the Assembly knows, chemical weapons have been used as proof of man's scientific development, resulting in death for the peoples in conflict and a legacy of desolation, in which many children are turned into orphans and there is a great feeling of helplessness. Such leaders bear a heavy responsibility by not allowing boys to become men and women to become mothers, because death comes upon them too soon. None of the parties involved in the region must be ignored. We must ask those engaged in conflict, in the name of free and peaceful peoples the world over, to find a solution to their problems. We must ask

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that the conflict between Iran and Iraq end, that the Palestinians gain a homeland and that terrorism be condemned. Mr. Henry Kissinger was right when he said, commenting on this thorny problem, "Without Egypt there can be no war, and without Syria there can be no peace", because with the goodwill of those two great countries a contribution to finding a solution can certainly be made.

Let us raise the standard of living of the peoples living in the conflict zones. Let us allow them to live: let us respect man's sacred right to life, a right that is consecrated in all the religions of the world, including ours, as the divine right through which there may be peace on Earth.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the Observer of the Palestine Liberation Organization, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 3237 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974.

Mr. TERZI (Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)): While the international community really needed to address the worsening situation in the Middle East, the international conscience must have been pricked this morning when we conveyed the message of the President of the Highest Islamic Committee in Jerusalem, Sheikh Saad El-Din Al-Alamy. That message and its content must have made some hearts bleed. We understand that the members of the Security Council, in their consultations this morning, expressed shock and horror, but the situation in Jerusalem epitomizes the situation in the Middle East. The occupying Power, Israel, whether openly and directly or covertly and through some of its elements, provokes violence and bloodshed. Those same elements, which are publicly denounced by the occupying Power but in fact protected and even armed by it, persist in their racist practices and acts of terrorism, terrorism sponsored by a Member State seated in this Assembly.

The Secretary-General in his report expresses concern and tells us that "the situation in the region continues to be highly volatile".

He tries, with good reason, to remind us that

"The plight of the Palestinian people, most of whom now live under occupation or in exile, remains a matter of acute international concern". (A/41/768, para. 34)

To us, the Palestinian people, the issue is an issue of survival, and our legitimate struggle is aimed at securing a comprehensive and just peace, where peace and a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israel conflict in the Middle East are no longer elusive but prove to be tangible and concrete. We fully agree with the Secretary-General's observation that

(Mr. Terzi, PLO)

"if the present deadlock in the peace process is allowed to persist, major hostilities will break out again in the area". (para. 34)

I stress the word "again" because, for 40 years, we have had too many major hostilities. The Secretary-General states that his contacts and endeavours have revealed that the difficulties regarding the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East have remained essentially the same.

The Palestine Liberation Organization made its position clear in this very Assembly in 1974, when the Chairman of the Executive Committee, Yasser Arafat, proclaimed that he came bearing an olive branch, the symbol of peace, and appealed to the Assembly to help him and the Palestinian people, on whose behalf he was addressing this Assembly, not to let the olive branch fall from his hand. The PLO fully supported the call of this Assembly in its resolutions 3375 (XXX) and 3414 (XXX), of December 1975, to reconvene the Peace Conference on the Middle East and to invite the PLO to participate on an equal footing. In 1977 the PLO was the only party to the conflict - the Palestinian people is the principal party, as we know - that welcomed the Gromyko-Vance declaration of 1 October 1977. Unfortunately, the Government of the United States immediately reneged on its commitment, and the Geneva Peace Conference was laid to rest in peace.

Since 1978 the situation has become more volatile and more alarming, and Israel has persisted in its policy of expansionism and annexation. The Israeli occupation troops are still controlling a substantial part of Lebanon, in addition to a major part of Syria and the entire area of Palestine. Israel refuses to carry out the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, be it 425 (1978), 497 (1981), 508 (1982), 509 (1982) or any others.

A lot is being repeated about the need for a peaceful process based on the principles of the Charter and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, be it

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the General Assembly or the Security Council. The Palestine Liberation Organization has repeatedly affirmed its respect for those principles and its adherence to the relevant resolutions. But we shall in no way be selective and choosy about those resolutions. In what way does 242 (1967) differ and why has it gained so much popularity? It is to be adhered to as strongly as the other resolutions - 465 (1980), 471 (1980), 478 (1980), 497 (1981) and so on - all the resolutions in their totality. How can those persons still insist on adherence to only one resolution, 242 (1967)? Is it a magic number? The Government of the United States itself announced from this rostrum that resolution 242 (1967) did not address the political dimension of the Palestinian problem. But it still maintains that the question of Palestine is the core of the Arab-Israel conflict. One is entitled to expect a bit of consistency and reason from those that simply stick to 242 (1967).

Moreover, does resolution 242 (1967) or any other resolution of the Security Council supersede the principles of the Charter, first and foremost among which is the right of peoples to self-determination? Where does this principle of the self-determination of peoples, in this case of the Palestinian people, appear in resolution 242 (1967)? Resolution 242 (1967), as we all know, was adopted by the Security Council to address a specific situation, a contingency: the 1967 war. It was never claimed to be the sole and exclusive basis for a comprehensive, peaceful process.

The need for a comprehensive peace became very clear and compelling, particularly, after the second invasion of Lebanon by Israel in 1982. The declared aim was the destruction of the infrastructure of the PLO and the elimination - mind the word elimination - of the Palestinian armed elements. The term elimination was clearly and unashamedly used by the representative of the United States in the

(Mr. Terzi, PLO)

Security Council, as if the elimination of human beings had been transplanted from the Nazi mentality to some mentalities in the United States Administration. It is clear now that the elimination, not only of the armed elements but of all the Palestinians, seems to be the aim.

This very morning - that is, 25 November - the refugee camps of the Palestine refugees in Beirut and in the south of Lebanon, around Sidon and Tyre, were still under attack by the mortars, by the artillery, by the armoured vehicles and tanks of some elements on Lebanese territory, with the aim of continuing what Israel started and failed to achieve. Our people have no intention of being sitting ducks or targets free for all to kill. And despite all these criminal attempts to eliminate our people, the PLO still holds out the olive branch.

(Mr. Terzi, PLO)

At the Arab summit conference held at Fez, Morocco, in 1982 the PLO contributed greatly to the Arab peace plan. We believe - nay, we know - that the survival of our people, the development of our people and the pursuit of the happiness by our people and all other peoples in the area depend largely on the dominance of peace and stability. But in no way can peace be attained at the price of eliminating our people; we shall not permit that.

The United Nations organized an International Conference on the Question of Palestine in the summer of 1983. Chairman Arafat, in an endeavour to find a mechanism for a peaceful process, called for an international peace conference. The Geneva Declaration on Palestine was endorsed by the General Assembly, with 124 Members voting in favour. This Assembly endorsed its guidelines and requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Security Council, to undertake the measures necessary to convene the peace Conference. Regrettably, the efforts of the Secretary-General were stonewalled by the negative attitude of a permanent member of the Security Council, namely the Government of the United States of America.

Thus, the efforts of the Secretary-General and the hopes and endeavours of the members of the General Assembly were blocked by the Government of the United States, which obstructed the initiation of preparatory work for the Conference. That position of the United States reflects its policy of opposing the peace process in the Middle East - maybe of opposing peace altogether. After all, we all still recall the statement of His Excellency the President of the United States, who from this very rostrum enumerated the hotbeds of tension: the Middle East was somehow mysteriously excluded. For him it is so peaceful, or perhaps he thought it was, or so he was informed - or misinformed, as has been the case recently. He seems to be misinformed very often.

(Mr. Terzi, PLO)

After all, was his Administration not funnelling arms worth billions of dollars to Israel to maintain its aggressive military adventurism through creeping expansion and its annexation of Palestinian and other Arab territories? Is it not the support Israel gets from the United States that promotes a new search for lebensraum and a new phase of anschluss by the Judeo-nazis in Tel Aviv? Was not the agreement on strategic co-operation between the United States and Israel, signed on 30 November 1981 by the Sabra and Shatila butcher, the war-criminal Sharon, and Secretary Weinberger, aimed at maintaining the flames of war and the stream of blood shed by innocent people? Was that co-operation agreement not even intended to cover the supply of funds to the contras in Nicaragua by the illegal sale of lethal weapons? Did it not cover the sale of Israeli aircraft to Central American States, and assist production of the Kfir aircraft, with the blessing of the United States Department of the Treasury, which was to rescind its opposition to financing the deal with United States aid money? The Kfir aircraft, as we know, is fitted with United States-made engines, so there is nothing purely Israeli about it; its body seems to be manufactured in Israel in order somehow to help the Israeli economy.

The Secretary-General is encouraged because

"the idea of an international peace conference appears to be gaining wider support and a number of procedural proposals have been made in bilateral contacts involving parties in the region and others who are interested in a settlement of this long-standing conflict". (A/41/768, para. 37)

We fully share that optimism. Let us recall that at the extraordinary summit meeting of Arab Heads of State, held at Casablanca in the summer of 1985, the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan presented a joint plan of action to facilitate the realization of the Fez Arab peace plan.

(Mr. Terzi, PLO)

That was followed up by many contacts, and finally the concrete obstacle to peace was revealed; it was revealed in the Congress of the United States of America.

On 5 June 1986, Lee Hamilton, Chairman of the Sub-Committee on Europe and the Middle East of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, inserted in the Congressional Record his correspondence with the State Department concerning the United States position on proposals by the Palestine Liberation Organization for a legal formula to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. Among the replies he received from the State Department, one reads as follows:

"The section entitled 'Steps' outlines the actions whereby the PLO would make a conditional acceptance of [Security Council resolution] 242 [(1967)] in return for a United States affirmation of Palestinian self-determination. The term 'self-determination' has, in the Middle East context, come to connote the establishment of a Palestinian State. The United States does not support the establishment of an independent Palestinian State. Therefore, such a reference is not consistent with United States policy."

Clearly the reference to Palestinian self-determination is against United States policy, and the United States consequently not only denies but would negate the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. We ask how peace can not be elusive when a permanent member of the Security Council would negate that inalienable right? The negation of that right is in itself a negation of peace, and the Government of the United States will of necessity be held responsible for the continuing highly volatile situation in the Middle East.

We wish to express here our great appreciation to the Archbishop of New York, His Eminence Cardinal O'Connor. After a visit to the area he affirmed that the situation would remain volatile so long as the Palestinians yearned to return to their homeland, because the basics are still "home, sweet home". So long as you deny people the right to return to their homes, there can be no peace.

(Mr. Terzi, PLO)

The Secretary-General surprises us by his statement that it has not been possible to resolve "how the interests and rights of the Palestinian people should be represented" (A/41/768, para. 37). I wish to remind the Secretary-General that General Assembly resolution 3210 (XXIX) of 14 October 1974 invited the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, a principal party to the conflict, to be present in this Hall. That is why we are here today.

Moreover, the Arab summit meeting held at Rabat in 1974 affirmed that the PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. But, with all due respect, what is more important and more significant is the position taken by the Palestinians themselves. In a referendum carried out recently in the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories, more than 90 per cent of our people affirmed that the PLO was their sole legitimate representative. I am sure that neither the Secretary-General nor anyone else should have any reason for doubts concerning the representation of the Palestinian people.

(Mr. Terzi, PLO)

In the process of peace, while the Palestine Liberation Organization, through our National Council, our organization's supreme authority, has authorized us to extend a friendly hand to Israeli citizens who aspire to peace, the Israeli Knesset enacts a racist law condemning peace-loving Israeli citizens and castigates them with three years' imprisonment. Thus, the peaceful process is torpedoed by Israel. Peace is not elusive. Peace is being prevented, and the Palestinian people, through their sole and legitimate representative, will continue in its endeavours to achieve a comprehensive and just peace.

How can any reasonable Palestinian perceive of peace, faced with the continuing presence of the forces of the occupying Power inside his own territory? Thus, a prerequisite for peace is the total and unconditional withdrawal of the occupation forces, and that is a condition sine qua non.

Finally, the General Assembly has endorsed the call for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. Let us all respond positively to that call. A preparatory committee within the Security Council would be a constructive step towards a convening of that Conference. We appeal to the international community, and particularly to the permanent members of the Security Council, to give peace a chance.

Give peace a chance. Forty years in the tragic life of the Palestinian people and the peoples of the area is really too long. This must compel us to think of a process for peace and to achieve that comprehensive and just peace. Hence, give peace a chance.

The PRESIDENT: The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic has requested to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 43/401, statements in exercise of the

(The President)

right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. AL-ATASSI (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic): The representative of Zionism spoke this afternoon and referred to my country. Owing to the lateness of the hour, and out of respect for this holy night, the eve of Thanksgiving Day, I shall not reply to that representative now, but reserve my right to reply on Friday.

The meeting rose at 8.15 p.m.