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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVIS IONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SIXTY-FOURTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Monday, 27 November 1989, at 3 p.m.

President:

Mr. FEYDER  
(Vice-President)

(Luxembourg)

later:

Mr. HURST  
(Vice-President)

(Antigua and Barbuda)

- Tribute to the memory of Ahmed Abdallah Abderemane, President of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros
- The situation in the Middle East [37] (continued): reports of the Secretary-General

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In the absence of the President, Mr. Feyder (Luxembourg), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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

TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF AHMED ABDALLAH ABDEREMANE, PRESIDENT OF THE ISLAMIC  
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF THE COMOROS

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): Before proceeding with the consideration of the item on the agenda for this afternoon, I should like to invite the General Assembly to join in a tribute to the memory of Mr. Ahmed Abdallah Abderemane, President of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros.

It was with deep sorrow that I learned this morning of the tragic death of President Abdallah. President Abdallah will be remembered for the distinguished leadership he gave to his country and for the support he extended to the quest for peace and justice in the world.

On behalf of the General Assembly, I request the representative of the Comoros to convey our heartfelt condolences to the Government and the people of the Comoros and to the bereaved family.

I now call on the Secretary-General.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL (interpretation from French): It was with heartfelt sadness that I learned of the tragic death of the President of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros, Mr. Ahmed Abdallah Abderemane. President Abdallah occupied the lofty office of Head of State of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros for 10 years, a period during which he earned the great esteem not only of his people but also of the African and international communities because of the great wisdom and moderation with which he carried out the peaceful development of his country.

I should like also to pay a tribute to President Abdallah for his devotion to the principles and ideals of the Charter and his strong support for the work of the

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United Nations. During his mandate President Abdallah visited United Nations Headquarters several times, and I had the honour of receiving him and gaining first-hand knowledge of his outstanding qualities as a statesman.

In these painful circumstances I should like to convey to the bereaved family and to the people and the Government of the Comoros my most heartfelt condolences on this great loss.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I invite representatives to stand and observe a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of President Abdallah.

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

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

Mr. PHOFOLO (Lesotho): Last week I had the unfortunate task of conveying to the Assembly the African message of condolences on the untimely death of the late President of Lebanon, Mr. René Moawad. A week has not yet passed, and I am again in the position of having to undergo the ordeal of conveying yet another message of condolences, on behalf of the African Group and of my country, regarding the untimely death of Mr. Ahmed Abdallah Abderemane, who was Head of State of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros.

On behalf of the African Group and on behalf of my country, I wish to say that we learned with a great sense of shock and dismay that the Head of State had met a violent and untimely death during what seems to have been an attempt to effect a coup d'état.

Mr. Abdallah became the first Head of State of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros in 1975. He came to power again and became President of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros in May 1978. He also held the portfolios of

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President of the Politico-Military Directory, Minister of Defence and Minister of Justice and the Civil Service and overhauled the structure of his Government in February 1982.

It is a cause of great concern that internal political differences would warrant the assassination of those holding opposing views on issues. The African Group views this action on the part of those who perpetrated it as an unwarranted and cowardly waste of valuable life. We ask ourselves why peaceful means were not adopted to resolve whatever problem or problems existed as such means would appeal to all peace-loving people who cherish ideals of democracy.

Africa mourns this loss of an African leader and shares the grief of the Government and the people of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros. We remember the immediate members of the family and the next of kin of the late Head of State and those who died with him. We convey to them our sincere sympathies and condolences. May his soul and the souls of those who died with him rest in peace.

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

Mr. JAYA (Brunei Darussalam): In my capacity as Chairman of the Group of Asian States for the month of November, I should like to express our profound sorrow over the sudden death of President Ahmed Abdallah Abderemane of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros.

At a time when the world is enjoying relative peace and tranquillity, the tragic circumstances surrounding his death fill us with sadness. May I extend, on behalf of the Group of Asian States, our heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the family of the late President and to the Government and the people of the Comoros on this sad loss.

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

Mr. ZAPOTOCKY (Czechoslovakia): On behalf of the Group of Eastern European States, I wish to express our sincere condolences to the delegation of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros over the tragic demise of President Ahmed Abdallah Abderemane. His sudden passing away is a severe loss to the people of the Comoros, to whose progress and better future President Abdallah devoted his entire energy. Like the people of the Comoros and the whole international community, we are dismayed by the brutal crime that has taken the life of that outstanding politician and statesman.

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

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I call on the representative of Saint Lucia, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. FLEMMING (Saint Lucia): It is with deep and sincere regret that I express, on behalf of the members of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, our profound condolences to the Government and the people of the Comoros on the sad occasion of the untimely death of their President, Mr. Ahmed Abdallah Abderemane.

We in the Latin American and the Caribbean countries have long admired his leadership, and our hearts go out to the people of the Comoros who, we know, will long mourn the loss of this great statesman. We in Latin America and the Caribbean are particularly distressed at the way in which President Abdallah died.

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

Mr. TELLMANN (Norway): The delegations of the Group of Western European and Other States were stunned and aggrieved at the tragic news of the assassination of President Ahmed Abdallah Abderemane. Mr. Abdallah was a highly respected leader of his country and its people.

This dastardly deed has left the world with a sense of loss and the people of the Comoros without an inspiring helmsman.

At this tragic hour, our deeply felt sympathy is extended to the people of the Comoros. On behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States, I should like to convey our most sincere condolences to the bereaved families, to the people and the Government of the Comoros and to our colleagues in the Comorian delegation.

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

Mr. ABULHASAN (Kuwait) (interpretation from Arabic): The Arab world was grieving last week over the untimely death of President René Moawad of Lebanon. Today the African continent is grieving over the untimely loss of one of its leaders. This is the fate of those who struggle for their peoples.

The Group of Arab States at the United Nations was shocked by the tragic news of the assassination of President Ahmed Abdallah Abderemane of the Comoros, who defended the noble causes of his nation and led his people within the Islamic and African family and who was interested in international affairs, foremost among which was achieving peace and stability not only in the African continent but also in the entire world.

This tragic event prompts us to extend to the friendly people of the Comoros, who have long fought for freedom, our deep condolences at this immense loss. We appeal to God to help the people of the Comoros to overcome the consequences of this great tragedy as they continue working for the achievement of the political stability and economic progress of their country.

The Arab Group would like to request the delegation of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros to convey our deepest condolences to the bereaved family. May he rest in peace and may God inspire the Muslim people of the Comoros with steadfastness.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I call on the representative of the United States of America, who will speak on behalf of the host country.

Mr. WATSON (United States of America): As the representative of the host country, I wish to express the United States Government's most energetic condemnation of the assassination of Mr. Ahmed Abdallah Abderemane, President of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros. In office since 1978, President Abdallah was a force for stability within the region. The United States Government deplores this recourse to violence, rather than peaceful action to resolve political differences. I request that the most sincere condolences of the United States Government be conveyed to the family of President Abdallah, to the Government of the Comoros and to all the Comorian people on his tragic death.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I now call on the Permanent Representative of the Comoros.

Mr. MOUMIN (Comoros): On behalf of my Government and on my own behalf, I should like to thank you all for the expressions of sympathy addressed to my Government and my people and to the family of the late President. We all share the same feelings and we are all against this dastardly act that was carried out, not with political motives, but in pursuit of a personal vendetta. The assassination of my President had no political motivation behind it. It was a purely personal vendetta, and we cannot but regret and condemn all such acts.

On behalf of my people, I should like once again to thank you all for this mark of sympathy in this hour of mourning.



## AGENDA ITEM 37

THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/44/690 and Add.1, A/44/731, A/44/737)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): Before calling on the first speaker, I should like to propose that the list of speakers in the debate on this item be closed tomorrow at 12 noon. If I hear no objections, it will be so decided.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I therefore request those representatives wishing to participate in the debate to inscribe their names on the speakers list as soon as possible.

Mr. ABULHASAN (Kuwait) (interpretation from Arabic): For almost two years now the world has been going through a stage of unprecedented positive changes and developments, the result of détente in relations between the two super-Powers, the United States and the Soviet Union. Those developments have transformed relations between the major international blocs in the world from confrontation based on suspicion and mistrust to relations based on a desire for co-operation and coexistence on the basis of trust and faith in the unity of human fate and a belief in the need to provide and re-channel forces and resources towards economic development and facing challenges. Some of the most salient results of those positive developments have been seen in the resolution of certain regional problems that were on the verge of threatening peace and security in the world, such as the question of Namibia, Afghanistan, and the situation in Central America.

It is regrettable that the winds of change and a positive spirit have not yet exerted influence on the situation in the Middle East. That situation remains unchanged, fraught with possibilities of explosion and instability.

The Secretary-General rightly described the situation in the Middle East in his report when he said:

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"As we are all too well aware, the Middle East is an explosive region and events or trends in one area almost invariably have repercussions elsewhere. For years I have stated that few international issues are as complex or potentially dangerous as the Arab-Israeli conflict. This remains so today." (A/44/737, para. 43)

If there is no change in the situation in the Middle East, that part of the world will undoubtedly become more dangerous, given its strategic importance that constitutes a major element in the security, stability, welfare and progress of the whole world because of its social, economic, human, historical and geographical components.

If one asks why the situation of the Middle East has not yet been influenced by the new positive climate permeating most parts of the world, one can readily see that the cause is Israel and the philosophy of this expansionist entity, with its strategic objectives in the region and its aggressive policies that respect no boundaries, no conventions and no customs.

The situation in the Middle East has its origin in the question of Palestine, the core, essence and crux of the problem in the region.

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This question is made all the more complex as a result of the increased expansionism of Israel. It eludes solution. The positive international atmosphere has no influence on its solution because of Israeli obduracy and arrogance, and because of the failure of the Organization, as represented by the Security Council, to take decisive, appropriate decision to deter that entity, to compel it to respect United Nations resolutions, whether they pertain to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the city of Al Quds Al Sharif, the occupied Syrian Arab Golan Heights or southern Lebanon. The population of these territories occupied by Israel since 1967 lives at the mercy of a régime that depends on military brute force, a régime that believes in no law, no charter, no custom; a régime that has no scruples about perpetrating the worst atrocities to consolidate its occupation. Its military arm is extended to attack positions in Arab States located thousands of miles from it and far from the occupied Arab territories, such as Baghdad and Tunis. It has no scruples about developing or using any type of weapon or testing it in a manner that constitutes an act of aggression against the sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of Arab States. Such was the case when Israel launched a missile that came down off the Libyan coast.

While the Palestinian people have been continuing their just struggle for their historic rights in the land of their ancestors, their legitimate leadership, in the form of the Palestine Liberation Organization, their sole, legitimate representative, has made successive peace initiatives. Arab States, through summit meetings, have submitted comprehensive plans for peace based on justice and international legitimacy. However, Israel, true to its type, has not been satisfied with impeding the peace efforts and making them meaningless. It persists in its position, rejecting any just settlement, and in its inhuman practices in

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the occupied territories, the atrocious details of which have been made public by the mass media and which have been deplored in the reports of all human rights organizations. We continue to wonder what the denunciations and waves of international indignation lead to in the way of practical measures and tangible action, at a time when the heroic intifadah is entering its third year and while the Israeli occupiers continue to fire live ammunition at children and other defenceless Palestinians.

Israel continues to demolish their homes and expropriate their properties; to impose policies of starvation and economic debilitation; to detain thousands; to use asphyxiating gases; to expel citizens, and to carry out internationally prohibited measures of collective punishment.

The Israeli occupation has not been satisfied with all this; it has gone even further and outraged the religious feelings of its victims and of the 1 billion Muslims throughout the world by attacking, desecrating and defiling their holy shrines. What the Zionists are doing to the Islamic holy shrines in Al Quds Al Sharif and to mosques in other parts of the occupied territories is a heinous crime on which a resolute stance should be taken by all States and organizations. This immoral conduct should be a matter of concern not to Muslims alone but to all peoples which respect religions and holy books and are committed to humane principles and values.

These familiar Zionist acts remind us that 14 years ago this month the General Assembly adopted a resolution in which it determined that zionism was a form of racism and racial discrimination. Under that resolution Israel became the second State, after South Africa, to be branded racist by the international family of nations. The only difference is that the unlimited Western support for Israel during all these years of unchecked Zionist aggression has prevented the imposition

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of international sanctions against Israel to force it to cease its practices and respond to the need for a just settlement and peace.

This month the United States used its right of veto against a draft resolution denouncing Israel's barbaric practices submitted to the Security Council. That was the third time the veto had been used this year to prevent simple international condemnation of these crimes. The world can no longer find an explanation for this policy of condonation of Israel's policies and practices. Does the United States not see in Israel's actions and in its occupation army something that deserves condemnation? Would the United States adopt the same position if these practices took place in any other part of the world? No one can claim that the right of self-determination and the enjoyment of human rights and basic freedoms are privileges to be granted to some peoples and denied to others, to be granted or withheld according to ideological whim and self-interest. This cannot be an acceptable concept of the values and precepts of which the Arab world is constantly reminded by the West.

What does the international community, especially the super-Powers, intend to do in the face of the blatant nuclear collaboration between South Africa and Israel, in particular in the light of the latest, patent evidence that those two racist régimes have tested a missile that is capable of carrying nuclear warheads and could reach many Arab and African capitals?

The Arab Group, of which I have the honour to be Chairman for this month, renews the appeal for concerted efforts by all States, in particular those that have acquired nuclear technology, to persuade Israel to end its illegal nuclear programmes, which are based on the theft of Western technology, above all American technology. These States should combine their efforts to compel Israel to place its nuclear facilities under international supervision through the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards system.

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The arms race into which Israel has dragged the Middle East for scores of years now is a fearful, evil race whose astronomical costs are taken from resources that are badly needed by the peoples of the region to implement their numerous development programmes instead of spending them on lethal weapons. The continued development of nuclear weapons by Israel is yet another part of its policy of aggression against the Arab peoples and is a tool of the nuclear intimidation and blackmail with which it tries to achieve its expansionist schemes.

Israel's continued occupation of large parts of southern Lebanon, its almost daily armed acts of aggression against Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity, its continued interference in Lebanon's internal affairs and its constant acts of destabilization of Lebanon are all elements that make the problem of the Middle East even more complex. They constitute an obstacle to stability in that sister country. The Arab Group in New York therefore calls upon the international community, and in particular the Security Council, to bring pressure to bear on Israel to comply with the various Security Council resolutions calling for Israel's immediate and unconditional withdrawal from southern Lebanon so that the people of Lebanon may be able to regain their well-being and concentrate their efforts on rebuilding their country's internal front in a way that would fulfil their aspirations to a stable and prosperous life.

The Palestinian leadership took a historic position at the meeting of the Palestine National Council at Algiers last year, a position that was fully supported by the Arab countries. Indeed, the international community as a whole has supported that position, whose premise is that the International Peace Conference on the Middle East - under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people - is the framework with international legitimacy for finding a solution to

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this problem that would achieve Israel's withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and establish an independent State of Palestine with its capital in Al Quds-Al Sharif.

The Arab Group considers this Palestinian position to be just and realistic. In the light of such a position no one can prevaricate unless the intention is to reject peace. It has become patently clear to the whole world now who wants peace in the Middle East and who is prevaricating and undermining efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement at a time when the world is at the dawn of a new era in international relations and a new era of détente and coexistence.

Mr. SALAH (Jordan) (interpretation from Arabic): Once again the General Assembly is seized of the situation in the Middle East. However, this year it is discussing the question at a time of marked progress towards the settlement of a number of internationally significant regional issues, a clear departure from the old patterns and the logic of confrontation, a willingness to engage in constructive dialogue and support an enhanced role for the United Nations.

The world breathes more easily in view of the recent positive indications in the international political climate which have emerged from the adoption by the two super-Powers and other major Powers of new policies of dialogue and agreement and their renunciation of the cold-war logic. This has reflected positively on the regional context of coexistence and given impetus to the resolution of issues which had remained intractable, such as those of Namibia, Central America, Afghanistan and the Iran-Iraq conflict.

However, the aberration amid all those favourable signs has been the situation in the Middle East. It has remained the area where no improvement has been made. Though it continues to be in the forefront of world attention and has been a grave

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cause for international concern since the end of the Second World War, it continues to move very slowly indeed.

It is a regrettable fact that the international will is never shown, as far as this region is concerned, unless the region explodes into military conflict. As soon as hostilities end however, that international will evaporates and the old despondency and acquiescence reign supreme.

The peoples of the region and, indeed, the whole of the international community sensed some sort of promise in the air, towards the end of last year on a wave of international welcome for the resolutions adopted by the Palestine National Council at its special session at Algiers and the subsequent Palestinian statements and declarations wherein the Palestinian people gave voice to their sincere desire for peace and earnest willingness to work for peace. In all this, the Palestinians committed themselves to acceptance of a peaceful solution based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of two States in Palestine as envisaged by General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 1947.

Together with the majority of the States of the world we expected Israel to respond to those resolutions and decisions with a degree of reasonableness and a show of good will. It has not done so. Instead, it has resorted to its well-tried technique of obstructing the path to peace by proposals that lead to a head-on collision with the requirements of a comprehensive and just peace. In doing so, it has demonstrated yet again that real peace is the very antithesis of its goals and expansionist designs, of which it has given ample evidence by its annexation of Arab Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan Heights, its insistence on renaming the occupied West Bank "Judea and Samaria", and the continued building of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories.



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On top of all this, Israel has continued to flout the international will embodied in United Nations resolutions that define the prerequisites for resolving the Arab-Israeli dispute in its entirety. Needless to say, the core of that dispute is the Palestinian issue.

The prerequisites of peace in the Middle East, as defined by the international community, are: Israel's withdrawal from all the Palestinian and Arab territories which it has continued to occupy since 1967; recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination and to establish their independent State on their soil in the occupied territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; respect for the right of all the States of the region, including the two States of Palestine and Israel, to live in peace and security within internationally recognized borders.

When the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, declared its acceptance, towards the end of last year, of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), the principal prerequisites of a complete and peaceful settlement were provided by the Arab side, and thus, the political and psychological obstacles which were seen by Israel and its supporters as hurdles in the way of a political solution of the Middle East problem were removed. Regardless of all this, however, and notwithstanding the clarity of the Arab side's political stance and its commitment to a real, peaceful solution, Israel has remained intransigent. Its response has been ambiguous and far from serious, as is proved by its so-called peace initiative of last May. To illustrate, let me recall what that so-called initiative stated in its preamble:

"This document presents the principles of a political initiative of the Government of Israel which deals with the continuation of the peace process; the termination of the state of war with the Arab states; a solution for the

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Arabs of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District; peace with Jordan; and a resolution of the problem of the residents of the refugee camps in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District." (A/44/282, annex, para. 1)

It is self-evident that that statement ignores completely the national rights of the Palestinian people. It refers to the Palestinian nationals in the occupied territories as the Arabs of Judea, Samaria and Gaza, and as "the residents of the refugee camps". It does not deal with the problem of Palestinian refugees in the Diaspora; it does not refer to the legal situation of the occupied territories; it insists on referring to the occupied West Bank as Judea and Samaria; and it does not even mention Jerusalem.

The Government of Israel aims through this plan to dilute the peace process and mire it in a morass of controversy over procedures and formalities in order to gain time and vitiate the peace initiative of the PLO. Such a posture on the part of Israel is tantamount to total rejection of all the prerequisites that must be provided if there is to be peace.

The Israeli Foreign Minister's letter to the Secretary-General - document A/44/721 - confirms that this Israeli political posture vis-à-vis any attempt to solve the problem in the Middle East is intended to be a substitute for the resolutions adopted by the United Nations. It even changes the terms used to describe the land and the rights of Palestinians. The content of the Israeli Foreign Minister's letter is a clear indication of the Israeli Government's intent to annex the Palestinian territories, to give the West Bank the name of Judea and Samaria, and to refer to Jerusalem as the unified capital of Israel. All this is an indisputable perversion of the resolutions and decisions of the United Nations.

The two reports of the Secretary-General - documents A/44/731 and A/44/737 - voice concern over the increasing gravity of the situation in the occupied

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territories and the fact that the peace opportunities that have arisen during the past twelve months have not been grasped. Reference is made to the Security Council's conviction that it has become urgent that a comprehensive, just and permanent settlement of the situation in the Middle East, particularly the question of Palestine, be achieved. This conviction on the part of the Security Council necessitates concerted and urgent action by the Council to settle the Middle East dispute, starting with agreement to hold the international conference that is unanimously regarded as the most appropriate forum for such an endeavour. Israel is the only State that has rejected completely and out of hand the idea of the international conference. Its leaders have never had any qualms regarding this rejection, which they have repeatedly stressed.

The General Assembly's general debate at the beginning of this session proved, when the talk turned to the Middle East, that the United Nations has an opportunity to move from the maintenance of peace to peace-making through the holding of an international peace conference - an idea that has attracted a wide measure of international support.

Jordan has always called for a peaceful, just and comprehensive solution, particularly since 1967. That call has continued to be for a settlement based on the United Nations Charter and on the relevant United Nations resolutions. In his statement to the General Assembly at its fortieth session, His Majesty King Hussein affirmed that the resolutions that would constitute a balanced basis for a peaceful and just settlement, are these: General Assembly resolution 181 (II) on the partition of Palestine; General Assembly resolution 194 (III) on the question of the Palestinian refugees; Security Council resolution 242 (1967), which calls for an Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories and affirms the right of all the countries of the region to live in peace within secure and recognized

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boundaries, and Security Council resolution 338 (1973), which calls for negotiations between the parties to the conflict. These resolutions as a whole meet with complete international acceptance, as they include the basic principles which, if adhered to, would lead us to the desired solution.

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Security Council resolution 242 (1967) has since its adoption been considered by us to be the basis for all peace efforts and every international attempt to deal with the consequences of the 1967 war. In view of this, Jordan has continuously striven, both on the Arab and on the international levels, to mobilize the necessary support for adherence to and implementation of that resolution.

As a matter of fact, it was Jordan's acceptance of that resolution which led to the emergence of an Arab posture which later developed into an Arab endeavour to reach a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute, the core of which is the issue of Palestine. Progress in that direction has been accelerated over the past few years - witness: the decision of the Fez Arab summit conference of 1982, which formulated a unified Arab position committed to international legitimacy as a basis for solving the Arab-Israeli dispute; the subsequent Palestinian-Jordanian joint efforts within that context; the Arab unanimous stance at the two Arab summit conferences of Amman, in 1987, and Algiers, in 1988, which, as a further affirmation of that Arab stance, called for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East.

All those efforts culminated in the emergence of an earnest and non-ambiguous Palestinian stance on the question of peace. This stance was embodied in the resolutions of the Palestine National Council in its special session last year in Algiers and was equally adopted by the Arab summit conference held in Casablanca this year.

We are convinced that such a historic opportunity should not be missed. We are equally convinced that all that is needed for this opportunity to produce a significant contribution to the search for peace is a measure of good will on the part of Israel. We are confident that the international community - and even those who pretend to believe otherwise - realize that there is a unified Arab stance that

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is highly moderate and responsible, and that it is based on the principles included in the international resolutions I have referred to.

We in Jordan support every effort, including the valuable efforts of the Secretary-General, to ensure the holding of an international peace conference on the Middle East, in order to end the suffering of the Palestinian people in the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip, to end the suffering of the Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights, and to move away from the dangerous and explosive tensions which beset the region.

We hope the Security Council will respond favourably to the request of the General Assembly to consider the adoption of the necessary measures to convene that conference before it is too late to reach a just, permanent and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute. Thus the Council would take a very important step towards dealing with the very roots of the Middle East problem. The Security Council has both the authority and the mandate to do so. It also has the resolutions which it has adopted unanimously and which would put paid to the problem if only they were implemented. The Security Council has also at its disposal an international unanimity on the most appropriate means of finding a solution, namely, an international peace conference.

While the focus is on the Arab-Israeli dispute and its core, the Palestinian question, we view with the utmost concern the continued Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon, which poses grave threats to Lebanon's unity, stability, independence and natural resources. In the light of our awareness of the dangers inherent in the continued Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon, we support all efforts, particularly those of the new Lebanese Government, which are aimed at safeguarding Lebanon's independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty.

The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) was deployed about 12 years ago, but it has not yet been able to fulfil its mandate because of

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Israel's refusal to comply with Security Council resolutions calling for Israel's complete, unconditional withdrawal from the occupied Lebanese territories.

The opportunity for peace in the Middle East is available. The commitment by the Arab side to benefit from that opportunity is clear and consistent. It is necessary - nay, imperative - not to miss this opportunity through the powerlessness of the United Nations, which bears the responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and the intransigence of Israel, which harbours dreams of hegemony and expansion.

We in Jordan are committed to all efforts to achieve a just and permanent peace settlement of the conflict in the Middle East. We reiterate our willingness to co-operate in every sincere effort that would lead to such an end, including the valuable efforts of the Secretary-General. We appeal to the United Nations and particularly to the Security Council, to shoulder their responsibility and translate international will into concrete action before it is too late.

Mr. BADAWI (Egypt) (interpretation from Arabic): The international community is living through an extremely sensitive, historic moment which will have profound repercussions on our world as it endeavours to achieve a free and worthy life under a new international order, built on dialogue and peaceful coexistence and free from the polarization policies and international tensions that had prevailed for many years. It appears that this is a reconfirmation of commitments entered into by the founders of the United Nations when the Charter was adopted. These are clear indications that peoples and Governments are now aware that time-worn ideologies do not pay and that it is the right of future generations to enjoy a more tranquil life, enabling them to devote their energies to economic and social development and prosperity.

(Mr. Badawi, Egypt)

We note that the two major Powers and their allies have committed themselves to ending the nuclear and conventional arms race, a trend that we hope will continue and grow. However, they must not forget that they are partners in this interdependent, integrated world, a world united by a common destiny, that depends on the harmonious coexistence of nations to the benefit of mankind as a whole.

The prevailing international détente has contributed to the solution, or the beginning of the process of solving, a series of regional conflicts which for many years had resisted all attempts at settlement and come up against international tensions, strategic confrontations and transient interests of States.

Only a few days ago the brother people of Namibia elected its representatives as the conclusion of the process leading to total independence. Considerable progress had been made even before that towards solving many other regional problems, such as those of Afghanistan and Kampuchea, the Iran-Iraq conflict and, most recently, the Lebanese situation. In this connection, I pay tribute to the national leadership in Lebanon, which has lost no time in facing up to its responsibilities with a view to ensuring the unity of that sister country and its sovereignty over the whole of its territory through the total withdrawal of foreign troops.

We welcome all the initiatives that have been taken to improve international relations, modest though they be and long though we have awaited them. Nevertheless, we feel it to be our duty to alert the international community to the fact that our achievements to date are but a small step forward on the long and arduous road ahead. The successes achieved in the past two years are derisory compared with the challenge the international community still faces.

Members will agree that the clearest evidence that we are still faltering on our road and that we have not yet moved to genuine détente is the situation in the Middle East, the cradle of the revealed religions and the very centre of many



(Mr. Badawi, Egypt)

cultures. The Middle East has not yet benefited from the positive international climate that now prevails in most regions of the world, in particular the European region neighbouring the Mediterranean basin. I am bound in all honesty to acknowledge that the situation in the Middle East has become even more tense owing to the introduction into the region of more sophisticated weaponry and to the tests on intermediate-range missiles carried out by Israel on the Mediterranean coast. This is a threat to the security of the Mediterranean and the stability of all States in the region, particularly in the light of the precise, detailed information we receive daily regarding the non-peaceful character of Israel's nuclear programmes and the strategic military co-operation between Israel and South Africa, with all its dangerous connotations.

I need hardly stress the fact that the other States in the region will not stand by with folded arms in the face of those Israeli policies, which threaten their security. Israel should carefully assess the situation, because if it pursues those policies there will inevitably be a very serious and dangerous arms race, the disastrous consequences of which will spare none in a region that already has more than its share of problems.

If Israel truly wishes to live in peace and security in the Middle East it must provide the States in the region with the guarantees for which they are asking. Those guarantees cannot be assured unless the peaceful nature of Israel's nuclear programmes is ascertained, Israel accedes to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and places all its nuclear installations under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards system, a denuclearized zone is established in the Middle East, and military co-operation with South Africa is terminated.

It is unfortunate that, while the hopes, and even the dreams, of some States are coming true, and we are talking about a favourable international situation, the

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tribulations of the peoples of the Middle East are increasing and Israel's policy of occupation continues, as do its arbitrary actions against the Arab population in the occupied territories. This is all part of Israel's desperate attempt to crush the popular Palestinian intifadah and implement measures that blatantly flout international charters and resolutions and, in particular, the fourth Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

This policy certainly attests to the short-sightedness of the Israeli occupation authorities, because it only reinforces the determination of the Palestinian people to resist the occupation and cannot but lead to further violence, thereby widening the gap between Israel and the peoples of the region.

In consequence of all this, the great hopes that were raised last year regarding positive results from the efforts to bring about a peaceful settlement of the Middle East problem, thanks to the courageous position adopted by the Palestinian leaders, in particular President Yasser Arafat, in November and December 1988, have been dashed and replaced by a new surge of feelings of mutual distrust by the parties involved, because the Israeli Government has not given the response that the Palestinian's historic position deserves.

We have followed the evolution of this situation with great concern because we are convinced that it is vitally necessary for negotiations accepted by all concerned to be started, in order to reach a comprehensive, lasting solution to the Middle East problem in all its aspects. That is why Egypt has decided to continue its efforts of this year to bring about a dialogue between Palestinians and Israelis, on a footing of equality and free from pre-conditions, as a first step in a comprehensive peace process - because the Palestinian problem remains the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict. I need not add that this dialogue would not be conducted in a vacuum; rather, it would be based on resolutions and positions that

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would ensure its international legitimacy, and, first and foremost, on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and on recognition of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people.

(Mr. Badawi, Egypt)

Similarly, this dialogue must be followed by measures that will necessitate expanded international participation within the framework of an international peace conference with a view to reaching a definitive, comprehensive settlement of the conflict.

Egypt would like to take this opportunity to reiterate its consistent position, which is the following. The international peace conference must be held under the auspices of the United Nations in conformity with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and with recognition of the national rights of the Palestinian people. The aim of that conference must be to reach, through negotiations, a comprehensive, peaceful solution of the Middle East problem in all its aspects, and other related problems, so as to guarantee a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Egypt supports the effective participation in the conference, on an equal footing, of all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and the five permanent members of the Security Council. It should be emphasized that, to be feasible and lasting, the comprehensive solution of the problem of the Middle East must include the following elements:

First, withdrawal from all Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem, as well as other occupied Arab territories; secondly, the conclusion of an agreement on the measures for the security of all States of the region, including, in particular, a provision with regard to part A of resolution 181 (II), of 29 November 1947; thirdly, solution of the problem of Palestinian refugees in conformity with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) and other relevant resolutions; fourthly, the dismantling of Israeli settlements in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967; and, fifthly, guarantees of freedom of worship in the holy places of all revealed religions.

(Mr. Badawi, Egypt)

I remind representatives of the States Members of the United Nations, of the peoples of the world, as we discuss the situation in the Middle East, one of the thorniest regional conflicts and one that has been before us continuously for years, that they have a common responsibility to try to solve all conflicts, no matter which region is involved. That was the purpose that led at the end of the Second World War to the founding of the United Nations, because of our conviction that peace is one and indivisible. History has demonstrated the far-sighted vision of the founders of the Organization, who drafted its Charter. There can be no doubt that in the light of recent technological progress any conflict, wherever it may occur, will have repercussions everywhere else on earth. Egypt believes in the common destiny of all the peoples of the world. It is committed to playing a direct or indirect role in the quest for just solutions to all regional problems. Egypt also believes that the United Nations has a consistent role to play as a peacemaker. It is a role that evolves and adapts to the characteristics of the conflict involved and the stage through which that conflict is passing. In this connection I remind the Assembly that the first deployment of United Nations peace-keeping forces, which won the Nobel Peace Prize for the Organization, was in the Middle East.

Egypt welcomes the Secretary-General's assurance in his various reports on the situation in the Middle East that he intends to pursue his efforts, with all the parties concerned, to find a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Arab conflict. We call upon all peace-loving States to contribute as much as they can to the relaunching of the peace-making process in the Middle East and the attainment of a peace guaranteed by a well-balanced and equitable series of rights and obligations, because this is indeed the corner-stone of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. History would judge us severely if we allowed this opportunity to escape. It would be an even more serious error than the errors that have been committed in

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the past and would have a negative, redoubtable impact on the present international efforts to establish a new international order that will ensure freedom, security, stability and prosperity for mankind as a whole.

Mr. Khitab KHAN (Pakistan): In the Middle East the prospects of peace, unfortunately, remain as elusive as they were over 40 years ago when the General Assembly first considered the threat posed to international peace and security by developments in the region. The Secretary-General referred to this impasse in his report, noting that

"The situation in the Middle East remains a source of profound and intense concern, not only because of the political principles and issues at stake, but also because of the widespread human suffering caused by the failure to resolve those issues." (A/44/I, p. 7)

The current debate, indeed, is another reminder of Israel's intransigence and its deliberate policy of thwarting every peace initiative. The reason for its attitude is simple. Israel persists in the mistaken belief that, through its military preponderance, it can in the course of time transform into a fait accompli its gradual absorption of the Palestine and Arab territories which, through the massive, abusive use of force, it continues to occupy illegally. Therefore, we once again condemn Israel's policy of expansion and annexation and its continued occupation of the southern territories of Lebanon.

The crux of the problem in the Middle East is the denial of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination and statehood. Neither through five wars nor through its contemptuous dismissal of Palestinian rights has Israel been able to will this problem to disappear.

(Mr. Khitab Khan, Pakistan)

Neither through the protracted use of force and terror nor through its repeated attempts to liquidate the identity of the Palestinian people has Israel succeeded in extinguishing the flame of freedom which for over four decades the Palestinian people have kept alight through incalculable suffering and sacrifice.

The intifadah in the occupied Palestinian territories since 9 December 1987 has demonstrated once again the determination of the Palestinian people to be free and independent. As the Secretary-General has rightly pointed out in his report on the Work of the Organization:

"it is the political aspects of the problem that have to be addressed if an end is to be put to the confrontations that occur almost daily throughout the occupied territories. I would, therefore, remind all concerned of the urgent need for an effective negotiating process based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and taking fully into account the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including that of self-determination. The longer such a process is delayed, the greater will be the difficulties in initiating it and the more explosive the situation can become." (A/44/L, p. 8).

For too long Israel's obduracy has been allowed to run rampant in the Middle East. Israel's distorted vision of its destiny, buttressed by a siege mentality, has engendered grave turmoil and turbulence in the Middle East and wrought havoc on its neighbours. It continues its occupation of southern Lebanon and the Golan Heights. On the other hand, the Arab desire for genuine peace was repeatedly made manifest in the resolution adopted last year in Algiers by the Palestine National Council. There is no longer room for prevarication. The Palestine National Council resolution is clear and unambiguous. It underlines the necessity of holding an effective international conference concerning the Middle East question and its crux, the Palestinian cause. The conference will be held under the

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auspices of the United Nations with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and all parties to the struggle in the region, including the Palestine Liberation Organisation - the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people - on an equal footing. The international conference will be convened on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the assurance of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people. First and foremost among these are their right to self-determination and the liberation of all Palestinian and Arab territories that Israel has occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem.

No nation need condemn itself to a perpetual state of war. Israel has a choice between durable peace and an ephemeral security based on the instruments of war and coercion. The prospects of a just and lasting settlement in the Middle East can be resuscitated if Israel is willing to negotiate on the basis of the proposal for an international peace conference on the Middle East.

In September 1989 the Heads of State or Government of the non-aligned countries reaffirmed their call for a settlement through comprehensive peace negotiations under United Nations auspices. Stressing the need for the early convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, they called upon the Security Council, while exerting efforts to convene that Conference, inter alia to consider and elaborate

"guarantees for security measures agreed upon by the Conference for all States in the region". (A/44/551, annex, p. 39, para. 8)

We believe that the members of the Security Council, particularly its permanent members, have a special responsibility to provide the necessary impetus for the convening of such an international conference.

It is our conviction that the establishment of the State of Palestine, which constitutes a glorious milestone in the inexorable march of the people of Palestine



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towards their cherished goal, will serve to strengthen the process of peace in the Middle East.

More than 40 years ago the Palestinian people were brutally uprooted from their ancient homeland. For all these years the people of Pakistan have remained steadfast in their support for the just cause of the Palestinian people. I wish to take this opportunity to renew our pledge of solidarity with the Palestinian people in their struggle to regain the exercise of their right to self-determination and independence, and with the Arab States in their efforts to resolve the Middle East conflict and strengthen peace and stability in their region. There can be no durable peace in the Middle East until and unless justice is done to the Palestinian people and Israel withdraws fully from all occupied Arab territory.

For four decades the Palestinians have suffered a tragic life. They are entitled to a homeland of their own. We join all fair-minded nations in supporting their righteous cause.

Mr. OUEDRAOGO (Burkina Faso). (interpretation from French): Throughout the years the superimposition and overlapping of political, strategic, economic, social, cultural and religious factors have complicated a situation whose crux is the question of Palestine.

Whatever approach we take in considering the problem, the legitimate claim of a people emerges irresistibly, irrepressibly and totally. A just and lasting peace in the Middle East can be based only on the acknowledgement and effective exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. Everything that has happened has resulted from the contempt shown for those rights.

While the climate in international relations has been characterized by relative détente and efforts to achieve conciliation, that climate regrettably has not affected the Middle East, where there has been a dangerous escalation in tension. There are two major reasons for that. The first is Israel's determination

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to maintain its policy of force in the region; the second is Israel's refusal to recognize the rights of the Palestinian people.

In fact, under cover of its claim of self-defence, Israel has pursued a policy of aggression and expansion against its neighbours and of strategic domination over the entire region.

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Its policy is characterized by violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of States near and far, by illegal occupation and annexation of Arab and Palestinian lands, and by denial of the Palestinian people's legitimate rights and aspirations, which are the crux of the Middle East conflict. Thus Israel has annexed Arab Jerusalem and the Syrian Arab Golan Heights, invaded Lebanon, destroyed its capital Beirut, occupied southern Lebanon, extended its repressive practices to the inhabitants of the occupied Arab territories, and intensified its colonization policies in those territories.

In that context, and in the Middle East turmoil, Lebanon is paying an incommensurately high price. The people and Government of Burkina Faso are concerned at and saddened by that situation. As a victim of the chain reaction resulting from the failure to solve the question of Palestine, Lebanon is entitled fully to regain its sovereignty, independence, national unity and territorial integrity.

Therefore Burkina Faso supports the proposals of the Tripartite High Committee of the Arab League to restore peace to Lebanon and establish genuine national reconciliation. We support those proposals especially since the recent tragic events which cost the life of President Moawad and members of his entourage are a reminder that that fraternal country, a victim of outside interference, must start somewhere if it is to recover. Fourteen years of blood and pain cry out to the whole international community.

Burkina Faso again expresses its solidarity with the entire Lebanese people. True to its status as a non-aligned country, Burkina Faso reaffirms that the integrity and unity of Lebanon require the withdrawal of all foreign troops and also stable institutions. Thus the process that has begun must continue.

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The security of the region is also being adversely affected by Israel's refusal to adhere to the 1970 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and its refusal to agree to the International Atomic Energy Agency's monitoring of its nuclear activities. This policy of force and domination in the region, to which I referred at the beginning of my statement, is being practised by Israel so that it can go on denying the Palestinian people its inalienable rights. The Palestinian people continues, because of Israel, to suffer the most humiliating ordeals - harsh repression, deportation and the pillaging of its property.

Nevertheless, the Palestine National Council has decided on an approach based on negotiation. An independent State of Palestine was proclaimed to that end. The Palestine Liberation Organization, representative of the Palestinian people, has shown its readiness for dialogue. On all sides appeals have been made to Israel to put an end to its policy of intransigence and force. The Israeli authorities, unfortunately, refuse to heed these appeals. In the final analysis nothing can break the determination of a people struggling for the recognition of its inalienable fundamental rights. Nothing can maintain indefinitely a policy based on domination, exploitation and pillaging that is pursued against people carrying on that struggle.

From Burkina Faso's viewpoint, a peaceful settlement of the situation in the Middle East requires that Israel renounce its policy of force and agree to the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East. Renunciation of the policy of force on Israel's part means: its total withdrawal from all the Palestinian and Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem; its recognition of the inalienable national rights of the Arab Palestinian people to return, to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent State in Palestine; the ending of its occupation in southern Lebanon; and respect for the

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sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of the States of the region, as well as for the right of all the States of the region to live in peace and security.

The idea of convening an international peace conference on the Middle East was initiated in General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, dated 13 December 1983. Six years have elapsed since then, and the consensus for the convening of such a conference has constantly expanded, to such a point that today only the Government of Israel opposes it.

We believe that it is necessary to hold an international peace conference on the Middle East with the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council and all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, with a view to reaching a comprehensive and just settlement of the Middle East problem on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and of all other relevant United Nations resolutions. In this regard, the United Nations, which is responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, has the means available to formulate a strategy and specific plans with a view to helping the participants in that conference establish a comprehensive, just and lasting peace. The particularly important role of the Security Council should be emphasized.

More than 40 years have passed and the situation in the Middle East remains just as alarming, for the reasons I have just given. We believe that an international peace conference on the Middle East would be a step in the right direction, and we take this opportunity to appeal to the Israeli authorities to join in the broadly based international consensus on the convening of such a conference, so that they too can take part in the collective efforts being made on all sides to reach a just and lasting peace in the Middle East in the interests of all the States and peoples of the region.

Mr. OBEID (Democratic Yemen) (interpretation from Arabic): It is a great honour for me to have this opportunity to address the General Assembly on behalf of the two parts of Yemen, on this important agenda item of the current Assembly session, namely "The situation in the Middle East". This confirms the unity of the position of the two parts of Yemen with regard to this important question.

This renewed discussion of the question of the Middle East is taking place in the positive climate prevailing in international relations at the present time. That climate is reflected in the policy of détente between the two super-Powers and the replacement of confrontation and lack of trust by understanding and co-operation.

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It has also reflected positively on regional problems in certain parts of the world, which had been hotbeds of tension threatening peace and security not only in those areas but in the whole world as well. Peaceful solutions have been found to some problems, for example, the Iran-Iraq war, Namibia, Afghanistan, Central America, the Western Sahara; while others are on the way to a settlement, such as Kampuchea and Cyprus. The United Nations has played an effective role in achieving understanding between the parties concerned and a political settlement to some of those problems that had long been of concern to the international community. We must pay a tribute here to the consistent and persistent efforts of Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar, whose work has proved beyond a shadow of a doubt the importance of the United Nations in solving disputes by peaceful means and instilling confidence and understanding among warring parties. All this has reinforced the confidence of the international community in the United Nations, a confidence which was almost lost at one point owing to the ineffectiveness of its resolutions and decisions.

In spite of our optimism vis-à-vis the present climate in international relations, this has, regrettably, not reflected on the situation in the Middle East. The fact that this situation has remained virtually deadlocked for over four decades is the outcome of Israel's rejection of peace, the principles of the United Nations Charter, international law and all the resolutions adopted by the Organization and other international and regional forums over several years to help solve the conflict in the Middle East.

What encourages Israel to continue to reject the repeated appeals by the international community to see reason instead of to pursue a policy of war and aggression is the unlimited military, political, economic and moral support it receives from the United States. Not only is that support unlimited but the United

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States is also propping up the Israeli policy on the regional and international levels by all the means at its disposal, including political and economic pressure on States and the right of veto, and protects Israel by preventing the Security Council from adopting sanctions against Israel or even condemning Israeli acts of aggression in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories.

On behalf of the two parts of Yemen, we call upon the United States, as one of the permanent members of the Security Council, to shoulder its responsibilities in keeping with the United Nations Charter and adopt a positive attitude towards relevant international peace efforts, thus joining the international community within the agreed framework to achieve a political settlement in the Middle East. The Security Council could then take the practical measures to prepare for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. We appeal to the United States to exercise pressure and influence on Israel to respond to the Palestinian and international peace efforts.

We have to take advantage of the positive climate in international relations and multiply our efforts to find a just and comprehensive settlement of the Middle East problem based on the principles of international law, the Charter and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations calling for the total and unconditional withdrawal by Israel from the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories and the restoration of all the inalienable rights of the Palestinians, including the right to return and the right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent State on their national soil. This can be accomplished only through the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of all parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization and the permanent members of the Security Council.



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The Arab States have repeatedly expressed in regional or international forums their desire to achieve a comprehensive and just peace in the Middle East. They have laid down the foundation of an Arab peace strategy based on the aforementioned principles. The PLO, the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, has reaffirmed beyond a shadow of doubt its interest in achieving peace in the region and has responded positively to the international efforts in that direction. The resolutions adopted by the Palestine National Council and the positive initiative announced by Mr. Arafat in Geneva had a positive effect on the Arab and international levels. The increasing international recognition of the State of Palestine, which celebrated its first anniversary this month, testifies to the conviction of the international community in the legitimacy of the PLO and its serious attitude towards achieving a just and comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian question and the Arab-Israeli dispute in general.

The Palestinian popular intifadah in the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which will shortly enter its third year, has demonstrated more than ever the urgency of finding a just solution to the problem. That heroic uprising has clearly illustrated that, notwithstanding the barbarity of the racist Zionist régime in the occupied territories, the occupation of the Arab and Palestinian territories, the desecration of holy places and the violation of basic human rights, as well as other acts of Israeli barbarity and terrorism, are not the way to settle the problem of the Middle East through the kind of peace Israel desires. The Zionists, however, refuse to heed that lesson even now that the Palestinian people has convinced the whole world of its will not to be vanquished and of its desire to determine its own future. In this connection, we must also pay a tribute to the struggle of our Arab people in the Golan Heights and the Lebanese south. At every session of the Assembly the debate on the situation in the Middle East ends with the adoption of numerous resolutions. These resolutions, like other

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resolutions adopted by the Assembly since the inclusion of the Arab-Israeli item on its agenda, have always condemned the Israeli occupation of the Arab and Palestinian territories and have denounced Israel for its disregard of the resolutions of the Security Council and the United Nations. They have also condemned Israel's continued occupation of the Golan Heights and the Lebanese south. The adoption of such resolutions does not amount to much, however, since they are not binding or have any influence on Israel or on those who support it. Israel continues to reject those resolutions and to pursue arrogantly its policies of occupation and acts of aggression which have become more violent over the years in defiance of the will of the international community. In fact, Israel's arrogance vis-à-vis the United Nations resolutions, its short-sightedness, its lack of will to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement of the problem and its repetitious false claims have all become permanent features of Israel's attitude towards the United Nations.

What is the importance of such resolutions if they do not even exercise moral pressure on Israel or contribute towards mitigating its arbitrary practices? Indeed, Israel considers that United Nations resolutions are not in keeping with its philosophy, which envisages only one State in Palestine and depends on military might and the support of its friends to impose that philosophy.

We believe that the international community must find new ways and means to exercise pressure on Israel and ensure that it respects international law and abides by its obligations in accordance with the United Nations Charter, including the adoption of sanctions, the imposition of an economic and military boycott and other mandatory sanctions which, in our view, would not be effective enough unless countries friendly to Israel withheld their unlimited support.

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Those measures proved effective when they were imposed on the racist régime in South Africa.

Despite the fact that we know beforehand that such mandatory measures cannot be adopted by the Security Council because of the strong opposition of the United States, we call at least for voluntary measures by the States Members of the United Nations. Otherwise we shall continue to adopt one resolution after another, while Israel will only turn a deaf ear to the international community and the suffering of the Arab population in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories will increase, thereby posing a threat to international peace and security.

The achievement of peace and security in the Middle East, indeed, in the entire world, calls for collective, honest, sincere and practical efforts and steps. Success in solving the Middle East conflict and other complicated regional problems will be determined in accordance with the level of political maturity displayed by the States Members of the Organization. That is the only standard against which the effectiveness of the United Nations as an international political body will be judged.

We hope that 1990 will be the year of peace in the Middle East. It is high time for the peoples of the region to enjoy security and stability after long years of torment and suffering. Why should the policy of international détente not extend also to the Middle East and restore a smile to the lips of its people? That will depend basically on the ability of the United States to adopt a realistic and fair policy vis-à-vis the conflict in the Middle East and on its readiness to exercise pressure on Israel to compel it to abide by international law. Let us hope so.

Mr. AL-SHAKAR (Bahrain) (interpretation from Arabic): Today there is a new will in the international arena to enhance the effective role of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security on the basis of

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complete respect for its Charter, and through the promoting of international co-operation within the Organization to solve international problems in accordance with the Charter.

Against that backdrop, the General Assembly is considering the situation in the Middle East, which is one of the most important items on its agenda in view of the close link between the situation in that region and international peace and security. The representative of the State of Kuwait, the current Chairman of the Group of Arab States, has expressed the position of the Group, including that of my country, in his statement made earlier today before the General Assembly.

The Assembly's consideration of this item is rendered all the more important this year in view of the fact that more than 22 years have elapsed since Israel occupied the Palestinian territories and the Syrian Golan Heights in 1967. It has been a period replete with successive events, momentous developments, grave concerns and heart-rending sadness, accumulating year after year as a result of Israel's non-compliance with its commitments under the Charter of the United Nations. Foremost among those commitments are respect for the principles of the Charter, in particular the principles of political independence, territorial integrity, and the right of peoples to self-determination, respect for basic human rights, refraining from the use or threat of force, the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

A clear analysis of the reports of the Secretary-General in documents A/44/731 and A/44/737 makes it abundantly clear that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, has adopted a positive stance, and so have the Arab States concerned. They have unambiguously demonstrated their desire for peace in accordance with international law. They have responded to all endeavours for the achievement of peace. They

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have adopted a position, in harmony with unanimous international opinion, as embodied in General Assembly resolution 43/176. On the other hand, there is Israel's intransigent position, which foils all international peace efforts, through obstructionism or rejection.

Hence, and in the light of the facts contained in the reports of the Secretary-General, we call upon the General Assembly to tackle the situation in the Middle East with the utmost seriousness. We call upon it to shoulder its responsibility for peace and security in that sensitive part of the world. It is high time to adopt a decisive position against Israel's obstruction of the peace efforts, its rejection of the convening, under the auspices of the United Nations, of an international peace conference for the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and its intransigent refusal to negotiate with the PLO, the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

In the present climate of international détente, and in view of the positive winds of change on the international scene, the General Assembly cannot remain silent in the face of this aberration. It is illogical to assume that the winds of détente, which have blown through all corners of the Earth, should have missed the Middle East. The situation is crystal clear, and the picture has become very obvious: it is no longer possible to justify Israel's continued refusal of the convening of an international conference. It is our belief that the General Assembly and the major Powers must adopt a unified international position on the call for that conference in order to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict and establish a just and comprehensive peace. This necessarily calls for the adoption of a decisive position vis-à-vis Israel's continued refusal of the conference - a position which would reaffirm the credibility of the Organization, the effectiveness of its resolutions and its prestige.

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Last year we witnessed a frantic escalation by Israel of acts of oppression aimed at eliminating the heroic Palestinian intifadah and stripping the Palestinian people of their inalienable national rights, including the right to self-determination and to the establishment of their independent State on their national soil. The purpose of these measures was to uproot the Palestinian people and expel them from their homeland by means of persecution, torture and, finally, deportation. Israel's aggressive policies have not been confined to Palestine and its people. Rather, they have encompassed the territory and the present and future of the whole Arab nation. Israel's acts of aggression and occupation have extended to other Arab countries.

The situation now prevailing in the Middle East is the result of Israel's rejection of all international and Arab peace initiatives, which are based on international law. But Israel has not limited itself to that. Rather, it has escalated the sense of confrontation by strengthening its more sophisticated military capabilities. It has acquired and developed weapons of mass destruction in the mistaken belief that that is the way to impose its occupation and dictate to the Palestinian people and the other Arab States.

The international and the United States media, in particular the NBC TV network, have made it clear that Israel has acquired weapons of mass destruction, that it is carrying out tests of such weapons, and that it launched a medium-range missile, which fell in the Mediterranean off the shores of Libya. In addition, they have made clear the increasing co-operation between Israel and the South African racist régime in the development of long-range nuclear missiles.

Israel has also transferred to South Africa sophisticated United States technology in the manufacturing of jet fighters. There has been a long history of collaboration between Israel and the South African régime in all fields,

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particularly that of armaments. This collaboration has taken on even graver dimensions since it was extended into the field of nuclear co-operation. This constitutes a threat to the very existence of both the Arab and the African States, which will always be the targets of the nuclear weapons and missiles of these two racist régimes, whose only objective is to impose their evil schemes. This collaboration, which constitutes a grave danger to the present and the future of the Middle East and southern Africa, cannot remain unchecked by the international community. It is a flagrant violation of Security Council resolutions which call for the imposition of an embargo on South Africa in connection with the military and nuclear co-operation between Israel and the Pretoria régime. Yet Israel has totally disregarded these resolutions. In addition, the collaboration threatens international peace and security in those two sensitive regions of the world.

A realistic analysis of the current situation in the Middle East leads to the following conclusions:

First, the intifadah during the last two years has succeeded in strengthening the international conviction that it is a legitimate way of rejecting occupation. It has attracted further international support for the struggle of the Palestinian people for the attainment of its inalienable rights. It has also refuted the unfounded accusations by Israel, which desperately attempts to portray the intifadah as an act of terrorism.

Secondly, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) has succeeded once again in exposing the lie called by Shamir the "Israeli peace plan". That plan has been exposed as a mere farce designed to dissipate popular discontent since there is a refusal to recognize the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, as well as the principle of

(Mr. Al-Shakar, Bahrain)

land for peace. The least that can be said about it is that it lacks the acceptable basis on which a just and lasting peace could be established.

Thirdly, the actions taken by the Palestine Liberation Organization have made clear the commitment of the Palestinian people to peace. They have exposed Israel's obduracy about all peace initiatives. They have also made it clear that there can be no substitute for the Palestine Liberation Organization as the representative of the Palestinian people in any negotiations that could take place for the achievement of the desired peace. In any solution of the Middle East situation or settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the PLO must inevitably discharge its major role. Therefore, Israel's attempts to keep the PLO out of the peace process are doomed to failure.

Fourthly, the international conference to be convened under the auspices of the United Nations - with the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council and all the concerned parties, including the PLO - is the internationally accepted forum for the achievement of a comprehensive and lasting settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict. That is the way to establish peace and thereby bring security and stability to the region, which has been deprived of them for so long.

Fifthly, the obdurate Israeli refusal to agree to the convening of the International Peace Conference is the major obstacle to the peace process in the region.

The international community should give serious consideration to those facts and undertake a joint international effort to ensure that the Security Council plays its proper role so that an end can be put to Israel's obduracy and to the events taking place in the Palestinian and other occupied Arab territories in connection with Israel's attempt to crush the Palestinian intifadah. A



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continuation of this situation will not contribute to the peace process. Rather, it will open the door wide to grave repercussions in the region, repercussions whose magnitude and results cannot be predicted. The obdurate Israeli position must not dissuade the international community from playing its proper role. The international community must pursue its action for launching of the peace process and bringing Israel to accept a just and comprehensive peace within the framework of international legitimacy, through recognition of the Palestinian people's right to the restoration of their occupied territories and their right to exercise self-determination and to establish their independent State on their soil. That is the only way to save the region from the disaster of the repercussions to which I alluded to earlier. It is the only path to the establishment of stability and security in our region.

(Mr. Al-Shakar, Bahrain)

My delegation fully agrees with the Secretary-General's reaffirmation, in his report submitted to the General Assembly, of the need for the Security Council to contribute to the efforts being made to reach a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict by renewing its commitment to resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and to the legitimate political rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination, with all it entails. That is the only solid foundation for the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region. The Secretary-General rightly points out in his report before the General Assembly that

"few international issues are as complex or potentially dangerous as the Arab-Israeli conflict". (A/44/737, para. 43)

Will the General Assembly this year stand up to this Israeli obduracy that jeopardizes the possibilities for peace? Will it reaffirm the commitment of the international community to the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing, as well as the five permanent members of the Security Council, on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and recognition of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, foremost among which is the right to self-determination? Will it do that?

Mr. PEJIC (Yugoslavia): The crisis situation in the region of the Middle East, which seriously affects international peace and security and the stability of the world economy, has preoccupied the world Organization and the broadest segments of the international community over a number of years. Despite certain positive movements in the region, such as the cease-fire between Iran and Iraq and the efforts to create conditions for overcoming the situation in Lebanon, there are unfortunately no important signs of the early initiation of the process for the

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solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, at the core of which is the problem of Palestine and which remains the basic and most dangerous source of tension and instability not only in that region but in the world.

This is the second consecutive year that debate on the situation in the Middle East has been marked by the intifadah, the uprising of the Palestinian people against Israeli occupation. The explosive situation in the occupied territories has thus drawn international attention most eloquently to the untenability of the situation created by continuation of the occupation. It is therefore understandable to expect urgent efforts to be exerted to bring about a solution to this problem and thus prevent developments that would lead to the outbreak of a new armed conflict in the region. The decisions adopted by the Palestine National Council last year along these lines and the opening of the United States-Palestinian dialogue are events of major importance that open up prospects for the commencement of substantive dialogue for a peaceful solution to the Middle East crisis and the question of Palestine.

Along with other non-aligned countries, Yugoslavia has always pointed to the unsatisfactory situation in the Middle East, which is by and large a consequence of the continued use of force, violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the countries of the region, the policy of occupation, and the denial of the legitimate rights of the peoples of the region to self-determination and independent development. General agreement exists that the basic cause of this situation is the policy conducted by some ruling circles in Israel and their constant refusal to engage in dialogue with the authentic representatives of the Palestinian people - that is, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which enjoys the full support of the Palestinian population in the occupied territories and of Palestinians living in diaspora - for a lasting and just solution to the problem of Palestine.

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Bearing in mind the complexity of the Middle East crisis and its potential threat to world peace, Yugoslavia has always pointed out that the only possible way to achieve a lasting solution of the situation in the Middle East is to begin the process for a political solution of the problem within the United Nations, with full respect for the authentic interests and rights of all countries and peoples in the region. Foreign occupation and domination, regardless of the military might upon which it relies, do not and cannot bring peace and security to anybody. Equally unacceptable are attempts to ensure exclusive protection for one's own interests at the expense of the elementary rights of others, through violation and even outright denial. Lasting and stable peace in the Middle East can be achieved only by eliminating the chronic sources of instability and conflict in that region and creating conditions for the coexistence of peoples and countries in that area. In that context, Yugoslavia firmly believes that a solution to the Middle East crisis is possible only through the unconditional withdrawal of Israel from all territories occupied since June 1967; recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, under the leadership of the PLO, to self-determination and independence; and respect for the rights of all the countries in the region, including Israel, to existence and security within internationally recognized borders.

Yugoslavia, as well as the vast majority of non-aligned countries, considers - and this position was reaffirmed at the recent summit conference in Belgrade - that the initiative for the early convening of the International Conference on the Middle East under United Nations auspices on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as well as other relevant United Nations resolutions - with the participation of all interested parties, including the PLO, on a footing of equality, and of other factors that can make a constructive contribution to the success of that Conference - provides the most suitable

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framework for a lasting and just solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, with the problem of Palestine at its core. We sincerely hope that at long last this will be recognized also by some of the most responsible members of the Israeli Government, thereby finally opening up prospects for substantive efforts in the direction of the solution of this serious international problem.

We therefore consider that it is indispensable to make decisive joint efforts to overcome the current situation of no war, no peace, and bring pressure to bear on those whose positions stand in the way of the opening of dialogue directed at finding the basis for resolving the Middle East crisis. As Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and a non-permanent member of the Security Council, Yugoslavia will continue to support each and every constructive effort towards opening a process that would lead in that direction. In this context we fully support the efforts of the Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar.

Yugoslavia has been following the most recent developments in Lebanon with great attention and concern. The brutal, criminal assassination of the newly elected President of Lebanon, Mr. René Moawad, caused understandable shock and outrage in Yugoslavia. That senseless act, which met with the broadest condemnation by the international community, was carried out by those who oppose efforts to ensure the speedy restoration of the full national unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Lebanon. It was carried out at a time when, on the basis of the Taif agreements reached as a result of the tireless efforts of the Tripartite Committee of the Arab League, the Lebanese people was starting the process of national reconciliation after years of conflict and suffering.

(Mr. Pejic, Yugoslavia)

For its part, Yugoslavia will continue to render full support for implementation of the Taif Agreement, which remains a broadly acceptable basis for solution of the Lebanese situation. In that regard, we welcome the election of the new President of Lebanon, Mr. Elias Hrawi. Of course, we continue to believe that essential pre-conditions for a lasting solution of the Lebanese situation are termination of the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon and the withdrawal of foreign troops from Lebanese territory, cessation of interference in the internal affairs of that country, and the enabling of the Lebanese people to decide, freely and independently, how it should develop.

Yugoslavia has been following with keen interest the developments in other parts of the Middle East. We attach great importance to the commitment of Iran and Iraq to the quest for a peaceful solution of the conflict between the two countries, on the basis of Security Council resolution 598 (1987). Yugoslavia reiterates its full support for the efforts being made by the United Nations Secretary-General and his Special Representative towards achievement of the goal of a peaceful solution. At the same time, however, we cannot but express our deep concern over the current impasse in the talks on the implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1987) concerning a solution of the Iran-Iraq conflict.

The eight-year-long war demonstrated in a most tragic way that the problems between the two countries cannot be solved by military means. We therefore call on the two sides to take appropriate steps to overcome the current impasse and to continue to co-operate with the Secretary-General in the implementation of resolution 598 (1987). We believe that progress in achieving this would be in the interests not only of the two countries but also of the peace and stability in this part of the world that are of vital importance for international relations.

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The crisis in the Middle East continues to be one of the most serious burdens in the context of the overall situation in international relations. We therefore believe that at this session of the General Assembly the international community will reaffirm its consensus on the need for the broadest possible international endeavour to overcome sources of tension and instability that have existed in that part of the world for years. For its part, Yugoslavia, in its capacity as Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, will continue to make a full and active contribution towards this end.

Mr. PITARKA (Albania): This year again the agenda of the United Nations General Assembly contains a multitude of items on acute political problems that call for solution and clearly reflect the concerns and legitimate aspirations of a number of Member States. At the same time these items represent a challenge to the entire international community to deal seriously with the problems and to make use of its role and of the role of this Organization to provide just solutions to them. One acute political problem bearing directly upon peace and security in the region and the world is that of the Middle East.

The representatives of numerous Member States have expressed profound regret, but also great disillusionment, at the course along which several regional crises and conflicts are developing. Among these is the problem of the Middle East, which, so far, has defied attempts to set it upon the road to a just and lasting solution. It is very unfortunate that the situation in this region remains dangerous and very explosive. This is because of the persistence of the factors that generate such situations - the number-one factor being the Zionist aggression and occupation of Arab territories and the denial of the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination and to live free in their homeland.

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Other factors relate to foreign interference and to the conspiracies hatched against the Arab people in general and the Palestinian people in particular. These conspiracies, which take the form of manoeuvres and political and diplomatic tricks and are inflamed primarily by the rivalry and collaboration between the two super-Powers - the United States and the Soviet Union - have become a stumbling-block to realization of the national aspiration of the Palestinian people and to solution of the Middle East crisis.

The further aggravation of the fratricidal war in Lebanon, which could have dangerous consequences not only for the country's unity - indeed, its very existence - but also for peace and stability in the region and beyond, is another factor which, in conjunction with the de facto continuation of the occupation of southern Lebanon by Israel, seriously exacerbates and renders more explosive the situation in the Middle East. Renouncement of the discords and feuds, as well as of the fratricidal bloodshed in Lebanon - and such a renouncement should be attained through a cease-fire and national conciliation, assisted by the fraternal Arab countries - would not only create the conditions for the extinction of another hotbed of tension and for the restoration of national unity and integrity in Lebanon but also encourage the Arab countries to concentrate their efforts and attention on putting an end to the occupation of their territories and, especially, on solving the Palestinian question, which remains the key to the final solution of the Middle East problems.

In the meantime, another important and encouraging development in the region is the heroic resistance and struggle of the Palestinian people to put an end to the Zionist occupation and to realize their inalienable right to self-determination in their own lands. Living proof of this determined resistance is the continuation of the intifadah - the massive uprising in the occupied territories in which the



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Palestinian people have been engaged for almost two years. Events and facts over this two-year period abound, thus proving that the Zionist oppression and genocide, the savage police violence, the massive number of arrests, the forced deportations, especially of patriotic Palestinian youths, and all other most barbaric measures of the occupying Israeli forces and administration have failed to break, however insignificantly, the will of the Palestinian population in these territories and their determination to resist, with their bare fists and chests, the bullets and tanks of the occupiers, so that they may free themselves from the hateful occupation and regain their stolen homeland, the land that was torn from them.

This massive popular uprising in the occupied territories and the ever more active involvement of the new State of Palestine, which has gained the recognition and support of the international community, and of its legitimate leadership, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), are, likewise, positive factors and developments that should accelerate the process of setting the Palestinian question on the road to solution by discarding the intrigues and plotting schemes, one of which is the so-called free elections in the occupied territories. This extremely anti-Palestinian plan has been rightly condemned and turned down by the Palestinian people themselves and by their legitimate representative, the PLO, as an attempt to gain time and to perpetuate the Israeli occupation régime in these territories, to crush the Palestinian uprising, and to neutralize the success of the important steps that the new State of Palestine has undertaken internationally, as well as its increasing prestige in the world and the affirmation of the part that it is entitled to play in the just resolution of the Palestinian question, which remains the key to the solution of all the problems of the Middle East.

(Mr. Pitarka, Albania)

Such deceptive plans can be neither covered up nor prettified by the new cosmetics that are being applied in order to paint as pacifiers those who are the real accomplices in implementing the Israeli expansionist policy. Nor can such plans be boosted by those who profess to be friends of the Arab peoples and strive to present their rapprochement and collaboration with Israel as "new opportunities" to exert pressure on it for the alleged purpose of contributing to the attainment of a peaceful solution of the Middle East question.

(Mr. Pitarka, Albania)

Life itself, reality and their resistance for survival have shown the Palestinian people and the other Arab peoples that the solution of their problems, the liberation of their ancestral lands and the preservation of freedom and independence are ultimately in their own hands; they lie in their unity and the resolute struggle against the Zionist and imperialist enemies and reaction. Against the unity of the Arab peoples, which is a source of invincible power, against the all-round Palestinian resistance, the intifadah included, the imperialist and Zionist schemes and plots are doomed to failure. This is the most secure course for the Palestinian and other Arab peoples to follow. No solution to the Palestinian question in particular or to Middle East problems in general can be achieved without the participation and the expressed will of those peoples, much less without the Palestinians and against the Palestinians.

The debate at this session of the General Assembly offers us an opportunity to reiterate once more the Albanian Government's and people's resolute support for and unreserved solidarity with the fraternal Arab peoples in their struggle and efforts, as well as to express our firm confidence in the triumph of the just cause of the Palestinian people and the fulfilment of their legitimate national aspirations and the aspirations of all the fraternal Arab peoples.

Mr. ESZTERGALYOS (Hungary): The deliberations at the present session of the General Assembly are being conducted in favourable international conditions under the influence of the many positive changes that have taken place during the past year. The year 1989 has also witnessed the growing involvement of the United Nations in the settlement of regional crises and hotbeds of tension. Indeed, we can note with satisfaction that most of the regional crisis situations on the agenda of the Organization seem to have been solved or to be well on the way to a peaceful solution.

(Mr. Esztergalyos, Hungary)

In striking contrast to all these encouraging tendencies, the situation in the Middle East remains alarming and continues to be a cause of serious concern to the whole international community. The ongoing militarization of the region, together with the constant tension among the participants in the conflict, have world-wide implications and one cannot exclude the possibility that at a certain point they may even threaten the unfolding positive processes in international relations.

The prospects for settlement are still uncertain. The problem at the core of the conflict, the Palestinian question, remains unsolved. The Israeli occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories continues and so does the uprising of the the Palestinian people against occupation, motivated by an accumulation of harassment, humiliation and frustration. The annexation of East Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan Heights and the continued violation of the territorial integrity of Lebanon are constant sources of tension necessitating large-scale United Nations peace-keeping operations in the area. In expressing our appreciation to the soldiers serving the cause of peace I wish also to reaffirm our support for these United Nations peace-keeping activities.

At this point I wish to express our deep indignation over the assassination of Mr. René Moawad, President of the Lebanese Republic, last week in Beirut. It is our hope that that terrorist act will not interrupt the process of national reconciliation and that the Lebanese people, who have suffered so much, will eventually regain peace, safety and prosperity for their country.

Owing to its geographical proximity and traditional relations with the countries and peoples of the Middle East, Hungary is deeply and sincerely interested in a just and early settlement of the conflict. Our approach to the complex issues and the many sensibilities involved in the Middle East problem is determined by a genuine desire to create and promote confidence between the parties

(Mr. Esztergalyos, Hungary)

involved and to contribute to the lessening of tension in the region. Proceeding from this consideration and intention, we deem it important to develop our relations with all the parties involved in the conflict. It was also in this spirit that Hungary recognized the proclamation of the State of Palestine and that we raised our inter-State relations to ambassadorial level. At the same time our relations with Israel are also developing and this found expression recently in the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between our two nations.

Our position regarding the ways and conditions of resolving the Middle East conflict has been placed on record and remains valid and unchanged. Hungary believes that the best way to reach a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the Middle East situation would be by the convening of an international peace conference under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council and all the parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

The basic conditions for a viable and speedy solution have been clearly formulated and are recognized by the international community, and Hungary also fully subscribes to them. They are: the withdrawal of Israel from all territories occupied since 1967; the full exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination and to establish its own independent, sovereign State; and respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all States in the region, including Israel.

In our considered opinion the encouraging international developments have created more favourable circumstances than ever before for the launching of the long-awaited peace process in the Middle East. Obviously, the increasing readiness for co-operation of the great Powers, which has been confirmed quite recently at this session of the General Assembly by their joint initiative on enhancing

(Mr. Esztergalyos, Hungary)

international peace, security and co-operation in accordance with the Charter, as well as by the initial results in the elimination of regional conflicts, is of particular relevance. In this respect we should like to underline the significance of the new, constructive and realistic attitude of the Palestine Liberation Organization and of the resistance of the Palestinian people to occupation, which has found powerful expression in the intifadah, now entering its third year, in the occupied territories.

The beginning of the dialogue between the United States and the PLO, the proposals and initiatives concerning the launching of a Palestinian-Israeli dialogue and the efforts undertaken by Western European countries also signify the commitment of the international community to finding a comprehensive political settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict on the basis of a balance of the interests of all the parties concerned.

The determination of the PLO to reach a comprehensive settlement by political means, the acceptance by the Palestine National Council of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and its repeated and categorical rejection of terrorism in all its forms have been welcomed and are regarded by the international community as important steps towards a peaceful, negotiated solution of the conflict. We believe that it is up to Israel now to take the next step and respond constructively to these moves. The opportunity remains to be seized in order to overcome the stalemate and engage in a negotiating process that should eventually bring peace and tranquillity to the peoples of the Middle East.

Mr. ZACHMANN (German Democratic Republic): The current situation in the Middle East is marked by the persistence of one of the oldest and most intricate regional conflicts in the world. The main cause of the permanent state of tension in the region, which is so sensitive in terms of international security, remains Israel's denial of the right to self-determination of Arab people of Palestine. The German Democratic Republic has followed with great concern the further aggravation of the occupation practices, which not only are a hindrance to the early peaceful settlement of the conflict but lead to even greater suffering for the Palestinian people. In this context, the massive resistance by the people of Palestine, now well into its second year, has made it eloquently clear that only a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Middle East conflict will bring peace to all peoples in the region.

The German Democratic Republic has long pleaded and worked for the early start of a settlement process in the Middle East, a process which should embrace all aspects of the conflict. Today, it is more than ever imperative to set such a process in motion through collective international efforts and reliance on a flexible negotiating approach.

Practical experience in the solution of other regional conflicts demonstrates quite strikingly that such solutions will be just and lasting only if they are brought about by political means. The German Democratic Republic also believes that the complexities of the Middle East conflict can be disentangled only through constructive dialogue and an accommodation of the interests of all the parties involved. Here, all those concerned are called upon to display the requisite sense of reason and realism.

The German Democratic Republic holds that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, must be a participant in such a dialogue on an equal footing with all the others.

(Mr. Zachmann, German  
Democratic Republic)

The German Democratic Republic stands resolutely for a peaceful and just settlement of the Middle East conflict. This includes guarantees of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and the right to existence of the State of Israel within secure borders. Proceeding from that, the German Democratic Republic is in favour of normal relations with all States in the region. My country also supports the demand voiced by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People that the State of Palestine should be accorded its rightful place within the international community and the United Nations.

The PLO's peace offensive, marked as it is by a sense of political responsibility and realism, has been an essential element in the emergence of new conditions in the Middle East. At the recent summit meeting in Casablanca, the Arab States supported the constructive policy line pursued by the PLO. Notwithstanding the obstacles mounted by Israel, the PLO has agreed to enter into a dialogue with Israel under international auspices. The community of States now expects Israel to come forward with an equally constructive approach. It is to be hoped that awareness will prevail in Israel that a just and secure peace can be achieved only through guaranteeing the legitimate rights of all peoples in the region, including the people of Palestine.

Like the overwhelming majority of States, my country emphatically pleads that the PLO should not be deprived of the political means of participating on an equal footing in the settlement of the conflict. We also believe that efforts to address only selected aspects of the conflict in order to circumvent the key issues or perpetuate existing conditions under a different label are doomed to failure.

In the recent past quite a few ideas have been advanced on how to start, without further delay, the process that is to bring about a solution to the Middle



(Mr. Zachmann, German  
Democratic Republic)

East conflict. One thing, however, has become clear: an international conference on the Middle East, if it were convened under United Nations auspices and if all the parties directly involved - including the PLO and Israel - as well as the five permanent members of the Security Council, participated as equals, would be the most appropriate and realistic way towards peace. The principles of a future settlement have already been set forth in quite a number of pertinent General Assembly resolutions.

In our view, the Security Council, particularly its permanent members, should take practical steps to prepare the Middle East conference in good time. This could conceivably be done in the framework of consultations. My delegation also supports all future efforts by the Secretary-General designed to set in motion a process leading to a solution of the conflict. By the same token, we wish to emphasize again that, as in the past, the German Democratic Republic will make every effort to contribute to progress towards a political settlement of the Middle East conflict.

Mr. AL-RIYAMI (Oman) (interpretation from Arabic): Mr. President, it gives me great pleasure to express to you on behalf of my delegation our profound satisfaction at the work accomplished during the deliberations and discussions at this session of the General Assembly. Your efficiency and diplomatic skill have undoubtedly enabled you to guide our work in this clear and satisfactory manner.

We are discussing today one of the most important items on our agenda, the situation in the Middle East, a region which is of special strategic importance on the world map. It is among the most delicate and dangerous areas and what happens there has a direct bearing on international peace and security.

(Mr. Al-Riyami, Oman)

The signs of détente in international relations, especially between the two super-Powers, are a source of satisfaction to us all. The relaxation of tensions has had a clear effect on stability the world over. The bounty of peace is beginning to bear fruit everywhere. My country will continue to work for this lofty objective and to advocate it. We in the Sultanate of Oman have repeatedly voiced our belief in the effective role played by the various bodies and organs of this Organization in finding just solutions to the many crises and problems that beset humanity. This belief stems from our faith in the benefits of dialogue and understanding between nations and our conviction that to engage in such dialogue under the wing of the United Nations is the ideal means of resolving those problems and crises.

The current world trends and regional developments require a broader overview of the problem of reshaping the Middle East peaceably. It is quite obvious that the region is being armed to the teeth, at great speed, with the most sophisticated and destabilizing of weapons. Israel has consistently pursued a policy of destabilization and discord that plays havoc with the security of the region, in defiance of the will of the international community and the principles of our Charter. The proof, if proof is needed, of Israel's persistence in this policy is that it has continued to introduce the most destructive of weapons into the region. It has constantly threatened the Arab countries. It has continued to test and experiment on weaponry and technologies of the most destructive kind. Its latest venture was a test run of a missile which fell near the coastline of Benghazi, in Libya.

The Palestinian intifadah is now two years old. This intifadah is the end product of the accumulated bitterness caused by the oppression and coercion practised against the Arab Palestinian people. One year has elapsed since the proclamation of the Palestinian State. And yet, we still see on our television

(Mr. Al-Riyami, Oman)

screens scenes of hundreds of unarmed, defenceless Palestinian victims being killed or maimed at the hands of the Israeli forces of occupation. Such hateful brutality goes on unchecked while world public opinion sits on its hands, demonstrating its powerlessness vis-à-vis the brutish behaviour of those forces of occupation and the trampling under their jackboots of the most fundamental and legitimate human rights of the Palestinians.

The ongoing intifadah and unwavering resistance to the Israeli occupation demonstrate the resolve and the iron will of the people to bring to an end the occupation in every shape and form. The Government of my country, Oman, supports all Palestinian peace initiatives and every sincere and serious effort to reach a durable, just solution that would ensure the national rights, especially the right of self-determination and the right to an independent State, of the Palestinian people. My country's delegation calls for the mobilization of all the United Nations capabilities and organs in such a way that the mechanisms at the Organization's disposal may become the effective and efficacious means of safeguarding the human rights of all peoples and of humanity at large. Our strong commitment in this respect impels us to call for the urgent organization and convening of an international peace conference under the auspices of the United Nations. That conference will afford the international community and all its peace-loving countries, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, the opportunity to address the matter.

My delegation hopes the two super-Powers will join all other world forces and the concerned parties in taking the necessary measures to achieve a just and peaceful solution that would end the long-drawn-out agony of the Palestinian people.

We hope the countries of the region will enjoy peace and stability. In order for that to happen, the two super-Powers must put the Middle East question at the

(Mr. Al-Riyami, Oman)

top of their priorities. The question must urgently be addressed. We also call upon the international community and the United Nations to exert pressure on Israel to recognize the realities in the region. If Israel really wants peace with its neighbours and coexistence with the Arab countries, as it claims, it must renounce its policy of aggression. It must desist from rejecting out of hand every attempt and peaceful initiative, and put an end to its persistent bellicosity and its consistent use of force.

We wish to express our sorrow with regard to the situation in Lebanon. My country has learned with grief of the assassination of the President of Lebanon, Mr. René Moawad. We condemn this heinous crime, which was committed against Lebanon's unity and its legitimacy and was designed as a blow against national reconciliation in that sisterly country.

We welcome the election of the new President of Lebanon, Mr. Elias Hrawi, and call on all our Lebanese brethren to work together towards restoring order, peace and stability in the country. We wish our brethren in Lebanon success in that endeavour and call for the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon. We wish all the peoples of the world peace and security.

Mr. SHIHABI (Saudi Arabia) (interpretation from Arabic): The problem of the Middle East, which is now under discussion is a problem that we have addressed in the General Assembly year after year, a problem that we live with in the Middle East day after day and hour after hour. Although the world has been able in the course of this year to move other intractable crises towards settlement and understanding, the problem of the Middle East has not moved any nearer to the end of the tunnel. Why? Because Israel, the most intractable problem of all and the source of all the disasters and troubles of the Middle East, still acts under the influence of its expansionist, colonialist outlook and pretends that it can protect itself by acts of aggression and the continued occupation of the land of others.

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

Its leaders do not seem to realize that if they persist in this - and all the indications are that they will - they gain nothing but more uncertainty and insecurity.

The leaders of zionism have dreamt many dreams over the years. They have clothed their dreams in the garb of religion and bedecked them with worldly ambition. They thought they were going to be able to deceive all the people all the time. They disregard the fact that history and geographic and demographic realities lead to direct contradictions with their fabrication of history and twisting of its facts. The leaders of zionism fondly believe that their penchant for settler-colonialism and their expansionist ambitions should be legitimate justification enough and sufficient licence to invade, commit acts of aggression, occupy another people's country and seize their lands. They seem convinced that their need for security is an international licence to threaten the security of others and an open-ended authorization to violate the rights of others and deprive them of their means of livelihood; and that the world has no alternative but to acquiesce in whatever the Zionists plan and whatever they may desire.

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

This, of course, is lop-sided logic, which the world of today rejects and twentieth-century society condemns. It has been condemned by divine religions since the advent of the prophets.

Israel, the irresponsible offspring of a corrupt, unacceptable precedent in international practices, has based its existence on the acquisition by force of other peoples' homelands and the violation of their national and human rights under the pretext of false claims. It thinks that the occupation of other peoples' homelands is a simple arithmetical exercise through which it can create facts on the ground and in which the owners of the land must acquiesce, and all the world must accept without demur the diktat of Israel.

The Zionist leaders seem to be ignorant of the wide cultural gap between the theorizing Western mentality in whose lap zionism was born, under particular European social, political and religious circumstances, and the mentality and heritage of the East, especially the deep-rooted emotional Arabian and Islamic outlook which is closely bound to family, faith and the land in which it grew. In order for us to see our way to an acceptable solution, we have to understand the cultural origins of the Arab and Islamic outlook which refuses to be separated from its roots no matter how strong the forces working against it are. Zionism will eventually pay the price of its ignorance of and disregard for the realities and underlying components of the Middle East problem, the distortion of the problem's causes and obfuscation of its consequences. We witness daily their insistence upon ignoring the facts and their opposition to any attempt to deal with the situation in the true light of the Palestinian, regional and international realities and daily we witness the results of this attitude manifesting themselves in the growing lists of the killed and wounded.

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

The problem of the Middle East is the natural complement to the Palestinian problem. In its complexity, it embodies the complex nature of zionism, its dreams and expansionist greed. It reveals the real nature of Israel and that it has become, since its inception, a grave threat to the peace and security of the region and the safety of its peoples. Israel has become the instrument of a dangerous logic which threatens the international scales and standards of regional and international peace and security through the right it claims for itself to do what it does and its attempts to justify what it does. In all this, it never ceases to cloud the issues and obfuscate the realities of the situation and the roots of the problem.

It also embodies - and this is a grave danger indeed - the effectiveness of the networks of Zionist influence in certain world capitals and their ability to affect the readiness of those who occupy positions of responsibility in those capitals to listen to the counsels of reason. In this way, those in positions of responsibility tend to accept the irrational and choose to keep quiet about Israel while they refuse to do so concerning any other aggressor in the world. The dangerous Zionist influence on the sound judgement of the advanced and influential countries in the world is far-reaching and poses a danger to the relations of these countries with other nations, should this situation continue as it is now.

How can the world in this day and age accept the Zionist logic that gives licence to Israel to continue its occupation of Arab lands, even when they admit that those lands are being occupied, and acquiesce in what Israel is committing in order to deprive a whole people of their rights under the eyes of the whole world? How can it be content with statements and limited resolutions without any punitive action? How is it that we have failed to this day to adopt any resolution which would impose any penalty or sanction in the face of Israeli aggression, when we have seen here, in this General Assembly, how many countries rose and took a stand

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

against the invasion by the armies of a certain State of another country, how they mobilized all the potential and all the international forums in condemning that State in the strongest terms, how they opposed that invasion with every means at hand until the occupation came to an end?

The proclamation by the Palestinian National Council on 15 November 1988 of the Palestinian State in conformity with United Nations resolutions, and the speedy recognition of that State and the welcome extended to the Council's declaration by peace-loving countries, which have so far numbered 95, point at one of the ways which will lead to peace and security in the region, if the Israeli authorities respond to it. It is the way to the implementation of United Nations resolutions, the resolution of the Fez summit conference and the various plans formulated by wise statesmen for resolving the problem of the Middle East and Palestine. This is a stage in the history of the Middle East which opens widely the doors of hope that the world may respond and thus rid the international arena of one of the worst problems that we in the region have faced.

But the authorities of Israel and its rulers, even the so-called moderates among them, have rejected the initiative even before it was announced and continued to resist it after the Palestinian National Council proclaimed it regardless of the great sacrifices it involved and the calls by many States in the world to recognize it and co-operate with it for the sake of security and peace. It is that peace which Israel does not want, avoids, and cannot live with, as its responses demonstrate. Hence, where do we go from here remains your responsibility - our collective responsibility.

After all that we have seen over the past two years since the beginning of the intifadah - the strange attempts to crush the intifadah and the Zionist manoeuvres to hoodwink the population under the name of security and peace - we may ask ourselves: What is it that Israel wants? Is it peace that it wants? But what



(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

sort of peace could that be when this is its response? It has made a mistake by rejecting the Palestinian State. It has shown that it does not recognize the right way to peace when it persisted in depriving the Palestinian people of their basic rights that are beyond dispute. It has strayed from the path because delusions have lured it since its inception in the land of Palestine when by aggression it seized the homeland of the Palestinian Arab people with the support and under the wing of imperialism; it dreamed of obliterating for all time the Arab Palestinian people.

Peace cannot be achieved through expanding the areas of aggression, enlarging the fronts of enmity and extending the lines of animosities. In 1982, the Arabs offered the well-known Fez summit formula as a way to a balanced peace in spite of the big Arab sacrifices it involved.

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

It was rejected, resisted and fought against by the Zionists, who even refused to understand the declaration of the Palestinian National Council, its peaceful initiative and the proclamation of the Palestinian State a year ago.

What, then, do they want? Do they want to keep the Palestinian people hostage as a bargaining chip in their drive to dominate the whole region by force? Can the Israeli authorities really believe that Israel will be able for ever to dominate the region, impose its will by intimidation, demarcate borders at will, and grant or withhold rights as it wishes? If so, it would appear that just as they are ignorant of everything else, so they are ignorant of the fact that they are a small group of people living on land they have occupied, sustained for one day to the next by foreign aid. Their roots are not where they live, and their actual influence is not in the place of their dreams. They are living in an environment of increasing hostility and deep hatred. The Arab nation, spread far and wide, and the Islamic people, within their farthest limits, give birth every year to several times the number of persons that make up the Zionist population in Palestine, as representatives well know.

The gap of Zionist technical and military superiority is narrowing every day and in a short time the equation of Israeli superiority will be but a farce in the annals of history. This is the reality of what will happen if the Israeli authorities persist in their delusions and ignorance. From what we hear and see every day, it is my expectation that they will persist in that ignorance and cherish their delusions unless the countries of the world take a firm stand in keeping with the simplest demands of their responsibilities, as was the case of dealing with South Africa. We await the same show of firmness now by the countries of the world, especially the friends of Israel. This is the dimension we do not seem to be able to find in the quest for the solution for which we are working.

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

The revolution of the Palestinian people is in full flood, despite all the measures of suppression. It erupted 23 months ago. Then there is the revolution in the Golan, the occupied land of the Republic of Syria and the revolution in southern Lebanon, the part of the Republic of Lebanon dominated by Zionist injustice and aggression. On every side there is open revolt against injustice, conquest and occupation. Sons and daughters of the people in revolt are daily being martyred. The world's conscience is outraged and the human imagination set aflame. The minds of people the world over are being set free from the shackles of Zionist deception and the Israeli misinformation that has continued to brainwash people over the past decades. The revolution has shown the Israeli army to be a gang of outlaws and trampers of human values who wage war against children and beat women, men, children and the elderly. It has shown that army to be a group of saboteurs who destroy houses, pillage stores and take the daily means of livelihood away from peaceful citizens. It is the revolution of children who have exposed with their stoning the Zionist leaders' claim to moral rectitude and adherence to divine edicts. It has exposed them before the eyes of the civilized world, and shown them to be a group of forgers who have deceived some of the people some of the time. Members must have heard, as we have, that more than 30 per cent of the injuries inflicted by the heavily armed Israeli army on the people of the occupied Palestinian territories were sustained by children under 15 years of age.

The question here is whether the United Nations, more than 40 years after the beginning of Zionist armed aggression, can rid itself of the complex that has prevented it from confronting Israel with the precepts of the Charter and all the measures against inadmissible acts of aggression called for in the Charter. Israel's actions are not admissible, whether in Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq or Tunisia; its acts of aggression are endless.

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

So can the United Nations face up to all this in the same way as it faces up to South Africa, Israel's organic twin and racist companion, or to any other situations of invasion and aggression throughout the world? The answer to this question will decide the possibilities of achieving the real peace for which all Members of the Assembly strive, and it will either define the role of the United Nations in solving the Middle East problem or expose the Organization's impotence. In the latter case, Israel, through its rejection of peaceful solutions, will face what every other invader throughout history has faced after seizing the exceptional opportunities afforded by the absence of logic and reason at a certain historical juncture. Such invaders have always had to face the realities of geography and the currents of history. They have always discovered, when it was too late, that exceptional opportunities are by their very nature temporary and that the realities of history and the facts of geography are bound to decide the outcome in favour of those in the right.

The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Fahd bin Abdulaziz, said in the statement addressed to the Chairman and members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People:

"As we know, the endeavours to achieve peace founded on right and justice have to cross the bridge of respect for values, adherence to covenants, compliance with principles of justice, and the rule of law. No peace will endure that is not founded on these tenets, and no peace will survive that is reached through violating and avoiding."

As we blessed and supported the proclamation of the Palestinian State, so today we praise with esteem and respect the revolt of the people in the lands of Palestine, the Golan and southern Lebanon to regain their usurped rights. We hail

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

the revolution and its heroes, men, women, children and the elderly. We hear the echoes from mountains and valleys, cities and villages; we hail their courage and sacrifice; we applaud their steadfastness in the face of Zionist injustice; and we salute their persistence until the final fulfilment of their aspirations. We have to translate into action our commitment to upholding Palestinian rights, restoring Syrian territory to Syria and Lebanese land to Lebanon, and ensuring the inviolability of the whole of the Arab land, from Baghdad to Tunisia, and all Arab and Muslim lands, as well as their protection from Zionist aggression. We have to respond to the calls of the Palestinian people in their intifadah in defence of the very principles upon which the United Nations was founded and the precepts enshrined in international conventions and treaties. They have a right to their homeland, to self-determination, to choose the form of government they desire; to uphold the State they have proclaimed, to reject all forms of injustice or aggression, and to condemn and expose the aggressor's unjustifiable claims.

Peace founded on justice is the demand of all members of the Assembly. It is our demand. Let us work for it on the basis that is clear to all.\*

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\* Mr. Hurst (Antigua and Barbuda), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

Let us hope that, in the present international climate of détente, the peoples of the world will be able to hold their heads high and participate in an international order based on respect for human values and the rights of the individual and of States. We hope that the Middle East will get its fair share of support so that these principles, rules and rights may become a reality in our region.

Mr. HOQOO (Afghanistan): Allow me at the outset to express our profound condemnation of the cowardly act of terror that claimed the life of President René Moawad of Lebanon. We express our heartfelt condolences to the people of Lebanon on their tragic loss; and we are confident that the late President will go down in the history of his country as a true and courageous son of Lebanon who rose to the demands of the national interests of his country at a crucial juncture, sacrificing his life for the cause of peace, harmony and national reconciliation in his motherland.

Over the decades, the tense situation prevailing in the Middle East as a result of the continued Israeli occupation of Palestine, the Syrian Golan Heights and parts of southern Lebanon, as well as the policy of aggression and expansionism constantly pursued by Israel in that region, has posed a dangerous threat to peace and security in that region and throughout the world.

That policy has brought about untold irreparable suffering and sorrow to the Palestinian people scattered around the world as refugees and to those Palestinian and other Arab people living in the occupied territories.

It is quite obvious that a just and lasting peace and stability in that volatile region of the world can only be based on Israel's total and unconditional withdrawal from all the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem, as well as on the restoration of the undeniable and legitimate rights of

(Mr. Hoqoq, Afghanistan)

the Palestinians to exercise self-determination without foreign intervention, to return to their homeland and to establish their own State in their national territory in line with General Assembly resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974 and other relevant United Nations resolutions.

In this connection, I should like to recall the great significance of the political declaration adopted by the Palestine National Council in Algiers on 15 November 1988. That declaration embodies the proper and practical ways and means for the settlement of the grave situation in the Middle East, with the question of Palestine constituting its core.

The heroic intifadah, which has continued notwithstanding the merciless murder of Palestinian youths, women, men and children at the hands of the Israeli butchers, is a convincing response to the illegal occupation of their lands.

In this regard, I should like to reiterate the firm solidarity and support of the people and the Government of the Republic of Afghanistan for the struggle of the peoples of Palestine and the Republic of Syria in their just and righteous cause of liberating their occupied lands.

The situation in Lebanon remains tense and explosive owing to the continued occupation of parts of southern Lebanon by Israeli forces. It is high time to demand the immediate and scrupulous implementation of Security Council resolutions 425 (1978), 426 (1978), 508 (1982) and 509 (1982), calling for the total and unconditional withdrawal of the Israeli aggressor forces from Lebanon. The full sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Lebanon as a full-fledged member of the community of nations must be preserved and ensured.

Under present conditions, the convening of an international peace conference under the auspices of the United Nations is the only practicable means for ensuring just and lasting peace and stability and security in the Middle East. In that

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conference, the full participation of all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, should be ensured on an equal footing.

In conclusion, I should like once again to express the firm support of the people and the Government of the Republic of Afghanistan for the just struggle of the Palestinian people and the other Arab peoples for the liberation of the occupied Arab territories and the immediate restoration of their legitimate rights. We are fully convinced that the just solution of the protracted Middle East problem can, in turn, consolidate the process of peace, understanding, peaceful coexistence, and international security.

Mr. AL-MASRI (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic): While the improved climate of international relations and the replacement of years of confrontation, tension and cold war by a new phase of détente have had a positive effect on some of the regional disputes throughout the world, the Arab-Israeli conflict continues to take a different course in an atmosphere of tension and confrontation. This is the outcome of depriving the Palestinian people of its inalienable national rights and of the continued occupation by Israel of the Palestinian and other Arab territories, as well as of the increasing Israeli intransigence in challenging international law and United Nations resolutions and the escalation of its brutal oppressive measures in the occupied Arab territories.

The United Nations credibility has been enhanced by its great achievements in many regions of the world. People are increasingly convinced of the Organization's effectiveness as an international machinery for resolving regional conflicts, eliminating injustice and assisting the oppressed in liberating themselves from all kinds of foreign occupation and alien domination and in restoring their national



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rights. Hence it is imperative that the United Nations assume a decisive role in helping the Palestinian people - whose uprising has entered its third year - as well as the populations of the other occupied Arab territories, liberate their lands from Israeli occupation and put an end to their tragedy. The Palestinians are subjected daily to all kinds of repression, oppression, killing, house demolition, deportation, and other means of mass punishment such as the destruction of farms - means which occurred during the most barbaric periods of nazism.

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Arab Republic)

The consideration of the Middle East crisis and the seeking of a just solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict cannot ignore the two following decisive elements which constitute the basis for the settlement of this conflict: first, the need for ending Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories and other occupied Arab territories unconditionally, since occupation is an illegitimate act which violates the United Nations Charter and the rules of international law; and secondly, enabling the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights, including their rights to self-determination, to return to their homeland, Palestine, and to establish their independent and sovereign State.

My country has repeatedly made it clear that peace has certain components, foremost among which are justice and equity, the ending of occupation and the restoration of usurped rights. There is no peace under occupation. There will be no peace unless and until the Arabs regain all their lands and all their rights. It is sophistry and a grave mistake for some people to believe that peace can be achieved in this region without total, unconditional Israeli withdrawal from all the Palestinian and other Arab occupied territories and without giving the Arab Palestinian people the opportunity to exercise their inalienable national rights. Those who speak of peace and ignore those requirements and conditions steer away from the truth of the matter and make a serious error of judgement. Israel does not want peace in the region.

The rulers of Israel, with their Zionist doctrine which is unmatched in its fanaticism and fundamentalism by any other doctrine, are living in another age. They still rely on myths and illusions to achieve their final objective of establishing greater Israel, from the Euphrates to the Nile. Israel simply wants the Arabs to accept its expansionist designs. It is for this reason that Israel

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rejects the international conference under the auspices of the United Nations and the implementation of related United Nations resolutions. It is escalating its expansionist policies and creating further obstacles on the road to peace. It has annexed Arab Jerusalem and the Arab Syrian Golan; it has invaded Lebanon, destroyed its capital, Beirut, and occupied its southern part; it has stepped up its settler policies by continuing to build more settlements. All of this strongly refutes the claims of those who believe that Israel wants peace. At the same time, it shows Israel to be a tool of aggression, a racist Zionist entity and an active factor against peace and security in the Middle East and in the world as a whole.

Having realized this fact, on 10 November 1975 the General Assembly adopted a resolution determining that Zionism is a form of racism. On 5 February 1982, after the application of Israeli laws to the Arab Syrian Golan, the General Assembly declared that Israel's record and actions confirmed that it was not a peace-loving Member State and that it had not carried out its obligations under General Assembly resolution 273 (III) of 11 May 1949.

The problem that obstructs the peace process in the Middle East is inherent precisely in the practices of Israel and the Israeli dreams of expansion. The long terrorist history of Israeli occupation of the Arab Syrian Golan, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and southern Lebanon calls to mind the barbaric acts of the racist régime of Pretoria against the peoples of southern Africa and the Nazi crimes against civilians during the Second World War.

Since it occupied the Arab Syrian Golan in 1967, Israel has continued to impose measures aimed at annexation of the territory and encouragement of its settlement by Israelis. That is why, in December 1981, Israel took the decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the Arab Syrian Golan and

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Israeli identity on its Syrian Arab inhabitants. Those who refused to accept that identity were harassed by the most harsh measures. The Israeli occupation authorities confiscated the lands of the Syrian Arab inhabitants and converted those lands into military zones and settlement areas. They also took over the natural water sources and prevented the Syrian Arab inhabitants from moving and working freely in the territory.

The situation in the Arab Syrian Golan, as in other occupied Arab territories, is deteriorating further. Every day the Syrian Arab inhabitants face very brutal treatment at the hands of the Israeli occupation forces. Their basic human rights are systematically violated.

Since Israel occupied the Arab Syrian Golan in 1967, it has pursued the well-known Israeli strategy of aggression against the inhabitants of the territory. Its objective has been to Judaize the Arab Syrian Golan, eradicate the national identity of its inhabitants, destroy its economic infrastructure, take over its water resources and change its social and cultural character, in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, particularly Security Council resolution 497 (1981), adopted unanimously on 17 December 1981, and General Assembly resolution ES-9/1, adopted on 5 February 1982 at the ninth emergency special session and reaffirmed at every subsequent session of the General Assembly.

It is no secret that the tragic situation in southern Lebanon is the result of Israeli occupation of part of Lebanon and of Israel's use of armed mercenaries and puppets to commit acts of terrorism and violence against the Lebanese population.

Israel rejected Security Council resolution 425 (1978) and subsequent resolutions calling for the full and unconditional withdrawal of its forces from

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all Lebanese territory and the deployment of United Nations forces in the area to carry out their mission.

The Israeli occupation forces have turned whole towns and villages in southern Lebanon into quasi-concentration camps. They transformed life there into hell as the Israeli occupation forces daily carry out acts of repression, murder and destruction from the air, sea and land.

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The road to a just peace is a one-way road that passes through an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of all parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization.

In essence, peace means justice; it means restoring the rights to those who have been denied them and putting an end to aggression and occupation. That is the kind of peace for which we struggle. The peace we desire follows the road of the implementation of the United Nations resolutions relevant to this question, including those pertaining to the holding of the international conference. Unless Israel withdraws from all the occupied Arab territories, unless the question of Palestine is solved in a way that guarantees the rights of the Palestinian people, there will be no peace in that region. For if there is no just peace, aggression and occupation will continue, in the Arab Syrian Golan, in the Arab Palestine land, and in southern Lebanon. That resistance is a result of continued occupation. Therefore, the resistance will continue in all these areas until the last inch of Arab territory is freed from Israeli occupation.

Mr. AKSIN (Turkey): Once again the question of the Middle East is before the General Assembly, and once again we shall have to give expression to our feelings of frustration at our inability to see the prospect of an early settlement. As we approach the end of an eventful year, we are witnessing welcome developments in a number of areas of conflict, developments that contribute to the creation of an international climate of conciliation and understanding. It was against that background that we anticipated favourable developments to help bring to an end the conflict in the Middle East and the suffering of the people of the region. Unfortunately, attempts made this year to achieve a just and lasting solution to the problem have so far brought no tangible results.

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Throughout the four decades of wars, strife and instability in the Middle East, Turkey has pursued policies conforming to its direct and natural interest in the region and in the fate of the people living near its borders. Close historical, cultural and emotional ties bind the people of Turkey to the people of the region. It is natural for Turkey to show concern at any event which would threaten the peace and well-being of the region, and the plight of the Palestinian population in the occupied territories is no exception.

We have made clear on a number of occasions our position regarding the question of the Middle East. Turkey is convinced that there can be no satisfactory, long-term solution to this problem unless it is based on negotiations between all the interested parties, conducted in good faith within the framework of an international peace conference. My Government welcomes all efforts directed towards achieving this end and believes that following the proclamation and international recognition of an independent Palestinian State last year the circumstances are right for the consideration of new initiatives. We hope that all countries in a position to do so will contribute to present efforts aimed at the establishment of peace and justice. Turkey stands ready to assist in such endeavours.

Recent initiatives envisaging the participation of the true representatives of the Palestinian people in direct negotiations with Israel deserve very careful consideration. My Government believes that such negotiations can form a basis for the elimination of differences, thereby leading to the launching of the peace process. We appeal to the Government of Israel to respond to these initiatives by adopting more conciliatory policies. We remain hopeful that no Government will stand in the way and block efforts aimed at the early attainment of a lasting solution. Such a solution must be based on justice, the right to

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self-determination, and the right of all States in the Middle East to exist in peace behind recognized and secure borders.

The report of the Secretary-General in document A/44/731 of 16 November 1989, on the question of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East as stipulated in General Assembly resolution 43/176 of 15 December 1988, reveals that all parties directly involved in the conflict, with the exception of Israel, are prepared to enter the peace process under the auspices of the United Nations. My delegation concurs with the Secretary-General when he expresses his dismay in the following words:

"This is particularly unfortunate since the resolution ... received much wider support than earlier resolutions concerning an international conference. The vote in favour of Assembly resolution 43/176 reflected the commitment of the international community to the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination".

(A/44/731, para. 5)

It is sad to see opportunities of this kind being wasted, especially at a time when the situation in the occupied territories is so alarming. The international community must exert its influence in support of the convening of the International Peace Conference under the auspices of the United Nations. All countries must shoulder their responsibilities to reach that end.

As the peace process falters, the world follows with anguish the justified uprising of the Palestinians in the occupied territories. The Palestinians, the principal victims of the question of the Middle East, are bravely confronting the



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harsh measures taken by the occupying Power. We need not go into the details of the oppression of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories. A random glance at the report (A/44/13) of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, or at the report (A/44/599) of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories, is enough to reveal the tragic situation faced by the Palestinian people. There have been so many resolutions, the last one being General Assembly resolution 44/2 of 13 October 1989, condemning the unacceptable policies and practices of Israel. Several draft resolutions condemning Israeli practices, adopted in the Special Political Committee last week, have met with general approval and will be brought to the General Assembly. There will be others. Is the message of the overwhelming majority of the United Nations not clear? For how long must Israeli practices be condemned before the indignation of the world community is understood?

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We appeal once more to the Government of Israel to end its harsh repressive measures in the occupied territories; to live up to its moral and legal obligations and stop violating the human rights of the Palestinian people; to recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinians, including their inalienable right to self-determination; and to engage in meaningful negotiations with the true representatives of the Palestinian people and other parties directly involved, in an international peace conference for the purpose of finding a political solution to the conflict.

Before concluding I wish to state once again that the tragedy of Lebanon is another matter of grave concern to Turkey. At a moment when expectations were rising as a result of the endeavours of Saudi Arabia, Algeria and Morocco to find a peaceful way of ending the agony of that suffering nation, the dark shadow of hatred once again overtook it. Turkey strongly condemns the cowardly attack on President Moawad and shares the shock and sorrow of the Lebanese people at its tragic loss. Our sincere wish is to see the early return of peace, unity and stability to Lebanon through the efforts of the Lebanese people, under the leadership of its newly elected President.

Mr. OULD MOHAMED MAHMOUD (Mauritania) (interpretation from Arabic): The improved political climate and the portents of hope do not, unfortunately, prevail everywhere. In the Middle East, notwithstanding the international community's appeals to and energetic and repeated condemnations of Israel through, among other things, resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council, there has been no improvement in the situation in that part of the world. Danger continues to hang over the region because of Israel. Therefore it is more necessary than ever before that we adopt appropriate measures to prevent an exacerbation of the situation. We should also demonstrate good faith, courage and willingness to

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assist the Palestinian people, who have suffered for more than 40 years now from occupation, displacement and denial of their rights.

The Palestinian people waited patiently for justice from the international community for a very long time, notwithstanding the brutality of the occupation. But in the face of disappointment, the Palestinian people lost patience; they had no option but to stand up to tyranny in a new way. Therefore, on 1 December 1987 they began their popular uprising against the Israeli occupation, an uprising that embodied the noblest values of steadfastness, resistance and opposition to occupation. The valiant Palestinian people have consented to generous sacrifices, demonstrating true courage and heroism, drawing upon their traditional values and closing ranks in a determined effort to achieve recognition of their inalienable right to establish their Palestinian State with the City of Al Quds as its capital.

The General Assembly must now reaffirm the need for a comprehensive, lasting solution of the problem of the Middle East, based on equity and justice, through the convening of an international conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of all the parties concerned, including, in particular, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The conference should focus on the principles set out in paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 43/176, adopted in 1988.

The message of peace sent by the President of the Palestinian State, Mr. Yasser Arafat, to the Assembly at its last session was testimony to the serious and sincere endeavours of the Palestine Liberation Organization to create conditions conducive to peace. Therefore, we can now only appeal sincerely to those in a position to exert influence to bring pressure to bear on the party

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Mauritania)

obstructing the attainment of peace to contribute to the establishment of a truly just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the area based on recognition of the rights of the Palestinian people and total withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories.

While supporting the efforts of our Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, and all international efforts, Mauritania remains concerned about the tension prevailing in that part of the world. We feel that advantage must be taken of the favourable international climate to bring about the settlement of the Middle East problem. The United Nations has enormous potential and this should be brought to bear for the purpose of bringing peace to that part of the world through serious, practical efforts to convene an international conference.

Mr. STRESOV (Bulgaria): The delegation of the People's Republic of Bulgaria is deeply disturbed by the fact that the Middle East conflict continues to be one of the most serious sources of tension in the world, despite the consistent efforts of the international community as reflected in numerous resolutions of the United Nations. The acuteness and scope of this conflict stands out in a particularly striking manner against the background of the current state of international affairs, in which a number of regional sources of tension are on the way to being quelled by political means.

(Mr. Stresov, Bulgaria)

It is common knowledge that the Palestinian issue is at the core of the Middle East crisis. Peace and stability in the region are unthinkable without a just solution of that issue. That is why every attempt to sidetrack or disregard the interests of the Arab Palestinian people through separate deals or by ignoring the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which is the sole, legitimate representative of these people, will, in fact, impede resolution of the conflict.

The heroic uprising of the Palestinian people in the Israeli-occupied territory has been going on for two years already. The intifadah is a vivid expression of the struggle of the Arab Palestinian people for their legitimate right to independence and self-determination, including the right to a sovereign State. There are daily reports of casualties and of repressive measures imposed by the occupying forces. The history of mankind has repeatedly proved that repression and terror cannot destroy a nation's desire for freedom and independence.

Our attention, besides being focused on the situation in the occupied Arab territories, is also focused on the situation in Lebanon, from which news about bloodshed, civilian casualties and destruction is reaching us. Bulgaria welcomed the recent agreements between the Lebanese factions achieved through the efforts of the Tripartite High Committee of the League of Arab States, hoping that they would bring peace to that troubled land. Unfortunately, this was not to be. We learnt, with profound shock of the assassination of President Moawad. Bulgaria strongly condemns this brutal act. We hope that the newly elected President will get the necessary support in his efforts to bring peace to Lebanon. It is most important now to avoid resort to further violence, which could disrupt the political dialogue. In order to bring peace to that suffering land, however, it is necessary, above all, to ensure the implementation of Security Council resolutions 508 (1982) and 509 (1982), which call for the immediate and unconditional

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withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon. The restoration of the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Lebanon is long overdue.

The People's Republic of Bulgaria is convinced that it is of paramount importance to seek a comprehensive, peaceful, just and lasting solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. That solution should be based on the generally recognized principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of foreign land by aggression, which means that Israel must withdraw completely and unconditionally from all Arab territories occupied in 1967. A solution to the conflict will be feasible only if the Arab people of Palestine are granted the right to self-determination and all States in the region, including Israel, are guaranteed the exercise of the right to free development and a secure future.

This approach enjoys strong support at the United Nations and has been elaborated in numerous resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. In our view, which is shared by the vast majority of countries, the most appropriate way to resolve the Middle East conflict is by convening an international conference, under the auspices of the United Nations with the participation of all interested States and including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on behalf of the State of Palestine, and the five permanent members of the Security Council.

We are convinced that the positive changes in international affairs create favourable conditions for a peaceful solution to the Middle East conflict. New opportunities in this respect have emerged as a result of the historic decisions of the Palestine National Council at its nineteenth session, in Algiers, which convincingly demonstrated the PLO's willingness to adopt a constructive approach to the solution of the Palestinian question.

It is our hope that these opportunities will be utilized and that other States involved in the conflict will show the necessary political wisdom and realism in

(Mr. Stresov, Bulgaria)

the search for a mutually acceptable solution. Efforts should now be directed at finding the common elements in the proposals and initiatives of the interested States, which should then be used as a basis for moving the political process in the right direction.

The People's Republic of Bulgaria welcomes the growing role of the United Nations in the efforts to find peaceful solutions to regional conflicts and eliminate sources of tension. The United Nations will always enjoy the full and active support of my country, so that the Middle East may ultimately be transformed from a region of armed confrontation and contradictions to an area of peace and understanding.

Mr. CHORNYI (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): The discussions at the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly have shown convincingly that the process of improving the international climate by the development of dialogue and the strengthening of the principle of the primacy of law and human values has encompassed practically all spheres of multilateral diplomacy and had a positive impact on the approach of States Members to the settlement of long-standing regional conflicts. So far, unfortunately, the wind of positive change in international life has had only a very insignificant effect on the situation in the Middle East. The Middle East has been, and continues to be, one of the most sensitive areas in the world and a dangerous focal point of tension.

The periodic outbursts of instability and the surges of confrontation and extremism in the region have confirmed a widely perceived truth - that there is no alternative to a political solution of that problem. Military measures and armed force have not only failed to lead to a settlement in the Middle East but also helped the accumulation of new factors that impede the movement towards peace and stability.

(Mr. Chornyy, Ukrainian SSR)

The Arab-Israeli conflict is now acquiring a particularly alarming nature because of the unbridled arms race into which the Middle East has been drawn. The accumulation, in that area, of weapons of mass destruction threatens the very existence of the States and peoples of the region, undermines the comprehensive system of peace and security established as a result of the efforts of the United Nations, and endangers the peace of the world in general.

Of course, new approaches have been seen there, too, from time to time. These relate primarily to the constructive and realistic platform of the PLO adopted at the special session, in Algeria, of the Palestine National Council. The PLO's recognition of the right of the State of Israel to a secure existence, its willingness to engage with Israel in negotiations within the framework of an international conference, and its renunciation of all forms of terrorism met with approval at the Arab summit in Casablanca and with a positive response in the world in general. The Ukrainian SSR actively supports the PLO's position and regards it as an important step towards a Middle East settlement.



(Mr. Chornyy, Ukrainian SSR)

Unfortunately there has still been no equivalent response from Israel. Israel's answer has been heightened repression in the occupied territories and in the political sphere the proposal of the so-called Shamir plan, which disregards one of the main requirements of a peaceful settlement in today's world - recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. Those in the ruling circles in Israel continue to seek to retain control of the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories. Consequently, as the Secretary-General notes in his report on the work of the Organization,

"The situation in the Middle East remains a source of profound and intense concern ... Hopes for early progress in the peace process ... have sadly given way to mistrust and doubt among the parties concerned."

(A/44/1, p. 7)

As a result of the continuing deadlock the situation in the occupied territories has become even worse. The policies and practices of Israel with regard to the population of the occupied territories have been unanimously condemned by the international community. However, Israel prefers to ignore that clearly voiced position, which has been repeatedly set forth in resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

Today, when the United Nations has proclaimed the Decade of International Law, thus demonstrating the desire of the world community to strengthen the authority of international law, the question of Israel's compliance with its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War poses a particularly acute problem. The development of events that has occurred once more convinces us that only a comprehensive political settlement encompassing all aspects of the conflict in the Middle East can effectively protect the rights of the Palestinians, as well as those of the citizens of Israel. Military force cannot guarantee a long-term, stable solution to political

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problems. It is essential to revive as soon as possible the effective process of negotiations on the Middle East, relying on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and taking fully into account the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination. Delay in this regard could have the most serious consequences.

We fully share the alarm of the Secretary-General, who in his report on this question observes

"I am deeply worried by the fact that time is passing and that opportunities that have emerged in the past 12 months might slip away." (A/44/731, para. 7)

Because of the exceptional complexity of the Middle East conflict, the negotiating process must be multifaceted in nature and could include efforts to establish and develop a bilateral and a multilateral dialogue. Here everything is important, including the initiatives of individual countries and their own regional organizations, such as, for example, the League of Arab States, and an active role by the Security Council and its permanent members.

My delegation believes that, in the light of the extreme gravity of the situation, the peace process must be given a strong impetus by the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East under United Nations auspices, with a view to achieving a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict. Consideration at a meeting of the Security Council of the question of preparing an international conference would certainly import extra dynamism to the peace process.

The principle of the freedom of socio-political choice, which we view as one of the fundamental principles of international relations, requires that the possibility of exercising that right be extended to the Arab people of Palestine. The holding, within the context of a comprehensive settlement under effective

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international control, of free and fair elections in the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem, could be a step towards that end.

In the general complex of Middle East problems the situation in Lebanon continues to be a source of great concern. The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic has consistently supported steps likely to lead to the cessation of military activities in that country. We were deeply alarmed and distressed to hear of the death of the lawfully elected President of Lebanon, Mr. René Moawad. That tragic event could once again provoke clashes among Lebanese parties and groups. This must not be permitted. We call on all Lebanese parties to show restraint and soundness of judgement and to use only political means. It is essential to consolidate the results achieved through the mediation of the Tripartite High Committee of the League of Arab States and the constructive positions of Arab and other countries. As the President of the Security Council observed on 22 November:

"Democratic Lebanese institutions must be strongly supported and the process of national reconciliation must go forward. This is the only way Lebanese national unity can be fully restored." (S/PV.2894, p. 3)

The Middle East and all the people who live there must cross the threshold of mutual hatred and confrontation. By taking that difficult but essential step they will open up for themselves the possibility of strengthening mutual security, economic co-operation and mutual cultural enrichment. Only by resolving the principal issue at this stage - by making a start on the process of a comprehensive settlement - can we move towards the solution of the other complex problems of the region.

Miss WILLBERG (New Zealand): It is with a sense of frustration that New Zealand speaks on this item. There was a glimmer of hope as 1988 drew to a close that this year might have seen progress on this long-standing dispute. Despite the efforts of many and the expressed wish of all, however, that was not to be.

(Miss Willberg, New Zealand)

New Zealand has long held that before any negotiated solution can be reached the parties concerned must have demonstrated a clear commitment to reach a just and durable peace. We welcomed, therefore, the outcome of the Algiers meeting of the Palestine National Council last year and, particularly, the statement by Mr. Arafat in December that the Palestine National Council explicitly accepted the existence of Israel. These were clear signs of movement, the opening of a door towards the possibility of negotiations.

In New Zealand's view, Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) provide the basis for a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East. We are all aware that these resolutions affirm that every State has the right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries, free from threats or acts of force. Israel has that right. We regret the reluctance of some of Israel's neighbours unequivocally to accept that right. The resolutions also emphasize the inadmissibility of acquiring territory by war. Israel has no right under international law to the occupied territories. Palestinian endorsement of Security Council resolution 242 (1967) provides a foundation on which to build a settlement that recognizes the rights and aspirations of those party to the dispute. Regrettably, current hopes appear to be fading, with political stalemate and immobility on the part of Israel. We emphasize our view that without a willingness to consider reciprocal concessions there can be no negotiated solution. We look for signs that Israel is genuine about peace. A range of peace proposals exists and substantial efforts continue, but real progress depends on political will. We have yet to see sufficient movement in the direction of reaching a negotiated settlement that addresses all aspects of the Palestinian problem; and for the Palestinians this must include the fundamental element of the right to self-determination and to a national homeland, if that is their wish.

(Miss Willberg, New Zealand)

Meanwhile, Israel continues to enforce measures to consolidate its hold over the occupied territories. New Zealand does not accept the validity of Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem, nor the continuing establishment and encroachment of settlements in the occupied territories. Nor can we condone Israeli practices in containing the intifadah. We are deeply concerned by reports of intimidation of those monitoring human rights, and of others working to provide humanitarian services to the Palestinian people. We find unacceptable Israeli practices of closing schools and educational institutions, of demolishing houses, of imposing economic sanctions and other forms of collective punishment. The repressive measures used against the village of Beit Sahur by the Israeli authorities have been widely condemned. The international community has been unanimous this year in its condemnation of Israel's continuing practice of deportations, in violation of international law. As an occupying Power Israel must accept the de jure applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention and apply its provisions in full.

We consider that the intifadah is a spontaneous uprising through which the Palestinian people have shown that they reject 22 years of Israeli occupation, that they are seeking to take control of their own destiny. The uprising shows no signs of ending; indeed, it has intensified over the last few months. It is clear that this is not simply a question of maintaining law and order: it is at root a fundamental political question which Israel must address.

Israel looks to negotiations with acceptable representatives of the Palestinian people. Yet those exercising leadership in the occupied territories find themselves either placed in detention or expelled from their homes. Who should represent the Palestinians is for the Palestinians to decide. We would remind Israel that in negotiating for peace one has in the end to deal with others besides one's friends. There can be no substitute for direct negotiations with

(Miss Willberg, New Zealand)

genuine Palestinian leaders. These must include the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Israel's acceptance of this fact would serve to revitalize the hope that peace can be achieved. Such an act would match the constructive PLO moves last year.

New Zealand is not, of course, a party principal to the dispute and our concern is one that recognizes the importance of the region for global stability. We have witnessed progress on many international issues over the year. A significant step was taken this month on another long-standing issue before the United Nations, the question of Namibia. The new international environment has seen a willingness on the part of parties to regional conflicts, and both super-Powers, to reach negotiated settlements, to seek peace and justice. When barriers are tumbling down around the world and enmities are seen as increasingly anachronistic, we look to the parties involved in this dispute to grasp the opportunities proffered in this new climate. The peace process is at a decisive stage because opportunities for progress do exist. We call on the parties to the dispute - and Israel in particular - to seize these opportunities. If they do not they will bear a heavy responsibility. If they do not peace will become ever more remote.

The United Nations has a constructive role to play. The convening of an international peace conference under United Nations auspices, with the participation of all parties involved, including the Palestinians - and this must inevitably involve the PLO - and those who can contribute to a successful outcome, provides the way forward to a negotiated settlement. Virtually all have given their support to this concept, but, as the Secretary-General notes, sufficient agreement does not yet exist to permit the convening of such a conference. We endorse the continuing efforts of the Secretary-General in this regard.

(Miss Willberg, New Zealand)

As we have said in this forum before, peace and justice for Israel will be found only when there is also peace and justice for Palestinians. We believe that the long-term interests of Israel will be served best by a peaceful resolution of the dispute based on a recognition of mutual rights. What we are looking to now is constructive movement by all parties to the dispute.

The meeting rose at 8 p.m.