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Agenda item 108:

Question of Palestine (continued) 883

President: Mr. Abdelaziz BOUTEFLIKA
(Algeria).

AGENDA ITEM 108

Question of Palestine (continued)*

1. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): Before calling on the first speaker, I should like to recall that, in accordance with the decision taken by the General Assembly at the 2282nd meeting, the list of speakers will be closed tomorrow, Friday, 15 November, at 5 p.m. In this connexion, I wish to draw the Assembly's attention to a problem connected with the list of speakers.

2. Some delegations—and I wish to make it clear that there are several—have expressed the desire to speak more than once during the debate on the question of Palestine. We are all fully aware of the importance of this debate and I do not wish to interfere in any way with the right of any delegation to speak. Nevertheless, it would seem to me that each delegation's right to speak must be exercised with strict respect for that of all the other delegations. Moreover, rule 35 of the rules of procedure explicitly states that:

“... The President may, in the course of the discussion of an item, propose to the General Assembly . . . the limitation of the number of times each representative may speak . . .”

and rule 72 that:

“The General Assembly may limit the . . . number of times each representative may speak on any question . . .”

3. Without wishing at this stage formally to invoke those provisions of the rules of procedure, I would urge delegations to agree voluntarily to speak only once in the course of the debate. Following that procedure will make it possible for all delegations wishing to do so to present their views without unduly prolonging the debate. Of course, this in no way affects the option that delegations have of making use of the right of reply whenever such use is justified within the framework of the application of the rules of procedure.

* Resumed from the 2283rd meeting.

4. I am convinced that delegations will, in the interests of all concerned, voluntarily make this contribution to the successful conduct of our work.

5. Mr. KHAN (Bangladesh): The Assembly is meeting today under the impetus of two vitally significant decisions. First, after a quarter of a century of diffused and piecemeal deliberations, it has finally decided to deal with the problem of Palestine in its totality, encompassing all aspects—historical, political and juridical. Secondly, by an overwhelming vote, the Assembly, in its resolution 3210 (XXIX), recognized the right of the Palestinian people to present its case to the United Nations through its duly acknowledged representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization [PLO]. These developments are a reflection of the basic realities of the situation and the crystallization of the views held by the great majority of States Members of the United Nations. They underscore qualitative changes that have taken place in the Middle East and the compulsion to find urgent solutions to a problem which is balanced on the thin edge between durable peace and dangerous confrontation. My delegation endorses and welcomes these moves, and particularly the presence of Mr. Yasser Arafat, who, in his inspiring address yesterday, has defined the perspective and framework for United Nations action. We consider that, in a very real sense, this twenty-ninth session constitutes the session of the people of Palestine, their status, fate and future.

6. The history of Palestine is too well known to bear repetition. A little more than 50 years ago there was no Palestine problem—only Palestine itself, an Arab homeland, inhabited by Arabs continuously for over 2,000 years. Its subsequent history stands out as perhaps the most unique example of intrigue, conspiracy and betrayal in modern times, laced with bitter ironies, not the least of which has been the role and responsibility of the United Nations itself. It is therefore only just and proper that the Organization, having been seized of this problem from its inception, should now be charged with the primary responsibility of redressing and resolving it on the basis of justice and universal principles enshrined in the Charter.

7. The story of Palestine is the story of a people denied the exercise of its fundamental rights of freedom and independence; a people whose territory became the object of forced intrusion by foreigners with a specific purpose—to create by artificial means and against the will of the original inhabitants, a political and demographic nucleus which had not existed in Palestine for over 20 centuries. The inevitable result was partition, war, and the dismemberment of the age-old Palestinian homeland within the space of 25 years. Out of the resultant strife and usurpation was born a new problem, the tragedy of the Palestinian refugees, an immense mass of humanity, uprooted, displaced and doomed to wander for over a quarter

of a century in squalid camps scattered over several countries.

8. The heart of the Palestinian problem is thus remarkable in its simplicity. A people deprived of its natural birthright, forcibly replaced by aliens, is now demanding the correction of a monumental injustice. It is essentially a political problem—the struggle of a people for its right of self-determination and achievement of legitimate national rights. The tragedy of the situation has been compounded by the fact that this reality has been obscured and diffused by treating the problem not as a political one but as essentially a humanitarian one. The historical irony is also potent. At the very time that the infamous Balfour Declaration was assuming specific substance, President Woodrow Wilson was propounding the now universally accepted norms—the rejection of territorial acquisition by force, and the right of self-determination of peoples, norms incorporated and sanctified as international law in Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations and in Articles 1 and 2 of the United Nations Charter. Yet these are norms whose validity and application have been denied to the Palestinian people.

9. For over 25 years the United Nations has ignored the rights of the people of Palestine, its existence as an entity, its status as a people, and treated it with the indignity of helpless refugees permanently dislodged and pitiable objects of international charity. Those who stayed behind are nothing more than second-class citizens. But the people of Palestine never accepted this abject status. The flame of Palestinian nationalism has been kept alive by their determination, will and unity through years of forced exile. The PLO is now the bearer of this sacred flame.

10. Though steps have been taken in the past to meet one or other of the many facets of the problem the resolutions of the United Nations have been honoured more in the breach than in the implementation. Since 1948 the Assembly has reaffirmed the right of the Palestinian refugees to repatriation. These calls assumed even greater urgency after the wars unleashed by Israel in 1956 and 1967, which swelled the flood-tide of refugees. The Assembly has repeatedly condemned the continued violation of basic human rights in the occupied territories and the systematic attempts to alter the cultural, economic and demographic identity of these territories. Meanwhile, the determination of the Palestinian Arabs to achieve their inherent rights earned recognition by the Assembly in 1970 [see resolution 2628 (XXV)] of the legitimacy of their struggle for self-determination and their identity not as refugees but as the people of Palestine. The logical evolution of this process was the decision in October this year to invite their acknowledged representatives to participate in this debate.

11. While these steps reflect the changing pattern in the composition of the Assembly and growing recognition by the world community of the injustices perpetrated on the Palestinians, no determined action has yet been taken to resolve the problem. Israel still persists in its denial of the right to self-determination of the people of Palestine and continues its illegal occupation of territories acquired through aggression by flouting with impunity the resolutions of the General Assembly. The Palestinians, deprived of international remedies, have no recourse but to continue

their struggle with all the means at their disposal, including armed struggle, like any other oppressed people.

12. The situation is fraught with danger. The Assembly cannot ignore the frustrations of the Palestinians over the cruel deprivation of their birthright. The Assembly cannot discriminate in its standards and take shelter in expediency. It must come to grips with the problem and decide on meaningful solutions backed by the collective authority and moral weight of all its Members. It goes without saying that the failure of international action is the ultimate spur to unilateral action with all its dangerous implications for global peace and security.

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

14. Even before we were accorded our rightful place in this Organization, the people of Bangladesh pledged in their Constitution to conduct their international relations in conformity with the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter and respect for international law. That is why, immediately on our admission to membership in the United Nations, our very first act was to co-sponsor the request calling for the inclusion in the agenda of the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly of the item on the question of Palestine [A/9742 and Add.1-4].

15. We believe that peace is an imperative for the survival of mankind, but for that peace to endure it must be a peace based on justice. Justice requires the undoing of all acts contrary to the principles of the Charter and, in particular, acts of aggression and the denial of the fundamental principle of equal rights and self-determination of all peoples.

16. In accordance with these universally recognized principles of international law, reaffirmed in numerous resolutions adopted by the United Nations and in the Conferences of the Non-Aligned Countries and the Islamic Conferences, my delegation considers it indispensable that any just and durable political settlement in this region must include the return of the Palestinian people to their homelands and the restoration of their rights and properties, the free exercise of their right of self-determination, and vacation and restoration of all Arab territories illegally occupied by Israel through force.

17. The Assembly must therefore, through concerted action, seek all the means at its disposal to give concrete and effective substance to these imperatives.

18. The Assembly is meeting in the wake of the historic Rabat Conference¹ at which 20 heads of Arab States unanimously called for the creation of an inde-

pendent Palestine on any land liberated from Israeli occupation. We welcome this decision. Together with the decisions adopted by the General Assembly this year, it is symptomatic of the new dimension of the Palestinian situation. On the one hand, it reflects the inevitability of the fact that historical injustices cannot resist the might of oppressed peoples, nor can subjugation withstand the tide of freedom and independence. On the other hand, these injustices must be viewed in the context of the new economic and political realities pertaining to the Middle East. The choice before the Assembly is clear. It is presented with a crucial opportunity of charting a realistic path to durable and just peace through timely and concerted action or, by failing to do so, opening doors to military conflict and global conflagration. We are confident that, given the necessary will, the choice of peace can prevail. My delegation pledges its total commitment to all endeavours in this direction.

19. Mr. OULD MOUKNASS (Mauritania) (*interpretation from French*): When on 14 October 1974 the General Assembly decided to invite the PLO to participate in our deliberations on the question of Palestine [resolution 3210 (XXIX)], it was merely recognizing a reality that is daily becoming more obvious. The Palestinian reality has in fact, today more than ever, established itself as the crux of the whole Middle East problem. True, consideration of the Palestinian question is not new in this Organization. The General Assembly and the Security Council have regularly considered that question, almost from the time they were first established. They have debated it at length, although without finding any way of ending the tragedy of Palestine; still less have they been able to prevent the outbreak of conflicts, each one more destructive and threatening to international peace and security than the last.

20. These efforts by the United Nations have failed essentially because thus far it has devoted itself far more to limiting the immediate consequences of those conflicts and this tragedy than to removing their causes. What are, in fact, the causes of the tragic and explosive situation that has prevailed for more than a quarter of a century in the Middle East, if it is not the fate meted out to the Palestinian people, a fate they are still enduring? Today no country of good faith can challenge the truth of that statement.

21. Furthermore, a brief historical survey will enable us to place the Palestinian question in its true context and to realize how important it is in seeking any solution to the global problem of the Middle East.

22. Hardly more than half a century ago, the people of Palestine were a model of a people living in peace on its land, a people tolerant of all those who, for religious reasons, came to settle in Palestine. The Jewish immigrants in particular found in this land refuge, friendship and brotherhood. The Palestinians never stopped to think of the intentions of those immigrants; rather they saw them as the victims of injustice, and felt it a duty to draw them out of their solitude and to protect them because of their weakness.

23. That was the attitude of the Palestine people until that immigration became political and military, as we know it today. It was no longer immigrants who came because of their religious faith; this was pure

and simple colonization by force. But this colonization is in many ways different from that which we have often condemned here at the United Nations. Certainly they are phenomena of the same nature, but no colonialism—not even the most abject, such as that of *apartheid*—has gone so far as to drive out an entire population from its national territory.

24. This is one of the many special features, among others, of Zionist colonization in Palestine. Thus, the people of Palestine, who gave so much and did so much to make Palestine a land of tolerance, brotherhood and communion, became a beast for the slaughter, the first target of international Zionism. It was understood, in fact, at the Basle Congress, convened in 1897 by Theodor Herzl, that the Arabs in Palestine were to be driven out of their lands and even annihilated from existence. This Machiavellian plan was summarized in a manner that fills us with horror by Herzl himself in his book *The Jewish State*.² He wrote:

“Let us assume, for example, that we wish to chase these wild beasts out of the country. Naturally, we shall not take up lances and arrows, nor are we going to follow the track of bears as was done in the sixteenth century in Europe. But we shall organize a powerful and well-equipped collective hunting party. Thus, we shall chase away the beasts and we shall throw among them bombs with powerful detonators.”

25. These “beasts” were none other than the Arabs of Palestine whose humanity was thus rewarded not only by that appellation, but also by the merciless hunt of which they were victims. The executors of that macabre hunt, the Haganah, the Irgun and many others, spared nothing to carry out the sordid objectives of international Zionism. What has not been done to the Palestinian people? The daily victims of mass assassinations, suffering the destruction of their dwellings, dispossessed of their goods, expelled from their homes, the Palestinian people have been compelled by force to suffer successive exoduses, finally finding themselves reduced to an existence of wandering and living on international charity.

26. It would take too long, and might indeed be boring, to review all the criminal acts committed by Zionism against the Palestinian people. Let us simply mention the names of the Haganah, the Stern Group, and the Irgun to recall the murder of innocent civilians, Palestinian women and children; at Deir Yassin, the village of Nasser El Dine, the village of Kafou, at Beit Dares or El Zairtum—to mention only these—the entire population was executed or collected in mosques to be blown up by dynamite.

27. One of the first consequences of this terrorist activity was, from 1947 and 1948, the expulsion of 700,000 Palestinian Arabs and the total destruction of their dwellings. This figure was to rise continuously as the Zionist State became stronger and perfected its terrorist methods and its settlement policy. The Palestinian people, now reduced to the state of refugees, was not driven out of its homes, it was even pursued within neighbouring Arab countries.

28. This is the underlying cause of the explosive situation that prevails in the Middle East, characterized today by the occupation by Israel of territories of neighbouring Arab States of Palestine. Over the

years, these countries have seen their territories become smaller, their sovereignty lessen, while Lebanon's very existence is threatened daily. The United Nations and, in particular, the great Powers, which bear special responsibilities, have certainly tried to find a solution to the entire problem. But so far, they have not succeeded because they passed over in silence the fundamental problem of the fate of the Palestinian people. History has nevertheless proved that peace in the Middle East does not depend on an absence of conflicts or on temporary arrangements, but on the just solution which will be found to the Palestinian problem. No lull can become peace and no peace can be lasting in this region as long as the Palestinian people has not recovered its legitimate rights, as long as the injustice against it has not been remedied.

29. This people remains, despite a quarter of a century of vicissitudes, profoundly devoted to its land and its homes. All the accumulated sufferings have not broken its will or weakened the vigour of its personality. This state of affairs, which is in itself a burning defeat for the Zionist supporters of the policy of scattering the Palestine community and having it absorbed by neighbouring fraternal States explains, doubtless, the grim obstinacy with which the systematic destruction of any semblance of a renaissance of that people has been undertaken. This homicidal madness, which does not recognize frontiers, which strikes at random, whose supreme purpose is to destroy life, has blindly sown ruin and destruction in all countries that committed the unpardonable crime of sheltering a few defenceless Palestinian refugees. The intolerable excesses of this homicidal madness have already, in just 20 years, plunged the Middle East into the horrors of four costly wars—costly from the human point of view and materially—which have led the international community to the brink of a general conflagration.

30. The results of this unprecedented manhunt, this demented will to exterminate an entire people, are the annexation and occupation by force, despite the repeated decisions of the Organization, of vast territories of independent and sovereign countries. Thus, the implacable logic of Zionist philosophy appears in all its atrocity. The destruction of the Palestinian enemy was the purpose, and as the Arab countries were an obstacle to this, they obviously had to be destroyed too.

31. Despite the occupation of the Arab territories, despite the hecatombs of the Palestinian martyrs burnt by napalm, the target of Zionist vindictiveness is more real and living than ever. The Palestinian people, under the authority of the PLO and its prestigious chief, our eminent brother, Yasser Arafat, has unceasingly given the world proof of its unquenchable vitality and its determination to recover its rights and its usurped homeland. This proof has been given in a brilliant manner by its great chosen leader, whose contribution to the debate in the Assembly was indisputably of paramount importance. Yesterday, from the most authorized person, we heard what the Palestinians want, what they aspire to, which is nothing other than the creation of a multiracial and multireligious State, where everyone would have the same rights and the same duties.

32. Are these the bloodthirsty Palestinians whose only aim is to throw the Jews into the sea, so complacently described in the Israeli statements which we have heard? Or are they another category of Palestinians who are unknown to us? The question has to be put to the Tel Aviv authorities. The fact is that the time when lies and counter-truths could sow confusion in this Assembly is past. The delegation of the PLO, whose presence among us I welcome, has already reduced to ashes all the slanderous allegations used constantly in attempts to discredit it before the Assembly. The brilliant statement whose political maturity, realism and extreme moderation escaped no one dealt a decisive blow to a Zionist propaganda, which draws its strength from an almost scientific manipulation of counter-truth. I am convinced that the Assembly will draw the necessary conclusion and will in future give the blustering statements of the Tel Aviv authorities no more value than they deserve.

33. The General Assembly has been seized of the Palestinian question for more than a quarter of a century. After a quarter of a century, a ray of light is beginning to appear on the horizon of our powerlessness. The Organization has a duty not to allow this ray of light to be extinguished. The Palestinian delegation, on which any final solution of the question depends, has given proof of goodwill and availability, which must on no account be discouraged. My country reaffirms its deep conviction that any lasting peace in the Middle East must include recognition of the inalienable and legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, and their participation, on an equal footing, in any negotiation concerning the problem. My country also denies the right of anyone to speak on behalf of the Palestinians or to negotiate on their behalf, other than the representatives freely chosen by that people within its national liberation organization.

34. In the interest of the international community and in the interest of the Organization, the debate that began this week must recognize solemnly what has always been and is today more than ever an unchallengeable and living reality, the existence of the Palestinians as a people and the importance of their effective participation as the principal party in any search for peace in the Middle East. It is on that condition, and that condition alone, that our debate today can respond to the hopes placed in the Organization by all peoples that love peace and justice.

35. The PRESIDENT (*Interpretation from French*): I started our work this afternoon by making an appeal to the Assembly. I drew the attention of members to the fact that some delegations—and I made it clear that there were several—had expressed their wish to speak, if not daily, at least many times in the course of the debate on the question of Palestine. I drew the attention of members to the fact that we were all fully aware of the importance of this debate and that, as far as I was concerned, I certainly did not wish to interfere in any way with the right of any delegation to speak. Nevertheless, I consider that the right of each delegation to speak must be exercised with strict respect for that of all other delegations. Moreover, rules 35 and 72 of the rules of procedure provide that the President may, in the course of the discussion of an item, propose to the General Assembly the limitation of the number of times each representative may

speaking, and that the General Assembly may limit the number of times each representative may speak on any question.

36. I emphasized the fact that, at that stage in the debate, I did not wish in any way formally to invoke those provisions of the rules of procedure, and I limited myself to urging all delegations to agree voluntarily to intervene only once in the course of the debate. I did so in the belief that such a procedure would make it possible for all delegations wishing to speak to present their views without thereby unduly prolonging our debate.

37. The procedure that I proposed in no way affects the option that all delegations retain to make use of the right of reply each time such use can be justified under the rules of procedure.

38. In making that appeal to the General Assembly, I was convinced that each delegation would be guided by the interests of the international community alone, and would be willing to make this contribution voluntarily to the successful conduct of our work.

39. Nevertheless, I find myself in a situation where I must formally propose, without reference to rule 35 of the rules of procedure, that the Assembly assist me in deciding this matter through the application of rule 72 of the rules of procedure. This rule explicitly states that:

"The General Assembly may limit the time to be allowed to each speaker and the number of times each representative may speak on any question. Before a decision is taken, two representatives may speak in favour of, and two against, a proposal to set such limits. When the debate is limited and a representative exceeds his allotted time, the President shall call him to order without delay."

40. Rule 72 is, of course, applied in accordance with the provisions of rule 85 of the rules of procedure, which reads:

"Decisions of the General Assembly on questions other than those provided for in rule 83, including the determination of additional categories of questions to be decided by a two-thirds majority, shall be made by a majority of the members present and voting."

41. I should like those speakers wishing to make statements in favour of allowing delegations to speak more than once during the debate on agenda item 108 to signify their desire to speak. Two speakers are required. I need two speakers to defend the idea of hearing the same delegation every day on the same subject, and another two speakers to defend the contrary proposition. After that the Assembly will proceed to the vote.

42. I have the name of one speaker who wishes to speak against the limitation, in other words, against not being permitted to speak every day—I emphasize "every day"—on the same topic.

43. Mr. TEKOA (Israel): Mr. President, the motivation for the suggestion made by you is obvious. There is only one Israel and about 20 Arab States participating in this debate. Israel has inscribed itself on the list of speakers for a number of appearances, making it clear that it does not intend to avail itself of the opportunity every day. It has done so in order

to ensure that the discussion should not be utterly unbalanced, and that the views of one of the principal parties should be heard in a fair and equitable manner. Israel's name remained on the list of speakers until this morning. We inscribed our name on the list about three weeks ago. This morning we were informed that our name had been deleted and that you intended to prevent us from exercising our rights under the Charter and the rules of procedure. Indeed, rule 68 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly states that:

"The President shall call upon speakers in the order in which they signify their desire to speak."

As I have indicated, we signified our desire to speak by inscription on the list as soon as it was opened several weeks ago. In fact, in debates on Middle East questions that have taken place in the plenary General Assembly in the past, Israel and representatives of other countries have on a number of occasions come to the rostrum to make statements in the debate, as distinct from the exercise of the rights of reply.

44. In these circumstances, Mr. President, your proposal is an expression of the bias that you have regrettably displayed against Israel and its rights since the beginning of the present session. This has been reflected, among other instances, in the manner in which yesterday morning's meeting was set and conducted, and in the totally illegal arrangements you made, on your own initiative, for the appearance at that meeting of the head of a murder organization bent on the destruction of a Member State of the United Nations and on the indiscriminate killing of its citizens.

45. I should like to place these facts on record and to express my delegation's strongest protest.

46. The PRESIDENT (*Interpretation from French*): Suffice it to say that the President was elected unanimously by the General Assembly, and that under no circumstances does he intend to shirk the responsibilities entrusted to him by the pertinent provisions of the rules of procedure.

47. I still have only one speaker listed to defend the point of view we have just heard. Does any other delegation wish to speak in favour of that same point of view? I already have two other speakers listed for the opposite view, still in pursuance of rule 72.

48. If not, I shall have to call on those speakers who wish to defend the opposite point of view. I call on the representative of Senegal.

49. Mr. FA L (Senegal) (*Interpretation from French*): First of all, Mr. President, I must make a confession. Before you expressed your feelings with regard to rule 72 of the rules of procedure, I myself had the intention of raising a point of order if you had called upon any one of the three speakers—for it is three delegations that are involved. It is not only the delegation of Israel, for three delegations have put their names down to speak every day during the course of the debate. I counted the number of times these delegations would speak, and the three, it would seem, intend to speak 19 times during the course of the debate, which would cause us to lose almost two days. It was my intention, when one of these delegations was called upon to speak, to raise a point of order, but you, Mr. President, have anticipated my doing so.

50. Before calling on me, you likewise gave good evidence of your impartiality, for rule 72 does not state that two speakers are absolutely necessary to defend the proposal to grant the right to speak every day to the same speaker. Rule 72 simply states: "Before a decision is taken, two representatives may speak . . .". Since there were not two speakers listed, but only one, you were not obliged to insist upon the need for a second speaker.

51. The fact that there was only one speaker to defend that point of view should actually have spared the Assembly the burden of hearing two others. But since you have insisted upon this, my delegation wished to come forward and present its view on this matter.

52. Our view is that the Assembly should act in accordance with the provisions of rule 72 by asking each delegation to confine itself to a single intervention in the course of this particular debate. It is, of course, understood that each delegation will have the opportunity, should it prove necessary, to exercise the right of reply and present its point of view, at the end of each afternoon's meeting.

53. I think that the three delegations that have inscribed their names on the list of speakers for each day of the debate are not really serious about it, if I may say so, for when the cause one is defending is a just cause, one does not need to speak seven times to convince the General Assembly that it is a just cause; once is enough. Of course, when one is acting as the Devil's advocate, one can speak a thousand times without being able to convince anyone.

54. That is why, in accordance with the provisions of rule 72 of the rules of procedure, I ask you, Mr. President, to request all delegations to speak only once on the substance of the item. Each delegation may, of course, speak in exercise of its right of reply at the end of the debate every afternoon, in order to set forth its point of view.

55. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the representative of the United States, who wishes to speak in support of the proposal made by the representative of Israel.

56. Mr. SCALI (United States of America): I rise to speak in favour of the right of unlimited debate, under the rules of the General Assembly, on an issue of this magnitude.

57. We do not dispute the right of the President, in consultation with the Assembly, to propose to limit the number of times a representative may speak in this Assembly on any question. We hope, however, that the decision he will take, in exercising that right, will reflect a standard of reasonableness in keeping with the seriousness of the issue under debate. It is not, in our view, frivolous or unreasonable to desire to make known a point of view at least several times, in the circumstances.

58. We therefore would appeal to the President, in view of the magnitude of the problem we are discussing, to exercise with the utmost flexibility his judgement about the number of times a delegation may appropriately speak.

59. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): The President considers that the Assembly remains completely free to decide how it shall conduct its

work. I now call on the representative of Iraq, who wishes to support the proposal made by the representative of Senegal under rule 72 of the rules of procedure.

60. Mr. EL-SHIBIB (Iraq): My delegation wishes to second the proposal made by the representative of Senegal that rule 72 should be applied. That rule gives the General Assembly the power and authority to decide to limit the number of times each delegation may speak on any question. We have many reasons for supporting the proposal of the representative of Senegal.

61. First, if this debate is to be meaningful and constructive, it has to be conducted in a serious way, without polemical or oratorical statements. We all heard the statement made yesterday by the representative of Israel. He has just claimed from this rostrum that the present proposal is designed to limit his ability to place Israel's point of view before this Assembly. But our experience in this Organization proves that the representative of Israel has never been unable to place his point of view before us, no matter how opposed to or divergent it might be from the views of the majority of the Assembly. Indeed, it is not my delegation's purpose in supporting the present proposal to limit the possibility for the representative of Israel to present his point of view to the Assembly. It is well known that any representative who feels at the end of each day's debate that some new elements have been raised, making it necessary for him to address the Assembly, has the right to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

62. Secondly, we feel that if one representative were to be allowed to speak every day, it would be only fair to allow other representatives to do so. As you well know, Mr. President, many representatives have indeed indicated that they desire to speak every day if one representative is given that right. If that were to happen, the debate would become repetitious and would not be in consonance with what the previous speaker has called the magnitude of the issue before us. It is in fact the magnitude and great importance of this debate that makes it necessary for us to be as succinct as possible in placing what is pertinent before the Assembly, thereby not losing time.

63. Finally, the representative of Israel has today attacked your impartiality, Mr. President. The applause you have just received from the General Assembly indicates the confidence members have in you for the dignified and impartial way in which you have conducted and will continue to conduct the proceedings of this session. The attack made on you personally by the representative of Israel indeed indicates the purpose he had in mind in wishing to speak each and every day during this debate: he simply wished to turn this debate into a harangue, with irrelevant accusations and counter-accusations, instead of allowing it to serve the real aim—that is, a meaningful and constructive discussion of one of the most important issues before us, an issue threatening international peace and security. This irrelevant attack on you, Mr. President—which really deserves to be ignored—means only that your name is now added to a list of names of distinguished persons who have incurred the capricious displeasure of Israel at one time or another.

64. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I shall now put to the vote the proposal that, without prejudice to the provisions of the rules of procedure regarding the exercise of the right of reply, the right to speak in the debate on agenda item 108 should be limited to a single intervention. A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Central African Republic, Chad, China, Congo, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Dahomey, Democratic Yemen, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, German Democratic Republic, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Niger, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Cameroon, United Republic of Tanzania, Upper Volta, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia.

Against: Austria, Barbados, Belgium, Bolivia, Canada, Costa Rica, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany (Federal Republic of), Guatemala, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Norway, Paraguay, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining: Australia, Bahamas, Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Greece, Ivory Coast, Japan, Khmer Republic, Liberia, Malawi, Nepal, New Zealand, Panama, Spain, Swaziland, Venezuela.

The proposal was adopted by 75 votes to 23, with 18 abstentions.¹

65. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote.

66. Mr. MONTENEGRO MEDRANO (Nicaragua) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of Nicaragua voted against the proposal which the General Assembly has just adopted in defence of one principle. We are not partial; we are not defending the position or attitude of any State. We have come here only to state what we think should prevail in a forum of this kind, in this most important world assembly. In our opinion, we are thereby defending the inalienable right of every State to reply, when it decides, to any attack levelled against it from this rostrum. We believe that, regrettably, this right is being distorted and taken away, and we believe that many rights are being taken away on the basis of mechanical majorities. These are Pyrrhic victories, which universal conscience must deplore and censure. That is why the delegation of Nicaragua wished to explain its vote.

67. Mr. DRISS (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation voted in favour of the proposal submitted by the representative of Senegal and

supported by the representative of Iraq. We did so in the conviction that by supporting that proposal we were defending a tradition which exists in the General Assembly: in all debates delegations speak once, and thereafter exercise the right of reply.

68. We should not like to leave anyone, either delegations or world public opinion, with the impression that the Assembly has prohibited any delegation from exercising the right of reply, or addressing the Assembly several times in the course of the debate. That is not so. It is simply a matter of being able to present one's point of view only once, as has been customary in the General Assembly, and of exercising the right of reply if need be, and several times, if the occasion warrants, in accordance with the Assembly's tradition.

69. I asked to be allowed to speak to explain Tunisia's vote so as to remove any misunderstanding, and so that the vote we have cast and the decision the General Assembly has taken is not interpreted in any other way.

70. Mr. MAINA (Kenya): I have asked to be allowed to speak to explain why I voted for limiting the number of times that each delegation can intervene in the debate.

71. It is quite normal and reasonable to assume that, in official debates such as the one we are having, without some measure of control many delegations may want to speak many times, and, taking into account the number of items we must consider and the amount of time at our disposal, it is reasonable that the number of interventions should be limited. I support this on the understanding that, since the decision was just taken, it becomes effective today. As I understand it, this would allow delegations that have already made one statement as of now to make one more, if they so wish, in conformity with the decision just taken. That would of course allow Israel and any other delegation one more opportunity to make a statement, because it is conceivable that when their statements were prepared they had in mind spreading them over the period. Proceeding from that understanding, it is quite reasonable and fair that, should they ask for one more opportunity, it should be granted.

72. Mr. ZAVALA URRIOLAGOITIA (Bolivia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation voted against the proposal because we consider that by adopting it we would be violating two principles: the right of all States to defend themselves and the right to dialogue, which has been respected since the beginning of this debate. If the dialogue itself was uneven, with 20 delegations against one, the debate is being converted today into an uninterrupted monologue without any defence by one of the parties.

73. Mr. SALIM (United Republic of Tanzania): Mr. President, our delegation had thought that it was not necessary to explain our vote, but in the light of the explanations made by at least one of our colleagues here we feel it is important for us to explain our vote.

74. Somebody spoke in terms of "mechanical majorities". I do not believe that there is anything mechanical in the way we have voted. We really and sincerely believe that every delegation has the right to put its case. In this instance we think that the delegation of Israel, like any other delegation, has the right

to put forward its position, but quite honestly—and we are very sincere in this—we think it would be the height of absurdity if only one delegation were to be given the opportunity every day to address the debate on the same item. To take a hypothetical example, the principal party, apart from Israel, to this conflict is the delegation of the PLO. Now, if we were also to allow the delegation of the PLO to speak every day, then of course we could also add, when speaking on the Middle East conflict, the delegations of Egypt, the Syrian Arab Republic and Jordan—all countries having territories that have been occupied. Suppose, for the sake of argument—and I should like to put this very sincerely, particularly to those who talk about “mechanical majorities”—we were to have every morning of the debate the delegation of Israel, the delegation of Egypt, the delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic, the delegation of Jordan, the delegation of the PLO, then what about the other Members of this Organization? Do we not also have the right to speak before this Assembly?

75. So I believe in all sincerity, Mr. President, that your ruling is logical, your proposal was logical; the point raised by a brother from Senegal was in consistence with the seriousness we attach to this debate. We believe that this is a very serious debate indeed. We believe that every delegation has the right to take part in the debate, and that the only way that the debate can take place in an efficient and effective way is to

allow every delegation the right to speak. Naturally, any delegation that wants to explain its position or wants to speak in rebuttal, would be able to do so at the end of our proceedings in conformity with established procedure.

76. If, Mr. President, you were not to do this, we would in fact now be creating a new precedent, the precedent of a single delegation preventing other delegations from speaking.

77. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote. I should also like to say that, the Assembly being sovereign, its decision is irreversible. Since there are no further speakers for this afternoon, I propose to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.

NOTES

¹ Seventh Conference of Arab Heads of State, held at Rabat from 26 to 29 October 1974.

² Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State* (New York, American Zionist Emergency Council, 1946).

³ The delegation of Burundi subsequently informed the Secretariat that it wished to have its vote recorded as having been in favour of the proposal.