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President: Mr. Abdelaziz BOUTEFLIKA
(Algeria).

AGENDA ITEM 108

Question of Palestine (*continued*)

1. Mr. JACKSON (Guyana): One of the major impediments to the achievement of world peace, to which the United Nations is so fundamentally dedicated—an achievement which continues to elude this Organization—is the unsettled situation in the Middle East. It is an area full of tension, which if not urgently defused, can have truly catastrophic consequences. It is an area in which principles sacred to the United Nations system are at stake. And it is an area in which principles long accepted by the international community—by each and every one of us—principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, are being consistently disregarded, at great peril to the peace of the region and of the whole world.

2. There are many important elements in this unsettled situation which bear upon a solution to the Middle East question. There is the right of all States—I repeat, all States—in the area to live in peace and to live as good neighbours. There is the urgent need for Israel to withdraw from all Arab lands seized in contravention of the principle of non-acquisition of territory by force. But central to any search for a solution lie the rights of the Palestinian people.

3. Recognizing the centrality of the Palestinian question to the solution of the Middle East situation, my Prime Minister, in opening the Conference of Foreign Ministers of Non-Aligned Countries at Georgetown in 1972, observed that the establishment of peace and justice in the Middle East was premised on "the provision of a settled home for the dispossessed people of Palestine".

4. The story of the Palestinians in this century is a painful one indeed. It is a story of dispersal and dispossession. Consequent upon the creation of the State of Israel, more than one million Palestinian Arabs fled from their homes and went into exile; and many of them perished in the trauma of that creation. From the exile of their tents, the Palestinians have seen their homes and villages destroyed, the bases of their political and social organization fundamentally altered,

and their cohesiveness as a society so undermined as to leave its fabric in tatters.

5. The tragic events that accompanied the outcome of the 1967 war only served to compound the plight of the Palestinian people and to render their situation more desperate. For so many of them, already in exile, it meant a further migration, to find new shelter. But whatever they may have lost, the Palestinians have not lost their identity as a people, a people who yearn for an opportunity to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination, a people who have kept alive their burning aspiration to live in a settled home, in peace. Dispersed and dispossessed, the Palestinian people are now a nation without a State.

6. The Palestinian tragedy is a tragedy the people of Guyana understand instinctively and with which they empathize. For following the vicious and murderous persecutions of Jews in Hitler's Germany, the British Government, in 1939, made a tentative offer of land in my country for Jewish settlement. And this was no idle offer. For a joint Anglo-American Commission appointed by President Roosevelt of the United States of America actually visited Guyana and made positive recommendations for such settlement. Arrangements were well advanced for the dispatch of a party of Jewish refugees to establish a settlement, on a trial basis, when the outbreak of the European "civil" war later that year put an end to further action in this particular regard.

7. Historical determinations affecting peoples arise as much from purpose as from accident. We cannot now, however, attempt to rectify them all. If we were to try and if we were to succeed in this endeavour, many aspects of the configuration of many Member States would be unrecognizable. While recognizing this truism, we must none the less, within the context of acknowledged realities in the Middle East, seek to achieve, with resolution and with persistence, a solution to the Palestinian question, based on principles which are universally accepted and on understandings and arrangements which are realizable and which are just.

8. For many years now, the United Nations has been considering the question of the Palestinian people only in its humanitarian aspects, seeking ways of increasing international assistance to alleviate the sufferings of the Palestinian people as refugees. Their cause, their basic cause, as a people without a home, a nation without a State, has for a long time been absent from the agenda for international action. It is therefore a mark of the realism of the United Nations that the General Assembly has this year made the welcome decision once again to face the question of Palestine frontally, as a major political issue, as a matter that is of cardinal importance to the Palestinian people, and as a matter that is focal to the Middle East situation. My delegation trusts that this decision has for all time

removed the Palestinian question from the periphery of international concern and placed it where it properly belongs, as a critical factor in the Middle East equation.

9. The delegation of Guyana was one which supported that decision of the General Assembly. Thus we listened with keen attention to the inspiring address delivered from this very rostrum by the Chairman of the delegation of the Palestine Liberation Organization [PLO].

10. We support the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people, expressed through their authentic institutions, and by their representatives, in their struggle for their rights. Now that the question of Palestine is once more before the General Assembly, it seems appropriate for the United Nations to take new initiatives to ensure that the Palestinians enjoy all their rights: the right, voluntarily exercised, to return to a settled abode, the right to a homeland, and the right to a State in which the distinct Palestinian personality can find full and cohesive expression.

11. In our efforts to ensure these rights to the Palestinians, we recognize that intertwined with the present realities in the Middle East are the activities and interests of Powers external to the region. We call on them to maintain the perspective in which this question has now been placed; and we call on them, in all their actions, to give that recognition, which is due and proper, to the rights of the dispossessed Palestinian people.

12. In the context of present-day realities, it is also incumbent upon Israel to mollify its attitudes towards the rights of the Palestinians and to shed the mantle of intransigence which it wears even on this podium.

13. Guyana therefore calls also upon Israel to recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people; and we call upon Israel to desist from all acts which place obstacles in the way of the enjoyment by these people of those rights. We call upon Israel, its representatives and its people, to give full co-operation to the United Nations in all measures designed to assist the Palestinians in securing these rights.

14. Mr. KHALID (Sudan) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Mr. President, I intend to speak briefly. And if I do so, Sir, it is in deference to you and respect to the intelligence of my colleagues and fellow representatives. I am here to praise our intelligence, not insult it. I shall not, therefore, tell the story of the incidents and accidents that were set in motion over half a century ago, in Basel, on 30 August 1897, and led to the events here since 13 November 1974. I have no doubt in my mind that we all know the milestones on this long road, if not the minor details. We know, because, in the international community, no question has pre-occupied men's minds as much as the Palestinian question has done. Millions of words have been written and spoken on the subject, starting from the Bible and the Koran—and here we are at it, centuries later.

15. What is there to be said that has not already been said? Let us not allow our serious efforts to be frittered away in redundant detail.

16. We have to look ahead. Let us rather look forward to a day in the near future when man is rid of this problem. He has been shackled by this question for too long. Lately the shackles have been getting

tighter, getting more painful—much more so since Herzl and his fellow Zionists set out to get a land, anywhere, to satisfy a lust for power. The suffering of the Jews was a good excuse for that search for authority, and religion was the vehicle carrying the sufferers to Palestine. They were promised manna from Heaven and solace, and anything looked better than their predicament in Europe. Uganda would have done for the purpose; Tanganyika would have done. Anywhere for a shred of authority. Palestine was only one of the many places being considered and the twists of history led the Zionists there. They came from the four corners of the earth inspired or, more appropriately, intoxicated by the mythical belief that they were the vanguard of the chosen peoples divinely called upon to set themselves apart from others and treat them as nothing but "hewers of wood and drawers of water".

17. That is by way of just remembering, but my main theme is looking forward. We are all, rich and poor alike, writhing under the consequences of the latest of wars over Palestine. We are filled with horror by the sabre-rattling, indeed the bestial attacks, that are going on, even as we are talking now. The attacks on the peaceful hamlets and tranquil shores of southern Lebanon are but an example. The tidings coming from the Middle East make disconcerting reading. We all know the storm is gathering and we all know that, if insanity prevails, the coming war will not be just another in the series. It will not be local; it will not be fought by any weapons we know.

18. We all have made a habit of criticizing this Organization. These are different days in the life of the Organization. Most commendable days. The resolution to invite the Palestinians to tell their tale of woe and tragedy made history. Peoples of the world have heard their voice. Those who have only seen the Palestinians through the distorting prism of the media, have heard their voice. For a quarter of a century the Palestinian voice was muted by force and callously ignored. They have now learned that Palestinians are not blood-thirsty terrorists. What they said here about the olive branch and the sword was not rhetoric. The world will certainly respond to the appeal "Please do not let us down. We want to dispense with the sword".

19. On 14 October this year, and on 13 November, we made history here. Our Organization has reason to be satisfied with itself. In essence, we said to Arafat and his men, "It is about time we heard from you; we have heard enough of you". That was the beginning.

20. The decision—taken by a significantly overwhelming majority—to invite the PLO to address the Assembly, apart from its historic significance for the Palestinians and other peoples similarly engaged in the struggle for freedom and the liquidation of colonialism and racism, is a clear indication of the United Nations determination to emerge from a phase during which its will and character have been subject to distortion and misrepresentation into a new era characterized by a steady and unshakable commitment to the effective realization of the principles enshrined in the Charter. Let us not be distracted by the arrogant, self-righteous and ostentatious references to "mechanical majorities", the implication being that this august Organization, representing—as it does—the living conscience of mankind, is guided not by intel-

ligent and informed opinion but by automatic and unthinking reflexes. Nobody talked of universality and mechanical majorities when the portals of this Organization were shut in the face of the representatives of 800 million people, nor did we see the latter-day apostles of the rule of law brandishing the United Nations Charter, rules and regulations when the only place reserved for the millions of freedom-fighters of Algeria, Cuba, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau was the ante-chamber of this Organization. Those voices are only the homage that vice pays to virtue, otherwise called hypocrisy.

21. Our Organization has indeed reason to be satisfied with itself today. But we are not going to rest on our laurels. Having heard the voice of Palestine, we have to heed the message left for us. It is a simple message. How true was he who said here on this rostrum that the problem of Palestine is remarkable in its simplicity. The simple message is: there is a place for us, if you make the effort to rectify long-standing wrongs, to realize long-deferred hopes to reconcile yourselves with the realities of the age, to free yourselves from the web of deception carefully woven by international Zionism for the last half century. The alternative to all that is despair and frustration, both deadly woes. A choice between the olive branch and the sword. And what did the adversaries of Palestinians have to say? More indulgence in wishful thinking and self-deception. Jordan is Palestine, we have been told right here on this rostrum.

22. The greatest form of self-delusion in which Israel and its allies in southern Africa are indulging is the conviction that by consolidating an alliance with each other—a point that has been clearly brought out and demonstrated in successive reports of the Special Committee on *Apartheid*—by continuing their efforts to confuse issues and misrepresent facts, by becoming increasingly violent and committing an ever-increasing number of atrocities against those whom they have already driven from their homes and property, by entrenching themselves behind thicker walls of power and guns, by so conducting themselves, they, the perpetrators of Zionism and *apartheid*, can forever stifle the nationalist resistance within, and stop the winds of change blowing without.

23. It is for this Assembly to prove Israel—as it has proven South Africa—wrong. It is for this Assembly to reiterate the historical truth that the forces of liberation will not succumb and that, sooner or later, the tide of history will engulf those who would, in vain, attempt to roll it back. By doing so we might be hastening and facilitating the liberation and the restoration of humanity and human worth, not only of the victims of racism and fanaticism but also of the proponents and perpetrators of these forms of tyranny and oppression. The liberating effects of the struggle against racism and colonialism on both the victims and perpetrators of these inhuman and dehumanizing practices call to mind the fact that, a few generations ago, Jean-Jacques Rousseau had reason to consider the paradoxical question whether a person might, under certain circumstances, be forced to be free. That this notion is, philosophically speaking, problematic as well as paradoxical, is by no means difficult to see. However, the liberation of the Portuguese on 25 April, for example, which was largely born of the guns of

the freedom-fighters of Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique, may be regarded as a vindication of Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

24. We make this point because, in the last analysis, we are concerned with the restoration and protection of the dignity and humanity of all men: those who have tempted to abdicate reason and humanity no less than the victims. We make this point because we are concerned that men, all men, should be able to live in freedom and in peace without discrimination as to race, colour or creed. We make this point because we are concerned to create and live in a world that is politically organized, as well as morally inspired, by the ideals and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

25. This is, indeed, the message left with us by the Palestinians:

“ . . . [We] call upon Jews to turn away one by one from the illusory promises made to them by Zionist ideology and Israeli leadership . . .

“We invite them to emerge from their moral isolation into a more open realm of free choice . . .

“We offer them the most generous solution, that we might live together in a framework of just peace in our democratic Palestine.” [2282nd meeting, paras. 76-78.]

Those were the words of Arafat. The alternative to this solution was well expounded the other day by a Palestinian long expelled from his homeland and making his plea to the Israelis through the media of this country:

“The Israeli Government cannot arrogate to itself the divine right of determining questions including our destiny and national aspirations. Like you we have roots in this land, like yours ours is a mystical attachment to it, and to deny our existence and national rights is to create conditions for interacting laws and forces that are destined for a fierce and long confrontation.”

26. But now that we have taken the firmest steps ever taken on the proper road to justice, which looked shadowy and elusive for years, we have to reiterate our resolve in unequivocal terms. It is incumbent on us to reaffirm our determination to adopt a clear-cut solution, and I am sure that once again this General Assembly will make history by adopting the draft resolution recommended to us by the Palestinian leaders. It is not enough to simply adopt this resolution. Many resolutions that have been adopted here and in the Security Council have been buried in our files, and have never seen the light of day. I would go further. We must fix a date for the restoration of the rights of the legitimate owners, we must plead with all Member States, especially those that have a decisive role to play in our Organization to face up to their responsibilities. We cannot reproach the two super-Powers—sometimes one of them believes that it is within its power to solve the question—because we do not know what they have in mind. We cannot understand the passivity of Europe, the aloofness of China. This Assembly must not leave human destiny in the hands of two Powers irrespective of the faith we might have in them. There are still those who, tempted by the vanity of affluence and power, are prisoners of a past dead and gone. They seek a solution based primarily

on the needs of the two Powers and not on any accepted principles or human values.

27. Hence, our need to involve others on the Security Council in the battle for peace—the countries of Europe and Asia. Only thus can a balance be struck, and the questions of peace and war dealt with independently of the two Powers. They may have it in them to resolve the problem of peace in the Middle East, but there is a difference between having the capacity, and translating it into action.

28. May I summarize what I have said? First, let us give the draft resolution that will be presented to us all the force we can. Only thus can we indicate that we were serious when we called upon the Palestinians to come and tell us their story. We now know that no formula for peace in the Middle East can be articulated without the acceptance of the Palestinian reality, the reality of the people and the reality of the land.

29. Secondly, let us appoint a day, a month, and a year, when the Arab rights would be restored. Geneva is only one of the roads to that end, and it seems to be blocked by obstacles and sophistry. The General Assembly would do well to use its newly won strength in searching for other means and thus come closer to finding a better path to peace.

30. Thirdly, let us persist in pressing other members of the Security Council, namely, the European countries and China to join in the efforts for peace instead of remaining mere observers.

31. Lastly, Sir, I was not just being complimentary when I said earlier in this session that you were presiding over a session the like of which we have not seen for years. We have witnessed South Africa being given a lesson. We have heard to voice of Palestine. Equally significant, we have seen the General Assembly take on a new lease of life. We had almost given up hope, but I pray God that at the end of this session we shall all go home saying that at long last the United Nations has asserted itself once more and regained its dignity and the strength we all want it to have, for it is the ultimate refuge of humanity and no longer the sanctuary of the weak.

32. Mr. VEJVODA (Czechoslovakia): My delegation welcomed with satisfaction the decision taken by the General Assembly at its twenty-ninth session to include in its agenda the item entitled "Question of Palestine". The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic became a sponsor of the draft resolution inviting the legitimate representatives of the Arab people of Palestine to participate in the deliberations of the General Assembly on that item. I am honoured to be able to join the many delegations of States Members of the United Nations that have spontaneously welcomed to our midst the leading representatives of the PLO, the organization heading the just struggle of the Arab people of Palestine.

33. The admirable statement delivered in a truly statesmanlike manner by the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO from this rostrum a few days ago, in which he convincingly elucidated, before the eyes of the whole world, the just cause of his people, was in itself the best proof of his words that:

"Through our militant Palestine national liberation movement, our people's struggle matured and grew enough to accommodate political and social

struggle in addition to armed struggle. The PLO was a major factor in creating a new Palestinian individual, qualified to shape the future of our Palestine, not merely content with mobilizing the Palestinians for the challenges of the present." [2282nd meeting, para. 61.]

34. The over-all positive development of international relations in the recent past, reflecting fundamental changes in the world balance of power, has also created favourable conditions for the political settlement of the long-lasting conflict in the Middle East. The peoples of the Middle East, too, must enjoy lasting peace and security.

35. The indispensable prerequisites for the restoration of a just and lasting peace in this region, which would correspond to the needs of all States and peoples in the whole world, are: the speedy normalization of the situation existing in the Middle East; the liquidation of all the consequences of Israeli aggression in that region; the withdrawal of the Israeli troops from all the occupied Arab territories; and the attainment of the legitimate national rights of the Arab people of Palestine in conformity with the Charter and the resolutions of the United Nations.

36. Every effort must be exerted to prevent a new war in the Middle East which would not only bring untold suffering to all Arabs and Jews in that region but would also constitute a serious threat to world peace.

37. Czechoslovakia, together with the other countries of the Socialist community, has always unswervingly and firmly supported the struggle of the Arab peoples against the policy of aggression, and for the strengthening of their free economic and social development. The countries of the Socialist community have also consistently defended the interests of justice in the matter of the legitimate rights of the Arab people of Palestine. We should recall in this context that the Socialist countries have emphasized the significance of the decision to recognize the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Arab people of Palestine, a decision adopted by the Sixth Conference of Arab Heads of State at Algiers in November 1973, and also by the Second Islamic Conference of Kings and Heads of State and Government at Lahore in February 1974.

38. The policy of the socialist States towards the peoples of the Arab world is a consistent policy and a policy of principle. It is based on a deep understanding of the aspirations and needs of those peoples.

39. The main cause of the problem is that the roots of the grave situation persisting in the Middle East, which time and time again threatens to flare up, lie in the aggressive policy pursued by Israel, and that has not yet been successfully dealt with. How long can the world be exposed to the danger of disaster due to the selfish interests of the expansionist Israeli governing circles? The Czechoslovak delegation condemns the aggressive policy pursued by the Zionist governing circles of Israel, who persistently refuse to respect and implement resolutions adopted by the Security Council.

40. Czechoslovakia likewise condemns most emphatically the policy of those States which systematically provide political, moral, material and military assist-

ance for the imperialist and aggressive policy pursued by the Israeli Government, which tolerate hostile campaigns against internationally recognized representatives of national liberation movements, and even support such actions as we have recently witnessed.

41. The latest statement by the Israeli representative in this Hall has once again thrown light upon the want of respect on the part of the Zionist circles for this supreme world body, the United Nations. The current deliberations of the General Assembly on the question of Palestine prove at the same time, however, that the unwillingness of Israel to implement Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, as well as the arrogant approach on the part of the Israeli Government, intensify the opposition of the world public to that Government's irresponsible policy. In the light of that policy, the artificially fabricated image of Israel as a peace-loving State, threatened on all sides by its enemies, as presented to the world by international Zionist propaganda, has crumbled long ago. The history of Israel, as well as its present policy, condemned by numerous decisions and resolutions of United Nations bodies, convincingly expose to the world the true face of the Israeli policy, reveal the aggressor and show who is his victim. The deliberations of the General Assembly at this session on the report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories [A/9817], have produced new and shocking proofs.

42. International Zionist propaganda is attempting to use all its existing means; it misuses the fact that the whole world condemned the persecution of Jews by the Nazis and pretends that the Jews are still threatened by the same danger. We regret every loss in human life during the sad events in the Middle East. When dozens of Arabs die by the ruthless actions of Israeli commandos, the Zionist propaganda does not, however, regret those losses and attempts to present the situation as a just cause. Brutal military actions by Israel, which are called "preventive" by a Zionist propaganda that takes its example from the Nazis, only further worsen the whole situation. A considerable part of the world suffers from the consequences of Israeli aggressive actions. Following last year's October war, the Arab States understandably and rightly imposed an oil embargo on the States assisting Israel in carrying out its aggressive imperialist policy. Although the embargo did not last long, its consequences for the economies of the capitalist world have been, as is well known, enormous. Zionist propaganda has pictured the whole situation in a completely different light and attempted to make the world quickly forget what was the real cause of the situation. Furthermore, it began to accuse the oil producers, particularly the Arab countries, of raising the price of oil. Thus the Arab countries have been directly or indirectly blamed for the economic difficulties of the capitalist world, though the true cause of this is Israel, its aggressive policy, and those who support it. Those who lament over the economic difficulties resulting from the problems of oil should look for the cause of those difficulties in the right place, and should prevent the repetition or even the worsening of such a situation.

43. The views of Czechoslovakia on the Middle East conflict are based on the justice of the demands of the Arab people for the liberation of all territories occupied by Israel and the urgent need to secure the national rights of the Arab people of Palestine by all means at our Organization's disposal. Czechoslovakia regards the speedy and consistent implementation of all the pertinent Security Council resolutions on the Middle East as a very important prerequisite for reaching a just and lasting solution.

44. We have fully supported the efforts exerted by the USSR to convene the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East. In our opinion it has played and should continue to play an important role in the settlement of the Middle East conflict and in creating relations of peaceful co-operation among States and peoples in that region, which must include the restoration of the national rights of the Arab people of Palestine. We therefore support the just demands for the speedy reconvening of the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East as one of the main components of the mechanism for settling the situation in the Middle East. Czechoslovakia opposes the efforts to circumvent the Geneva Peace Conference through piecemeal talks, as well as the attempts to settle the Middle East crisis without the most important guarantor of international peace and the co-chairman of the conference, the USSR.

45. Czechoslovakia supports the participation in the Geneva Conference of all the parties directly concerned, including participation by the PLO on an equal footing with the other participants in the Conference. The deliberations and conclusions of the Conference must result, *inter alia*, in the securing of the legitimate national rights of the Arab people of Palestine.

46. Czechoslovakia is deeply convinced that it is impossible to settle the Middle East question without solving the problem of Palestine—that is, without implementation of the right of the Arab people to self-determination, and the right to live and make progress freely in its own State.

47. Czechoslovakia regards the Palestinian question as an indivisible part of the over-all complex of questions pertaining to the Middle East, without a just solution of which permanent peace for all States and peoples living in that region cannot be secured. We view the Palestinian movement as an important part of the national liberation struggle of the developing countries, and we are therefore in sympathy with its struggle against imperialism, neo-colonialism and Zionism. The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic has therefore always given its full support to the just demands of the people of Palestine, and my delegation is continuing to do so at the current session.

48. The Czechoslovak Government recognizes the right of the people of Palestine to national existence, self-determination, independence and free development in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. It is convinced that the PLO, as the sole legitimate representative of the Arab people of Palestine, must be given not only full international recognition in its struggle, but also all-embracing support from the United Nations. The unity and concerted action of the PLO multiplies the strength of the Palestinian movement.

49. In our opinion, the time has indeed come for the United Nations to confirm with its whole authority the legitimate right of the Arab people of Palestine to self-determination and the creation of its own State. Our present deliberations on the question of Palestine should therefore be aimed at reaching those just conclusions, which are in full accord with the fundamental principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations. The Czechoslovak delegation is prepared to give such decisions its full support.

50. Mr. RICHARD (United Kingdom): It has long been the view of the British Government that in any debate on the Middle East the views of the Palestinian people must be listened to. Indeed, I said so myself on 14 October in this Assembly, and if the Assembly will forgive me I shall now quote from my statement. I said:

“The British Government has made plain many times its belief that no peace settlement in the Middle East is possible that does not take account of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians. The British Foreign Secretary has several times spoken of the need for any settlement to provide for a personality for the Palestinian people. It follows, therefore, that we consider it right that the views of the Palestinians should be heard.” [2268th meeting, para. 97.]

I would reaffirm that position today.

51. Whatever else can be said of this debate, it would seem that a Palestinian voice has been heard clearly and unmistakably in this Assembly. If the consequence is that thereby the political process has been advanced, then again so much the better. But political dialogue is not the same thing as universal agreement, and discussion is different from unanimity. It certainly does not follow that in any such discussion all delegations must agree or that they must necessarily support the same resolution in order to show their support for the dialogue itself. On the contrary, if there is to be a meaningful discussion it requires, does it not, mutual tolerance and compromise. It is in that spirit, therefore, that I speak today.

52. The sharp rise in tension in the Middle East last week-end demonstrated how fragile the peace is and how easily the fears of each side can be aroused. My Government's chief aim is to promote a just and lasting peace in the area. We shall do all in our power to ensure that the peace negotiations Mr. Kissinger is at present conducting are not prejudiced or in any way put at risk. We see no more encouraging way for the complex and difficult problems of the Middle East to be brought to a peaceful conclusion than through his skilful and persistent diplomacy.

53. My Government continues to believe that full implementation of Security Council resolution 242 (1967), as called for in Security Council resolution 338 (1973), is an indispensable requirement for the attainment of a just and lasting settlement of the Middle East question. That resolution sets out the basic requirements of the Arab States and of the Israelis. On the one hand, it calls for the withdrawal of Israeli occupying forces. On the other hand, it reaffirms the principle that Israel, like other States in the area, is entitled to live in peace with its neighbours within secure and recognized borders. We must surely do

nothing in this Assembly that might undermine those key principles.

54. Resolution 242 (1967) sets out a way by which the Arab States and Israel can work out how to live in peace together. But the relations between the Arab States and Israel are not the whole of the problem. There is also the question with which we are concerned here today—the question of the Palestinians, which is perhaps the oldest and most complex of all the questions involved in the dispute between Israel and the Arab world.

55. Resolution 242 (1967), passed as it was over seven years ago, took no account of what has since become an increasingly evident aspect of the Middle East scene. That is the belief of the Palestinians that they are a separate people; that they are a people distinct from the peoples of the lands in which many of them now live; that they are indeed a people with a just claim to express their own identity within the territory with which they are historically associated, and that, as such, they have political rights which extend beyond the rights of refugees referred to in resolution 242 (1967). My Government has much sympathy with those sentiments; indeed, it would be impossible not to sympathize with them. The Palestinians are central to the Middle East conflict and any attempt to ignore them will only exacerbate matters. They must be fully involved in any settlement. The international community in the Middle East must find a way to enable the Palestinian people to express their personality and to exercise their legitimate political rights; but this must be done in a manner which does not infringe upon nor call into question the right of Israel as a State to exist in peace within secure and recognized boundaries. This right is the right of Israel as a State and not merely that of Israelis as individuals. This is in our view an all-important proviso and neglect of it will do much damage to the search for peace which we all desire to foster.

56. In this connexion, may I say how much I welcomed the firm statement of the representative of Nigeria when he said from this rostrum yesterday:

“... the reality of the existence of Israel as a sovereign State should be acknowledged. A realistic search for peace in the area demands that the Israelis be guaranteed security within agreed borders.” [2291st meeting, para. 38.]

This seemed to us to be a firm statement of a principle fundamental to any future settlement.

57. My Government will, therefore, continue to support efforts to find a solution based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and giving due recognition to all the realities of the Middle East. The resolutions I have cited must be supplemented—but not supplanted and not distorted out of shape or recognition—by an acknowledgement that the inter-governmental settlement for which they provide must now be broadened to include a place for the Palestinian people as well.

58. As Mr. Callaghan said in the House of Commons on 30 October:

“The three fundamental needs which such a settlement must satisfy remain the same. Israel must have satisfaction of her need for recognition by her neighbours of her permanence as a State and of her

legitimate security requirements. Israel's Arab neighbours must have satisfaction on the withdrawal of Israeli occupying forces. And provision must be made for satisfaction of the needs of the Palestinians, by which I mean not only the rights of individual Palestinian refugees, as was laid down for so many years by the General Assembly, but also the legitimate political rights of the Palestinian people."

59. Finally, let me say this. An opinion canvassed by many commentators after the Rabat Summit Conference was that it was a good thing that at last this very central issue was out in the open; that at last the contestants—the Palestinian people and the Israeli people—might be face to face. I see the force of this argument. There is much talk nowadays of the need to identify your problem precisely, before you begin to tackle it. But there is no profit in identifying your problem unless at the same time you are willing to take the practical measures needed to solve it. In a problem as profound and as complex as the one before us today, there can be no hope of a solution if the parties adopt rigid attitudes, if they deny any particle of justice to their opponent's case and if they bind themselves from the start to make no concessions. My plea today is therefore to both sides—and I am talking about both the matter and the manner of the negotiations—and it is a plea for flexibility, for moderation, for pragmatism, and indeed for a willingness to contemplate the possibility of compromise.

60. Mr. WILLIAMS (Sierra Leone): A great deal has been written about the establishment of the State of Israel and the present *status quo* of the Palestinians, and I do not need to go into any details. However, one document worth mentioning is the famous, or infamous, Declaration submitted to and approved by the British Cabinet which was addressed by the British Foreign Minister, Mr. Arthur James Balfour, to Lord Rothschild, on 2 November 1917, part of which reads:

"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country".¹

61. I must hasten to point out that the Declaration itself had no legal value, for at no time, whether before or after it was made, did the British Government possess any sovereignty, dominion or other title over Palestine that would empower it to recognize any rights in favour of the Jews in or over that country. Furthermore, the Declaration was made with complete indifference to and in disregard of the rights and wishes of the inhabitants of the country. Mr. Balfour himself wrote on 11 August 1919:

"In Palestine we do not propose even to go through the form of consulting the wishes of the present inhabitants of the country . . . The four Great Powers are committed to Zionism. And Zionism, be it right or wrong, good or bad, is rooted in age-long traditions, in present needs, in future hopes, of far profounder import than the desires and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit the ancient land".

62. After the First World War, the Mandate over Palestine was entrusted to the British Government in 1922. Matters deteriorated with the establishment of the Mandate, the two main objectives of which were (a) to give effect to the provisions of Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations—which stipulated that the territory was to be led gradually to complete independence; (b) to put into effect the Balfour Declaration. This provision in the Mandate, made against the express wish of the Palestinian people, resulted in opening the gates of Palestine to the influx of Jews from all parts of the world. Between 1923 and 1946, therefore, the ratio of Jews in Palestine changed from one in twelve of the population to one in three.

63. Immigration of Jews into Palestine and attempts by the British to restrict it sparked off violence against the Palestinian Government and British officials, and finally forced the Mandatory Government to refer the question of the future government of Palestine to the United Nations.

64. The United Nations Special Committee on Palestine appointed by the General Assembly put forward a plan for the partition of Palestine. The Arabs rejected the plan on the ground that it was incompatible with law and justice, and inconsistent with the principles of democracy. They also questioned the competence of the United Nations to recommend the partition of Palestine. They made several requests to have the issue referred to the International Court of Justice for an advisory opinion, but their requests were rejected. On 29 November 1947, resolution 181 (II), a resolution for partition, was adopted by the General Assembly by 33 votes to 13, with 10 abstentions. It is not necessary to discuss here the manoeuvres employed to have the resolution adopted.

65. That resolution, in our view, constituted a trespass on the sovereignty of the original inhabitants of Palestine because it gave away to alien immigrants a large part of the territory of the country and denied the Palestinians the right to exercise their natural right to self-determination. It is questionable, too, whether the United Nations had the right to partition Palestine or to break up the territorial integrity of a land over which it did not possess any sovereignty or dominion.

66. It was no surprise, therefore, that the United Nations resolution on partition met with a wave of protests and demonstrations among the Arabs and caused consternation among the Orthodox Jews. On 10 April 1948, the United Nations Palestine Commission, unable to perform its functions of implementing the partition plan, wrote:

"As a result of Arab armed opposition to the resolution of the General Assembly, counter or preventive measures taken by the organized Jewish community, and the continued activity of Jewish extremist elements, Palestine is now a battlefield."²

67. Successive deliberations of the General Assembly on the issue did not yield any fruitful results, and when the Mandate was finally withdrawn on 15 May 1948, there was no established machinery of government for the maintenance of law and order; it was therefore certain that the armed conflict which had been brewing between Arabs and Jews since the adoption of the partition resolution would then explode, with more violence.

68. The Mandate over Palestine ended in chaos and tragedy, since it had failed to achieve the purposes of Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations. The State of Israel was proclaimed on the date the Mandate ended, and by the end of 1948 the Israelis had occupied 80 per cent of Palestine, including most of the territory allocated by the United Nations for the proposed Arab State; one million Palestinians were uprooted from their homes and were turned overnight into refugees, condemned to live in conditions of misery, destitution and despair.

69. I have traced this brief history to show how the people of Palestine have been most unfairly treated, not only by the great Powers—particularly the British—but also by the United Nations, under pressure from the great Powers. The present *status quo*, with all that has preceded it since 1948, is a direct responsibility of the great Powers. Since the 1967 conflict they have shown concern for peace in the Middle East, but the resolutions they have adopted in the Security Council have fallen short of this target. The reasons for this failure are twofold: one is that their conceptions of peace are divergent and, secondly, the means which they utilize for the attainment of peace are not always conducive to the realization of such objectives. Thus the United States wants a peace which is largely conditioned by Israel's wishes, and the Soviet Union's objective is to force Israel to withdraw from territories which it seized in 1967 and ensure that Israel does not reap any territorial advantages from its aggression. None of those resolutions has offered a just and viable solution for the Palestinian question.

70. The great Powers, moreover, have not made any positive contribution, either before or after 1967, towards the elimination of the basic cause of the conflict. They have paid lip-service to the cause of the Palestine refugees and proclaimed in unexecuted resolutions the right of those refugees to return to their homes, but have taken no concrete action for the implementation of the resolutions or the redress of the wrongs done to the Palestinians. The great Powers have not lived up to the grave responsibilities they have incurred in the situation which they have helped to create.

71. Because we believe that the United Nations has a responsibility for finding solutions to the problems it helped to create, we were among those who supported the inclusion of the question of Palestine in the agenda of the twenty-ninth session. The question of Palestine is the key to the situation in the Middle East, an item which has been on the Assembly's agenda for a number of years. We believe that if a solution can be found to the Palestine question, the situation in the Middle East will cease to be the problem it has been till now.

72. The Israelis have repeatedly declared that the parties with whom they want to negotiate are the Arab States, not the Palestinians. But the Arab States do not own Palestine and cannot dispose of any part of it in favour of anyone. Palestine is the land of the Palestinians, and no one else. How then can any negotiation between the Arab States and Israel resolve the Palestine question? This is why my Government supported the proposal that the Palestinians, or their representatives should be allowed to take part in the

debate on the question of Palestine. Since the Arab League has recognized the PLO as the authentic representative of the true aspirations of the people of Palestine, and since the Palestinian people has publicly acclaimed the PLO as the official representative in its struggle, no other nation or group of people has a right to question its authority. My Government welcomes the fact that Yasser Arafat, the PLO leader, came to participate in this all-important debate. We believe that only good can come out of that invitation by the General Assembly, which has at last recognized its responsibilities and obligations vis-à-vis the Palestine question.

73. In allowing the representatives of the Palestinians to take part in our deliberations on the issue before us, we are aware that many Israelis accept the importance of recognizing some form of Palestinian national identity. Their views have been well articulated by Arie L. Eliav, former Secretary-General of Israel's largest and most influential party. Recently he wrote:

“The Palestinian nation is identifiable as a national entity by national consciousness, by continuous territory where most of the Palestinians live, by a history of several decades replete with battles and wars, and a diaspora which maintains a link with the Palestinian homeland. At the same time, it is conscious of a common national catastrophe, sacrifice, suffering, heroes. It has dreams and the start of a national literature and poetry.

“Our relations with the Palestinian Arabs constitute the most important element of our relations with the Arab world as a whole, and the two are inseparably linked. Herein lies the key to the solution of the over-all problem.”

74. But if the situation cannot be solved by agreement between the parties, or by a decision of the great Powers, how then can it be settled? For a situation of “no war, no peace”, if left indefinite, can deteriorate from day to day until the next apocalyptic. In my Government's view, there are three possible solutions: a military solution, a political solution and a solution consistent with right and justice.

75. A military solution should be ruled out even though there are factors, conditions and policies on both sides which impel the Arabs and Israelis towards such a solution. Any military solution in the area is intricately bound up with super-Power strategy and involves imponderables of eventual direct intervention by the great Powers or the possible use of atomic weapons.

76. A political solution of the conflict would be one which would seek to settle the problem realistically on the basis of a fait accompli, regardless of its illegality and injustice. Such a solution was envisaged in Security Council resolution 242 (1967), which sought a just settlement of the refugee problem, only one of the facets of the Palestine question. That resolution, while it could achieve a settlement between Israel and the Arab States, would not settle the basic conflict between the Palestinians and Israel, which would remain entire and unresolved. Legally, Palestine belongs to the Palestinians, whose sovereignty over their country is inalienable and imprescriptible, the land of Palestine cannot validly be the subject of any

disposition, alienation or other transaction without the consent of the Palestinians. Hence it is inconceivable that any Arab State could recognize an alien State which was unjustly set up on Palestine territory. We see, then, that an agreement on the Arab-Israeli conflict cannot be reached with regard to the future of Palestine, its territory and its original inhabitants without the participation and consent of the Palestinians.

77. The only solution which could and should settle the conflict must be one that is consistent with right and justice. It must not be one aimed at the establishment of peace on the basis of a *fait accompli*; rather, it must be one aimed fundamentally at securing peace and justice in the Middle East. My Government believes that lasting peace will return only through compliance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), through the removal of legitimate Palestinian grievances, and through the recognition of the right of the State of Israel to exist.

78. Therefore, any solution aimed at securing peace and justice in the Middle East must envisage three broad measures.

79. First, there must be an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Israeli forces. That is one of the provisions of Security Council resolution 242 (1967). Contrary to what has often been asserted, withdrawal is not, in our opinion, a concession but an obligation. That point was made when, following the Israeli refusal to withdraw from the Gaza Strip in 1956, President Eisenhower said:

"Should a nation which attacks and occupies foreign territory in the face of United Nations disapproval be allowed to impose conditions on its withdrawal? If we agree that armed attack can properly achieve the purposes of the assailant, then I fear we will have turned back the clock of international law."

80. Another measure to be taken in the solution of the Palestinian problem is the implementation of United Nations resolutions on Palestine which Israel has ignored and defied. Implementation of some of their provisions would not by itself solve the Arab-Israeli conflict, but it would reduce the dimensions of the conflict. The implementation of United Nations resolutions, the repatriation of the refugees of 1948 and 1967, the restoration of their property or compensation to them therefor, and the ensuring of the legal status of the City of Jerusalem will entail the annulment of a large number of legislative and executive actions taken by Israel in violation of those resolutions and of the rights of the Palestinians, such as the annexation of Jerusalem and the confiscation of Arab-refugee property.

81. The third and last measure to be taken into consideration is the reconsideration of the United Nations resolution on partition. As I have already mentioned, my delegation believes that the resolution and its implementation were illegal. It will be recalled also that the debate preceding Israel's admission to the United Nations in 1949 made it clear that that admission was conditional upon Israel's declarations and assurances relating to the General Assembly resolutions of November 1947 and December 1948. Since then Israel has violated those resolutions. The concept of a Jewish

State envisaged by the General Assembly in 1947 was that that State was to comprise Jews, Muslims and Christians enjoying equal rights; it was never intended to become the racist and religious State it has now become.

82. A settlement of the conflict has to be realistic and envisage everything else, or the war between the Arabs and the Israelis is bound to continue, with its unfathomable consequences to the Middle East and to the world at large, until the wrongs are righted or until a catastrophe occurs which will demonstrate the error of the Zionist venture in Palestine. To quote Henry Cattan:

"A true solution, then, does require a new democratic structure in place of the present régime in Israel. But these requirements were not made necessary by the Palestinians. By forcibly dispossessing the Palestinians in 1948, the Zionists themselves placed a time-bomb in the foundations of their own State. The choice now is between defusing the bomb and letting it explode".

83. Mr. DE GUIRINGAUD (France) (*interpretation from French*): Since a large number of representatives have already spoken in this debate and have dealt with the question of Palestine in great detail, I shall not revert to the genesis of that question but, rather, shall confine myself to present developments. I do not believe it is necessary to stress how disquieting the situation in the Middle East now is. While it is true that we are discussing the "Question of Palestine", the fact is that it is the whole of the situation in the Middle East, with its many aspects, that is being considered by our Assembly, which, more than ever, must demonstrate its sense of responsibility.

84. In agreeing, on 14 October last, to hear the Chairman of the PLO, our Assembly took a decision that was both natural and crucial: natural because the moment has come to hear directly from these Palestinians, who have made the world aware of the fact that they are a people; crucial because this awareness of the Palestinian fact is a new element without which, we know full well, any settlement of the conflict would be inoperative and doomed to failure sooner or later.

85. We have therefore listened with the greatest attention to the statement in which Mr. Yasser Arafat described for us his dream for the future of the Palestinian people. We might perhaps have wished that a closer link had been established between what was proposed to us and what the United Nations has done thus far during the past quarter of a century in attempting to settle the Israeli-Arab conflict. However, for our part we wish to support all those views of the Palestinian Chairman that can pave the way for peace, the olive branch he offered to us, and which we wish to accept.

86. It is in this spirit that the Minister for Foreign Affairs of France held an important interview with Mr. Yasser Arafat on 21 October last. We felt, as I think everybody feels, that this people wished to overcome its frustrations, that its great abilities needed to be redirected into other fields, including the political area, that is, the area of realism. No revolution, no struggle, however just, is an end in itself. The time comes when facts should be placed in an over-all

context, and each party, each country concerned, must make contact with the realities that compose that over-all context.

87. The most authoritative voices in my country have been among the first to recognize the Palestinian reality. On 24 October last, Mr. Giscard d'Estaing, President of France, stated:

"The key to the problem is the understanding that there can be no durable peace in the Middle East if there is no just settlement of the Palestine question. Once the international community has recognized the existence of a Palestinian people, what is the natural aspiration of this people? It is to have a homeland."

88. Other statements made throughout the world by leading figures, and the place given to the Palestinian question by the press, and at international meetings, all increasingly confirm with every day that passes the importance of this factor in the negotiations aimed at a peaceful settlement in the Middle East. We hope that Israel will in turn accept this major political factor.

89. It is all too clear, indeed, that a true peace cannot be established in the Middle East without taking into account the legitimate rights of the Palestinians and, at the same time, the rights of Israel as a State on an equal footing with the other Members of the Organization.

90. As one of the speakers before me said, the interests of all States and peoples in the Middle East must be taken into account. Another speaker said that peace entails the respect for the territorial integrity and political independence of all States. In these circumstances, we believe that it is essential that any text that emerges at the end of our debate should be balanced, and it should accordingly take into account all the elements in the situation as referred to in all the resolutions adopted over a period of 25 years by our Assembly and by the Security Council on a political settlement in the Middle East.

91. Among those resolutions, I shall, of course, refer to resolution 242 (1967), which makes the settlement contingent, on the one hand, upon the withdrawal of Israeli forces from occupied territories and, on the other hand, upon undertakings ensuring for all the States in the region the right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries.

92. I should like to make it clear in this connexion that the Israeli borders, in our opinion, should correspond, except for possible minor adjustments to be agreed on by the parties, to its borders on 4 June 1967.

93. We have a twofold task: to recognize the general principle of self-determination, and to reconcile it with the two principles governing the settlements to which I have referred. In other words, we should take into account the human and historical legitimacy of a Palestinian homeland, and we should bring about a situation where the State of Israel, which was admitted into our Organization on 11 May 1949, can coexist peacefully with all its neighbours, both benefiting from all the rights and, of course, respecting the obligations recognized in the Charter.

94. These are a few considerations which I consider might be useful at this particularly difficult stage.

Peace in this profoundly troubled region remains fragile. If the Palestinians felt that their legitimate rights were not being recognized, or if Israel felt that its very existence was threatened, then the worst could be feared.

95. More than ever, we believe that only a formula for an over-all settlement, even if the search for this formula has to go through successive phases and piecemeal arrangements, can enable us to reconcile the concerns of all the parties involved. It is accordingly in that direction that the international community, represented by our Assembly, should exert its efforts, in particular, by encouraging the resumption of the Geneva negotiations. This means that we must bear in mind all the elements of the problem—I repeat, all the elements—when we come to take our decision on any texts before us.

96. If it is true that the United Nations represents continuity in justice and law, let us see that we safeguard this continuity, without which everything would revert to darkness and obscurity.

97. Having thus defined the general position of my country, I should like now to address myself to the two main protagonists in this debate, the Israelis and the Palestinians. The striking feature of the history of these peoples is their common misfortune: both have known suffering and exile. Born in one of the cradles of Western civilization, they have both suffered the worst vicissitudes. Neither has been spared. Will they be able to find in this community of sacrifices a reason for mutual understanding and coexistence? Is it really impossible to return to Jerusalem its role as a sacred centre for the three great monotheistic religions? Is it unreasonable to think that the resources devoted to armaments will one day be placed at the service of the entire region? It seems to me that these are the real problems, the solution of which is the condition of peace and security for all the peoples of the Middle East.

98. In conclusion, I should like to express the hope that our Assembly will take an informed decision on the difficult problem before us, aware of its own responsibilities, aware of the aspirations of the peoples of the Middle East and aware of the interests of peace.

99. Mr. OLCAY (Turkey): Turkey, with its geographical proximity to the area and owing to its close ties with the Arab peoples, forged by its tradition, history and culture, has always been deeply concerned with the creation and the continuation of the Middle East question, which has brought so much suffering to the peoples of the area so many times. My country, with its history and experience throughout a millennium in the area, cannot remain indifferent to its problems. The plight of the Palestinian people, which has been the most direct victim of several wars in this century, can be well understood by us Turks, for obvious reasons. Turkey's active participation in the efforts made for nearly two decades to find ways and means of alleviating, if only partially, the sufferings of a part of the Palestinian people is not a coincidence nor does it mean that it regards the problem as a mere refugee problem. It is clear to us that the question of Palestine is at the very root of the Middle East problem.

100. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Mr. Turan Guner, addressing the General Assembly

on 24 September 1974 during the course of the general debate, stated:

"... The Palestinian people, which has been suffering for a quarter of a century, still remains deprived of its legitimate rights and interests. My country has from the very beginning supported the Palestinian cause. We are gratified that this year the question is a special item of the agenda, and we have high hopes for the outcome of the debate to be held on this subject, and shall follow it with great attention." [2241st meeting, para. 139.]

101. It was in this spirit that Turkey co-sponsored the request for the inclusion of the question of Palestine in our agenda [A/9742 and Add.1-4] and supported the invitation to the representatives of the Palestinian people to participate in the consideration of this item by the General Assembly [resolution 3210 (XXIX)]. We hold that no international conflict should or could be usefully considered without the participation of the representatives of the nations and parties directly involved. We also believe that it is for the nations themselves to designate their own representatives and that we must respect that decision. We therefore respect the decision of the Arab States which recognized the PLO as the sole representative of all the Arab people of Palestine and entrusted it with Palestinian national authority.

102. This leads us similarly to express our strong disagreement with those who claim that the Assembly had no right to invite the representatives of the PLO to express their views on behalf of the Palestinian people.

103. We listened carefully to the statement made by Mr. Yasser Arafat, the Chairman of the PLO, the national representative of the people of Palestine. We consider that he gave a convincing exposé of his people's plight resulting from the injustice it has been made to suffer for a quarter of a century.

104. The question of Palestine has been neglected far too long. My delegation is convinced, however, that no lasting and just solution to the Middle East problem can be found unless the legitimate rights and interests of the Palestinian people, including its national rights, are taken into account. The question of Palestine is not merely a humanitarian problem, it is an important political question. Its satisfactory solution constitutes one of the basic prerequisites for and fundamental elements of any durable settlement in the Middle East. A large portion of the people of Palestine have been living for many years away from their homeland in conditions of extreme hardship and deprivation. Desiring the peaceful coexistence of all the peoples in the area, Turkey considers it most natural that the Arab people of Palestine should equally exercise its right to self-determination and statehood on its own territory. In no circumstances and on no pretexts can the retention of any part of the territories occupied by Israel be condoned. As with the Arab territories on the two other fronts, the West Bank also should be returned to its rightful owners.

105. We were happy to note with a certain amount of hope in this connexion the limited progress achieved on two fronts in the area of disengagement of military forces. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey said in this connexion in the general debate:

"The military disengagement agreements on the two fronts, which have resulted in the partial withdrawal of Israeli troops, in our view do not constitute anything but a first step towards the evacuation of the occupied Arab territories and in the recognition of the legitimate rights and interests of the Palestinian people." [Ibid., para. 140.]

106. We continue to maintain the same conviction. We are, of course, aware of the recent intensified efforts to achieve further progress towards peace. While appreciating those efforts, we nevertheless feel that the general recognition of certain realities is necessary if they are to be worth while.

107. In order to enhance the prospect of a peaceful settlement in the near future, it is necessary to view the question of Palestine realistically in its historical perspective and evolution. Such an approach would, furthermore, provide a basis for the much-desired peaceful coexistence to be established among all the peoples in the area. It is very clear to my delegation that the peaceful coexistence of all the States should become an essential condition of life in the Middle East and the entire world.

108. This will no doubt require statesmanship and realism on the part of each and all concerned. Obviously, however, it also requires respect of all States and nations for each other's rights.

109. The Arab people of Palestine should enjoy equal rights with any other people; it should enjoy the national right of self-determination in territories belonging to it. Syria and Egypt should recover all the territories rightfully theirs.

110. My delegation would like to hope that all these conditions for respect among all States and people in the area can be achieved peacefully. The willingness of all parties to negotiate with each other is an essential prerequisite of such an outcome. No useful purpose other than continued tension and conflict in the area can be served by refusing to negotiate with the PLO, which is unquestionably the sole legitimate representative of the Arab people of Palestine, for the purpose of the negotiations is obviously to return what lawfully belongs to the people of Palestine and thus secure the interests of all the peoples and States in the area.

111. In this connexion I should like, before ending my statement, to quote from the statement made only yesterday by Mr. Mohamed Samih Anwar, the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Egypt:

"We are confident that the various countries and peoples... will consider the question of the Palestinian people in the light of the principles and aims of the United Nations Charter. We are confident that they will take steps to ensure the application of these principles to achieve those aims and that they will uphold the rule of law, thus reaffirming the historical development towards a world where justice and equality prevail and where a just and durable peace reigns." [2290th meeting, para. 41.]

112. We could not agree more that the question of Palestine and the Middle East should be solved with the application of the principles of the United Nations Charter. Goodwill and realism by all the parties, as expressed in the quotation I cited above, seems to us likely to make all the difference. Let us hope that

they will be forthcoming for all the parties and that peace at long last will be established in our area.

113. Mr. PLAJA (Italy): My delegation listened with the utmost interest to the statements that have been made from this rostrum in the last few days, particularly by the representatives of the countries which are more directly interested in the issue at stake and by the Chairman of the PLO. It is not my intention to dwell upon the specific contents of those statements, but let me say that what my delegation wishes to retain from them is the echo of the expectation of this Assembly that a fresh impetus be given to the search for a peaceful solution to the question of Palestine.

114. It is with the aim of encouraging this search that the Italian delegation recently cast two affirmative votes with reference to the item under consideration—first, by supporting the inclusion of the question of Palestine in the agenda of the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly and, secondly, by supporting the proposal to invite the PLO to participate in the deliberations on the item. The Italian Government considers the deliberations of the present session of the General Assembly to be a positive development in so far as they may form an important link in a chain of events leading to the restoration of peace in the Middle East. They offer us, in fact, an opportunity to include in the consideration of the basic elements of the Middle East crisis the problem of the Palestinians, who can no longer be relegated to the political, social and economic limbo of refugee status and who are entitled to have their right to a homeland reaffirmed by this Assembly.

115. We believe that a new phase has thus started in the difficult search for a solution to the question of Palestine, a phase in which the Palestinian movement will be in a position to make its contribution to a peaceful solution in the framework of international law, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter.

116. My Government believes that the most constructive way to move towards a settlement in the Middle East is a negotiating process in which all the different problems which are at the basis of the crisis would be taken into due consideration. A step-by-step procedure is inherent in any realistic process. What I mean is that every step must take account of the substance of all the different problems which are at stake and constitute a progressive approach to the combined solution of all of them. The Italian delegation considers that, as far as the Middle East crisis is concerned, the process would not bear durable fruit unless it pays due attention also to the aspect which constitutes the subject of our debate today, that is, the question of Palestine.

117. The new phase of the quest for a peaceful solution in the Middle East on which we are hopefully embarking confers a special responsibility on all the parties concerned. We must all be conscious of the fact that the alternative to progress along this path would inevitably be a heightening of tension and, eventually, a resumption of hostilities. A new outbreak of hostilities could have the most serious and unpredictable consequences. That is why we think that all States—and, on their behalf, this Organization, of which they are Members and which embodies their

most constructive and peaceful aspirations—are more than ever not merely concerned but also under obligation to intervene in this matter. Our deliberations must point to the urgent need, in response to the wishes of world opinion, for progress in negotiations in which the positions of the parties may be brought closer together.

118. To that end, it is also important to give serious consideration to the problem of the methods of negotiations for a peaceful settlement. The search for this settlement should be preserved as far as possible from outside influences interfering with the substance of the problems that must be solved. In this respect we take a very positive view of, and indeed are grateful for, the initiative of the Secretary of State of the United States of America. The results of his initiatives, by unanimous recognition, have been most significant and point to the possibility of further progress.

119. All the representatives who have preceded me in the present debate have stressed how important is the solution of the problem of the people of Palestine with respect to the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. As is clear from what I have previously stated; my Government shares that view.

120. I should like here to state once again the position of my country on the issue of the Middle East crisis. We believe that no just and lasting peace can be attained without taking into account the rights and interests of all the States and peoples of the region. Now the long history of United Nations involvement in the Middle East conflict underscores certain elements, underlined time and again in the relevant resolutions of our Organization, and particularly in resolution 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967, which are of the essence if progress is to be made in the quest for peace. Addressing the Assembly on the specific subject of the question of Palestine, which is part of the Middle East crisis, the Italian delegation would like to stress that besides the long-established principles accepted by this Assembly of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territories by war and the consequent withdrawal by Israel from all territories occupied after 1967, and the acknowledgment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State—including, of course, Israel—within secure and recognized boundaries, it is indispensable to take due account of the fundamental rights and interests of the Palestinians, which should be given expression through the universally accepted principle of self-determination.

121. On this last specific point Italy's position is one of long standing. It was clear to us that the plight of the people of Palestine could not be reduced to the dimensions of a problem of refugees seeking humanitarian assistance from the international community. The ultimate fate of the Palestinians, the solution of the problem that was for so long defined as the Palestinian entity, now comes into its true light. In October 1970—addressing the Foreign Committee of the Senate in Rome—the Italian Foreign Minister, Mr. Aldo Moro, stated that a peaceful settlement in the Middle East could not be imagined without taking into due consideration the Palestinian element of the problem, and that the Palestinian element of the situation was not a humanitarian but a fundamentally political one. On another occasion my Foreign Minister again stated

that the Palestinians were not looking for material relief but were seeking and were entitled to a home country.

122. Furthermore, by adhering to the Declaration of 6 November 1973,³ Italy, together with her eight partners in the European Economic Community, restated the aforementioned guidelines, and believes in their lasting validity in the present circumstances.

123. We should like to voice the hope that our deliberations—as I stated in my intervention in the general debate on 30 September 1974 [2249th meeting, para. 250]—may develop and be concluded in a constructive way. This Assembly should aim at establishing principles and guidelines which may lay down the premises for an agreed solution to the question of Palestine within the general framework of the criteria for the settlement of the Middle East problem.

124. The Italian delegation would like to emphasize that, in dealing with the important issue now before us, it is important to keep in mind that the search for peace is a long and painstaking process. The ultimate aim is peace with justice in the Middle East. From it the peoples of the region would benefit enormously.

As a Mediterranean country, Italy is also vitally interested in all efforts aimed at bringing peace and stability to the Middle East and stands ready at any time to render whatever assistance might be considered useful. The Italian delegation therefore hopes that the positions that the Assembly will take in this debate will be apt to promote a state of mind which will encourage the parties to pursue, in a spirit of compromise, the quest for the attainment of a peaceful solution in the Middle East.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

NOTES

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Second Session, Supplement No. 11, vol. I, document A/364, annex 19.*

² *Ibid., Second Special Session, Supplement No. 1, document A/532, chap. III, sect. C.*

³ *Official Records of the Security Council, Twenty-eighth Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1973, document S/11081. Also circulated under the symbol A/9288.*