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Letter dated 30 April 1984 from the Permanent Representative of
India to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to refer to Your Excellency's letter of 9 March 1984 on the question of the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East.

The Government of India has considered carefully the suggestions contained in the aforementioned letter. It will be recalled that the suggestion for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East arose out of the Geneva Declaration on Palestine, adopted at the International Conference on the Question of Palestine held at Geneva from 29 August to 7 September 1983. The Declaration called for such a conference to be convened on the basis of the principles of the Charter and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, with the aim of achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, an essential element of which would be the establishment of an independent Palestinian State in Palestine.

The proposed peace conference, which was to be convened under the auspices of the United Nations with the participation of all parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization as well as the United States of America, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and other concerned States on an equal footing, would take as its basis the guidelines set out by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine. Those guidelines were reflected in resolution 38/58 C, co-sponsored by India, and adopted by the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session.

India has consistently advocated a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the problems of Western Asia which should comprise the exercise by the Palestinian people of their inalienable national and human rights, including the right to

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establish an independent State in their homeland, the total and unconditional withdrawal by Israel from all Arab territories occupied since 1967, including the Holy City of Jerusalem, and a guarantee for all States in the region, including Palestine, to live within secure and recognized borders. In our view, the Palestinians have a right to return to their homes and property in Palestine from which they have been mercilessly displaced and uprooted. Their right to self-determination should be exercised without any external interference and, like other States in the region, the State of Palestine should be enabled to live in peace and security and follow its own domestic and foreign policies. An essential prerequisite for the attainment of a peaceful solution is the full and equal participation of the Palestinian people in any discussions relating to their future and indeed the future of the entire region.

With regard to the suggestions contained in paragraph 3 of Your Excellency's letter, the Government of India is in broad agreement with the plan of action contained therein. It is, however, suggested that some flexibility be retained in the selection of participants. It is the view of the Government of India that the participants should include the following Governments and authorities:

- (a) States directly involved in the Israeli-Arab-conflict, namely, Israel, Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon;
- (b) The PLO;
- (c) The United States of America, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and other States influential in the Middle East conflict, including States members of the Security Council at the time of the issue of the formal invitation to the Conference.

On other organizational matters, including a time-frame for the convening of the Conference, it is the view of the Government of India that the situation in Western Asia does not brook any delay and urgent preparatory measures should be undertaken so that the Conference can be convened at the earliest possible time.

I would like to add that the Government of India is appreciative of the efforts being made by Your Excellency towards the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and stands ready to extend its full co-operation and support in this connection.

I have the honour to request that this letter be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under item 33 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) N. KRISHNAN
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of India
to the United Nations
