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President: Mr. Hamilton Shirley AMERASINGHE
(Sri Lanka).

AGENDA ITEM 27

Question of Palestine (*continued*):

- (a) Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People;
- (b) Report of the Secretary-General

1. Mr. DA COSTA LOBO (Portugal) (*interpretation from French*): One of the questions to which the United Nations has in recent years been giving profound and sustained attention is that of the Middle East and, more specifically, the problem of Palestine, and indeed this is fully justified.

2. This is one of the most serious questions from the standpoint of international security and one which has at the same time acquired an exceptional human and humanitarian dimension.

3. With regard to the seriousness of the problem seen from the standpoint of international security, it is sufficient to recall that during the past 20 years three wars have taken place in the region without a true situation of peace ever having been established. This is all the more serious since this area of the Middle East indisputably has in the eyes of the great Powers a considerable strategic importance and since, accordingly, things that happen there and the political solutions that may be found are perceived as having a direct relationship with the international balance of forces. That is why any war or crisis and even the very prolongation of a clearly unstable *status quo* has particularly strong repercussions at the world level on international security. In other words, nowadays it is readily admitted that regional crises can trigger off world crises, and in the specific case of the Middle East this risk is particularly acute.

4. From another standpoint too—that which I have called “human” or “humanitarian”—namely, the well-being or the suffering of men, this problem takes on aspects which are peculiar to it or confer on it an extraordinary intensity, for, on the one hand while we find a people which has been compelled to abandon its lands, its homes and its properties, or to live as a stranger on its own soil, on the other

hand—and we must not forget this—we find a people ruled by a permanent feeling of insecurity. In short, we find peoples that we can consider the victims of artificially created solutions, victims of the illusion that it is possible to make amends for injustices by creating situations which in themselves give rise to new injustices.

5. We do not believe that the solution of this problem depends on the discovery of a recipe which might subsequently be submitted to this Assembly and, if necessary, approved by it. Accordingly, while the Portuguese delegation is participating today in the debate on the question of Palestine, it is clearly not claiming to be submitting a formula for solving the problem. Nevertheless, we believe that it is essential that any plan of action for such a solution should be based on a number of fundamental principles and that everyone should be aware of the degree of support that each of those principles can receive. Consequently, it seems to us to be extremely useful for each delegation to this session of the General Assembly to express its Government's position on this subject. For its part, the Government of Portugal considers that any solution to the Palestine problem must respect the following principles.

6. First, Israel must withdraw from the occupied territories. This is a principle whose theoretical justification seems to us difficult to dispute. It is in fact embodied in the main resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council on this question. Hence, it seems to me that I need not prolong this statement by providing justification for the principle.

7. Secondly, the rights of the Palestinian people must be recognized, in particular its right to self-determination and its right to independence. It is somewhat paradoxical that events should have taken place in the Middle East in the period following the Second World War—at the precise moment when the right of the peoples of all regions to self-determination and independence was being recognized—whose consequence was to deprive the people of Palestine of the true exercise of that right. While on the one hand dependent peoples, above all in the African and Asian continents, were becoming free and sovereign States, on the other hand a Middle-Eastern people, the Palestinian people, was being deprived of its right to accede to independence, to choose its political institutions and to govern itself.

8. It was perhaps the complexity of the problems involved which, to a large extent, entailed a certain development of events which resulted in the rights of a people being sacrificed. But, although that complexity can help us to explain that development, it certainly cannot justify the present situation and, even less, its prolongation.

9. We believe that, with regard to the recognition of these rights in the framework of the United Nations, the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 3236 (XXIX) was a step forward whose importance cannot be overlooked. And it is a pleasure for me to recall here that the Portuguese delegation, taking part in the work of this Assembly for the first time after the revolution of 25 April 1974, voted in favour of that resolution.

10. Thirdly, the right of the displaced Palestinians to return to their homes must be recognized. That is a right which is also embodied in General Assembly resolution 3236 (XXIX). It is a right which, while directly affecting the human and humanitarian aspects of the problem, seems to us to constitute also an important basis for the solution of certain political aspects. Indeed, these two aspects are so interrelated that it is very difficult to make a strict distinction between them.

11. Fourthly, the right of all the States of the region to exist as independent States within secure and recognized borders must be recognized. As a logical consequence of our attitude, we continue to believe that the rights of a people cannot be recognized by means of the violation of or non-respect for the rights of another people, and that justice cannot be done by creating unjust situations, even if in an apparently fair way. And it seems to us that if the recent history of that region of the world teaches us anything, it is that no stable situation can be created if we consider only those aspects, however valid they may be, which at a particular moment are especially obvious, relegating to the background those that are less obvious. That is why we defend the principle—embodied, indeed, in Security Council resolution 242 (1967)—that all the States of the region, including the State of Israel, have the right to exist in peace, as independent States.

12. I believe that an analysis of the political and diplomatic developments in the Middle East in recent years shows that even when an element of agreement, a basis of conciliation, between the parties to the conflict has existed, it has always been extremely difficult to complete the journey, often a very short one, between a situation marked by a certain balance—precarious perhaps, but still a balance—and a new situation constituting a new point of balance.

13. The Portuguese delegation is convinced that the divergent positions on the solution of the problem are, although real, not so deep as those relating to the means of reaching a solution. We are convinced that that is because each of the parties feels that the other might take advantage of the advantageous situation in which it might find itself during the development of the process in order to impose a radical solution militating in its favour. That has happened, and it is quite understandable that it should have happened, because of the atmosphere of reciprocal mistrust between the parties to the conflict. And that mistrust can certainly be regarded as one of the inevitable consequences of the crises that have been experienced, the acts of violence that have been committed and the passions that have been aroused.

14. While the analysis I have just made leads us to a pessimistic conclusion, to the extent that the solution can

be found only with great difficulty, it nevertheless contains an element of optimism: the difficulties that have been encountered so far in the efforts which have been made to find a solution do not allow for a conclusion that the problem is impossible to solve.

15. We believe that the slight progress made in recent years on very limited aspects of the problem has represented a contribution—small but positive—to the security of the region. In that connexion, I would recall the presence in the Middle East of two United Nations peace-keeping forces, which are a positive element in the situation.

16. At this time, when it seems difficult to isolate the aspects of the problem on which some individual progress could be made, and when we note a growing impatience at the lack of a solution to the most important questions, we believe that, once again, the problem must be viewed as a whole. That was the idea expressed by the Foreign Minister of Portugal when he stated from this rostrum on 7 October last:

“We support the rapid convocation of the Geneva Conference and hope that it will recognize the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people, as well as provide guarantees for the security of Israel”. [22nd meeting, para. 275.]

17. Portugal, which has no interest to defend in the region in question but which, on the other hand, attaches the greatest importance to the ties of friendship which it has there, will make all the efforts it can to contribute in the United Nations to the search for constructive, fair and lasting solutions.

18. Mr. HERZOG (Israel): For the first time in the history of the United Nations an *ad hoc* committee of the General Assembly has set out deliberately to distort the history of the Arab-Israel conflict, a history with which this Organization has been intimately involved, and to turn the clock back for the purpose of rewriting the history of the Middle East conflict.

19. For the first time in the history of the United Nations a committee of the General Assembly has consciously ignored the Security Council and its resolutions and has adopted recommendations which conflict with existing Security Council resolutions with the obvious objective of circumventing them.

20. For the first time in the history of the United Nations a United Nations committee has adopted recommendations that amount to nothing less than a prescription for the dismemberment of a State Member of the United Nations. In defiance of the Charter of the United Nations, and in contravention of Security Council resolutions, an *ad hoc* committee of the General Assembly has allowed itself to have those recommendations dictated to it by an organization the programme of which explicitly includes the destruction of a State Member of this Organization.

21. If we set aside the legalistic niceties of a United Nations document, with its intentional ambiguities and deliberate omissions, we see that the recommendations of the so-called Palestine Committee, if implemented, will

cause the effective disintegration of the State of Israel in stages. It is indeed ironical and tragic that the United Nations, which arose as a monument to the ashes of, among others, the more than 6 million kith and kin of ours who were annihilated by the Nazis in Europe, should be even considering recommendations by one of its *ad hoc* committees which in fact spell out the destruction of the Jewish State by stages.

22. The recommendations of the Palestine Committee now before the General Assembly are designed to implement the political objectives of the so-called Palestine Liberation Organization [PLO] as enunciated in its Covenant and political programme. In the name of the Government and people of Israel and of the Jewish people I reject out of hand the recommendations contained in the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People [A/31/35].

23. Israel condemns the Palestine Committee for being one-sided, biased, intellectually dishonest and bound by expediency and for allowing itself to become a tool in the hands of the PLO and to adopt as its recommendations the political objectives of that organization. Thus the Palestine Committee has enabled the PLO to transplant the nihilistic aims of its Covenant into a United Nations document.

24. In 1947 the General Assembly of the United Nations in an historic act confirmed to the Jewish people its historic right to a State of its own in its ancient homeland. The scheme put forward by the United Nations [resolution 181 (II)] called for the partition of the country into two States, a Jewish State and an Arab State. The Jewish people formally accepted the United Nations resolution. The Arab nations rejected the United Nations resolution out of hand.

25. On 15 May 1948, with the conclusion of the British Mandate, seven Arab armies invaded Palestine with the avowed purpose of destroying the State of Israel in its infancy. Those Arab military operations were described in the Security Council by the then Soviet representative to the United Nations, Mr. Andrei Gromyko, as being "aimed at the suppression of the national liberation movement in Palestine".¹

26. It is as simple as that, and, as has been said, truth does not change because those who proclaim it get tired of their own veracity.

27. A small Jewish population, outnumbered and outgunned, fought back desperately and successfully, losing 1 per cent of its manpower in the process, and the State of Israel was established. The allegations repeated again and again without foundation by the Arab representatives about the expulsion of the Palestinian Arabs are complete fabrications and constitute nothing but a series of falsehoods. The Palestinian Arabs, as anybody who will take the trouble to read about those tragic days will discover, left their homes on the specific instructions of their leaders, who, incidentally, were the first to leave. They were promised that they could return in the wake of the victorious Arab armies and inherit the spoil and loot of the

Jewish population, who would be annihilated and thrown into the sea.

28. An entire library has been written by the Palestinians themselves describing those tragic days and the callous advice they were given by their leaders. Time and again over the years we offered compromises. But the Arab States would not agree because they wanted to perpetuate the conflict and did not want to lose that political pawn.

29. We offered compensation for their property, but they refused because that implied a recognition of the State of Israel. Every proposal that we made over the years indicating a willingness for compromise was turned down by the Arabs, who were invariably controlled and ruled, as Members will have gathered from their observations at these assemblies, by the most extreme elements.

30. As far back as 1947 the Arabs refused to abide by any General Assembly resolutions based on or stemming from the recommendations of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine—in particular, I refer to resolution 181 (II), known as the partition plan—because they embodied the universally recognized principle of the right of the Jewish people to self-determination and sovereignty in its ancient homeland, the land of Israel, Palestine.

31. It is a historical fact that for 29 years now the Arabs have refused to recognize the right of the Jewish people to a State of its own. Having failed to come to terms with the universal recognition of that right, they have set out to turn the clock back in order to rewrite history. Now that the Arabs can muster an automatic majority at the United Nations and thus have the General Assembly at their command, they have chosen to re-establish a Palestine committee, a committee to which the Arabs can dictate recommendations acceptable to them. The result is now before this Assembly in the form of the recommendations in the Palestine Committee's report.

32. The Palestine Committee was established by General Assembly resolution 3376 (XXX), an Arab-inspired resolution which was entirely one-sided, biased and hostile to Israel. It requested the Palestinian Committee to recommend a programme for the implementation of General Assembly resolution 3236 (XXIX), a resolution instituted and in fact dictated by the PLO. Both resolutions ignored the existence of the State of Israel and the historic right of the people of Israel to its land. Accordingly, Israel rejected resolutions 3236 (XXIX) and 3376 (XXX) from the outset.

33. It should be recalled that Israel's reservations were shared by other nations preserving a modicum of objectivity and discernment. The representative of Italy gave expression to this at the time, in the General Assembly, in the name of the nine members of the European Economic Community. A logical consequence of such a one-sided resolution is the composition of the Palestine Committee: 16 of its 20 members have no diplomatic relations with Israel, and some even deny to this day Israel's right to exist.

34. The recommendations put forward the thesis that the Palestinian question is "at the heart of the Middle East conflict". Those familiar with the conflict know full well that the core of the Arab-Israel conflict is not the question

¹ See *Official Records of the Security Council, Third Year, No. 71, 299th meeting, p. 7.*

of the Palestinian Arabs; it is not the issue of territories occupied by Israel in 1967 as a result of the failure of the Arab onslaught. Each of these questions, which together with other problems compose the Arab-Israel conflict, either did not exist at some point in its 29-year history or could have been easily solved had there been an Arab willingness to do so. Thus none of these problems could be considered the "heart of the Middle East conflict".

35. Even if each and every one of these corollary problems were solved, the Arab-Israel conflict would still be here to haunt the world, because at the heart of the conflict lies the simple fact that to this day the Arab world has not recognized Israel's right to exist, and it continues to deny the Jewish people's right to self-determination and national sovereignty in its ancient homeland. The vicious Arab attack on Zionism, the national liberation movement of the Jewish people, during the thirtieth session of the General Assembly bears witness to the fact that to this day the Arab States have not recognized the right of the Jewish people to national independence.

36. The recommendations of the Committee with respect to the Palestinian Arab refugees of 1948 and those displaced as a result of the 1967 war contradict the provisions of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). Resolution 242 (1967) called for the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East which would include, *inter alia*, "a just settlement of the refugee problem". However, the continuous Arab war against Israel created not only an Arab refugee problem, but also the problem of Jewish refugees from Arab countries. Security Council resolution 242 (1967) refers to the refugee problem as a whole, including the Jewish refugees. The Palestine Committee recommendations totally ignore the rights of 800,000 Jews who fled from Arab countries to safety in Israel. Today, half of Israel's citizens are those who were forced to flee from Arab lands, or their children. Have they no rights? Should not there be a committee established to protect their rights? Are their rights not inalienable?

37. It should be recalled that in the period 1947-1948 the leaders of the Palestinian Arabs and of the Arab States stated openly before the entire world and at the United Nations that they intended to go to war in order to prevent the rebirth of the State of Israel. They did just that, but failed in their declared attempt to "throw the Jews into the sea".

38. A vivid description of that period appears in the memoirs of the first Secretary-General, Mr. Trygve Lie, in his book entitled *In the Cause of Peace*. The Arab assault, mounted by seven Arab armies, began on 15 May 1948. Trygve Lie describes these events in unequivocal terms:

"During the next hours and days, events crowded upon us. The Arab states launched their invasion of Palestine with the end of the Mandate. This was armed defiance of the United Nations, and they openly proclaimed their aggression by telegraphing news of it to United Nations Headquarters."²

² See Trygve Lie, *In the Cause of Peace: seven years with the United Nations* (New York, the Macmillan Company, 1954), p. 173.

He then goes on to say:

"The invasion of Palestine by the Arab states was the first armed aggression which the world had seen since the end of the second world war. The United Nations could not permit that aggression to succeed and at the same time survive as an influential force for peaceful settlement, collective security, and meaningful international law."³

And says further:

"... this was clear aggression, and that failure to meet it could easily lead to the ultimate downfall of the United Nations, just as the mishandling of the Manchurian and Ethiopian cases in the 1930's had led to the collapse of the League of Nations."⁴

39. It is obvious how the Arab-Israel conflict started and who was the aggressor in 1947-1948. I therefore put it to representatives that there would not have been one single Arab refugee—not even one—had the Arab States not chosen to defy the United Nations and go to war, against the United Nations resolution, with the declared aim of destroying the newly reborn State of Israel. This is an incontrovertible fact, and no amount of Arab distortions and falsehoods can alter this fact.

40. The incontestable Arab responsibility for the creation of the Arab refugees has been amply documented also by Arab leaders in their statements at the time. But even today we can find an article written as late as March of this year, 1976, by Abu Mazen and published in *Falastin al-Thawrah*, the official journal of the PLO. It reads as follows:

"The Arab armies entered Palestine to protect the Palestinians from the Zionist tyranny but, instead, they abandoned them, forced them to emigrate and to leave their homeland, imposed upon them a political and ideological blockade and threw them into prisons similar to the ghettos in which the Jews used to live in Eastern Europe."

That is a quotation from the official newspaper of the PLO.

41. In 1972, the memoirs of Khalid al-Azm, who served as Prime Minister of Syria in 1948 and 1949, were published in Beirut. In analysing the reasons for the Arab failure in 1948, al-Azm wrote:

"Since 1948 we have been demanding the return of the refugees to their homes. But we ourselves are the ones who encouraged them to leave. Only a few months separated our call to them to leave and our appeal to the United Nations to resolve on their return."

42. The issue and the causes of the second group of refugees, which, together with that of the Palestinian Arab refugees, compose the so-called Middle East refugee problem, were quite different.

43. During the United Nations debates on the partition resolution Arab leaders warned that the Jews in Arab

³ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

countries would be used as hostages to prevent the establishment of Israel. With the passage of that resolution and the establishment of Israel, those dire threats were carried out in Aden, in Egypt, in Iraq, in Syria and elsewhere: riots and pogroms, together with mass arrests and legislation confiscating Jewish property, restricting the employment of Jews and limiting their education and freedom of movement occurred in many Arab lands. As a result, more than 800,000 Jews fled from those countries to Israel between 1948 and 1967.

44. Now, Israel could have approached the question of the Jewish refugees in the same manner as the Arab States approached their refugee problem. We could have kept those refugees in camps financed by the United Nations as political pawns. Instead, the Jewish people throughout the world, in accordance with our inherent humanity and civilization, cared for the refugees, transported them, rehabilitated them and re-established them as useful citizens and productive human beings. This in comparison to the callous brutality with which most of the Arab world has treated its refugees.

45. The fundamentally different approach of Israel on the one hand, and the Arab States on the other hand, was described at length by Mr. Trygve Lie, the first Secretary-General:

“Israel’s approach to its problem of Jewish refugees was strikingly in contrast. Hundreds of Jews were arriving daily, especially now from the Arab lands . . .

“The organization for receiving immigrants was most impressive . . .

“ . . . I was impressed in Israel, both by the accomplishments and by the spirit behind them.”⁵

46. The responsibility of the Arab States for having expelled their Jewish inhabitants is also well documented by Arab sources. A recent article written by Sabri Jiryis, a researcher with the Institute for Palestinian Studies in Beirut and published in *Al Nahar* in Beirut on 15 May 1975, contains a most important statement:

“This is hardly the place to describe how the Jews of the Arab States were driven out of the countries in which they lived for hundreds of years, then how they were shamefully deported to Israel after their property had been confiscated or taken over at the lowest possible price.

“It is plain that Israel will air this issue in the course of any serious negotiations that might be undertaken one day in regard to the rights of the Palestinians.

“ . . . Since 1948, you Arabs have caused the expulsion of just as many Jews from the Arab States, most of whom settled in Israel after their properties had been taken over in one way or another. Actually, therefore, what happened was only a kind of ‘population and property exchange’, and each party must bear the consequences. Israel is absorbing the Jews of the Arab States; the Arab

States, for their part, must settle the Palestinians in their midst and solve their problems.

“There is no doubt that, at the first serious discussion of the Palestine problem in an international forum, Israel will put these claims forward.”

This was an Arab statement, published in Beirut last year by, incidentally, the very prestigious Institute for Palestinian Studies.

47. The Arab refugee problem does not differ from the many other refugee problems in the world except for the fact that it is the only one that has not been solved. Other refugee problems, infinitely larger in scope, have been solved in virtually all cases through the resettlement and rehabilitation of the refugees with the help of suitable financial arrangements. This is what happened, for example, after the Greek-Turkish conflict, after the Second World War in West Germany and elsewhere, after the India-Pakistan conflict. None of those refugee problems, involving tens of millions of human beings was resolved by attempting to repatriate the refugees *en masse* to the countries and homes from which they fled.

48. The Committee’s report tries to establish a principle of the “right of return”, thus trying to accord a semblance of legality to a claim that the Arabs have repeated many times. The parliamentary situation in the General Assembly is such that nowadays the Arab States can translate any of their slogans into General Assembly resolutions and committee reports, regardless of their implications and regardless of whether or not they conflict with existing Security Council resolutions.

49. There is no basis for the so-called “right of return” in United Nations resolutions, and in fact it conflicts with international law based on the principle of the sovereignty of States. This so-called principle is absolutely unrealistic, as Israel has no intention of committing demographic suicide. The problem of the refugees—both Jews and Arabs—can never be solved in this manner.

50. Refugee problems the world over have been solved by integration.

51. Is it not time that the General Assembly approached this problem by taking into consideration, for the first time, the two sides to the problem? Two approximately equal populations were displaced by the Israel-Arab conflict, the Jewish refugees and the Arab refugees. The Jewish population has been taken care of by the Jewish people throughout the world in a humane, dignified and civilized manner, without their being imposed on the charity of the world. The Arab population has been left in camps—many of which have been turned into formidable military centres, as we have seen in Lebanon—to live in the most despicably sordid and inhuman conditions because they are required to be political pawns in a heartless game, because so many of the Arab leaders cannot take time off from the gambling tables in Monte Carlo and Las Vegas or from their preoccupation with the purchase of hotels in London and elsewhere to deal with their less fortunate brethren.

52. Just think of it: the revenue from one day’s oil supply in the Arab world would be sufficient to solve the entire

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 196 and 197.

Arab refugee problem. The Arab leaders are unwilling to solve the problem, and instead continue to ask for international charity.

53. Just think of it. When 4,000 Arab families had moved out of refugee camps in Gaza—out of the most squalid, disease-ridden, inhuman conditions and into decent housing which they had acquired with their own earnings, assisted by mortgage loans from the Government of Israel, which housing the Gaza refugees are clamouring, cash in hand, to enter—the United Nations Special Political Committee last week passed by a majority a draft resolution [A/SPC/31/L.6/ calling on the Government of Israel to return the refugees from the housing in Gaza, with running water, electricity and gardens, to primitive and disease-infested hovels.

54. How inhuman and debased can this Organization become?

55. Eight hundred thousand Jewish refugees were driven out of Arab countries where they had lived for thousands of years, where they had contributed to the culture, the commerce, the science, the literature and the well-being of the countries in which they lived. They left behind considerable wealth. Yet not one word about their rights, about their properties, is mentioned in any United Nations statement or resolution.

56. Let me make it quite clear that we will not at any stage consider valid any discussion of the refugee problem in the Middle East if half of that problem, the Jewish refugee problem, is ignored.

57. I revert to the quotation from Sabri Jiryis of the Institute of Palestinian Studies, that I made earlier.

“It is plain that Israel will air this issue in the course of any serious negotiations that might be undertaken one day in regard to the rights of the Palestinians.”

58. Since the Palestine Committee has decided to raise this issue, I propose to raise the issue of the Jewish refugees, knowing full well that the members of the Palestine Committee, in accordance with the instructions they received from the PLO, would not even consider the question of the Jewish refugees.

59. I place you on notice that we intend to press for the rights and property of our brethren who left Arab lands. We will not agree to bias or discrimination.

60. The question of withdrawal has again been raised. Following the Sinai campaign in 1956 the General Assembly adopted a resolution which included a recommendation for the total withdrawal of Israeli forces. We withdrew from all the territory occupied in that campaign—namely, the whole of the Sinai and Gaza—on the understanding that the United Nations Emergency Force would be stationed along our borders with Egypt and at the Straits of Tiran on the Gulf of Aqaba and that shipping to and from the Gulf of Aqaba would be free and unimpeded. Ten years later, in May 1967, President Nasser of Egypt ordered the United Nations Emergency Forces to withdraw. The then Secretary-General of the United

Nations agreed to withdraw the Force without demur and without so much as consulting the Security Council or the General Assembly. President Nasser then closed the Straits of Tiran to all Israeli shipping, thereby creating a *casus belli*. He paraded his armies through the streets of Cairo as they moved to Sinai, announcing on 26 May 1967 to the Arab Trade Union Congress that this time he would liquidate the Palestine problem—in other words, he would destroy Israel. Arab armies ringed Israel—a quarter of a million troops. The Arab world was seized by mass hysteria. The world looked on in horror, powerless to do anything. The United Nations Security Council excelled itself again in debating, but did nothing else. Sinister forces encouraged the Arab assault on Israel. Valedictory articles were written in the world press about the model society and democracy that had been Israel. The Arab world rejoiced and promised every man, woman and child in Israel the most horrible fate imaginable. Mass hysteria such as had never been seen gripped the Arab world as its armies poised around Israel prepared to strike and, in their words, to “throw the Jews into the sea”. Again we fought back against heavy odds, and within a week the combined Arab forces had been defeated and the territories now being administered by Israel in the West Bank, Sinai, Gaza and the Golan Heights were in Israeli hands.

61. We did not make war for conquest. We did not plan to go to war. We did not and do not seek territory or expansion. All the Arab statements at that time are on record for members of this Assembly to read. The war which the Arabs brought on us and on themselves led to the results of the 1967 war. To talk of Israeli aggression, as many delegations have done here, is untrue and venal. To talk of Israeli aggression is to repeat a barefaced lie which does not bear examination in the face of facts. All the representatives here were grown-up persons in 1967. Let them not try to pretend that they do not recall what occurred in 1967. Any self-respecting delegation, from whatever group or bloc of countries, which indulges in this cynical rewriting of history is but condemning itself by its own words.

62. Less than two weeks after the conclusion of hostilities in June 1967—to be exact, on 19 June 1967—the Government of Israel offered to return the whole of Sinai to Egypt and the whole of the Golan Heights to Syria in return for the demilitarization of those areas and a peace treaty. But the Arabs were advised otherwise—according to President El-Sadat, by their Soviet advisers—and again did not agree on negotiation or compromise. Their reply came in the form of the Khartoum resolution: “. . . no peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, no negotiations with it . . .”.⁶

63. In one of its recommendations the Palestine Committee calls for the establishment of “an independent Palestinian entity”—in the areas occupied in 1967, headed by the PLO. Moreover, the Committee then recommends that, having gained control of these territories, “further arrangements for the full implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people” [A/31/35, para. 72 (g)] should be made. Thus, the Committee’s recommendations

⁶ Adopted at the Arab summit conference held in Khartoum from 29 August to 1 September 1967.

for Israeli withdrawal do not stop at the 1967 lines but imply the step-by-step truncation of the Jewish State until it totally disappears. Hence, the area “in Palestine” in which the Palestinians are to exercise the so-called right of national independence is expressly left undefined and open-ended.

64. However, while the Committee’s recommendations wish to hide the PLO’s true intentions behind a screen of deliberate ambiguities, those of us familiar with the Arab States’ and the PLO’s political objectives have no illusions. These recommendations, having been dictated by the PLO, must be read in conjunction with the PLO’s Covenant and political programme and the statements of its leaders.

65. In its Covenant, drafted in 1964 and amended in 1968, the PLO defines Palestine in articles 1 and 2. In article 1 it states: “Palestine [is] the homeland of the Palestinian Arab”—I repeat, “Palestinian Arab”—“people, ... an inseparable part of the ... Arab”—I repeat “Arab”—“homeland ...”. Thus there is no doubt that, according to the PLO only the Arabs have national rights in historic Palestine, our ancient homeland, in which a Jewish community has lived throughout history. Article 2 gives Palestine its geographical definition: “Palestine, within the frontiers that existed under the British Mandate, is an indivisible territorial unit”. Mandated Palestine covered the territory that is today not only Israel and the administered territories but also the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Thus the aims of the PLO cover not only the administered areas of the West Bank and Gaza, but also Israel and Jordan.

66. Articles 9 and 10 support the use of terrorism, and indeed the PLO has brought misery, murder and assassination to the area of the Middle East and has introduced terrorism as a form of international idiom. Jordan was its latest victim only yesterday.

67. The Covenant is explicit in its aims. Thus article 15 calls for the elimination of Zionism in Palestine. Article 19 declares “the establishment of Israel [to be] fundamentally invalid.”

68. And if the utter contempt for the United Nations and the unequivocal denial of the right of Israel to exist are not enough, the Covenant sets out even to deny the Bible and 4,000 years of Jewish national existence by denying, in article 20, the existence of any historical or religious ties of the Jewish people with the Holy Land.

69. Having dwelt at length on the most basic document of the PLO—its constitution, its bible, its programme—I wish to stop here for a moment and pose a question to the members of the Palestine Committee. In all due fairness and honesty, do you not think that your report, which dealt at length, supposedly, with every aspect of the Palestinian question, should have made some reference, even the most oblique one, to this Covenant of the PLO which could be described by only one term, that is, as a Nazi racist document? Do you not believe some reference to that document should have been included in the Committee’s recommendations?

70. The explanation for that omission is quite simple. While those recommendations seem at first glance to be

recommendations proposed by an *ad hoc* Committee of the General Assembly, they can in fact be seen, if one studies the records of its meetings, to be recommendations which were dictated by the PLO. They include only the suggestions proposed by the PLO or approved by it.

71. Representatives can, if they wish, compare the statements of the PLO before the Committee and the recommendations. When members of the Committee or observers that are States Members of the United Nations put forward any proposal not to the liking of the PLO it was not included in these recommendations. When the first draft included the term “Palestinian State” instead of the present term, namely, “Palestinian entity”, the PLO objected; and, again, the Committee jumped back into line.

72. The PLO objected to the use of the term “State” and insisted successfully that the term to be used should be “entity”, so that it would be in strict conformity with the PLO’s political programme and there would be no danger of recognizing Israel by implication, even in part of Palestine.

73. Thus, points 2, 3 and 8 of the PLO’s 10-point programme adopted in June 1974⁷ must be read together with the Committee’s recommendations, in particular those in paragraph 72 (e) and (g) of the report, bearing in mind the fact that nowhere in those recommendations is the right of Israel to existence and to secure and recognized boundaries ever mentioned even once.

74. Point 2 of the PLO’s 10-point programme reads:

“The Palestine Liberation Organization strives ... to establish the people’s national, independent fighting authority on every part of Palestinian land to be liberated ...”

Point 3 states:

“The Palestine Liberation Organization struggles against any scheme or projected Palestinian entity the price of which is recognition [of Israel], peace [with it], secured boundaries [and] abdication of the national right ...”

Finally, point 8 explains the deliberate ambiguity in the term “further arrangement” and reads:

“The Palestine national entity, after it comes into existence, will struggle ... to complete the liberation of the entire Palestinian soil ...”

I mentioned before their definition of “all Palestinian soil”, namely, the soil not only of the West Bank and Gaza, but also of Israel and Jordan.

75. Indeed, the ambiguous term “further arrangements” refers not only to Israel but also to another State Member of the United Nations, namely, Jordan. As I stated earlier, the PLO Covenant defines the designs of that organization not only with regard to Israel but also with regard to

⁷ The transitional program of the Palestine Liberation Organization, adopted at the twelfth session of the Palestine National Council, held in Cairo from 1 to 8 June 1974.

Jordan, as article 2 of the Covenant refers to Mandated Palestine, thus including also Jordan. In addition, point 5 of the 10-point programme states:

"The PLO will struggle with the Jordanian patriotic forces for the establishment of a national Palestinian-Jordanian front whose goal is the establishment of a democratic national régime in Jordan that will establish an organic link with the Palestinian entity that will come about as a result of combat and struggle."

That is point 5 of the PLO 10-point programme, in case my Jordanian colleagues have overlooked it.

76. An even more explicit statement was sent by Yasser Arafat to the Jordanian Student Congress in Baghdad in 1974:

"Jordan is ours, Palestine is ours, and we shall build our national entity on the whole of this land after having freed it of both the Zionist presence"—that is, Israel—"and the reactionary-traitor presence"—the reference is to King Hussein.

77. That is the true face of the PLO and these are real aims behind the recommendations of the Palestine Committee. Needless to say, to put it mildly, this whole exercise does no credit to the Committee and its members.

78. There are those who may suggest the facile explanation that, after all, the PLO's Covenant and 10-point programme, as well as the statements of its leaders, are mere words and their intentions are different. I say to them, "If words do not convince you, however sinister they may be, look at the deeds: look at Jordan in September 1970; look at Lebanon today, a nation virtually bleeding to death—all because of the PLO."

79. The Chairman of the PLO, Yasser Arafat, said before the General Assembly⁸ that he had a "dream" of a Palestine that is a democratic and secular State—led of course by the PLO. Moreover, after that, in an interview in *The Economist* of London, he said: "We have in the Lebanese experience a significant example that is close to the multireligious State we are trying to achieve." That PLO dream is today Lebanon's nightmare. Look at Lebanon today: 50,000 dead, 100,000 wounded, 1 million refugees who fled the country and hundreds of thousands of families uprooted from their villages and forced to abandon their homes for safer locations. The damage is enormous and the country's economy has been crippled. In short, Lebanon is bleeding. The PLO's attempt to take control of Lebanon is an outrage in itself, but when it is accompanied by brutal acts of merciless massacre and destruction, the outrage is multiplied.

80. The representative of Lebanon presented a full description to this Assembly only a few weeks ago [31st meeting] and I shall not quote him again here. However, the picture emerging from reports emanating from Lebanon is even grimmer than he described. The names of numerous Lebanese towns and villages have become synonymous with the most terrifying brutalities, massacres and tragedies.

⁸ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-ninth Session, Plenary Meetings*, 2282nd meeting.

81. The statement by former President Franjeh of Lebanon in summing up his term of office speaks volumes. He said: "Assad has woken up; Kuwait has awakened; and Jordan awoke before them. We woke up too late; and others are still asleep." Israel is not asleep and we do not intend to fall asleep.

82. The West Bank is now awake too, and fully recognizes the murderous character of the PLO. A more explicit denunciation of the PLO appeared in an interview with the former Mayor of Hebron, Sheikh Muhammad Ali Al-Jaabari, one of the most important leaders in the West Bank who, on 14 October 1976, only three weeks ago, said:

"As long as there is a body called the PLO which behaves in the way it does, there will be no solution to the Palestine question. I think that the Arab people of the West Bank should be brave enough to admit this, courageous enough to know what is in its true interest. This people should authorize Jordan to negotiate on its behalf, so that afterwards it will have the opportunity of self-determination.

"The PLO too must be courageous and realistic enough to admit that it has failed. This organization should turn to Jordan—or perhaps another Arab country—and ask it to negotiate on behalf of the Palestinians. The PLO is incapable of negotiating. The PLO brought havoc in Jordan and now it is destroying Lebanon. It would do the same thing here, given the chance."

That statement was made by one of the outstanding leaders in the West Bank.

83. From its inception as a modern State in 1948 Israel's political aim has been the achievement of a peace settlement with its Arab neighbours based on mutual respect, recognition of agreed international boundaries and normal cultural, commercial and diplomatic relations. In our declaration of independence we extended the hand of friendship to the Arab world. The Arab States, for their part, have never agreed to move towards this kind of settlement, since they deny Israel's very right to nationhood. They have, on the contrary, seized every opportunity to try to undo Israel's statehood.

84. The Committee on Palestine has produced a report designed to move our area away from peace, as it ignores Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973)—imagine, they are not even referred to in the report because the PLO objected—as it ignores Israel's rights; as it ignores the fact that no dictated solution will be accepted by Israel; and as it ignores the centrality of the process of negotiation in solving any conflict.

85. If there is still even the slightest doubt in anyone's mind about much of the Arab thinking behind the Committee's report, let me refer members to the Egyptian Government-controlled newspaper *Al Gumhuriya* of 27 June 1976, in which we read:

"... a report of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Palestinian People included important recommendations. The most salient of them is the one which refers to the establishment of a Palestinian State,

which in fact means the negation of Israel's existence—an idea which is gaining new supporters every day."

That was a statement in an official Egyptian newspaper. Small wonder, therefore, that the Government of Israel has made it clear throughout that it will have nothing to do with the so-called Palestine Committee and rejects its recommendations out of hand. Israel has never considered national suicide to be an international obligation, and it is about time that members realized this.

86. The tragedy of the Middle East is compounded by the fact that everybody looks for facile solutions to a most difficult problem. A superficial analysis of most of those solutions, such as the recommendations before us, reveals a disturbing degree of ignorance in respect of what is going on in our area and of the fact that the issues are so complex that no formula, however well meaning, can bring about an immediate solution. A mystic, sacrosanct character has been given to the 1967 lines. If only we will pull back to those lines, we are told, all will be solved.

87. I can only repeat for the umpteenth time that for 19 years we sat behind the 1967 lines and there was no move in that long period on the part of the Arab Governments towards negotiation, towards accommodation, towards peace.

88. The position of the Government of Israel on the question of borders and territories has been clarified adequately over the years. We have made it clear that we see Security Council resolution 242 (1967) as the basis for negotiations on this and other issues, as it requires the establishment of secure and recognized borders. We certainly do not accept the arguments put forward by many in respect of the 1967 lines. But let me, as a matter of interest and without prejudice to Israel's clearly defined position on this issue, draw the attention of the members of this Assembly to the fact that, their views notwithstanding, not one single Arab Government or delegation is on record as declaring that the 1967 lines would be recognized by them as final peace borders with Israel. I repeat, my comment here is without prejudice to Israel's clear and defined stand on this issue. But I think it is important to make this point to those well-meaning delegations, and to those less well-meaning delegations, which blithely produce the pre-June 1967 lines as the cure for all the evils in the Middle East.

89. We have been subjected here in this debate to criticism on the issue of security settlements. It is, however, conveniently forgotten that the Arab States maintain that a state of war exists with Israel. Nevertheless, when we take steps such as these to ensure our security, they are deplored. Why? As long as our neighbours maintain that a state of war exists, are we not entitled to take all reasonable steps to protect our population. Indeed, is our Government not required by the very nature of its obligations to take such steps?

90. How long are we supposed to wait before the Arabs sit down and enter into negotiations? I repeat, for 19 years we sat behind the 1967 lines. For 19 years no settlements were established by us in the West Bank or anywhere else in the territories administered by us. Did our Arab neighbours discuss peace?

91. For years we waited for negotiations. How long are we supposed to wait? Let me make this crystal clear: without face-to-face negotiations based on mutual recognition and respect conducted in a civilized manner, there will be no advance towards accommodation. We certainly cannot be expected to pretend that time stands still or to ignore our security requirements while the world waits until this or that Arab leader deigns to open negotiations instead of sending his representative here to engage in name-calling and abuse.

92. I owe no apology to anybody for our statehood and national sovereignty, which are consecrated by 4,000 years of continuous unbroken national, religious, political and social experience such as no other nation has ever known. It has been hallowed by one of the greatest experiences in history as recorded in the Book of Books, the Bible.

93. We have never denied the problems which exist. We have always striven to negotiate and solve them. Israel's approach to the problem facing us is neither a facile one, nor is it based on slogans. It is a problem which exercises the entire population of Israel. Because ours is the only free country in the region, it is the only country in which a variety of solutions has been proposed in public discussions.

94. Similarly, the Arab population which lives with us is the only Arab population in the Middle East which is free to discuss and debate openly and disagree and propose different solutions. This problem affects our very existence, and we do not approach it in the facile and superficial manner which characterizes the approach of so many delegations in this hall.

95. But on one point there is no debate and no discussion in Israel, namely, that there is no alternative to direct face-to-face negotiations with our neighbouring States to achieve peace, a real peace.

96. Israel remains committed to the need for movement towards a comprehensive solution of the conflict on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and in the forum established for that purpose, namely, the Geneva Peace Conference as originally constituted, or in any other forum in which the States parties to the conflict decide to meet. Israel is also committed to a solution which takes into account the question of Palestinian identity. As was declared by our Deputy Foreign Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Yigal Allon, before the General Assembly in 1975:

"... it is self-evident that genuine peace in the Middle East must include a just and constructive solution for the Palestine Arab problem. Israel is fully alive to this problem, probably more so than... those who pronounce freely upon it, and we do not require persuasion of the need to solve it peacefully and honourably. Indeed we insist that this be done."

97. The fact is that, of 2.8 million Palestinian Arabs, over 1.7 million, including 650,000 in the West Bank, are citizens of the Kingdom of Jordan and hold Jordanian passports, while half a million are citizens of Israel and hold

Israeli passports. Approximately 80 per cent of the Palestinian Arabs, therefore, are citizens of both countries, Jordan and Israel.

98. Furthermore, 80 per cent of the territory of Mandated Palestine is the present Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. These facts alone, apart from many other facts, bring us to reiterate the belief of the Government of Israel that the ultimate solution of the Palestine Arab problem must lie within the context of a peace agreement between Israel and Jordan.

99. Finally, I noted the statement yesterday of the representative of Jordan in which he announced that we have an option of real peace. I noted with interest the change in tone and substance of his remarks made here from those made by him only a few years ago to the Jordanian-Palestinian people on Jordan television, when he uttered remarks which in fact called for the destruction of Israel.

100. I regret that the representative of Jordan is not here in the hall, but I am sure that he will hear of my remarks.

101. I would say to him: I am willing here and now, Mr. Ambassador, to join with you, in your words, to

“...unshackle ourselves from the conflicts, tragedies and sufferings of the past few decades. I am thinking in terms of a new order, within a framework of genuine peace, in which the tractor replaces the tank as a way of life and a way of thinking.” [69th meeting, para. 52.]

I agree with you, Mr. Ambassador, that if our “... decision should be to opt for peace, then no unnecessary time need be wasted in any further ado about... irrelevancies” [Ibid., para. 54].

102. I declare here and now that I am prepared to meet with you with hand outstretched in order to examine with you how we can reach the terms of a new order within the framework of a genuine peace. I am prepared to meet with you and initiate discussions in the spirit of constructiveness, conciliation and peace, real peace—*sulh* in Arabic—at any time, in any place.

103. Let us, you and I, as a first move in our own small and very limited way, unshackle ourselves from the barren and pointless discussions in this body and take the first step towards a constructive approach based on mutual respect and recognition so that ultimately our two peoples and cultures can join together to restore the greatness of our joint Semitic civilization.

104. I solemnly declare before this august Assembly that I am prepared to take this step now, even as I step down from the rostrum.

105. Mr. PAWLAK (Poland): While debating the question of Palestine in plenary meetings of the General Assembly, we fully realize that few problems have taxed the strength of the United Nations more than this one and that few problems of such magnitude remain unsolved. The issue of the plight of the Palestinian people has been before the United Nations for over a quarter of a century now. It is

however only the third time in this hall that we have had an occasion to listen to the high officials of the PLO, the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Mr. Farouk Kaddoumi's statement delivered at the beginning of our debate [66th meeting] has truly moved all of us, because the tragedy of the Palestinians, forced to live in destitution and cast as refugees, can hardly be tolerated any longer.

106. Our debate is also richer in substance because we have been presented with the important report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. I wish to express our gratitude to the Committee's Chairman, Ambassador Médoune Fall of Senegal, the Rapporteur, Mr. Gauci of Malta, and the other members of the Committee for the comprehensive and well-balanced document. Consideration by the General Assembly of this report is, in the opinion of the Polish delegation, a new and important stage in the entire debate of the problem of Palestine.

107. The Polish delegation has studied the report with great interest and appreciation. It gives us a clearer and deeper understanding of the question in its entirety. We find it closely related with the terms of reference given in General Assembly resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975. That resolution clearly and precisely recognizes the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination without external interference and its right to national sovereignty.

108. In its report based on that resolution, the Committee rightly states:

“...no solution in the Middle East can be envisaged which does not fully take into account the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.” [A/31/35, para. 59.]

It also correctly points out that “...the full implementation of these rights will contribute decisively to a comprehensive and final settlement of the Middle East crisis” [Ibid., para. 60].

109. Indeed, the United Nations must take appropriate steps designed to enable the Palestinians to exercise, in their own State, their legitimate rights, including the rights of self-determination, national independence and sovereignty and the right to return to their homes and property. Therefore, the work of the Committee, established at the thirtieth session, is praiseworthy and constitutes a good contribution to the Palestinian cause.

110. The debates in this hall, with the participation of the outstanding leaders of the Palestinian people, have shown that the issue of Palestine should not be seen only in its humanitarian dimensions, as the mere problem of the refugees. It is a profoundly political issue, one which must be dealt with and solved through a political process.

111. The nature of the issue has been well proved also during the debate on such agenda items as the one relating to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East [item 53], and the one relating to Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the

population of the occupied territories [item 55]. Those debates have offered us the most up-to-date information on the continued misery, the disaster, of the Palestinian people. Neither the international community nor a single person, for that matter, can remain indifferent to the tragedy of the people of Palestine.

112. However, compassion, charity and philanthropy—as most documents and statements point out—do not bring us any closer to the solution of the problem, nor do they implement the inalienable human and political rights of the people of Palestine. The only way to solve the question is to deal with it in all its political implications. The United Nations can greatly contribute towards that end.

113. However, in this context, it is deplorable that the Security Council, owing to the veto of one of its permanent members, was not able to make any progress on the issue after the debate, in June 1976, on the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

114. The delegation of Poland, sharing the major conclusion of the Committee's report that "no solution in the Middle East can be envisaged which does not fully take into account the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people", wants to stress once again that the main obstacle to the implementation of those aspirations is the policy of Israel. The continued occupation of Arab territories by Israel and its stubborn refusal to withdraw from all the Arab territories occupied since 1967, as well as its disregard for the rights of the Palestinians, constitute the main impediment to any progress towards the solution of the question of Palestine.

115. Moreover, Israel and its allied protectors persist in stirring up the differences between the Arab countries and in directing the reactionary Arab forces against the Palestinians and their resistance movement, which is one of the most progressive and anti-imperialist forces of the Arab world. We were able to witness this kind of conspiracy in the tragic events in Lebanon.

116. Poland feels great satisfaction that an agreement regarding the cessation of hostilities in Lebanon and the normalization of the situation in that country has finally been reached. We trust that the agreed settlement will not be detrimental to the Palestinian people and their valiant resistance movement directed against the Israeli aggressor.

117. In its resolution 3376 (XXX) the General Assembly has recognized the right of the Palestinian people to independence and sovereignty. The proper exercise of that right calls for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, thus enabling the Palestinians, in the words of the resolution, "to return to their homes and property from which they have been displaced and uprooted".

118. In the light of that resolution and the Committee's report, the General Assembly must take adequate measures to halt the further establishment of Israeli settlements in the Arab territories occupied since 1967, to bring about the dismantling of the existing settlements, to make Israel refrain from making any demographic changes in those territories, and to see to it that all the Arab property in those territories is returned intact to its owners.

119. In approaching the issue at hand, we are well aware of the organic link between the question of Palestine and the Middle East problem. One cannot be solved without the other.

120. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland, Mr. Stefan Olszowski, said in this context during the general debate of the current session:

"Developments in the Middle East, including the tragedy of Lebanon, pose a . . . threat to peace. The only effective way to settle the problem is by the return to the Arab countries of the territories occupied by Israel in 1967 and by a comprehensive political settlement which would take due account of the interests and rights of all States and peoples of the region, including Israel, as well as the right of the Palestinian people to its own statehood". [5th meeting, para. 56.]

121. Poland has no doubt that the only machinery which can provide a proper forum for the comprehensive political settlement is the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East. Along with other socialist countries, Poland considers the Soviet proposal to reconvene the Geneva Conference as the best-timed one. In fact, the proposal has already been supported by many other countries.

122. It is only logical that this kind of multilateral negotiations can bring the expected results, provided all the parties concerned participate in such a common endeavour. Thus, the participation of the PLO in the Conference is indispensable.

123. In conclusion, I wish to stress that the question of Palestine, through its inherent and inseparable interrelationship with the Middle East problem, continues to be a source of serious international tension, whose impact is not limited to the Middle East region. It has its negative implications, which cover a larger scale than the merely geographical aspect. The elimination of this cause of tension would make an outstanding contribution to international relations and to the further improvement of the atmosphere of détente and co-operation, thus practically affecting all the spheres of international life.

124. Mr. OVINNIKOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (*interpretation from Russian*): The General Assembly has begun its consideration of the question of Palestine. The solution of this question is of extremely urgent significance not only for the Arab people of Palestine but also for the fate of peace and security in the Middle East and throughout the world. The impossibility of achieving lasting peace in the Middle East without solving the question of Palestine is now a generally recognized fact, for only a just peace can be a lasting peace. That means that an inescapable condition of such a peace must be the ending of the unnatural situation in which the 3 million Palestinian people have for three decades now been deprived of their inalienable right to self-determination and have lived as exiles.

125. Recent events in the Middle East have again confirmed that the Palestine problem is an acute political problem, and now no one has any doubt that it cannot be viewed only in its humanitarian aspects—in other words,

only as a problem of refugees. The consideration of the Palestinian problem in the United Nations and the decisions adopted by our Organization in recent years testify to the fact that practically all States Members of the United Nations—except, of course, Israel and its protectors—now recognize the inalienable national rights of the Arab people of Palestine, including its right to establish its own State.

126. In resolution 3236 (XXIX), which is of fundamental significance, the General Assembly confirmed the inalienable rights of the Arab people of Palestine: its right to self-determination without external interference and its right to national independence and sovereignty. It also confirmed the right of the Palestinians to return to their homes and to their property.

127. This resolution contains still another fundamentally important provision: that the Palestinian people is one of the main parties involved in the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. This position of the General Assembly was later developed and given specific form. In resolution 3375 (XXX), the Assembly specifically invited the PLO, as the representative of the Palestinian people, to take part in all international efforts relating to the Middle East on an equal footing with other participants on the basis of resolution 3236 (XXIX).

128. This means that in the solution of the Palestinian problem, and with regard to the fate of the Arab people of Palestine, the pre-conditions have been established for a decisive break-through. The most representative forum of modern times, the United Nations, through its General Assembly, has firmly stated that the Palestinian question is the central political problem of a Middle East settlement and that without the Palestinians, without the PLO, such a settlement is impossible.

129. Such a conclusion flows inevitably from the work of the Security Council this year. Already in January of this year, in accordance with its resolution 381 (1975), the Council officially considered the question of Palestine as an integral part of the situation in the Middle East as a whole; it considered the Middle East problem, including the question of Palestine.

130. The second new factor in the work of the Security Council this year is that the PLO is now recognized by the Council as a directly interested party in the Middle East. This indeed is why the PLO has participated in five series of meetings of the Security Council this year on the Middle East question. Finally, the third new factor is that the Security Council has begun to consider the substance of the Palestinian problem. In June the Council considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, which was drafted and transmitted to the Council in accordance with General Assembly resolution 3376 (XXX), and although, owing to the negative vote of the United States delegation, the corresponding decision was not adopted, the very consideration of these questions is of very great significance. It testifies to the fact that the only obstacle to a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, including the guaranteeing of the inalienable national rights of the Arab people of Palestine, is the negative position of Israel and its protectors.

131. The wrongheadedness and short-sightedness of this policy of Israel and its handful of supporters are evident. It is impossible to guarantee anyone's right to existence by denying that right to others, especially to neighbours. It is impossible to guarantee anyone's security by trying to build it on the annexation of neighbouring territory. Just as Israel cannot evade the necessity of withdrawing its troops from all the Arab territory occupied in 1967, so it cannot evade recognition of the lawful national rights of the Arab people of Palestine. These are two basic elements of a settlement, if Israel truly wants peace in the Middle East.

132. From this standpoint anyone who tries to disregard the existence of the Palestinian problem, the existence of the Arab people of Palestine or the existence of the PLO will be building on sand.

133. The position of the Soviet Union on the Palestine problem, as on the whole complex of questions relating to a Middle East settlement, is a consistent position of principle.

134. The Soviet Union gives constant attention to the search for a settlement in the Middle East. The Twenty-fifth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union set the task of concentrating the efforts of peace-loving States on the elimination of the remaining hotbeds of war and, above all, on the attainment of a just and lasting settlement in the Middle East. This task has in recent times acquired especial—I might say, burning—urgency. In his report to the Twenty-fifth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mr. Brezhnev, gave the following assessment of the situation in the Middle East:

“There is now no war in the Middle East, but neither is there peace—and, even less, tranquillity. And who will dare to guarantee that the flame of hostilities will not flare up again? This danger will remain as long as the Israeli armies remain in occupied lands. It will persist as long as the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians driven from their land are deprived of their lawful rights and live in appalling conditions, and as long as the Arab people of Palestine is denied the possibility of creating its own national State.”

135. The Soviet Union actively supports the just struggle of the Arab people of Palestine for the exercise of its inalienable rights. We support and render assistance to the Palestine resistance movement as the active branch of the national liberation movement of the Arab peoples. In turn, we note with satisfaction that the consistent solidarity of the Soviet Union with the struggle of the Arab people of Palestine has enjoyed the profound gratitude of the leaders of that people. As the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO, Yasser Arafat, stated in an interview reported in *Pravda* on 5 May this year:

“We express our deep gratitude to the friendly Soviet Union for the help and support it has given. This solidarity will undoubtedly promote further successes for the just cause of the Palestinian revolution and the Arab national liberation movement.”

136. The Soviet Union advocates the solution of the Palestinian problem on the basis of the satisfaction of the

lawful national demands of the Arab people of Palestine, including its inalienable right to establish its own State. Such a solution must be implemented as part of a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East, which must also provide for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from all Arab territories occupied as a result of Israel's 1967 aggression, and for international guarantees of the security and inviolability of the frontiers of all States in the Middle East, and of their right to an independent existence and development. The international machinery for working out appropriate agreements is the Geneva Peace Conference. The Soviet Union calls for the resumption of its work, with the participation of all the directly interested parties, including the PLO.

137. The representative of Israel, in his statement here, tried to distort the policy of the Soviet Union in the Middle East in an attempt to prove that in some way it has changed. No, what has changed is the policy of Israel itself. The essence of this change is that Israel has turned to systematic aggression against the Arab States and peoples.

138. The Soviet Union has never cast any doubt on the right of Israel to exist. In his statement at the fifth emergency special session of the General Assembly in 1967, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, Mr. Kosygin, said that the Soviet Union was not against Israel but against the aggressive policy pursued by that State.¹⁰ That is the Soviet Union's position of principle and it remains so today.

139. If the Israeli leaders really wish in good conscience not to pursue a short-sighted policy, they cannot fail to see the real alternatives which today face Israel. They are the following.

140. The first alternative is that Israel, in accordance with United Nations decisions, withdraws its troops from all Arab lands occupied in 1967, and ceases blocking the exercise of the inalienable national rights of the Arab people of Palestine. In that case, Israel would be entitled to expect—and it would receive—international guarantees of its security.

141. The second possible alternative is a different situation. If Israel does not do this voluntarily, it would nevertheless be compelled to withdraw its troops from the occupied Arab territories, and would still be faced with the inevitable establishment of a Palestinian State. In that case, however, Israel would not, of course, receive any international guarantees. The responsibility for such a turn of events would then be borne by those Israeli leaders who today display an astounding political insouciance, I would even say, a lack of political responsibility.

142. As far as the Soviet Union is concerned, it has consistently and as a matter of principle called for a political settlement in the Middle East which would be in keeping with the interests of the Arab countries that are the victims of aggression; in keeping with the interests of the Arab people of Palestine; in keeping with the interests of Israel itself.

143. The need for a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East on the basis of the principles to which I have referred is endorsed and supported by all progressive and democratic forces and by all peace-loving States, and above all, by the Socialist and non-aligned States. These principles are reflected in the document entitled "For peace, security, co-operation and social progress in Europe" [*see A/31/124, annex*], which was adopted unanimously at the Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties of Europe held in June this year in Berlin.

144. These principles are also contained in the Political Declaration of the Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of 86 non-aligned countries, held in Colombo, which states, *inter alia*:

"... a just and lasting peace in the Middle East can only be established through the solution of the Palestine question, the root cause of the conflict in the region, in accordance with the United Nations resolutions which recognized the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people." [*A/31/197, annex I, para. 79.*]

145. The need for decisive efforts to achieve a comprehensive political settlement in the Middle East is particularly pressing in view of the explosive nature of the situation there which is aggravated by Israel's continuing build-up of armaments and the cruel occupation policy which it pursues in the usurped Arab territories.

146. The United Nations General Assembly must make its contribution to promoting an over-all Middle East political settlement and a solution of the Palestinian problem in particular.

147. The delegation of the USSR is convinced that the factual and cogent report submitted by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to the General Assembly contains a number of constructive proposals, the implementation of which would advance the solution of the key problems of a Middle East settlement. The delegation of the USSR supports the recommendations made in the Committee's report, which in our view constitute a specific programme for the implementation of the fundamental resolutions of the General Assembly on the question of Palestine. The General Assembly must confirm those recommendations and take effective measures for their implementation. Here we also base our view on the fact that, as the head of the Palestinian delegation, Farouk Kaddoumi, stated in the General Assembly on 15 November, the principles adopted by the Committee are "... the necessary basis for the resolution of the Palestinian problem and the achievement of peace in the Middle East." [*66th meeting, para. 71.*]

148. One of these fundamental principles put forward by the Committee and noted in Mr. Kaddoumi's statement is the participation of the PLO on an equal footing with the other parties in all efforts and conferences relating to the Middle East. In the view of the Soviet delegation, it is especially necessary to confirm this principle and to give it concrete form in the present circumstances.

149. Not only the strengthened position of the PLO in the United Nations but also the course of events in the Middle

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Fifth Emergency Special Session, Plenary Meetings, 1526th meeting, para. 44.

East clearly testify to the fact that the PLO is the representative and the tested leader of the Palestinian people and is leading its just struggle for its inalienable national rights. The Palestinian resistance movement is becoming increasingly mature. It has become an organic factor in the political and other situations in the Middle East. Recently the PLO attained the status of a full member of the League of Arab States. The PLO is a full member of the non-aligned movement. At the Fifth Conference of non-aligned countries in Colombo the PLO was elected to the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Countries.

150. A general political settlement in the Middle East is thus possible only given the full participation of representatives of the Palestinian people. The representatives of that people in the persons of the PLO must take part on an equal footing in efforts to achieve a Middle East settlement at the Geneva Conference.

151. Without the participation of the Palestinians, the Geneva Conference, as the Foreign Minister of the USSR, Mr. Gromyko, stressed in his letter dated 17 February this year to the Secretary-General of the United Nations: "... would be not a forum for business-like negotiations but a camouflage aimed at creating a semblance of negotiations" [see A/31/53-S/11985, annex].

152. In the Soviet-Yugoslav communiqué signed yesterday, 17 November, in Belgrade the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mr. Brezhnev, and the President of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the President of the Communist League of Yugoslavia, Mr. Josip Broz-Tito, called for a resumption of the Geneva Conference on the Middle East with the participation of all directly interested parties, and here the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia stated that the PLO must take part in the Conference from the outset on an equal footing with the other participants.

153. This is why, in the view of the Soviet delegation, the General Assembly would be acting correctly in supporting with its full political and moral authority the participation of the PLO in the resumed Geneva Conference.

154. Mr. KEAT CHHON (Democratic Kampuchea) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation would like, through the delegation of the PLO, to offer the brotherly and militant greetings of the people of Democratic Kampuchea to the brave people and courageous fighters of Palestine, who are waging a heroic struggle on a terrible battlefield against imperialism, colonialism and zionism.

155. My delegation would like to assure the PLO delegation that Democratic Kampuchea, which has always firmly supported the just struggle of the Palestinian people, will continue to do so until the Palestinian people can exercise its inalienable national rights and in particular its right to be master of its own destiny without any foreign interference, its right to independence and sovereignty and its right to return home.

156. Democratic Kampuchea will also continue to support firmly the just struggle of the other Arab peoples to regain their territories which were occupied by force by Israeli zionism in 1967.

157. The Palestinian people is a heroic people. Throughout its long and difficult struggle, with its many obstacles, it has endured all sorts of difficulties, both subjective and objective, and has made innumerable sacrifices. It rose up and fought the enemy without giving it respite and has won significant successes one after the other. It has thus created a favourable situation, which will lead it to inevitable victory.

158. Through its own struggle, by the blood shed by its valorous sons and by its success in its battles in the field, the Palestinian people has gained for its just cause the sympathy of the peoples of the countries of the third world and those that love peace and justice. The peoples of the countries of the third world and those that love peace and justice consider that the heroic Palestinian people are in the front lines of their joint struggle against imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, zionism, racism, *apartheid* and all forms of interference, aggression, expansion and foreign exploitation, in order to win independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, the right to be masters of their own destiny and that of their country, and the establishment of a new international economic order. It is for this reason that the just struggle of the Palestinian people and that of the other Arab peoples enjoy the powerful encouragement and active support of the peoples and Governments of the non-aligned countries, those of the third world and those that love peace and justice. At present the international status of the PLO is being constantly reinforced as time goes by. The PLO plays an active role in the League of Arab States; it is recognized by the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations; it is a member of the vast family of the non-aligned and was elected a member of the Co-ordinating Bureau of Non-Aligned Countries.

159. The people and Government of Democratic Kampuchea heartily rejoice at these resounding successes in the struggle of the Palestinian people.

160. The problem of the Middle East was born of the aggression of zionism and imperialism. The question of Palestine lies at the heart of that problem. As long as the Palestinian people does not have its national rights restored to it, it will be futile to hope for the establishment of a lasting peace in that region.

161. My delegation denounces Israeli zionism, which, simultaneously with the intensification of its barbarous repression and the strengthening of its establishment of settlements in the Palestinian and Arab territories occupied by force and thanks to United States aid, obstinately continues its aggression against the Palestinian and Arab peoples and refuses the Palestinian people the exercise of its inalienable national rights, which have been recognized in resolution 3236 (XXIX) of the United Nations General Assembly.

162. Such stubbornness cannot but rekindle the determination of the Palestinian people and that of the other Arab peoples to persevere in the fight and finally and completely to vanquish imperialist and Zionist aggression.

163. My delegation is convinced that, drawing on the valuable experience of its long struggle, the valiant Pales-

tinian people will always go forward along the road of its just struggle. As in the past, it will be able to overcome difficulties of all kinds and outwit the perfidious manoeuvres of the imperialists who are doing everything they can to interfere in its internal affairs, to divert it from its objectives and to frustrate it in its struggle to obtain its inalienable national rights and the right to decide its own future.

164. By its resolute and stubborn struggle, a struggle in which it enjoys the powerful support of its Arab brothers and that of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America and all those who love peace and justice, the heroic people of Palestine, which firmly controls its own destiny, will conquer.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.