

United Nations
**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

THIRTY-FIRST SESSION

Official Records



**89th
PLENARY MEETING**

Monday, 6 December 1976,
at 11 a.m.

NEW YORK

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Agenda item 29: The situation in the Middle East (<i>continued</i>)	1351

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

AGENDA ITEM 29

The situation in the Middle East (*continued*)

1. Mr. OVINNIKOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (*interpretation from Russian*): In the year that has passed since the General Assembly adopted at its thirtieth session resolution 3414 (XXX) on the Middle East the United Nations has made considerable efforts to free the matter of a Middle East settlement from deadlock. We should recall here the recent comprehensive consideration given by the General Assembly in plenary meetings to the question of Palestine. Great significance should also be attached to the consideration in the Special Political Committee of such aspects of the Middle East problem as the situation of Palestinian refugees and Israeli practices in the occupied Arab territories. As far as the Security Council is concerned, this year it has devoted to the Middle East problem one third of its 107 meetings or 35 meetings, and at those meetings it has considered comprehensively practically all aspects of the Middle East conflict. However, through the fault of Israel's protectors, the Security Council was unable to adopt a positive decision either on the Palestinian problem or on the whole complex of questions relating to a Middle East settlement as a whole.

2. Nevertheless, it is important to note that, despite the savage opposition of Israel and those that support Israel, the will of the overwhelming majority of countries, which are in favour of a Middle East settlement, is gaining ground. We may single out the following important directions in which progress has been made.

3. First, a qualitatively new aspect in the consideration of the matter by the Security Council was the fact that, following the General Assembly, the Council at its meetings in January and June of this year for the first time considered the question of Palestine as part of a Middle East settlement. In that consideration, as well as with regard to the other Middle East questions considered in the Council, an active part was taken by the delegation of the Palestine Liberation Organization [PLO], which was specifically invited by the Council as the only lawful representative of the Arab people of Palestine. The delegation of the PLO took part in 32 meetings of the Security Council in

1976, thereby being recognized *de facto* by the Council as one of the main parties to a Middle East settlement. These discussions, like the discussions in the General Assembly, showed quite clearly that, without the full participation of the Palestinian people represented by the PLO and without a just solution of the Palestinian problem on the basis of guaranteeing the inalienable national rights of the Arab people of Palestine, it is impossible to attain a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

4. Secondly, the result of the consideration by the Security Council in November of the situation in the occupied Arab territories is important. The Security Council, in the consensus statement made by the President on 11 November,¹ expressed its grave anxiety and concern over the present serious situation in those territories as a result of continued occupation. The Council called upon Israel to put an end to its arbitrary and unilateral actions in the occupied Arab territories, both with regard to the Arab population and with regard to the establishment of Israeli settlements, and it stressed that such measures have no legal validity and constitute an obstacle to peace in the Middle East. This is a clear confirmation of the illegality of the Israeli occupation.

5. Thirdly, just a few days ago, on 30 November, the Security Council in resolution 398 (1976) underlined the urgent need to continue and intensify efforts for the establishment of a durable and just peace in the Middle East. In the statement by the President of the Security Council in this connexion which is an integral part of that decision,² the Council endorsed the point of view of the Secretary-General to the effect that the situation in the Middle East will remain unstable and potentially dangerous unless real progress is made towards a just and lasting settlement of the Middle East problem in all its aspects. In other words, the Security Council unambiguously came out in favour of intensifying efforts to reach a political settlement in the Middle East.

6. Special reference must also be made to the efforts of the Secretary-General in seeking to carry out the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly on the Middle East: his appeal in January this year to the Co-Chairmen of the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East and also his initiative of 1 April this year in making contacts with the representatives of all interested parties. As the Assembly is aware, these actions were taken by the Secretary-General on the basis of resolutions 3414 (XXX) and 3375 (XXX). The Soviet Union, for its part, responded positively to

¹ See *Official Records of the Security Council, Thirty-first Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1976*, document S/12233.

² *Ibid.*, document S/12247.

those efforts. The position of the Soviet Union in this connexion is set out in the letters from the Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union, Mr. Gromyko, addressed to the Secretary-General and dated 9 January³ and 17 February⁴ of this year, which have been issued as documents of the General Assembly and the Security Council, as well as in the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Middle East. I refer to document A/31/270-S/12210.

7. This, then, is the background against which the General Assembly is now developing its consideration of the situation in the Middle East. This background obliges the Assembly to support these positive moves and in turn adopt decisions which would effectively promote a radical breakthrough towards attaining a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. Time will not wait.

8. Through the fault of the Israeli aggressors and their protectors, the Middle East remains the most dangerous hotbed of international tension, where there is the constant possibility of a fresh outbreak of hostilities. The lengthy delays in the search for a settlement of the Middle East conflict continue to arouse the serious concern of all those who hold dear the interests of the peoples of that part of the world and the cause of peace and security throughout the world.

9. For 10 years now, Israel has occupied the Arab territories seized as a result of its 1967 aggression. The occupation forces are following a planned policy of colonizing these territories and of "integrating" them economically with Israel. Step by step they are proceeding towards making them part of Israel. Expulsion of Arab population from the occupied territories, racial discrimination and oppression have become standard features of the usurper's behaviour. The ruling circles of Israel are stubbornly blocking the enjoyment by the Arab people of Palestine of their lawful right to self-determination and to the establishment of their own State. The build-up of Israeli armaments is proceeding on a large scale. In the light of the aggressive policy of Tel Aviv, the recent news that Israel already possesses or will shortly possess nuclear weapons acquires a particularly ominous significance. There is no need to demonstrate the danger to peace this constitutes, and the further complications it may entail.

10. Having adopted a policy of the annexation of the usurped Arab territories, Israel and the Powers supporting it are doing everything that they can to block the efforts of the United Nations and of all peace-loving States to achieve a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East, and to this end they are resorting to all kinds of political manoeuvres. As in the past, they are seeking to promote a Middle East settlement through partial, separate agreements, thus creating the illusion of "movement towards peace", the illusion of easing tension in that part of the world. But the fact is becoming increasingly evident—and the Soviet Union has been saying this from the beginning—that measures of this kind have not only not brought the Middle East question nearer a solution, but have even created additional difficulties in that respect. As experience shows, this policy,

obviously directed towards the selfish goals of its supporters, is wholly unrelated to the achievement of a truly lasting and just peace in the Middle East, but only puts off the necessary comprehensive decisions and leads efforts towards a settlement into a deadlock. This policy of achieving partial and separate agreements is a screen used by certain circles to distract the attention of Arab States and peoples from the struggle for the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East and to split the united front of the struggle against aggression. The tragic events in Lebanon provide a clear example of this.

11. The delegation of the USSR has already stated the Soviet position of principle on the Middle East, both at the present session of the General Assembly and in the Security Council. We should like to stress once again that the hotbed of tension in the Middle East can be eliminated only if its roots are eliminated, only if the basic conditions for a comprehensive political settlement laid down in the relevant United Nations resolutions are fulfilled. First, Israeli troops must be withdrawn from all the Arab territories occupied in 1967. Secondly, the legitimate national demands of the Arab people of Palestine must be satisfied, including their inalienable right to establish their own State. And finally, thirdly, the security and inviolability of the frontiers of all Middle East States must be ensured through, *inter alia*, international guarantee. This includes their right to independent existence and development. The solution of these three organically linked questions would make it possible for the countries of that part of the world to bring about the cessation of the state of war, and to establish peaceful relations, between the Arab states and Israel. As was stated at the Twenty-fifth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Soviet Union is ready to participate in international guarantees of the security and inviolability of the frontiers of all States of the Middle East under United Nations auspices or on some other basis. The Soviet Union also believes it important to seek ways of bringing the arms race in the Middle East to an end. Of course, this would be connected with an over-all settlement in that part of the world.

12. This approach of the Soviet Union to the Middle East settlement—since it takes into account the interests and rights of all the Arab peoples and the Israeli people—is both just and equitable.

13. A comprehensive and radical settlement will lay the basis for a lasting peace in the Middle East and will create conditions for peace and progress for all the peoples of the region. As everyone knows, there exists a recognized international machinery acceptable to all the parties directly concerned for working out appropriate agreements on settlement questions. This is the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East.

14. The Soviet Union has repeatedly expressed support for the resumption of the work of this Conference, with the participation of all parties directly concerned, including the PLO, as the legitimate representative of the Arab people of Palestine. The Soviet initiatives on this question are well known, including the Soviet proposal on the organization of the work of the Conference in two stages—a preparatory stage and a substantive stage. At the initial preparatory stage, all organizational questions could be resolved,

³ *Ibid.*, Supplement for January, February and March 1976, document S/11926.

⁴ *Ibid.*, document S/11985.

including the order of considering the specific aspects of the settlement and the establishment of the necessary working groups. We believe that that phase would not be a lengthy one. Following it, the Conference would be able to embark on its fundamental task of dealing with the substance of a settlement. Of course, during the work of both phases of the Conference the representatives of the PLO must participate.

15. Recently, the Soviet Union put forth a new proposal designed to bring about the resumption of the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East [see A/31/257-S/12208]. It proposed a concrete agenda for the conference embracing all problems whose solution would, in fact, lead to the establishment of lasting peace in the Middle East.

16. The Soviet Government has also repeatedly stressed its readiness to co-operate as constructively as possible with other interested parties in order to enable the Conference to fulfil the tasks entrusted to it.

17. In putting forward concrete proposals and initiatives with a view to settlement of the Middle East conflict, the Soviet Union is not seeking any kind of privileges or advantages for itself in the Middle East. True to its solidarity with the peoples fighting for freedom and social progress, the Soviet Union has unswervingly supported, and intends to go on firmly supporting, the just position of the Arab States and peoples, as well as their struggle for the complete elimination of the consequences of Israeli aggression. As was noted in the Soviet Government's statement on the Middle East dated 28 April 1976,

"Peace and tranquillity in the Middle East are the goals of Soviet policy in the area. The Soviet Union is also interested in creating conditions for the development of relations with all States of the Middle East. It has not and cannot have any prejudices against any of these States, including Israel, if the latter gives up its policy of aggression and takes the road of peace and good-neighbourly relations with the Arabs." [A/31/84-S/12063, annex.]

18. Belief in the necessity for a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East on the basis of the principles I have outlined is shared and supported by all progressive and democratic forces and all peace-loving States—above all, by the socialist and non-aligned States.

19. The problem of a Middle East settlement was given an important place at the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty, which took place in Bucharest at the end of November. In the Declaration of the Warsaw Treaty Participating States entitled "For new horizons in international détente, for building security and developing co-operation in Europe", which was unanimously adopted by the participants in that Conference, it was stressed that:

"The States represented at the Meeting restate their support of the fight of the Arab States and peoples for a just political settlement of the conflict in the Middle East. They unanimously consider that such a settlement requires the withdrawal of all Israeli troops from the Arab

territories occupied in 1967, the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian Arab people, including its right to create a State of its own, the securing of the right to independent existence of all the States involved in the conflict, including Israel, and the termination of the state of war between the respective Arab States and Israel.

"It is these problems that have to form the agenda of the Geneva Middle East Peace Conference, whose proceedings should be resumed in the shortest possible time and with the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization. The conflict in the Middle East can and must be settled; this is necessary in the interest of all peoples of the region, in the interest of general peace.

"The participants in the Meeting resolutely advocate the undelayed normalization of the situation in Lebanon, the peaceful settlement, by the Lebanese themselves, of all the internal problems of their country, without outside interference, and with appropriate consideration of the legitimate rights and interests of the Palestine resistance movement represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization." [See A/31/431-S/12255, annex I, sect. V.],

20. It is a cause for satisfaction that, during the current debate on the question of Palestine and other aspects of the Middle East problem in the plenary meetings of the General Assembly and in the Security Council almost all States Members of the United Nations, including Western countries, with the exception of Israel and its protectors, have also come out unambiguously in favour of a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East on the basis of the withdrawal of Israeli troops from all the Arab territories occupied in 1967 and guarantees for the inalienable rights of the Arab people of Palestine, as well as for the right of all States of the region to an independent existence and development.

21. In this way the international community has clearly defined realistic principles for a settlement of the conflict which are fair to all parties to the Middle East conflict. It is now time to seek concrete agreement on the basis of those principles within the framework of the Geneva Peace Conference, with the participation of all interested parties, including the PLO.

22. In these conditions, the General Assembly must adopt the kind of decisions which would make it possible to bring about a decisive break-through for peace in the Middle East. This would be promoted, above all, by purposeful decisions on the part of the Assembly to ensure the speedy resumption of the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East with the direct participation of the PLO in its work, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 3375 (XXX).

23. This would also be facilitated by an appeal to the United Nations Secretary-General to make contact with the Co-Chairmen of the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East and to request them to enter into consultations immediately with all parties to the conflict, with a view to preparing for a resumption of the work of that Conference as soon as possible.

24. Mr. SALLAM (Yemen) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Almost 10 years ago, on 5 June 1967, Israel launched a

treacherous act of aggression against both Egypt and Syria, thereby occupying the entire Sinai peninsula, as well as the Syrian Golan Heights and all that remained of Palestinian land. Israel launched that treacherous act of aggression in the belief that force and humiliation are the only paths conducive to peace—a peace based on injustice and submission. But the Arab nation throughout the entire Arab world has rejected this unjust and unfair “logic” and has resolved to restore its dignity and regain sovereignty over its land.

25. The October 1973 war was the only logical reply to Israel because it does not understand any other language. The Arabs have thereby taught the Israelis a lesson that they will never forget.

26. The Arabs are a peace-loving people and they wish to establish peace in their homeland so as to build their economy and devote the enormous funds spent on war to economic and humanitarian purposes to promote the happiness of our part of mankind and to avert the scourges of war and destruction.

27. Before the Second World War, the Arab people suffered injustice, coercion and humiliation at the hands of the colonialists and invaders. When the Second World War came to an end the Arabs thought that their problems would be solved and that their independence and sovereignty over their land would be guaranteed in accordance with the pledges given by Britain in conformity with the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. But that mirage began to be dispelled day by day and year by year until the Arabs came to realize that they had rid themselves of the yoke of old-style colonialists only to fall into the grip of new-style, arrogant and unjust settler-colonialists who claim to be “the chosen people of God” and contend that the Arab lands, from the Nile to the Euphrates, are a special property given to them by divine right.

28. The British, the Americans and others, for numerous reasons, have played the main role in this drama that has been produced and directed by world Zionism: from the Balfour Declaration to the partition of Palestine into two States, Arab and Jewish; from the war of 1948 to the war of 1956, in which Britain and France participated; and finally to the treacherous war of 1967, the plan for which was drawn up in some Western capitals and carried out by Israel on its own behalf as well as on behalf of some Western countries.

29. I say this so that it may be recorded in history. Many books, magazines and newspapers printed after the 1967 war bear witness to these facts and record them as established truth.

30. There is no need here for me to explain the numerous motives that prompted some Western countries at that time to encourage Israel, like a mad dog, to launch a treacherous war against the Arab countries; nor is there any reason here in this context to explain the motives which led Mr. Nixon on 23 June 1967 during his visit to Tel Aviv to say:

“Israel should never give back any territory it gained and it should use its strong position to compel the Arabs to sit separately with Israelis at the negotiation table.”⁵

That was said in spite of the warm welcome accorded Mr. Nixon in Egypt during his visit.

31. But several years have passed; circumstances have changed, and so have the centres of power in the Middle East. Therefore, there is no longer any justification for some Western Powers to adhere to their old, arbitrary position. It is not enough that this drama has been enacted for 30 years? Is it not enough that this inhuman bargaining has been allowed to go on? Is it not enough that the lives of innocent people are being sacrificed every day for the pleasure and prosperity of those bargainers? Do the Zionists not realize the role they are playing in carrying out the wishes of those bargainers? Do they not know that if they really want to live in peace in the land of peace they must pursue a path conducive to peace, based on justice, equity and respect for the right of others?

32. We have listened to the Israelis saying that, in order to arrive at a permanent settlement in the Middle East, the Arabs must make some concessions and must recognize Israel and its sovereignty over Palestinian land. With those concessions the Arabs would give up all the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people which belong to the Palestinian people alone. As to concessions by the Israelis, they consist simply of withdrawal from the Arab lands occupied since 1967, with some reservations.

33. Withdrawal is not itself a concession, but, rather, a commitment that should be implemented in accordance with the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, whose provisions Israel pledged to respect when it was accepted as a Member of this world Organization.

34. To make withdrawal conditional on a peace treaty cannot serve the cause of peace based on right and justice. In this connexion I should like to quote a statement by President Eisenhower during the tripartite aggression against Egypt in 1956:

“Should a nation which attacks and occupies foreign territory in the face of United Nations disapproval be allowed to impose conditions on its own 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 order.”⁶

35. The Arabs have accepted the principle of negotiations with Israel at the Geneva Peace Conference on condition that the PLO, which is the sole representative of the Palestinian people, be allowed to participate in that Conference's deliberations. But the Zionists persist in reiterating the statement that the PLO must first recognize Israel as a condition for its participation in the Geneva Peace Conference.

36. Israel today occupies the whole of the land of Palestine, just as it occupies the Egyptian Sinai peninsula and the Syrian Golan Heights. So, which is the State of Israel? Is it the Israel created by the United Nations through its biased and illegal resolution, or is it another

⁵ Quoted in English by the speaker.

⁶ Quoted in English by the speaker.

Israel? For Israel has actually passed through various stages of metamorphosis from 1947 to the present time.

37. Therefore, if the PLO were to recognize the Government of Israel, how, then, could it claim any right in the land of Palestine?

38. If Israel wishes to live in peace in the land of peace, then it has to understand that this has to be done on the basis of respect for and acknowledgement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and of unconditional withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories. The Arabs are capable eventually of eliminating all the consequences of injustice and aggression, and if Israel really wishes to live in peace it must be logical with itself and seize this opportunity and not let it pass just as it has allowed to pass the other opportunities which were presented to it. Moreover, it has to acknowledge that the presence and participation of the PLO, which is the sole representative of the Palestinian people, is basic and essential to any effort undertaken with a view to achieving a comprehensive and just solution in the Middle East.

39. In the past, Israel has on several occasions opted for war. Let it just once opt for peace.

40. Mr. FLORIN (German Democratic Republic) (*interpretation from Russian*): The German Democratic Republic shares the profound concern of so many States Members of the United Nations in connexion with the situation in the Middle East. In the Secretary-General's report on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force [UNDOF], we find an unambiguous warning:

“... there can be no question that the situation in the Middle East will remain unstable and potentially dangerous unless real progress can be made towards a just and lasting settlement of the problem in all its aspects.”⁷

Those words were written about the situation in the Israeli-Syrian sector and reflect the official view of the Security Council, but they can just as correctly be applied to the general situation in the Middle East.

41. The correctness of the repeated assertion that as long as Israeli aggression is not brought to an end once and for all the Middle East conflict will continue to be fraught with the danger of sudden escalation has been confirmed. Israel's continuing aggression is the reason why the peoples of the Middle East cannot live in peace and security and why the situation in that part of the world is a constant threat to universal peace. My delegation therefore supports the demand for an intensification of the efforts for a fundamental settlement of the Middle East conflict.

42. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the German Democratic Republic, speaking in the general debate at this session of the General Assembly on 4 October this year [15th meeting], stressed the view of the German Democratic Republic that a political settlement of the Middle

East conflict is necessary and possible. A just and lasting peace in the Middle East can be attained on the basis of the clear decisions of the world Organization, which contain demands for Israel's withdrawal from all the Arab territories it occupied in 1967 and for the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and also state the right of all peoples and States of that part of the world to peace and security.

43. To question those fundamental principles, to call for new debates on all questions, thus denying the General Assembly of the United Nations the right to insist on observance of the fundamental rules of international law and to call decisively for their implementation, is tantamount to directly encouraging Israel's aggression.

44. But times have changed. Israel has of course shifted from its “hot” seizure of Arab territories to its “cold” annexation, and here its illusion that it can assimilate the occupied territories with impunity is bolstered by the so-called “step-by-step diplomacy”. However, we can say with certainty that Israel will not be permitted to extend its territory by force at the expense of its neighbours. The new relationship of forces in the world is not working in favour of the aggressors and their annexationist plans.

45. A just and peaceful political settlement in the Middle East requires united action by all States and peoples interested in a just peace. The pre-condition for the attainment of that goal is united and consolidated action by the direct victims of Israel's aggression, the Arab peoples and States, against the Zionist strategy of expansion pursued by Israel and its imperialist henchmen, that is, action taken jointly and in agreement with the natural allies of the Arab peoples and States in this struggle, namely, the States of the socialist community and the other anti-imperialist forces in the world.

46. The tragic events in Lebanon, which are a direct consequence of the failure to settle the Middle East conflict, have shown clearly that the Israeli aggressors, together with the imperialist and other reactionary forces, have made every effort to fan the flames of dissent among the Arab States and to prevent the implementation of a united peace strategy. They have made every effort to liquidate the PLO, which is an essential link in the efforts to establish a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. Israeli ruling circles, fearful of more united action against their continuing aggression, have intensified their activities with regard to Lebanon and have even gone so far as to threaten direct intervention. With regard to Lebanon, the German Democratic Republic, like the other States parties to the Warsaw treaty, calls decisively for the immediate normalization of the situation in that country and for the peaceful solution by the Lebanese themselves of all the internal problems of their country, without outside interference and taking due account of the lawful rights and interests of the Palestinian opposition movements, represented by the PLO.

47. The time has come to make the official representatives of Tel Aviv—those who are still thinking in terms of Zionist theories of expansion—realize that it is impossible to destroy the Palestinian people and its lawful representative, the PLO.

⁷ See *Official Records of the Security Council, Thirty-first Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1976*, document S/12235, para. 32.

48. Certain circles in the imperialist States also should give fresh thought to their position when they think that in their official policy they can disregard the role of the PLO. Indeed, some of their agents are trying to weaken the fighting capacity of the PLO.

49. Fortunately, the thirty-first session of the General Assembly has once again confirmed that the overwhelming majority of States views the exercise by the Palestinian people, represented by the PLO, of its inalienable rights as an essential condition for peace in the Middle East.

50. It is a matter for concern that Israel tried, a few days ago, to block any reference in the Security Council's decision extending the mandate of UNDOF to the fact that it is urgently necessary to continue and intensify the efforts for the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, as well as any reference to the need for real progress towards a just and lasting settlement of the Middle East problem in all its aspects. Is not Israel trying to transform the stationing of United Nations forces in Arab lands into a means of perpetuating the present situation for ever? The Members of our Organization can never agree to that. I would recall, also, that the cost of maintaining these United Nations forces is borne by Member States and in no way by the aggressor, the party truly responsible for the conflict. That is a matter for regret.

51. A peace settlement in the Middle East would certainly be facilitated if the leaders in Tel Aviv were compelled to stop stoking up the arms race. Ending the supply of weapons to the aggressor, as well as other broad financial support, would be a substantial contribution to that cause. Unfortunately, those on whom such action depends are working in the opposite direction. But even this support of the aggressor will not save him.

52. Israel is in a situation of increasing internal political crisis. The unwillingness of the broad masses of the people to accept the hopeless course of aggression and the worsening situation of the workers are becoming clearer. Strike movements are growing. The causes of this are obvious. Israel's State budget for military purposes for 1976 and 1977 is estimated at 37.1 billion Israeli pounds. Two thirds of the total budget is swallowed up by armaments. Military companies are acquiring ever-increasing profits. For example, the profits of one such company were 35 per cent larger in 1975 than in 1974. The burden of financing the armaments has fallen on the shoulders of the workers. The Arab population is in a particularly grievous situation because, in Israel itself and in the occupied territories, it is subjected to oppression and discrimination.

53. Emil Tomeh, a member of the Politburo and Secretary of the Central Committee of the Israeli Communist Party, has drawn attention to the fact that the solution of all of Israel's social and political problems lies only in a lasting peace. In his view, the struggle for a peaceful solution acquires great significance in the light of the ideological struggle against zionism, whose policy is quite contradictory to the interests of the masses of the people.

54. The ruling circles in Israel should finally draw the necessary conclusions about why their futile policy has failed. Their efforts to make themselves out to be the

representatives of all Jews in the world amount to nothing but vain self-deception. Their efforts to camouflage the true causes of the Middle East conflict have once again been roundly rejected at this session of the General Assembly. Tel Aviv's hope that, with the assistance of the powerful Zionist groupings on the American continent and the policy of one big Asian country, it could deceive world public opinion concerning the true nature of the Israeli aggression is built on sand.

55. Tel Aviv has also erred in its assessment of the power and international authority of the PLO, and it has miscalculated in its efforts to break out of its universal isolation by means of various manoeuvres.

56. The peoples of the world are demanding peace and security with an ever firmer voice. The process of easing international tension is becoming stronger and stronger. Relationships between the forces of the world are in no way working in favour of the forces of the cold war or of the intensification of tension and the continuation of aggression. Attention was drawn to this once again at the recent meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty.

57. Only one conclusion can be drawn: there must be a speedy resumption of the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East, with the full participation of the Palestinian people, through their legitimate representatives, the PLO.

58. An over-all settlement of the problems of the Middle East requires: the withdrawal of all Israeli troops from the Arab territories occupied in 1967; the exercise by the Arab people of Palestine of their inalienable rights, including the right to establish their own State; the guaranteeing of the right to independent existence of all States involved in the conflict, including Israel; and the ending of the state of war between the Arab States concerned and Israel.

59. The delegation of the German Democratic Republic supports the constructive proposals of the Soviet Union concerning the Geneva Peace Conference. The German Democratic Republic again states its support for the struggle of the Arab States and peoples to achieve a just political settlement of the Middle East conflict.

60. Permit me to conclude by quoting the words of the recent declaration by the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty: "The conflict in the Middle East can and must be settled; this is necessary in the interest of all the peoples of the region, in the interest of general peace."

61. Mr. KAMAL (Bahrain) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Once more the United Nations General Assembly is debating the question of the Middle East. Each year, when the Middle East item is included in the agenda of the General Assembly, the question which suggests itself is how such an important problem in such a sensitive region of the world can remain unresolved.

62. In our view, this item constitutes the greatest challenge confronting our international Organization not because it has so far failed to adopt resolutions, nor because it has been unable to take any action, but because it has so far been unable to take measures to ensure that its

resolutions are carried out, including resolution 181 (II), adopted by the General Assembly on 29 November 1947, and the two resolutions of the Security Council—242 (1967), adopted on 22 November 1967, and 338 (1973), adopted on 22 October 1973.

63. We believe the reasons are very clear. Since 1947 there has been continuous Israeli aggression against Arab countries, and Israel, by its atrocious methods, is still conducting its racist Zionist policies on the land of Palestine, the Golan Heights and Sinai. The Middle East has suffered many invasions, starting with the Mogul invasion and the Crusades, followed by various forms of colonialism. But not until 1947 had the region suffered a racist invasion such as that which has now continued for 30 years. Those groups of people who had suffered Nazi terrorism and persecution in Europe and in some other countries came to take revenge on a peace-loving people who had faith in human values and were practising them in the Middle East. They began to carry out their inhuman attacks, razing villages, killing the inhabitants and acting against the very principles of Semitism, which are upheld by all religions. The Zionist occupation of Palestinian land in 1947, 1948 and 1956, and the occupation of the land of Sinai, the West Bank and the Golan Heights in 1967, are clear indications of the continuous aggressive policies pursued by the Zionist racist régime in Israel and shed light on the prospects for the future.

64. The security and safety of the region is constantly threatened by war, and this in itself constitutes a threat to world peace and security. The countries which support Israel bear a great responsibility for the tension which prevails in the Middle East region, and the assistance given to Israel has helped it to consolidate its existence and presence in the occupied Arab land and has strengthened its determination to ignore the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. This in turn has led to a continuation of the state of tension in the Middle East.

65. In our view, the main problem is the question of Palestine and the cause of the Palestinian people and their right to the land of their fathers. The conscience of the world cannot tolerate the continuation of the sufferings of the Palestinian people, whose land has been usurped, whose houses have been destroyed, and who have been deprived of their most elementary rights as a people—not to mention the massacres committed against them in full view of the countries of the world. The sufferings visited upon the Middle East region as a result of the Zionist racist colonization from 1947 until now have undermined the progress and development of the region. It is regrettable that the countries which helped to create such a situation are still pursuing their policy of embezzlement vis-à-vis the Arab peoples.

66. At the beginning of this century the resources of the Arab peoples of the Middle East region were depleted; now, in the second half of the century, the Arab peoples are experiencing a new kind of embezzlement and their wealth is being exhausted through the presence of a persistent state of tension and by wars which are repeatedly launched against them, forcing them to pay vast sums to obtain arms with which to defend themselves and their heritage, which is threatened with extinction at the hands of the Zionist racist authorities.

67. One of the most elementary rights of the peoples of the area, particularly the Palestinian people, is to be able to live in peace and security and to be able to rebuild their societies and their economies in order to participate in the building of human civilization, but even this right has so far been denied them, because of the hostile attitude of Israel and of its supporters, which are maintaining a state of war and aggression in order to consolidate Israel's position in the area. Never before in history has there been a process similar to that now taking place in our lands. The indigenous people's lands have been usurped to provide a homeland for intruders who are brought in from all parts of the world, and those people are denied the right to live in their own homeland. The calls for peace voiced by the representatives of racist Zionism in the United Nations are simply intended to deceive world opinion. The conditions stated in the document holding out hope for peace prepared by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian people [A/31/35], established in accordance with General Assembly resolution 3376 (XXX), constitute, in the opinion of my delegation, the minimum requirements for bringing about a peaceful solution of the Palestinian problem, which continues to be the crux of the Middle East crisis. Nevertheless, this document was rejected by Israel. The trickery practised by Israel in its attempts to deceive world public opinion constitute, in our opinion, the greatest challenge facing the international community. When the representative of Israel speaks of the security, stability and prosperity enjoyed by the Palestinians in the occupied Arab lands, or when he asks for permission to show a film on the advantages of occupation, what does the representative of racist Zionism expect? Does he expect the countries and peoples of the world to sanction the continuation of the Zionist racist occupation? Does he think that the General Assembly is going to adopt a resolution calling on Israel to extend its domination so that this so-called prosperity can be extended to another part of the world?

68. The Arab calls for peace in the area are based on a number of considerations, including the following: the guarantee of the right of the Palestinian people to return to their homeland and their right to self-determination, and the withdrawal of Israel from all the occupied Arab territories.

69. Since 1895, the Zionist racist movement has been practising large-scale blackmail against Jews throughout the world in general and against Jews in Europe and America in particular with a view to achieving its illegitimate designs. It is logical that the countries and peoples of the world should become aware of this policy of blackmail and put an end to it in order to safeguard world peace and security. It is high time to expose the attempts and plans made by racist Zionism in order to mislead and brain-wash public opinion, and the propaganda it has carried out by spreading fabrications about the situation in the area. It is high time to expose them, so as to reveal all the facts about racist Zionism. The practices carried out by the Zionist racist authorities in the area have been condemned by the United Nations and denounced by the international community. That is why the representative of Israel here has consistently conveyed Israel's refusal to allow any committee of the United Nations to enter the area to find out the facts. It is high time for all the peace-loving peoples and countries of

the world to take action to end the tension prevailing in the area. Israel's attitude of contempt for the resolutions of the United Nations is clear evidence of its intransigence and its arrogance towards this Organization and its Member States, and this shows the true nature of the call for peace repeated by the representative of the racist Zionist movement on every occasion. The road to peace is clear: it lies in full respect for the resolutions adopted by the international community and the taking of positive action pursuant to those resolutions. My delegation welcomes any initiative in this respect designed to establish security, avert a destructive war and ensure world peace.

Mr. Florin (German Democratic Republic), Vice-President, took the Chair.

70. The countries of the region have expressed their readiness in the past, and they remain ready, to co-operate with all friendly countries that have interests in the area and that are concerned with creating an atmosphere of stability in the Middle East in order to arrive at a just and lasting settlement of this problem. That is the objective sought by the Arab countries, in conformity with all resolutions adopted by the Security Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations. The resumption of the Geneva Conference with a view to establishing peace in the Middle East region, with the participation of all the parties concerned in the work of the Conference, including the PLO, which is the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, would be, in our view, an essential step in the direction of a just and lasting settlement in the Middle East.

71. Mr. YANKOV (Bulgaria): For quite a number of years, the Middle East problem has been the focus of the attention of the international community and the United Nations. This year alone the Security Council has discussed various aspects of this issue on eight different occasions.

72. After the lengthy debates on the two interrelated questions—those of Palestine and the Middle East—at the thirtieth session of the General Assembly, the current session has already discussed and adopted an important new resolution on the Palestine problem; and now the General Assembly is considering the Middle East question in its entirety.

73. Many delegations have already referred to the decisions on the Middle East adopted by the Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries last August [see A/31/197]. The Middle East crisis continues to feature in the talks between most responsible statesmen and politicians of various countries. There is nothing accidental in this. The explanation is simple. The situation in the Middle East continues to be unstable, insecure and in a constant state of tension and may at any moment erupt into a new armed conflict. The efforts of the United Nations notwithstanding, no real progress has been achieved as yet towards finding a just and lasting settlement of this acute international issue.

74. What are the inevitable conclusions to be drawn from this continuing crisis in the Middle East?

75. In the view of the Bulgarian delegation, the first obvious conclusion is that the basic causes of the Middle

East conflict have not been removed. Israeli armed forces continue to occupy large portions of the territories of neighbouring Arab States which Israel seized as a result of its aggression in 1967. At the same time, Israel's ruling circles continue to prevent the exercise by the Arab people of Palestine of their legitimate rights, including their right to create a State of their own. The 3 million Palestinians continue to live as exiles, despite the fact that their right to statehood has been reaffirmed by the United Nations and that the PLO has been recognized by the Security Council and the General Assembly as the legitimate representative of the Arab people of Palestine.

76. The second conclusion which, in our opinion, can be drawn from an objective analysis of the developments in the Middle East, is that only a comprehensive and radical political solution of the conflict can lead to a just and lasting peace and guarantee the security of all States in the area.

77. The experience of the last three decades shows that a lasting peace cannot be reached in the Middle East by means of a mere cease-fire among different countries or groups of countries in the region. That approach led and will still lead to a false lull that can easily flare up into new armed conflicts. If there are still people who doubt this elementary truth, the events in the Middle East since the last armed conflict in 1973 should have convinced them that this piecemeal approach is not only damaging but quite dangerous. In fact, it can serve only the interests of those who would like to see the Middle East without peace and tranquillity at all.

78. It is to be regretted that this discredited approach has been employed once again with respect to the Middle East in the period since the 1973 conflict. Small wonder, then, that the results thus achieved are far from satisfactory. The threat to peace in the Middle East has not been removed. It even becomes more imminent with every passing day.

79. The only result of the widely trumpeted step-by-step policy as a means of resolving the Middle East conflict was the increased intransigence of the aggressor and its blunt arrogance in flouting the decisions of the United Nations and the will of world public opinion. In short, that policy enabled the aggressor to be unpunished, to profit and to ride roughshod over the legitimate interests and rights of the victims of the aggression. In fact, legal justification has been provided for postponing and delaying the solution of the Middle East conflict so that the situation of "no peace, no war" can be maintained. Moreover, through the step-by-step approach, fresh complications have been added with a view to hindering a just and peaceful settlement of the conflict.

80. The substance and designs of this kind of policy are too obvious. They aim at making world public opinion grow accustomed to the idea that, ostensibly, the security of Israel can be guaranteed only if Israel annexes part of the Arab territories. Of particular concern is the fact that the aggressors and their protectors have made no secret of the aims of their policy. Israel's representatives state from this rostrum with growing impertinence that they have no intention of complying with United Nations decisions.

81. For that reason, in the view of the Bulgarian delegation, the main purpose of the current discussion will be to establish the failure of step-by-step diplomacy in the search for a solution of the Middle East crisis, to blow the lid off the real intentions of that policy and to show categorically that partial measures and interim agreements which leave the key problems of the Middle East hanging cannot ease tensions in the Middle East. On the contrary, they run the risk of creating a new stalemate. To put it in a nutshell: the current discussion will be useful and will really help a solution of the Middle East only if it renounces and rejects unequivocally the policy of partial measures as unworkable and dangerous for the interests of peace in the Middle East and throughout the world.

82. The Bulgarian delegation fully shares the view that the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Middle East—which is intended to postpone indefinitely a comprehensive and radical settlement—corresponds only to the interests and long-term plans of those whose aim is to control the Middle East with its enormous oil deposits and its important strategic position. It is common knowledge that those who pursue that policy, which favours the unreasonable stand of the Israeli ruling circles, are trying to torpedo Arab unity, to deal a blow at the forces of the Palestinian national liberation movement and to drag the Arabs into a fratricidal war. The tragic events in Lebanon have been yet another eloquent proof of the dangerous repercussions of that policy if the perfidious schemes against the cause of the Arab peoples are not checked in time.

83. The extensive discussion on the question of Palestine which ended two weeks ago and the current debate are encouraging for one reason, at least. They show that the overwhelming majority of Member States, including all Arab States, are becoming increasingly aware that what is needed for a comprehensive solution of the Middle East crisis are new and energetic efforts, that the only basis for reaching a just and lasting settlement of the conflict is the one that has been furnished by the relevant decisions of the Security Council and the General Assembly.

84. We are very pleased to note that the overwhelming majority of States place special emphasis on the fact that that basis is composed of the following intrinsically interrelated aspects: namely, the withdrawal of Israeli troops from all the Arab territories occupied by Israel in the course of its aggression in 1967; the realization of the inalienable rights of the Arab people of Palestine, including their right to create their own State; the guarantee of the right to independent existence of all States in the Middle East involved in the conflict, including Israel; and the cessation of the state of war between the Arab States and Israel.

85. There is no doubt that those basic and interrelated aspects correspond to the interests and legitimate rights of all countries directly involved in the conflict, and furnish a just and realistic foundation for the establishment of a lasting peace in the Middle East. As components of a comprehensive settlement of the crisis, they offer the shortest cut out of the deadlock and to do away once and for all with one of the most dangerous hotbeds of tension and conflict in international relations today.

86. There is, therefore, a just and feasible basis for the settlement of the Middle East conflict. At the same time, what is equally important is the fact that there is an international mechanism which can work out the details of that settlement. The Bulgarian delegation is pleased to note that only the Arab States directly involved in the conflict but also the overwhelming majority of Member States are becoming increasingly convinced of the urgency of a prompt resumption of the Geneva Conference on the Middle East.

87. It is more than obvious that the Geneva Peace Conference is the only forum in which a comprehensive political settlement of the Middle East crisis can be found with the participation of all the parties concerned—including, quite naturally, the PLO in its capacity as the recognized legitimate representative of the Arab people of Palestine. Its participation must be ensured on an equal footing from the very beginning, and in all stages of the work of the Geneva Peace Conference. In this connexion, the Bulgarian delegation welcomes the new initiative of the Soviet Government for the speedy resumption of the Geneva Peace Conference with specific suggestions on the preparations for the Conference and its agenda, which is to include all the problems the solution of which can lead to the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

88. The position of the Government of the People's Republic of Bulgaria on the Middle East problem is well known, since it has been explained and restated in the Security Council and the General Assembly on numerous occasions. This position is contained in quite a number of governmental documents and declarations issued by the most responsible statesmen of my country. It stems from the invariable policy of principle of the People's Republic of Bulgaria to seek a solution of international disputes by political means of negotiations. It is also based on the solidarity of the Bulgarian Government and people with the peoples fighting for freedom, independence and social progress. That is why the just cause of the Arab peoples has met, and will continue to meet, with full support from the Bulgarian Government and people.

89. It is hardly necessary to remind this Assembly that my country, which is in geographical proximity to the Middle East area, is vitally interested in eliminating that dangerous hotbed of tension and in establishing relations of co-operation and understanding among all States in that part of the world. We are deeply convinced not only that this is possible but also that it corresponds to the interests of all peoples, including the Israeli people.

90. It is high time that Israel's ruling circles abandoned their obstructionist and senseless policy, showed more commonsense and proved that Israel sincerely desires peace and good-neighbourly relations with the Arab peoples. The support given by certain States, foremost among them the United States, to the present Israeli policy will not change it in such a way as to remove the obstacles along the road to peace in the Middle East.

91. There is no doubt that one of the paramount tasks for the strengthening of international peace and security is to do away with the dangerous hotbed of tensions in the Middle

East. We believe that both this discussion and the decisions which are to be adopted by the General Assembly will help the resolution of this urgent problem. All States are in duty bound to assist the efforts at reaching a comprehensive, just and lasting political settlement of the Middle East crisis.

92. All States are in duty bound to heed the clearly expressed will of the United Nations and world public opinion.

93. Mr. STANBURY (Canada): Canada's desire for a Middle East peace settlement is real and steadfast. It has led us to make and to continue our peace-keeping contribution there. Beyond the short term, such a contribution can be fully justified only if it helps to provide the time and regional stability for negotiation of a settlement. A year or two ago, it was possible to perceive a link between Middle East peace-keeping and progress in the process of peace negotiations put in train by the mediation efforts of the United States. Since then, unfortunately, that process has lain moribund. Now, with renewed hopes for Lebanon and therefore for the entire region, the time seems opportune for the reactivation of comprehensive negotiations towards a final settlement.

94. In the view of the Canadian Government, it is of the utmost urgency that a new start be made. There now exists agreement on the framework for negotiations: first, Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) have obtained general agreement. Secondly, all parties have agreed that the Palestinians should be heard and should participate in any discussion affecting their future. What then are the remaining obstacles? We know that they are procedural in form.

95. It would, of course, be naive to deny that the existing procedural difficulties cloak deeply-felt aspirations and apprehensions. But that fact simply confirms the necessity for particular efforts by the key parties to clear away procedural obstacles and permit negotiations to be resumed. We all know that the most important obstacles at the present time are: the difficulty of arranging for the effective representation of the Palestinian people in discussions and negotiations that will play a central role in determining their future, on the one hand and the need for unequivocal acceptance by all parties of the existence of the State of Israel as a sovereign and independent State on the other.

96. The task of overcoming those obstacles ought not to be beyond human ingenuity. It will require imagination, flexibility and determination; it will demand the wisdom, on the part of all concerned, to refrain from making it impossible to begin constructive negotiations by insisting on procedural considerations that would tend to predetermine their conclusions.

97. For negotiations to be successful they must begin, and they must begin with clear indications from both sides of the will to make necessary concessions. To save, as "bargaining points" for use at a later stage, concessions that both parties know to be inevitable, can only make it impossible for the bargaining ever to get started. There is no basis for serious negotiations without a clear understanding of two points: the reality of Israel as an independent State consistent with Security Council resolution 242 (1967) and the need for the Palestinian people to participate in the process of developing an appropriate structure for their political self-expression, within a suitable territorial framework.

98. Except for Palestinian participation, Security Council resolution 242 (1967) provides all the necessary elements of a basis for negotiations. Israel must withdraw from territories occupied in 1967, but only as part of a process that establishes secure and recognized boundaries for all States in the region and that provides effective recognition of the right of all those States, including Israel, to live in peace. Resolution 242 (1967) was a landmark of general agreement on the essential framework for a just and lasting peace. It should be neither tampered with nor distorted; it should be used as a basis for moving ahead towards a negotiated solution.

99. The Geneva Conference, while not the only conceivable forum for negotiations, is the only one in being. Rather than try to reconstruct it, we urge the parties to make use of it with all the urgency that the situation demands.

100. Let the parties and the international community, therefore, do what is necessary in order to permit the launching of the negotiating process and to seize now an opportunity which, if it is not grasped, will surely pass, just as surely to be followed by the outbreak of renewed hostilities and destruction which it is our common responsibility to prevent.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.