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

**AGENDA ITEM 29**

**The situation in the Middle East (*continued*)**

1. Mr. PAPOULIAS (Greece): The situation in the Middle East continues to be fraught with great dangers and to constitute a threat to international peace and security. So it is only natural for my country, which lies in the immediate vicinity of the area, to be particularly interested in a speedy, just and lasting solution of the problem, the more so as Greece has historical links of friendship with the Arab countries and a cultural heritage going back to such common sources as Aristotle.

2. Like many other delegations, my delegation has already had the opportunity of expressing its views during the discussion of the item on Palestine, but the present debate gives me another occasion to reiterate my country's stand on the problem of the Middle East, which is based on the fundamental principles of the Charter, especially the principle of self-determination, as well as on the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council.

3. Our position can be summed up again as follows. We subscribe to the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territories by the use of military force and to the need for: withdrawal by Israel from all the Arab territories occupied since June 1967; recognition of the legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinians, including their right to self-determination and to a national identity; a solution that guarantees the sovereignty and independence of all States in the region, including Israel, and their right to live within secure and recognized borders; support for all efforts and negotiations designed to bring about a just, lasting and peaceful settlement in the Middle East in accordance with the principles of the Charter and with the relevant United Nations resolutions, including the reconvening of the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East; and participation in that Conference of all the interested parties, including the Palestine Liberation Organization [PLO], as provided for in resolutions 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX), in favour of which my delegation voted.

4. Indeed, we do not consider that any negotiating effort aimed at bringing about a just and lasting peace in the

Middle East can be seriously undertaken or can have any chance of success unless it ensures from the beginning the participation of the recognized representatives of the Palestinian people along with the other parties concerned. This is a reality that has acquired overwhelming acceptance.

5. We are pleased to note that draft resolutions A/31/L.26 and A/31/L.27, which were submitted in regard to this item, correspond in a very large measure to the positions that the Greek delegation has supported over the past years with consistency and clarity. We feel that these draft resolutions contain the elements for a just and lasting settlement of the problem of the Middle East. They also call for appropriate action by the United Nations organs, namely, the General Assembly and the Security Council, as well as by the Secretary-General, in order to bring about a settlement which the international community has been seeking to promote for a long time in the name of justice and peace and in accordance with the principles of the Charter.

6. For these considerations, the Greek delegation will vote in favour of draft resolutions A/31/L.26 and A/31/L.27. I wish to add that Greece has joined in sponsoring draft resolution A/31/L.27.

7. Our hope is that all the parties involved will demonstrate political wisdom and statesmanship and a sincere desire to negotiate in a serious and meaningful way. For this is an essential condition if we are to ensure a fundamental and comprehensive political settlement of the Middle East problem and establish a just and lasting peace in the area.

8. Mr. KAUFMANN (Netherlands): Speaking on behalf of the nine countries of the European Communities, I should like to emphasize how important we consider this debate.

9. There is no need for me to stress the close and long-standing links that bind our countries with those in the area. This debate provides an opportunity to consider the question of the Middle East in all its aspects.

10. The common position of our nine countries was expressed most recently in the general debate during this session of the General Assembly from this very rostrum by the Netherlands Foreign Minister, Mr. van der Stoep, on behalf of the nine countries of the European Communities [7th meeting]. In addition, a number of our Foreign Ministers have expressed their views on the question of the Middle East. All those statements reflect our common concern about the continuing seriousness of the situation in the area and make clear the importance which we attach to further progress being made towards a just and lasting

settlement as soon as possible. This reconfirms our position, which has already been voiced during last year's debate on this item by the representative of Italy, Ambassador Vinci, who, on 2 December 1975, spoke on behalf of the nine countries of the Communities.<sup>1</sup> We very much regret that for several reasons it has not been possible, during the year that has elapsed, to make the progress that we had hoped for.

11. A major complicating factor in this have been the tragic developments in Lebanon about which our countries have on several occasions expressed their profound concern. We have therefore noted with great satisfaction the decisive improvement in the situation in Lebanon following the successful outcome of the meetings of the Arab Heads of State in Riyadh and in Cairo in October. The nine countries have on several occasions affirmed their support for the maintenance of the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon. In this context, we should like to reiterate our assurance to President Sarkis of our goodwill and support in the formidable task of reconstructing Lebanon. Our countries, both individually and through the Commission of the European Communities, have demonstrated our support by contributing to a number of initiatives, including that of the United Nations itself, which have been taken to deal with the problems still facing Lebanon.

12. In the same spirit I should like to recall, in my capacity as representative of the presidency of the Council of the European Communities, that the European Economic Community has negotiated broad economic co-operation agreements with the countries of the region. It stands ready to broaden the existing agreement with Lebanon. Obviously peace in the Middle East would be an important factor in the economic and social development of the region.

13. The improvement of the situation in Lebanon has coincided with other favourable developments in the area. In this regard we have noted that statements have been made by leaders on all sides, both in the Middle East and here in this Assembly, which seem to indicate a certain convergence of view that the time may shortly be ripe to bring about the resumption of negotiations towards a comprehensive settlement.

14. Our nine countries consider it of the utmost importance that this opportunity should be grasped. We also hope that all sides will exert the greatest efforts to find a way around the remaining obstacles on the road towards the conference table. In this spirit we trust that all concerned will do their utmost to refrain from actions which could prejudice the opportunities for progress which now exist. For our part, the nine countries remain ready to contribute in any way we can to the efforts towards a settlement.

15. Our nine countries remain convinced that such negotiations must be based on the following principles: first, the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force; secondly, the need for Israel to end the territorial occupation which it has maintained since the conflict of 1967; thirdly, respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and

independence of every State in the area, and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries; fourthly, recognition that, in the establishment of a just and lasting peace, account must be taken of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians.

16. The first three principles include the elements of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which provide the only agreed framework for the achievement of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. We would oppose any unilateral attempts to detract from them. At the same time, we have also stated our view that these three principles have to be supplemented by a fourth: namely, recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. We have furthermore made clear that the exercise of the right of the Palestinian people to the effective expression of their national identity could involve a territorial basis in the framework of a negotiated settlement.

17. We would, however, like to emphasize once again our firm view that all these aspects must be taken as a whole. Just as we consider that, in the context of a settlement, Israel should be ready to recognize the rights of the Palestinian people, so we consider that the Arab side should be ready to recognize the right of Israel to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries.

18. As was stated by the Italian representative in the debate on this item on 2 December 1975, our nine countries are prepared to assist in such a settlement in a concrete way. In particular, we remain ready to consider the possibility of participation in such international guarantees as may be necessary to ensure the security of all the parties concerned.

19. The role of the United Nations over the years in efforts to bring peace to the Middle East has been of the greatest importance. We should like to pay a special tribute here to the tireless efforts of the Secretary-General. We are also deeply conscious of the value of the contribution made by the United Nations peace-keeping forces, whose presence remains essential.

20. In conclusion, we believe that during the last few weeks there have been a number of signs which seem to indicate that a more realistic attitude towards the need for an early resumption of peace negotiations is being adopted. This debate on the Middle East therefore comes at an opportune moment. It is our fervent hope that it will be conducted in a constructive manner and thereby encourage the momentum towards peace.

21. Mr. KAISER (Bangladesh): The Middle East situation, in the twenty-ninth year of our deliberations on this highly complex and sensitive problem, continues to remain a major test of the viability and credibility of the United Nations, challenging its fundamental rationale: the collective responsibility of all Member States for international peace and security and the economic and social well-being of all mankind.

22. In no other issue has the United Nations been so deeply involved. In no other problem does the United Nations bear so crucial a burden of responsibility. Indeed,

<sup>1</sup> See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirtieth Session, Plenary Meetings*, 2423rd meeting.

the myriad ramifications of the Middle East problem have been woven into the fabric of every major concern affecting the Assembly's work, whether it be political, legal, economic or humanitarian.

23. Five major items of the agenda, spread over several Committees, deal specifically with various aspects of the problem. Hundreds of resolutions, directly or indirectly impinging on the issues involved, swell the backlog of precedents governing future action. Yet it is a measure of our collective failure that the situation remains deadlocked, that the problem continues in constant flux, unpredictable and turbulent, threatening not only the peace of the region but global peace and security.

24. To us in Bangladesh the roots of the problem appear stark in their simplicity. This is a problem of a people whose thousands-year-old homeland became the object of usurpation by foreigners with no other purpose than to sustain the artificial memories of an ancient historical past—aliens, whose specific intent was to create, illegally and against the will of the legitimate inhabitants, a political and demographic nucleus that had not existed for centuries. It is the problem of an uprooted people, denied their birthright and their inalienable right to freedom and independence.

25. The situation has been compounded in its illegality. It violates the most basic principles proscribing the acquisition of territory by force and the cardinal principle of respecting the territorial integrity of States. A land has been forcibly partitioned without the consent of its inhabitants. Its people have been expelled from their homes and their goods and properties confiscated. Out of the inevitable strife have resulted four major wars, the dismemberment of an ancient territory, and the annexation and occupation of further territories of other sovereign Arab States. The inhabitants of these territories have been harrassed openly and covertly to abandon their homes, and aliens have been invited—indeed, urged and exhorted—to establish settlements on lands they do not own. Discrimination on the basis of exclusive preference for one religious faith is rife, and centuries-old cultures are threatened by displacement.

26. The situation is not only illegal but manifestly insecure. Peace based on injustice cannot survive. Security cannot be sustained through annexation. The maintenance of an untenable *status quo* through the force of might and open defiance of the wishes of the great majority of the world community is not only short-sighted but also self-destructive, for it involves not only one or two nations but threatens global involvement and holocaust.

27. Bangladesh's stand on the question is unequivocal. It demands the total withdrawal of Israel from territories occupied since the war of June 1967; the recognition of the legitimate right of the Palestinians to return to their homeland and to national self-determination; and the maintenance of the demographic, legal and cultural status of the Holy Places, in particular the holy city of Jerusalem. Such a course, we believe, will ensure the road to peace and tranquillity in the area. Without it, hope for solutions will remain ephemeral.

28. Bangladesh has followed with close interest the many initiatives that have been made within and outside the

United Nations to give effect to its resolutions. The step-by-step negotiations have produced only partial results and there is as yet no advance to the next phase. Indeed, as the Secretary-General has bluntly stated in the introduction to his report on the work of the Organization:

“Although efforts to resume the negotiating process in the Middle East are, in the present circumstances, in abeyance, it is vital that they should be resumed . . .”  
[A/31/1/Add.1, sect. III.]

29. We continue to believe that the involvement of the United Nations remains an indispensable factor in the search for solutions. The responsibility of the Security Council is paramount in this regard in taking the necessary measures and speeding up the implementation of the relevant resolutions of the Assembly on the basis of a defined time-table. We are also firmly of the belief that the momentum towards a reconvening of the Geneva Conference should be renewed and sustained, with the participation of the PLO as an indispensable factor.

30. In conclusion, it is obvious that peace is indivisible and that security in the Middle East is integrally linked to the structure of a global security. It is time for injustice and illegality to give way to a just political settlement that will ensure to all the fundamental rights laid down in the Charter and that respects the decisions of the overwhelming majority of nations of our world.

31. It is for that reason that Bangladesh has decided to join in sponsoring the draft resolution contained in document A/31/L.26. We firmly believe that this draft resolution contains the indispensable ingredients for any purposeful move forward on this critical question.

32. Mr. TIKHONOV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (*interpretation from Russian*): The General Assembly is again considering the item on the situation in the Middle East because the position in that part of the world remains intricate and dangerous. The cause of that state of affairs is clear: it is the aggressive policy of Israel, which with the support of its protectors, is trying to hold on to the Arab lands seized as a result of its aggression.

33. Israel's occupation of Arab lands and its denial of the legitimate national rights of the Arab people of Palestine are in keeping with the long-term plans of imperialism to establish control over that part of the world, over its enormous oil resources and over important strategic positions. But implementation of those plans is being impeded by the new distribution of forces in the Arab East and the strengthening in that region of States which are taking the road to national independence and social progress. Therefore imperialism and its Israeli henchmen are making efforts to undermine progressive régimes and trying to pit them against each other to prevent the consolidation of patriotic forces in the Arab world, as well as to destroy the relations of friendship and co-operation between Arab countries and other States.

34. Events in Lebanon and Israel's involvement in them have demonstrated the urgent necessity for a speedy settlement in the Middle East. Life itself has convincingly shown that positive advances towards such a settlement

cannot be achieved by means of partial deals on a separate basis. Such deals, from the outset, pursued the evil and cunning goal of ignoring the main problems, causing a split in the ranks of the Arab countries opposed to Israeli aggression, withdrawing some of them from the forefront of the fight for the common Arab cause and creating conditions enabling the aggressor to put pressure on individual Arab countries and so make it easier for Israel to entrench itself in foreign territories. This is now seen even by those who earlier were inclined to nurture some illusions with regard to separate deals.

35. We have said before and repeat: the Middle East crisis can be settled only on an all-embracing and lasting basis which ensures, first, the withdrawal of Israeli troops from all Arab territories occupied in 1967; secondly, the satisfaction of the legitimate national rights of the Arab people of Palestine, including the right to establish their own State; and, thirdly, the independent existence of all States in the Middle East under appropriate international guarantees.

36. The whole course of events in the Middle East shows that there is no alternative to an all-embracing settlement other than that basis. To delay a settlement means to show indifference to the fate of the countries and peoples in that part of the world and the fate of universal peace.

37. Thus it is essential to resume the work of the Geneva Peace Conference, which was set up specifically to work out the conditions for a lasting peace in the Middle East, with the participation of all the parties directly concerned, including of course the PLO. In this connexion, we should like to recall the important new initiative of the Soviet Union, made at the beginning of October of this year [A/31257-S/12208], proposing the resumption of the work of the Geneva Peace Conference and putting forward concrete proposals concerning its agenda and procedures.

38. All those key elements and the procedure for a settlement are provided for in the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations. They are also referred to in resolution 3414 (XXX), which was adopted a year ago by the General Assembly.

39. All that is lacking is a desire on Israel's part for such a settlement. Here is a clear example of that. On 7 October, exactly two months ago, Israel's Foreign Minister, Mr. Allon, spoke in this hall [22nd meeting]. He dwelt at length on "Israel wants peace, is striving for peace and is ready for peace at any time". He argued for observance of the United Nations Charter and so on. But in that same month, in the authoritative American journal *Foreign Affairs*, there was an article by the same Allon<sup>2</sup> from which it was clear that Israel intended to annex territories belonging to the Arabs, namely, a significant part of the West Bank of the Jordan, the Golan Heights, parts of the Sinai peninsula and the Arab part of Jerusalem. That is the kind of peace that the Israeli aggressors want to impose on the Arab countries. That is how they treat the will of the United Nations, which has repeatedly stressed "the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by means of war" and

insisted on the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the territories occupied during the 1967 conflict.

40. A heavy responsibility is also borne by those who protect Israel, by those who, despite the appeal contained in General Assembly resolution 3414 (XXX) "to desist from supplying Israel with any military or economic aid", are setting aside billions of dollars for the Israeli arms build-up.

41. In Tel Aviv clearly the chauvinist zeal has still not been dissipated, and they are still relying on the force of arms and on foreign assistance.

42. But that is a big mistake which involves a serious danger not least for Israel itself. This was pointed out by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Mr. T. Y. Kiselev, speaking on 23 June 1967 at the fifth emergency special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. He said:

"The freedom-loving peoples will not allow the forces of reaction to hinder the national development of the countries of the Middle East. In our age, when the forces of peace and progress have grown immeasurably, aggressive ventures will not go unpunished. This the rulers of Israel ought to know."<sup>3</sup>

43. During the past year, the United Nations has devoted considerable attention to the Middle East problem. The Security Council has held eight series of meetings on the various aspects of this question. It should be noted that on 11 November this year the Council unanimously adopted a statement by the President<sup>4</sup> containing a serious warning to Israel concerning the situation in the occupied Arab territories. Important decisions have been adopted at the present session of the General Assembly; among them I should like to refer to 31/20 of 24 November on the question of Palestine.

44. The United Nations, with its great international authority, can and must make the weight of its verdict felt on the question of establishing a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. For its part, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, like the other States of the socialist community, will make its contribution to the attainment of that goal.

45. Mr. MOKRI (Iran): Our consideration of the question of the Middle East marks an additional tragic year in the long-standing crisis which, for almost three decades, has plagued the very life of the people of the area. In the simplest terms, it is indicative of the galling fact that, in spite of the strenuous efforts of the United Nations in seeking a just and lasting peace for this trouble-stricken area, occupation, suppression, frustration and bitterness continue to be the order and mood of the day.

46. The attitude of the Government of Iran towards the problems of the Middle East is primarily inspired by the

<sup>3</sup> See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifth Emergency Special Session, Plenary Meetings*, 1533rd meeting, para. 69.

<sup>4</sup> See *Official Records of the Security Council, Thirty-first Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1976*, document S/12233.

<sup>2</sup> Yigal Allon, "Israel: The Case for Defensible Borders", *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 55, No. 1, (October 1976), pp. 38-53.

fact that in the last three decades in all cases where conflicts and armed clashes have flared up in certain areas of the world they have been the result of the use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of certain States or communities of those areas. As such we believe that any solution of the chronic problem of the Middle East, if it is to be effective, should be influenced by the following premises.

47. Firstly, the right of one community to political survival does not mean the liquidation of another. In other words, the realization of the objective of self-determination and statehood by one group of people in no way means the denial of the application of the same principles to the other peoples of the same area, particularly when by the very fact of history they happen to be the indigenous peoples of that area.

48. Secondly, the occupation of the territory of other peoples by the use of force is contrary to the spirit as well as the letter of the Charter of the United Nations, and the acquisition of territories by force cannot and should not be recognized as legitimate. Accordingly, there can be no justification or excuse for the forcible retention of territories occupied through the use of force, or for the pursuit of a policy of suppressing the indigenous population.

49. Thirdly, a just and lasting peace cannot be realized through the establishment of a territorial *cordon sanitaire* in favour of a particular State of a region. Historical experience has proved that peace cannot be built while the seeds of dissension still remain, that it cannot be achieved by gnawing away at lands that belong to others; that claims of security, no matter how understandable, cannot hinge on the insecurity of others.

50. In fact, a just and lasting peace can be achieved only through the equitable implementation of the principle of self-determination and statehood for the relevant peoples of the area, coupled with mutual understanding and agreement among the parties concerned to respect the sanctity of their territorial integrity and political independence. The first step towards the realization of those objectives is the effective utilization of the political and diplomatic means and opportunities offered by the United Nations itself.

51. In this connexion, the basic principles of Security Council resolution 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and resolution 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 remain to this day the most vital and realistic framework for bringing about peace in the Middle East. On the basis of those premises a just and lasting peace in the Middle East calls for the implementation of the two basic prerequisites, namely, withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in June 1967 and the recognition of the inherent right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and statehood.

52. Inspired by these considerations, the Iranian Foreign Minister during the general debate at the current session of the General Assembly stated that:

“... we wish to reiterate our conviction that the key to the solution of the Middle East problem lies in the full implementation of the Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), together with other relevant

decisions, including those dealing with the status of Jerusalem.” [14th meeting, para. 63.]

He also said:

“... no one can harbour the illusion that a lasting peace will return to the area until such time as Israel withdraws from the Arab territories occupied by force.” [Ibid., para. 61.]

In this respect, he maintained that:

“... any proposed solution of the Middle East problem should fully take into account the legitimate rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people.” [Ibid., para. 63.]

53. It is, indeed, extremely regrettable that the very modest efforts inaugurated with the Sinai Agreement between the Government of Egypt and the Government of Israel<sup>5</sup> for the realization of peace and security in the Middle East failed to follow their proper course of development. Although efforts to resume the negotiating process are, in the present circumstances, in abeyance, it is vital that they should be resumed in earnest as soon as possible. In this connexion, we do not believe that a particular intranational or regional crisis should be viewed as an impediment to the resumption of the Geneva negotiations, or that any intransigent attitude towards the Palestinian participation in such negotiations should be used as a pretext for continuation of the policy of procrastination with regard to the solution of the Middle East problem.

54. Palestine is an undeniable historical, racial and geopolitical reality, and this inevitable truth can neither be overlooked nor wished away. The question of Palestine and the protracted conflict in the Middle East are so closely interrelated as to be in fact the two halves of an indivisible tragic reality. It is quite logical that in any negotiations concerning the question of the Middle East, including the Geneva Conference, the representatives of the Palestinians should occupy their rightful place and enjoy effective participation. It is to be noted that today the Palestinian dimension of the Middle East problem has more than ever gained recognition in efforts to achieve a just and lasting peace in that region.

55. This was particularly seen as the core of the question when for the first time the Security Council in January examined the matter in all its aspects. In this connexion the Security Council has rightly maintained that the core and substance of the problem of the Middle East lies in the Palestinian issue. We should like once again to underline that effective participation by the Palestinian representatives in peace negotiations is an essential element in resolving the Middle East dispute. Any peace arrangement without the participation of the representatives of the Palestinians and adequate accommodation of their legitimate rights and interests would be a jerry-built structure doomed to collapse.

56. To put it briefly, we continue to believe that a just and lasting peace in the Middle East is to be realized within

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., *Thirtieth Year, Supplement for July, August and September 1975*, document S/11818/Add.1.



the framework laid down in the relevant United Nations resolutions, namely, Israeli withdrawal from occupied Arab territories and the recognition and accommodation of legitimate rights and interests of the Palestinian people, including its right to create an independent State and, finally, acknowledgement of and respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all States in the area and their right to live in peace, free from threats or acts of force.

57. A first step towards those objectives is the resumption of peace negotiations, including reconvening of the Geneva Conference with the participation of all parties concerned.

58. Mr. WILLIAMS (Sierra Leone): My delegation has listened with keen interest to those who have addressed this Assembly on the subject of "The situation in the Middle East", particularly those delegations which are directly concerned and involved with that problem.

59. Each party to the conflict has supported its case with extremely eloquent, logical and convincing statements tracing the history of the Middle East from 1948 until the present day. One common theme, however, appears discernible during the debate so far. Both sides are agreed that the suspended Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East should be reconvened as soon as possible.

60. The Sierra Leone delegation has on a number of occasions made its position clear on this subject. Recently from this very rostrum the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Chairman of the Sierra Leone delegation declared on 30 September 1976:

"The Middle East continues to present a problem of grave dimensions. Israel continues to occupy Arab lands and, contemptuous of public outcry, is going ahead with its plans to build Jewish settlements on those lands. The continuing presence of Israel in the Arab territories it acquired by force, and its violation of the sacred rights of the Palestinian people must clearly be regarded as a grave threat to peace and security in that region. We advocate full compliance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as we feel sure that a lasting solution can only be found through compliance with the provisions of these resolutions." [12th meeting, para, 127.]

61. Sierra Leone's position on this issue is therefore consistent with what has now been considered by the parties directly involved as the basis for a lasting solution to the Middle East problem.

62. The two Security Council resolutions mentioned above, namely, 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), have been quoted not only by the Permanent Representatives of Egypt, the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq but also by the Permanent Representative of Israel as the basis for any solution of the Middle East problem. By its resolution 3414 (XXX) the General Assembly requested the Security Council to take appropriate measures to implement all resolutions aimed at achieving a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

63. On 12 January this year the Security Council reconvened to discuss the Middle East problem.<sup>6</sup> At the conclusion of the debate the Secretary-General called attention to the fact that the discussions highlighted the Palestine dimension of the problem and reaffirmed the right of every State in the area to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries.

64. A close examination of the Secretary-General's report contained in document A/31/270-S/12210 of 18 October 1976 reveals that the Secretary-General has been in regular communication with the Co-Chairmen of the Peace Conference on the Middle East, namely, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Secretary of State of the United States of America, to obtain their views on the modalities for a solution to the Middle East problem. The Soviet Foreign Minister's reply was that the only reliable way was through the resumption of the Geneva Peace Conference with the participation of all the parties directly concerned, including the PLO and the two Co-Chairmen.

65. The Secretary of State of the United States emphasized in his reply that progress would hardly be made if Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 were not fully adhered to. He also agreed that a resumption of the Geneva Peace Conference would eventually serve as a means of arriving at a solution to the problem, provided that a preparatory conference of those who have so far participated in the negotiations was convened where modalities for the Geneva Conference would be worked out. The United States was prepared to hold bilateral consultations with the Soviet Union before such a preparatory conference could be held.

66. In his exploratory mission to the Middle East, Under-Secretary-General Roberto E. Guyer held discussions in Amman, Cairo, Damascus and Jerusalem from 25 February to 2 March 1976. The result of that mission was the determination to discover ways of resuming negotiations towards peace. Efforts were subsequently made to contact representatives of parties concerned here in New York, who welcomed the Secretary-General's initiative and re-emphasized their unequivocal demand for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from all Arab territories occupied since June 1967. Egypt has been very clear on this issue that a resumption of the Geneva Peace Conference with the full participation of all parties concerned, including the PLO should be the next step towards a solution of the problem.

*Mr. Doukouré (Guinea), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

67. Israel also wants the Geneva Peace Conference reconvened - but only with the original participants in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). By that declaration, Israel is implicitly excluding the participation of the PLO in any forthcoming Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East.

68. It is therefore quite clear that although, broadly speaking, all the parties directly concerned are convinced that a lasting solution to the Middle East problem can

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, Thirty-first Year, 1870th meeting.

hardly be achieved unless the Geneva Peace Conference resumes, there are still some areas where the parties directly concerned have conflicting views. The search for peace in that region undertaken by the Secretary-General as a result of General Assembly resolution 3414 (XXX) should continue, with a view to getting the parties directly concerned to agree on a formula for the resumption of the Geneva peace talks.

69. On the question of an agreed formula for the resumption of the Geneva peace talks, my delegation would like at this stage to emphasize that any peace talks on this problem without the participation of the PLO would hardly lead to a permanent solution to the Middle East problem.

70. Having agreed that our point of departure is the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), we are convinced that the beneficiaries of any peace negotiations as envisaged in the resumed Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East situation would be not only the Syrians, Egyptians and Jordanians, but also the Palestinians. In this respect, therefore, the Palestinians are a necessary party to any talks geared to a permanent solution of the Middle East problem.

71. My delegation would therefore appeal to all parties involved in this dispute to endeavour to be realistic and regard the active participation of the PLO as inevitable in any negotiations aimed at solving this problem.

72. Mr. MESTIRI (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): If there is one problem that directly threatens international peace and security today, it is the problem of the perpetuation of the present situation in the Middle East. Indeed, three years after the October war, which shook those who preferred to resign themselves to Israel's occupation of the Arab territories out of their lethargy, no decisive progress has been made on the road to peace. The hopes—already rather shaky hopes—aroused by the Sinai Agreement have evaporated, and there is no longer anyone now prepared to accept the palliatives designed to replace a comprehensive solution of all the aspects of the Middle East question.

73. And yet the fact that the Middle East problem continues to confront the international community is not the result of any lack of efforts by the United Nations, whose main bodies have been dealing with the problem and have advocated a peaceful, just and lasting solution in accordance with universally recognized principles.

74. The rejection of annexation of territories by force, the right of all the peoples of the region to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries, the right of the Palestinian people to the restoration of its country and to the exercise of its inalienable right to self-determination: those are all basic principles universally recognized, even by the majority of the countries that are friendly to or allies of Israel. Only Israel continues obstinately to refuse to accept those principles; for let us not be mistaken—the delaying tactics and evasion of the leaders of the Hebrew State in regard to what they themselves call the Arab peace offensive have no other basis than the refusal to accept the very principles of any just and lasting solution.

75. In contradiction to the principles of law and international morality, Israel believes in the primacy of force and confesses that it does not envisage returning all the territories conquered by the force of arms during the 1967 aggression.

76. In contradiction to the principles of law and international morality, Israel does not believe in the establishment of final boundaries, since one of the avowed objectives of Zionism is, as had been said during this debate, the establishment of a State going from the Nile to the Euphrates; and Israel has not stopped—at least not yet—identifying itself with Zionism.

77. Finally, in contradiction to the principles of law and international morality, Israel continues to refuse, clearly and without any deviation, to recognize that the Palestinian people have the right to exercise their most basic and inalienable rights.

78. Those are the basic principles of Israel's policy, so far.

79. It is in the light of that policy that we must interpret the practices and actions of the Israeli authorities in the occupied territories. The establishment of Jewish colonies—colonization in the full sense of the word—thereby takes on the clearest significance.

80. When the representative of Israel comes here to tell us that his Government is prepared to negotiate, we are entitled to wonder what is to be negotiated. There are many of us in this Assembly who would like to see some peaceful intentions in the policy pursued by the Hebrew State. But we have listened to the representative of Israel and unfortunately we cannot—even with the best will in the world—find any positive element in the statement he made at the opening of this debate [*87th meeting*]. We, like many others, put some questions to him a few days ago on the way his country views peace negotiations, and we asked particularly whether his country intended to renounce the right to annex territories by force. But, instead of giving the replies we were waiting for, the representative of Israel made accusations against this Assembly and engaged in enormous counter-truths; for instance, he repeated the allegation that more than half the meetings of the Assembly and its Committees have been devoted to various problems connected with Israel's policy. And then we heard that representative repeat a proposal by Prime Minister Rabin that a sort of "Helsinki Conference on the Middle East" should be convened. It seems that the Prime Minister of Israel and his representative here have simply forgotten that the Helsinki Conference took place 30 years after Germany had returned the territories it annexed by the force of arms and had renounced any kind of expansionism. For our part, we hope that the Middle East will have its Helsinki conference sooner than 30 years after Israel's renunciation of the right of annexation and its actual restoration of all the territories occupied by the force of arms. Obviously, these kinds of proposals can fool only those who want to be fooled.

81. To revert to serious matters, it is high time that the international community, and particularly the great Powers, imposed true peace negotiations to defuse the dangerous crisis in the Middle East, which militates in favour of this

situation of "no war, no peace" that has existed since the end of the 1973 war. These negotiations must be designed to achieve a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East question and, to that end, all the interested parties must participate in them.

82. At the root of the problem of the Middle East is the spoliation of the Palestinian people, of their lands and their homeland. It would be neither just nor realistic to try to resolve the problem without the participation of the representatives of that people, the leaders of the PLO. Participation by the Palestinians is a necessary condition for the success of any negotiations on the Middle East problem; it is as necessary and indispensable as that of all the other parties concerned.

83. We believe the time is propitious for undertaking these negotiations in Geneva or elsewhere under the auspices of the Security Council and under the co-chairmanship of the two great Powers. These two Powers have the duty to assume responsibility for leading the conference to a successful conclusion.

84. As regards the Arabs, no one can doubt their sincere desire for peace and their will, so often proclaimed from this rostrum and in the capitals of all the Arab States of the region, to arrive at a peaceful solution which can be durable, and therefore just. As regards Israel, it is up to the

international community as a whole and the allies of Israel in particular to bring it to a more just and accurate conception of the facts of life of our times, and of the reality of the evolution of mankind and of events.

85. The United States has a special role to play. Without its support Israel could not obstinately continue in its intransigence. We are entitled to hope and trust that the United States will act firmly and prevail on Israel to compose its differences, thus bringing about an era of peace in the entire area, particularly for the Arab peoples, who will then be able to devote their energies, resources and efforts to their economic and social development. It is the duty of the United States to contribute to the removal of the permanent threat against all the countries of the region presented by the formidable Israeli arsenal.

86. The Arab peoples hope that such a just and durable settlement will take place as soon as possible, but they know that time is not against them—on the contrary.

87. Let us hope that Israel and the countries which support it militarily and diplomatically will realize that the present favourable circumstances may not occur again so soon.

*The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.*