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

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Moreno Martínez
(Dominican Republic), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

AGENDA ITEM 29

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

1. Mr. S. K. H. KHAN (Pakistan): My delegation has studied the report of the Secretary-General on agenda item 29 regarding the situation in the Middle East [A/31/270-S/12210]. In his report, the Secretary-General has summarized the letters sent by him, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 3414 (XXX), to the two Co-Chairmen of the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East and the parties concerned, as well as their responses. It appears from the replies received that, while all the parties have stated their general agreement on the necessity of resuming negotiations for a just and lasting settlement of the Middle East problem, there are, as the Secretary-General states in his report, still important differences of view among them.

2. What the document clearly demonstrates is a definite desire for a just peace on the part of the Arab States—a just peace which cannot be achieved without the evacuation of all Arab territories occupied by Israel, a just peace which cannot be achieved without the people of Palestine being enabled to exercise their inalienable national rights. These elements are basic to any agreement in the Middle East. Regrettably, however, the Israeli Government has so far refused to face the facts, and the extremely reasonable stand of the Arab States has evoked no positive and practical response. Reason on the part of the Arab States has met with the stone wall of unreason on the part of Israel, and the situation remains deadlocked.

3. Durable peace can return to the Middle East only when Israel withdraws from all the Arab territories it has occupied since 1967, including the holy city of Jerusalem, and when the inalienable national rights of the people of Palestine are fully restored.

4. The situation in the occupied territories is tense and Arab resistance is becoming more widespread. However, the

Israelis, instead of seeing the writing on the wall, instead of acting with foresight and agreeing to vacate the territories occupied by them in 1967, have responded with repression and brutality.

5. There is an international consensus on the essential prerequisites for a just and durable peace in the Middle East, namely, withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied Arab territories, the restitution of the national rights of the Palestinian people, and the right of all States in the region to live within peaceful frontiers. That consensus was reflected in the resolutions adopted at the last session of the General Assembly, as well as in the Security Council debates on the issue during the year.

6. Since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 3414 (XXX) there have been several debates in the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East. However, there has been a virtual stalemate in the efforts for progress towards a negotiated settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The situation is therefore characterized by growing uncertainty.

7. Meanwhile, Israel continues unabated its intransigence and its policy of “creeping annexation” by setting up Jewish settlements in the occupied areas, despite international odium and condemnation, including that embodied in the recent consensus adopted by the Security Council on the subject.

8. While the Arab countries are doing their utmost to bring about a peaceful solution to the problem of the Middle East, Israel continues to obstruct those efforts. Its policies and practices in occupied Arab areas leave no doubt that it is following a policy of annexation of the occupied Arab territories through settlements. In doing so, it is trampling underfoot all norms of civilized behaviour and is depriving the Arab population of the occupied areas of their basic human rights. That issue came up for discussion recently in the Special Political Committee, where my delegation addressed itself to the question in the debate¹ and also introduced a draft resolution on the subject, which was adopted by a vote of 84 to 3, with 22 abstentions.²

9. As stated by my delegation in that Committee, Israeli policies and practices make it clear that Israel is not interested in a lasting peace in the region. Israel has been harassing the Arab population of those areas, establishing settlements, demolishing Arab properties, deporting Arab citizens of those areas in a manner designed to repress the

¹ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Special Political Committee*, 30th meeting.

² *Ibid.*, *Thirty-first Session, Annexes*, agenda item 55, document A/31/399, paras. 16 and 23, draft resolution C.

* Resumed from the 92nd meeting.

Arab people of the occupied territories permanently. Pakistan rejects, as it did in the Special Political Committee, all such efforts as a violation of international conventions, instruments and law, as well as the Charter of the United Nations and the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council on the subject.

10. It was only a few days ago that the General Assembly discussed the recommendations of the 20-member Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People [A/31/35, *part two*]-the national rights of the Palestinian people, which are at the heart of the Middle East problem. The tragedy that befell the Palestinian people in 1947 with the creation of Israel, when they were driven out of their homes and land and millions of them were transformed into refugees, is basic to the issue. Until such time as the national rights of the Palestinian people are restored and guaranteed to them there can be no peace in the Middle East.

11. Pakistan's policy on the Middle East conflict is unequivocal and based on history. Since the inception of Pakistan as an independent country in 1947, we have consistently and resolutely supported the principled stand of the Arab States. We have been in the forefront of the forces advocating the establishment of a just and durable peace in the Middle East on the basis of the principles of non-acquisition of territory by force as well as the exercise of self-determination by the Palestinian people.

12. It is the view of the Pakistan delegation that it is urgent speedily to reconvene the Geneva Peace Conference with the full participation of all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization [PLO], the representative of the Palestinian people, in order to achieve a just solution of the problem and to bring peace to the area.

13. I wish to avail myself of this opportunity to refer to the draft resolutions on this question of which my delegation is a sponsor [A/31/L.26 and Add.1-3, A/31/L.27 and Add.1-3]. The draft resolutions are free of polemics and concentrate on the issues involved and provide a basis for resolving the problem. Much time has been spent in vague references to the implementation of the resolutions of the General Assembly. Now the time has come to set a time-frame for the adoption of concrete measures to implement the relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

14. We believe it is incumbent on all members of the General Assembly to join the efforts to achieve the goals set forth in the resolutions of the United Nations for the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. This is the only way to peace in the Middle East. Peace in the Middle East would remove a major threat to war in the world.

15. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): Before calling on the next speaker, I should like to inform members of the General Assembly that the sponsors of draft resolution A/31/L.27 have revised operative paragraph 2 of that draft. Operative paragraph 2 should now read as follows:

"Calls for the early convening of the Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United

Nations and the co-chairmanship of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America, not later than the end of March 1977".

16. Mr. KINENE (Uganda): The position of Uganda on the question of the Middle East has always been made clear whenever my delegation has spoken on this important matter. We in Uganda consider the present dangerous and explosive situation in the Middle East as the consequence of what happened in Palestine in 1948 when a strange foreign body, the Zionist entity, was transplanted by force into the region of the Middle East-to be precise into Palestine-at the expense of the innocent people of Palestine who since then have been forced to live in exile under conditions of misery and bondage. The transplantation of that foreign body in the area was made possible by the connivance and support of imperialist Powers, which at the time were the dominant force within the United Nations.

17. Since then the people of the Middle East have never known a single day of tranquillity or peace in their area. That is because the Zionist aggressors did not content themselves with the land they illegally usurped from the Palestinian people in 1948. On the contrary, they went beyond the original borders of the territory they occupied in 1948, and in consecutive wars of aggression they occupied more territories belonging to Syria, Jordan and Egypt.

18. It should be pointed out that in the particular case of Egypt they usurped a land belonging to an African country which is a member of the Organization of African Unity. We in Uganda, therefore, regard that Israeli aggression not only as directed against the Arab people of the Middle East but also as an aggression committed against the entire African continent. Israel to us is an enemy not only of the Arab peoples, but also of the peoples of Africa as a whole. In any case, this has already been confirmed by the fact that it is Israel that is pouring out technical and military support to our arch enemy, namely, the racist régime of South Africa, and this General Assembly has already condemned it for collaborating with the racist régime of South Africa.

19. The Members of the United Nations in their wisdom recognized the PLO as the sole authentic and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and, with that in mind, the United Nations admitted the PLO as an observer in the Organization.

20. This action was a significant departure from the unrealistic attitude of regarding the question of Palestine as merely a problem of refugees. The overwhelming majority in this Organization agreed that the PLO was the sole legitimate representative of the people of Palestine. It is therefore more than ridiculous to see that the representatives of the Zionist entity are still insisting that the PLO does not represent the Palestinian people and that it should not take part in the Geneva Conference on the question of the Middle East when it reconvenes.

21. My delegation wonders what acceptable solution could be reached at such a Conference if the principal party to the problem in the Middle East, namely, the people of Palestine, was excluded from it. As a matter of fact, the

position of the Zionists in this case is very similar to that of a robber who breaks into somebody's house, kicks him out and takes possession of all his belongings and, when others call upon him to give back all the stolen property, the robber insists that he cannot give back such property because he does not recognize the owner of the house. This same robber would go further and tell others that he is not prepared to talk to the victim, but that he would talk to the victim's neighbours.

22. It is for these reasons that the Uganda delegation firmly believes that there can be no genuine and lasting peace in the area of the Middle East as long as Israel continues to ignore the rights of the people of Palestine. As spelled out in General Assembly resolution 3375 (XXX), Israel must recognize the rights of the people of Palestine.

23. This must be followed by the unconditional and immediate withdrawal by Israel from all the Arab territories it occupied by force. This is perfectly in accordance with the provisions of the United Nations Charter, which forbids States Members of the Organization to acquire the territory of others by force. In our view, this is the only way in which a peaceful and lasting solution to the problem of the Middle East can be reached.

24. It is with the convictions that I have expressed in this statement that my delegation fully supports the two draft resolutions in documents A/31/L.26 and A/31/L.27, which have been endorsed by the non-aligned countries, and the amendments introduced by Sri Lanka contained in document A/31/L.25.

25. Mr. BENGELLOUN (Morocco) (*interpretation from Arabic*): In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

26. I am pleased, on behalf of the delegation of the Kingdom of Morocco, to extend to the Secretary-General of our Organization, Mr. Kurt Waldheim, our warm congratulations on the occasion of his re-election as Secretary-General of the United Nations for the next five years. In our view, his unanimous election was in appreciation of the unremitting efforts which our Secretary-General has made and continues to make to ensure the triumph of the principles of the Charter and the fulfilment of the aims and objectives sought by our Organization. We are confident that the fact that Mr. Kurt Waldheim will continue to carry out his great responsibilities in the next years will be the best guarantee that our Organization's work and efforts will be devoted to the achievement of the objectives for which it was created, namely, to realize prosperity for mankind. As the re-election of the Secretary-General took place during the General Assembly's debate on the momentous question of the Middle East, I avail myself of this opportunity to address to him an urgent appeal to devote to this issue, which is of great concern to the international community, more attention and effort in order to arrive at a solution. Because of the continuing Israeli aggression on Arab lands, we are once again compelled to resume discussion of the situation in the Middle East, a crisis which is incontestably still the main focal point of tension in the world. In spite of numerous recommendations and condemnations by our international Organization, denouncing and condemning Israeli aggression and seeking to eliminate its

consequences, this aggression still persists, 10 years after it was perpetrated. In full view of the whole world this aggression is still being practised on the Palestinian people, who have been rendered homeless, and on the populations of the occupied Arab territories in Sinai and the Golan Heights. Therefore a state of "no war, no peace" persists in the eastern Arab region simply because of Israeli intransigence and obstinacy. This has turned the region into a focus of grave tension and has created an explosive situation, which could at any time lead to a fourth Arab-Israeli war unless an end is put to this aggression and to the sufferings of the Arab people in the occupied territories.

27. This danger, which is a grave threat in the area and whose consequences might extend to all other parts of the world, as happened in 1973, lies in the Zionist entity's insistence on maintaining its occupation of Arab lands, freezing the present situation and enjoying the benefits of the war of aggression it launched in 1967, in violation of United Nations principles which prohibit the acquisition of territory by force. The Israelis have also ignored the most elementary principles of international law and international norms of behaviour. They must respect the spirit of this age, which has rejected the principle of force.

28. The support of the Israeli occupation and its consolidation are clearly manifested in the policy of evasion, procrastination, annexation, occupation and expansion which is being pursued by Israel and which aims at rejecting any attempt at resolving the Middle East crisis and the Palestine question.

29. We are not saying these words idly or speculatively; we are citing here statements made by ruling circles in Israel. These are the general outlines of their official, declared policy. As everyone knows, that policy is based on expansion and annexation. An example of this is the official announcement by the Israeli Knesset of the annexation by Israel of the Arab city of Jerusalem, despite the strong world protest against such conduct. As a prelude, so to speak, to the policy of annexation, Israel has built, and is still building as everyone knows, many civilian and military settlements all over the occupied Arab lands. Responsible authorities in Israel have stated that these settlements are there to stay. In answer to a question on the future of these settlements, Moshe Dayan, who at that time was the Israeli Minister of Defence—in other words, he was still in power—said:

"In building these settlements we are not planting seeds in bottles that can be taken from one place to another; we are sowing seeds in the earth, seeds that will take root and remain there forever."

Needless to say, the political programmes of all the Governments that have been in power in Israel since the 1967 war of aggression have contained provisions supporting the policy of building Jewish settlements in the occupied Arab territories. Israel's emphasis on the concept of secure borders is actually only another aspect of its insistence on maintaining the fruits of its aggression and continuing its occupation of these lands, or at least part of them, even if a settlement of the Middle East problem is reached in the future. In this age of great technological developments, in which there has been tremendous progress

in the manufacture of weapons, Israel must know better than anyone else that natural barriers such as rivers and mountains no longer represent secure boundaries as they did in the age of conventional weapons. Science has made it very easy to cross these borders. The only truly secure borders are those agreed upon and mutually accepted. But the climax of Israeli obstinacy is to be found in Israel's insistence on ignoring the presence of the Palestinian people, the first victims of Israel's presence as a political entity in the Middle East. In pursuance of this futile policy, Israel continues even today to oppose the participation of the representatives of the Palestinian people in any peace talks on the Middle East. Israel is fully aware, as is the whole world, that there can be no lasting peace in the Middle East if there is no just settlement to the question of the Palestinian people's cause, a settlement discussed with and accepted by the original representatives of that people: the leaders of the PLO.

30. The Middle East crisis had its origin in the usurpation by the Zionist entity of the land of the Palestinian people and that people's inalienable rights. To insist on ignoring the facts regarding the Palestinians today is tantamount to attempting to prevent any real solution to the problem of the Middle East. To establish another armistice system in the region would be far from being the desired solution, one likely to bring about a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

31. I do not wish to set the clock back. I shall not review the history of the Zionist movement which brought Jews from their original homes and communities in various parts of the world and drove them to Palestine, where they expelled the Palestinian people, depriving them of their land and their rights. Nor am I going to review the developments in the Palestinian question or refer to the special responsibility borne by the United Nations in this respect. A few weeks ago, speaking from this same rostrum [74th meeting], I dealt with that matter in detail. I drew attention to the legitimacy of the Palestinian liberation struggle. Also, last month I made clear to the Security Council my country's views on the Israeli practices in the occupied Arab territories.³

32. It is indeed a source of great concern that, while the United Nations and other international circles are making great efforts to find a just solution to the Middle East problem, Israel is trying to give a character of permanence to its occupation of Arab lands; it is trying to change the geographic and demographic structure of those lands, and is doing that deliberately and in a studied manner. Despite international condemnations, the last of which was the consensus statement of the Security Council of 11 November 1976,⁴ the Zionist entity continues with its violations relentlessly.

33. Morocco reaffirms what it has previously declared in the Security Council: that it denounces these violations and does not consider legal the actions of the occupation authorities against the property of the Moroccan Waqf in

the city of Jerusalem and its vicinity. Therefore Morocco maintains its full rights in that matter. Indeed, Morocco considers all the Israeli actions since June 1967 in the Arab city of Jerusalem, in the West Bank, in Sinai and in the Golan Heights to be invalid and illegitimate. These actions give Israel no rights or privileges, because they have been carried out during an illegitimate occupation and they are in complete contradiction to the provisions of the 1949 Geneva Convention concerning occupied territories. Furthermore, these actions have been condemned by the two principal organs of our international Organization, the Security Council and the General Assembly.

34. The international community cannot remain indifferent to the status of the city of Jerusalem, which is so important to people of the Moslem faith, as well as of other faiths. We are constantly witnessing new attempts to Judaize that City and to efface its Islamic and Christian character and turn it into a purely Jewish city by surrounding it with a number of Jewish settlements populated by groups of alien immigrants.

35. That action is a flagrant challenge to the feelings of hundreds of millions of Moslems, and Christians, a desecration of their Holy Places and an infringement of the most precious manifestations of their heritage.

36. In the face of this cultural tragedy experienced by the city of Jerusalem, the emancipation of that city from the yoke of occupation is a duty that should not be shouldered by the Palestinian people alone, nor by the Arab countries alone. It is an international, universal duty dictated by the conscience of every person who has faith in humanity and its values and heritage.

37. The war of Rāmādan of 1973 destroyed many of the legends Israel had created in an attempt to convince the world that it had become a great Power in the Middle East that could never be vanquished. Side by side with their Arab brethren, Moroccan citizens gave many examples of heroism in that war in their efforts to ensure the triumph of Arab rights and to put an end to Israeli aggression.

38. The principle of aggression and the principle of settlement of disputes through the use of armed force and the occupation of the lands of other countries have been rejected by the international community since man has known the way to civilization. The principle that aggression is to be condemned is a universal principle, to which there can be no exceptions. The international community, today, cannot countenance bargaining on that principle, because that would be tantamount to going back on an established norm of international behaviour. The precedent Israel is trying to impose on contemporary international relations is a grave one which should be resisted by the international community as a whole before it assumes even graver dimensions. In so doing, the international community will be acting in implementation of the provisions of the United Nations Charter and of Security Council resolution 242 (1967) concerning the settlement of the Middle East crisis, which Israel claims it has accepted and which clearly condemns the acquisition of the land of other countries through the use of armed force.

³ See *Official Records of the Security Council, Thirty-first Year, 1968th meeting*.

⁴ *Ibid.*, *Thirty-first Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1976*, document S/12233.

39. The Arab summit conference held in Rabat from 26 to 29 October 1974 on the initiative of His Majesty King Hassan II, King of Morocco, was of decisive importance in regard to the Palestine question and the Middle East question, because it very clearly specified the responsibilities of the Arab parties to the Middle East conflict, clearly emphasizing the importance of the Palestinian entity and dispelling any equivocation. It also stressed the role of the PLO as a pioneer in the Palestinian struggle and as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Following that conference, many countries recognized the PLO, as well as the inalienable national and indigenous rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to sovereignty in their homeland and to establish their national State on the land of Palestine.

40. As regards the historic resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 24 November [resolution 31/20], which provides for practical steps to establish a Palestinian State on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip, in our view it is a preliminary and successful step towards rectification of the situation which was in part created by the United Nations through its adoption in 1947 of its resolution on the partition of Palestine [resolution 181 (II)]. Following the adoption of the aforementioned resolution, King Hassan II made a statement at a press conference in Paris at which he said:

"For the first time in its life the United Nations has offered a serious and realistic platform for a definitive peace in the Middle East. Indeed, by creating a Palestinian State in the Transjordan and Gaza, the Palestinian people is recognized, the Palestinian entity exists. But the Israelis will ask for guarantees, and it is entirely normal that they should do so. Now it is up to the Arabs, on the one hand, and the friends of the Arabs, on the other, as soon as possible and while the impulse exists to prepare a series of political and procedural measures which Israel could regard as a definitive and public guarantee of peace and of its frontiers. Naturally, this would necessarily entail the withdrawal of Israel from occupied territories. I believe that if we adopt that resolution as a platform we shall never have been so close to a settlement affecting the climate not only of the region but of the entire world."⁵

41. The delegation of the Kingdom of Morocco welcomes the constant efforts of the Secretary-General since the General Assembly's adoption of resolution 3375 (XXX), and his numerous contacts with the parties concerned, including the PLO. We also welcome his continuous attempts to end the stagnation which has prevented political action in the Middle East from leading to a peaceful, just and lasting solution, for we believe that the United Nations provides the best and most appropriate framework for expediting a peaceful solution in the Middle East region and providing a comprehensive solution, bearing in mind the close links between the United Nations and the Palestine question.

42. Morocco believes that there is an urgent need, at the present time in particular, for the Secretary-General to exert further such efforts to create a suitable atmosphere for the resumption at the earliest possible date of the

Geneva Peace Conference, which has been suspended for a considerable time.

43. In this connexion the Kingdom of Morocco thinks that an invitation to the PLO to participate in the Geneva Conference is a basic and inevitable pre-condition without which no real settlement of the Middle East problem can be reached, because the Palestinian side is one of the main parties to this dispute, if not the principal party. It is the party whose destiny depends upon the outcome of the Conference.

44. Morocco has great hope that the Co-Chairmen of the Geneva Conference, the United States and the Soviet Union, will undertake efforts in this direction and will not ignore the party most vitally concerned with the Middle East crisis, so that the forthcoming round of talks at the Geneva Conference will have every possibility of success. Morocco appeals to them also to exert their efforts and to use their influence with all the parties to the dispute to ensure that a just and comprehensive settlement is reached that would put an end to the evils and the scourge of war from which this area in the Middle East has been suffering for about 30 years.

45. We think that the prospects for peace are better now than at any time since the Middle East crisis arose. We also think it is better for everybody that the prevailing climate should be exploited now, before this chance is lost with the outbreak of new hostilities.

46. But we should like to recall here that Israel is committing a grave mistake if it believes that it can impose an expansionist fait accompli on the Arab States and on the international community. It is also committing a grave mistake if it believes that it can efface the Palestinian people from the earth, particularly at a time when international recognition of the Palestinian people and of their inalienable indigenous rights is increasing every day.

47. Real peace in the Middle East cannot be based on anything but justice, which imposes first of all the need for recognition of the Palestinian people, of their national rights to sovereignty over their land and the right to establish their State on Palestinian soil. It must also be based on the need for the withdrawal of Israel from all the land occupied since 1967.

48. Mr. FALL (Senegal) (*interpretation from French*): On 24 November 1976, at its 77th meeting of the present session, the General Assembly adopted a resolution approving the report and the recommendations of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People [resolution 31/20]. In a few days our Assembly will be called on to endorse a draft resolution adopted by the Special Political Committee approving the report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices affecting the Human Rights of the Populations of the Occupied Territories [see A/31/399, draft resolution C].

49. At this time the General Assembly is dealing with the situation in the Middle East. In his statement at the opening of the debate [87th meeting] the representative of Israel deplored the fact that much too much time, in his view, was being devoted by the United Nations to the problems

⁵ Quoted by the speaker in French.

relating to the conflict between his country and the Arab States. What he forgot to add was that our Organization did not choose to use its very valuable time in this particular way. It was rather the State of Israel itself which forced our Organization to do so by its deliberate and repeated acts of violation of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, by its flagrant and continued violations of the most sacred human rights and by its arrogant and provoking behaviour towards the representative of States in the United Nations.

50. Thus the tragic conflict which for over 25 years has split the Middle East has once again brought us together in this hall. A conflict whose origin was a question of self-determination and national sovereignty has now been replaced by a regional crisis which has already caused four wars and whose very existence is a permanent danger to international peace and security. All the nations of the world are gravely concerned at the implications of this conflict, which threatens their very existence.

51. Therefore it is appropriate to ask how a situation so dangerous for the international community could have continued without receiving a suitable solution which would be acceptable to all. This state of affairs is caused by the particularly difficult and complex nature of the conflict. Its difficult nature is due to the total commitment, which is intense and profoundly subjective, even denominational in a way, of the various parties involved. It is due to their passionately antagonistic view of events and it is also due to their lack of political flexibility. Its complexity is due to the fact that the elements at the root of the conflict are so closely interrelated that any partial or unbalanced settlement could only make the solution even more difficult, if not impossible.

52. Therefore, after a quarter of a century, during which this question has been constantly discussed in the United Nations, the majority of its Members have come to the conviction that a just and durable solution of the conflict depends on the adoption of a global and balanced approach which would duly take into account the interests of all the parties involved, including the Palestinian and Israeli parties.

53. The world community gradually came to realize that the main obstacle preventing such a solution was the predominance of partial, unilateral approaches which were arbitrarily selective and whose aim was, above all, to gain United Nations approbation of faits accomplis and situations brought about by the use of force in violation of the Charter of this Organization and of the most sacred principles of universally accepted international law. It must also be recognized that those objectives have almost been reached. Thus the theory that the Middle East conflict is essentially a conflict between Israel and the Arab States and is mainly based on the refusal of the latter to recognize the existence of the Hebrew State has prevailed for a long time in this Organization. Its main consequence has been the negation of the very existence of the Palestinian people and consequently of its national rights to Palestinian land. The result of this view of the question was evidently to obscure one of the main elements of that conflict.

54. By recognizing that the Palestinian question is at the heart of the conflict in the Middle East and that the

implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in conformity with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter is an indispensable condition for the restoration of a just and lasting peace in that region, our Assembly has finally placed this problem in its true context. Moreover, it has also expressed the conviction that the participation of the Palestinian people is essential in all efforts aimed at bringing about a just settlement of the Middle East conflict.

55. The attention now being paid to the Palestinian question, and above all the cardinal importance accorded it within the problem of the Middle East, is the main characteristic of the new approach which today prevails in the United Nations. The difference in kind between this and the earlier efforts is that the present approach takes into account the two other elements and treats them according to their relative importance.

56. Today, a majority of States agree that a just and lasting solution of the Middle East conflict must be based on the following: first, the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights to national self-determination, including, on the one hand, the right to establish an independent State in Palestine in conformity with the principles of the Charter, and, on the other hand, the possibility of allowing refugees who wish to return to their homes and to live in peace with their neighbours to do so while those who do not wish to return to their homes should receive equitable compensation for the property that they lost, in conformity with the provisions of resolution 194 (III); secondly, the withdrawal of Israel from the Arab territories occupied since the war of June 1967, in accordance with the solemnly proclaimed principle of the inadmissibility of any acquisition of territory by force that is reflected in Security Council resolution 242 (1967), a resolution dear to the hearts of Israel and its friends; thirdly and finally, the implementation of the appropriate provisions which, in conformity with the United Nations Charter, would guarantee the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all the States of the region, as well as their right to live in peace within boundaries recognized by all nations, specifically those of the region, and guaranteed by the international community.

57. The implementation of those principles is prevented by the stubborn opposition of the Israeli State, which persists in denying the Palestinians their national rights and in forcibly occupying the territories which belong to Arab States Members of our Organization.

58. In contempt of the resolutions of the United Nations, Israel continues a policy of the implantation of colonies of Jewish settlers in the occupied territories and takes measures tending to modify the demographic, cultural and religious nature of the Holy City of Jerusalem, as well as of other localities in the occupied territories.

59. The Arab populations of those territories are subject to massive arrests, to deportation and expulsion from their homes and lands. Their houses and properties are being destroyed and their religious freedom is, in every way, being impeded. This daily and constant violence committed by the occupying forces can but exasperate the victims and

crystallize their resentment, thus engendering tension, revolt and, finally, insurrection.

60. The tragic events which have afflicted the territories of the West Bank of Jordan throughout this year are an eloquent illustration of this. Since violence always gives rise to further violence, the repression resorted to in reaction by the Israeli occupation authorities risks bringing about a general conflagration which would threaten the precarious security in that region.

61. There is yet another aspect of the Israeli occupation which is equally a source of potentially even graver dangers. I am referring to the policy of the fait accompli, of which the best that can be said is that it constitutes a definite obstacle to any peaceful settlement of the Middle East conflict. Indeed, how can one reconcile the establishment of a just and lasting peace, one of whose main components would be the evacuation of all occupied territories, with the Israeli policy of annexation of certain parts of those territories and the establishment of Jewish colonies in those territories?

62. In taking measures aimed at modifying the physical character, the demographic composition, and the institutional organization of the occupied Arab territories, Israel is obviously trying to create an irreversible situation. That such is its aim is confirmed, most particularly, with regard to the Holy City of Jerusalem. Israel is carrying out an obvious Judaization of that city in disregard of history and of all traditions that have made it a city of conciliation, a city of love and spiritual communion, a metropolis of peaceful coexistence among the three great revealed religions.

63. Thus, by sacrificing the future to the temporary advantages of the moment, Israel is creating certain difficulties that will make it harder for it to reach its stated objective of living in peace with its neighbours. Its use of force will only increase the feelings of frustration and rancour among its neighbours and thus broaden the gap of hostility which separates them from the Jewish communities.

64. The Israeli practices in the occupied territories, far from indicating the desire of that State to bring about a just and lasting settlement, suggest on the contrary a policy that is aimed at unilaterally modifying the situation to the profit of the State of Israel. That search for unilateral advantage is at the root of its violent and unjust attacks on the United Nations whose efforts at promoting a just and peaceful settlement of the Middle East problem evidently conflict with the expansionist designs of the Hebrew State.

65. In the view of the Israeli leaders, all the acts of our Organization are biased and irresponsible. According to them, the representatives of the United Nations are incapable of having a sound opinion with regard to the questions of the Middle East because they are insufficiently familiar with the true state of affairs in the region. But they forget that what determines the judgement of United Nations delegations is, rather, their adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter and of international law. In their view, there can be no restricted area where the behaviour of States must be based on different

principles, and notably on the principle that might makes right.

66. Thus, it is mainly Israel's contempt for the Charter, not to mention its violations and its defiance with regard to our Organization, which has so much restricted the circle of its friends in this Assembly.

67. Israel must realize that the best way to persuade States to support its cause is certainly not by condescension and sarcasm, but only by a courteous, frank and honest dialogue with the qualified representatives of other sovereign States. It is a fact that in coming to this rostrum the Israeli representatives think less of the audience they have before them than of the reaction of the American public to which—not without reason—they pay particular attention.

68. During the discussions which have taken place this year, first in the Security Council and then in the General Assembly, on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, some delegations have felt it necessary to declare that the recommendations of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People [*see A/31/35, part two*] violated the provisions of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). Such an affirmation is fanciful, to say the least. On the contrary, the recommendations of the Committee were aimed at supplementing those two Security Council resolutions by bringing to them the missing elements without which they were not sufficiently balanced. I would add that General Assembly resolutions 181 (II) and 194 (III), which served as the basis of those recommendations, were at the time both approved by the State of Israel and by its friends.

69. Moreover, other delegations have adopted a negative attitude towards the recent initiatives taken by our Organization, declaring that the search for a solution to the Middle East conflict should be the result of the negotiating process. My delegation would like to ask them in what way recourse to a procedure of peaceful settlement of the Middle East conflict implies the necessary exclusion of the United Nations from consideration of the question.

70. Such an assertion appears even more paradoxical when we consider that our Organization, by its very universality, is the most appropriate forum for the promotion of a just and lasting settlement that would take due account of the interests of all interested parties. Any other proposal aimed at bypassing the United Nations runs the risk of producing a settlement based only on the current balance of power and not on the principles of justice and true equilibrium. I also wonder whether those who support the principle of negotiations outside the United Nations framework do not feel some remorse when they recall that the Middle East question was created by this very United Nations and that our Organization is at the very origin of the outbreak of this crisis.

71. Of course, my delegation deems it indispensable to achieve a negotiated solution to the Middle East conflict; none the less, we also believe that such negotiations should be based on just and loyal foundations.

72. I would not like to conclude this statement without voicing the deep concern of my delegation over the inertia

which characterizes the attitude of the Security Council with regard to the question now under discussion here. This situation is intolerable in the light of the heavy responsibilities of that key organ of the United Nations with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security. Today, more than ever, the Security Council must deal with the principles that are to govern an over-all settlement of the Middle East crisis. As has all too often been repeated, the framework set forth by resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) is seriously deficient in so far as it does not take due account of the national rights of the Palestinian people. The revision of those resolutions is all the more necessary as it will enormously assist in the achievement of a just and lasting solution in the negotiations at the Geneva Conference. My delegation takes this occasion to reaffirm its support for the speediest possible reconvening of the Geneva Conference, with the equal participation of all interested parties, including the PLO, in conformity with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 3375 (XXX).

73. My delegation also wishes to appeal to the members of the Security Council, particularly to those which have made themselves conspicuous by their negative attitude towards the implementation of the rights of the Palestinians, to help the Council to emerge from its stagnation by allowing it to be more receptive towards initiatives aimed at promoting a just and lasting solution of the Middle East problem.

74. The political and diplomatic deadlock which led to the October 1973 war was due, as we all know, to the inefficacy of resolution 242 (1967) and to the persistence of a situation of "no war, no peace", which was its bitter Council to prevent the recurrence of such a situation.

75. In order to do so, the Council should take measures to prevent a further deterioration of the situation in the occupied territories by demanding that Israel put an immediate end to its violations of human rights in those territories and abolish, once and for all, the rampant annexationist measures it has undertaken. The Council should also adopt measures which would allow the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights as defined by General Assembly resolution 3236 (XXIX).

76. Those measures, which will allow the Security Council to fulfil its role as the guardian of international peace and security, are also in keeping with the true interests of the Palestinian people and of the Israeli people, because, as was said one day from this rostrum by an eminent United Nations diplomat, and it is with this quotation that I shall conclude my speech:

"Injustice inevitably brings revolt and occupation resistance. And there is no momentary lapse for which in the long run the energy and the means of retribution will not be found. One must avoid these headlong and unreflecting evasions, which are the result of despair, because however hard governments try, intangible factors will cause incidents whose consequence—armed confrontation—is all too foreseeable."

77. Mr. ALGÅRD (Norway): The road to peace in the Middle East has proved to be a tortuous one, and has seldom been fully explored by those who are most directly interested in a peaceful settlement in the area. The

instruments for peace are available, whereas the willingness to use them seems to be lacking.

78. However, the situation in this strife-torn area is of grave concern, not only to those most directly involved but to the whole international community. We are all acutely aware that the Middle East conflict constitutes perhaps the greatest present threat to international peace and the most immediate danger of a broad-scale international conflict of unforeseen consequences.

79. My delegation has on many occasions over the last few years outlined the principles on which we feel that a settlement in the Middle East should be based. Our Middle East policy remains firmly linked to decisions by the highest organs of our world Organization, especially Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which have received wide support in the past. Standing firm on the principles contained in those resolutions does not mean turning the clock back. Nor does it mean that we are closing our eyes to new developments and new ideas and proposals. We understand the feelings and share the sense of urgency of all States and nationalities in the Middle East longing for a comprehensive, peaceful and just solution, including the realization of legitimate national rights and accepted nationhood within secure and recognized borders. It is an almost inherent feature of our Organization that it is not oriented towards the *status quo*, either in process or in substance. On the other hand, nobody can expect the road to peace ever to be built if all previous work is to be undone each time a new stretch has to be added. If such a practice were to be followed by our Organization, we would divert our energies and invite retrogression.

80. The Norwegian Government, therefore, gives its unswerving support to the principles of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). We do not find this stand inconsistent with our view of the Palestinian question as one of the fundamental political problems in the Middle East. As a matter of fact, we believe there is overwhelming support for the view today that the Palestinian question is far more than a refugee problem. There is also broad and general recognition of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinians. We agree also that there will be no final settlement in the region as long as the Palestinian question remains unresolved. Nevertheless, it is our understanding that that recognition complements previous decisions and principles rather than undermines them. In fact, these various elements constitute a delicate balance that ought to be reflected in decisions and resolutions by all organs of our Organization. To the extent that it is not, the road to peace will become even more difficult.

81. The United Nations should play a significant role in the Middle East; in particular, we want to emphasize the role of the Secretary General in this regard. His dedicated efforts to bring the parties together deserve the continued support of our Organization.

82. However, the ultimate responsibility for a comprehensive settlement lies with the parties directly involved. But outside Powers also bear a great responsibility, especially the permanent members of the Security Council, including the Co-Chairmen of the Geneva Conference. We do not expect the existing differences to be shelved

overnight. But, like many others, we should like to see the parties involved adopt an approach which heeds the numerous appeals of the international community for both dialogue and restraint.

83. A political dialogue aimed at a comprehensive and peaceful solution in the Middle East must include all parties. The Palestinians must be brought into the negotiation process so that their legitimate national rights can be safeguarded in an appropriate manner. The procedural problem of how this is to be done is in itself a matter for negotiation and should be recognized as such. Such recognition must, however, imply that all parties are willing to modify previous attitudes.

84. We believe the coming year should offer new opportunities for resumed negotiations, be it in Geneva or somewhere else or in some other form. We realize also that the resumption of talks next year will not be easy; nevertheless, the time has come to face the problem of a comprehensive settlement.

85. The exercise of restraint seems to be another important prerequisite for new progress. We therefore share the view expressed by the Security Council last month that no unilateral measures by any party to the conflict can prejudice the outcome of the search for the establishment of peace and that such unilateral measures constitute an obstacle to the achievement of a just and lasting peace in the area. As pointed out by the Security Council, such restraint is particularly important in respect of the occupied Arab territories. Acquisition of territory by force is unacceptable to my country. No measure aimed at perpetuating the occupation of territory acquired in such a way cannot, therefore, can meet with the approval of my Government.

86. It is equally important, however, to view Israeli withdrawal from occupied Arab territories in conjunction with an over-all solution of the conflict, an important element of which is the acceptance of the right of every State in the area to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries, free from threats or acts of force. That applies to Israel as well as to the other States in the region. We can never depart from that fundamental principle. It seems to us that it is as imperative to uphold that principle today as it will be in the future when and if new entities appear alongside the States already existing in the area.

87. The last year and a half has been a period of turbulence and great human suffering in Lebanon. My own country has been greatly alarmed at the continuation of hostilities in Lebanon and has already expressed the hope that confrontation might very soon be replaced by further negotiations. We see the peace-making and peace-keeping initiatives by countries in the area as a commitment to a new future for Lebanon and to the continued sovereignty and unity of that country. The conflict in Lebanon has important repercussions not only for that country but also for the region as a whole. The number of suffering people in Lebanon is still high and the country faces momentous tasks of reconstruction. Norway has already contributed to humanitarian relief projects through international organizations and the United Nations Trust Fund for Assistance to

Lebanon. When the situation in Lebanon returns to normal and reconstruction begins, the Norwegian Government will consider favourably requests for such assistance to that country.

88. The road to peace in the Middle East will no doubt remain tortuous. Nothing but a total commitment of all States and nationalities in the area, as well as of outside Powers, to use this road can eventually foster the community of interest and security so much needed. It is therefore the responsibility of this Assembly and this Organization to see to it that no move is considered and no demand put forward which represent an obstacle to the formation of such a community among countries and various nationalities in the Middle East. A community of interest and security must be based on the recognition of the right of every State or entity, now and in the future, to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries.

89. Mr. BOATEN (Ghana): The continued preoccupation of the United Nations with the situation in the Middle East and the numerous discussions which have been held on that question here in this Assembly, in the Security Council and in committees of the Organization have recently evoked some serious criticisms. Most of such criticisms have been unfortunate. They have not only impugned the integrity of the United Nations; they have also gone so far as to call into question the collective wisdom of this Organization. In recent times there have been attempts to paint the United Nations as a worthless Organization undeserving of the support of the peoples of the world for whom it was so wisely created.

90. Admittedly, most of the criticisms referred to could be characterized as emotional outbursts born of frustrations resulting from the inability of their authors to persuade, if not coerce, the Organization to submit to their particular views. Seen in this light, the frustrations and the emotions may be understandable. The outbursts, however, and the attempts to bring the United Nations into contempt are not excusable and cannot be excused. Indeed, they are dangerous to humanity. They are dangerous because by holding the Organization up to ridicule and contempt we are advocating its dissolution without suggesting a more viable replacement. We are thus, perhaps without meaning to do so, advocating a return to the immediate post-war era when two antagonistic camps faced each other, each planning the liquidation of the other. The world has moved far away from that era, thanks to the United Nations, and I do not believe that there is any one of us in this Assembly who would like us to return to that period of uncertainty and fear regarding the future of the human race.

91. Like other Members of the Organization, those of us from the developing world have also known numerous frustrations. Most of these frustrations persist. We have also had occasion to identify some Members of the Organization as the source of our frustrations. Our verbal exchanges with such countries have not always been characterized by friendliness. But, nevertheless, we have never used their membership of this Organization as a reason for condemning the United Nations. We have always regarded our disagreements with them as springing from the nature of the Organization. We by no means regard the Organization as a perfect institution. In the absence of a more viable

substitute, however, we regard it as the only institution, at least for the moment, which offers hope for the future of the human race.

92. These preliminary remarks may be viewed as caution; they should also be regarded as a plea to those who appear to be carrying on a dangerous campaign to discredit the United Nations and undermine the hopes and aspirations of "the peoples of the United Nations" for whose safety and security this Organization was created, to restrain themselves from making unwarranted and extravagant accusations. It is our hope that this appeal will be heeded in the same spirit in which we make it. We shall all be losers, collectively, if this Organization should follow the path of the League of Nations. Perhaps one essential difference needs to be drawn: after the collapse of the League the human race had another opportunity to try again; after the collapse of the United Nations Organization, there may not be such an opportunity.

Mr. Dessande (Chad), Vice-President, took the Chair.

93. The United Nations has a duty to keep a close and continuous watch over the situation in the Middle East, primarily because of the Organization's commitment to peace and security in the world. It is no longer open to debate that, given the present alignment of powerful forces with interests in the area, the Middle East holds the seeds of a serious threat to international peace and security. There is yet another reason why this Organization has a responsibility, indeed, an obligation, to continue its efforts to bring peace and stability to the area. There is no denying that the present nature of the Middle East issue derives from United Nations action in the area. The Organization sought a solution to the tension in the area in partition. The problem we face now springs from the partial implementation of the partition solution.

94. I do not intend to dwell on the history of the problem with which we are all so familiar. If I have referred briefly to some of the events leading to the issue, it is because, in the view of my delegation, no solution conceived as a package can be expected to achieve its goal if only part of it is implemented. As envisaged by the United Nations decision on Palestine, the Jewish population has found a home in Israel. But where is the home envisaged by the same decision of the Arab population? My delegation maintains that this question constitutes one of the essential elements of the Middle East issue, to which this Organization should seriously address itself if we are to find a solution to the problem.

95. The fact that the question remains unresolved after nearly 30 years within which we have witnessed four armed conflicts, is proof that the Middle East question will not disappear simply by our ignoring it. The large number of exchanges between the Secretary-General of our Organization and Governments of the countries in the Middle East in 1975 alone attests to the impossibility of achieving peace in the Middle East without consulting the interests of the Palestinian people who, in our view, are the most seriously affected in the issue. There is another reason why the Middle East issue should continue to engage the serious attention of this Organization. The Chief of Staff of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization and other

United Nations observers recorded and reported on over 600 incidents between June 1975 and June of this year. These included numerous cases of firing across the armistice demarcation line. These incidents have not ceased and will presumably continue into the future so long as the main problem remains unresolved.

96. In the general atmosphere of tension, uneasiness and understandable impatience, the people of Lebanon have also had to pay a high price in terms of human and material loss. All this, added to the increasing tempo of the arms race in the region, should give all Members of this Organization—indeed, the world community as a whole—cause for great discomfort and anxiety.

97. What makes this tragedy unique is that a whole generation of Israelis, Palestinians and other Arabs have, in the intervening years, grown up nurtured on suspicion and hatred for each other. Like their parents before them, they have been imbued with a commitment to struggle by all available means at their disposal, and must continue to do so, until they achieve what they see as their inalienable right to a secure home and peace in the Middle East. Their children will likewise continue from where their fathers have left off, and so will succeeding generations, for as long as no permanent settlement to the issue is found.

98. My delegation believes that the opportunity to reach a permanent settlement of the issue exists. What is required is a willingness on the part of all parties concerned to reach such a settlement. This Organization already has a number of resolutions on the issue in its records. They include Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which were expected to assist in resolving the problem but which have so far remained largely ignored. There are also resolutions adopted by the General Assembly which have suffered a similar fate. This Organization has been compelled to set up the United Nations Emergency Force, the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force and the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization. All these can be seen only as part of a holding operation; they cannot, individually or collectively, be a substitute for peace. In our commitment to the principles of the Charter and to international peace and security, Ghana answered the call of this Organization and provided—and continues to maintain—contingents in the United Nations Emergency Force. Some Ghanaian soldiers have even sacrificed their lives in the line of duty in the Middle East. Other contingents have suffered in like manner. These sacrifices can be considered worth while only if they can be seen as contributing to a permanent settlement of the Middle East issue.

99. Ghana's position on the Middle East situation has always been consistent and unwavering. We have always held the view that occupation of other peoples' territories by force or as a result of a conflict is inadmissible. We stand by this principle. In keeping with this principle, we fully support the call on Israel to withdraw from Arab lands it occupies at present. It flows from this principle that we cannot accept demographic changes in the territories at present occupied by Israel, whatever the pretext for such action might be. In our view, any such changes would perpetuate the occupation, lead to hardening of positions and render the problem intractable. In such circumstances

the argument that the population in the occupied lands enjoys a higher level of prosperity than obtains in the neighbouring territories is unimpressive; we have heard such arguments before in regard to other territories elsewhere. To us such an argument has only one objective, namely, to obscure the issue for which we must find a solution.

100. It is for these reasons that Ghana would counsel Israel to consider favourably the wisdom of withdrawing from the Arab lands it has occupied, as its contribution to peace and security in the area and to future fruitful co-operation among all the peoples of the region.

101. The existence of Israel as a sovereign State is a fact which can no longer be denied. While accepting this fact, my delegation is of the opinion that there will be no peace in the Middle East, and therefore no security for Israel itself, until the Middle East issue has been settled on the basis of the guidelines provided in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

102. It is for this reason that my delegation urges the reconvening of the Geneva Conference. For its part Ghana has always held the view that such a conference must be open to the acknowledged representatives of all the parties to the conflict. No conference held on any other basis can hope to achieve the desired result. It is for this reason that the participation of the PLO, the authentic representative of the Palestinian people, is seen by my delegation as indispensable if there is to be any hope of the Conference achieving the desired result.

103. The sooner the Geneva Conference is reconvened on the basis of the present realities, the sooner we can look forward to a solution of the problem of the Middle East which would guarantee peace and security for all the peoples of the area, including Israel and the Palestinian people. The time for recriminations and counter-accusations is past. It is now time, we believe, for the parties to the conflict to sit down and negotiate for peace and security in the interest of all.

104. Mr. KARIHILO (Finland): Ever since its inception the United Nations has been involved in the problem of the Middle East. The tense situation existing in the area is reflected in the agenda of the thirty-first session of the General Assembly, which includes several items relating to different aspects of the Middle East conflict. It was only a short while ago that the Assembly concluded an extensive debate on the question of Palestine.

105. In January this year the Security Council held a long debate on the Middle East problem, including the Palestinian question, but was not able to adopt a resolution on the matter. After the debate in the Security Council the Secretary-General, in identical letters addressed to the Co-Chairmen of the Peace Conference on the Middle East, stated that he was concerned not only at the evident dangers of stalemate and stagnation of the Middle East problem but also at the prospect of difficulties which might arise when new deadlines were faced on peace-keeping in the absence of any progress towards a settlement. In April the Secretary-General requested the parties concerned to convey to him any ideas of a procedural or substantive nature which they might have with respect to action to be

taken by the United Nations with a view to breaking the impasse in peace efforts. In his report on the situation in the Middle East, which forms the basis of the present debate [A/31/270-S/12210], the Secretary-General concludes that, while there is general agreement on the necessity of resuming negotiations for a just and lasting settlement of the Middle East problem, there are still important differences of view among the parties.

106. The Government of Finland shares the view generally held during this debate that every effort should be made to create a political and diplomatic momentum towards peace. Recent declarations by Arab and Israeli leaders have contained a new note of moderation and realism which gives us reason to hope for the reconvening of the Geneva Peace Conference in 1977. The world community should therefore give its full support to all parties concerned to persist in these efforts because a settlement can emerge only from constructive negotiations and not from confrontation or inflexible attitudes. It is the opinion of the Finnish Government that a political solution of the Middle East conflict should be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). A just and lasting peace, however, can be achieved only if the legitimate national interests of the Palestinians, including their right to national self-determination, are fulfilled. The acquisition of territories by force is unacceptable. Israel must therefore withdraw from Arab territories occupied in 1967. Likewise, it is necessary that the right of every State in the area, including Israel, to live within secure and recognized borders be guaranteed.

107. The United Nations has made several efforts during its existence to assist in the search for a solution to the very complex and important problem of the Middle East. It is generally recognized that the present impasse in the negotiations can only lead to further frustration and increased tension in the area, which could have very serious consequences. The Middle East problem affects not only the parties to the conflict but the whole international community. It is therefore our sincere hope that constructive steps will be taken without delay to bring the long-sought peace to the Middle East.

108. In the search for a peaceful solution my Government continues to give its full support to the United Nations peace-keeping operations in the Middle East. A central problem in peace-keeping is the lack of progress in political negotiations. Conditions created by peace-keeping for peace-making should be fully utilized by the parties. Otherwise the stalemate - if it continues for too long - can frustrate not only the troop-contributors but the whole purpose of peace-keeping. If the lack of progress in the implementation of Security Council resolution 338 (1973) continues, the situation in the Middle East will remain unstable in spite of the peace-keeping operations. Let us therefore make every effort to start the negotiating process towards peace.

109. Mr. SIDDIQ (Afghanistan): The Middle East crisis has been threatening international peace and security for the past three decades and will continue to do so in the future. The underlying cause of this crisis has been the aggression committed by Israel and the occupation of the lands of sovereign Arab States, as well as the denial to the

Palestinian people of the exercise of their inalienable rights. The United Nations has taken important measures regarding the causes of this crisis and has recommended ways and means by which it could be resolved and a just and lasting peace achieved in the Middle East. Israel has refused to comply with these decisions.

110. The position of Afghanistan with respect to the crisis in the Middle East is well known. We have always been against alien domination, aggression, occupation and the acquisition of territory by force. On the basis of that position, we have constantly demanded the withdrawal of Israel from all the occupied territories, and we believe that that is an essential prerequisite for the achievement of a lasting and just peace in that area of the world.

111. Recently in the General Assembly an extensive debate took place on the exercise of the inalienable rights of the people of Palestine. A large majority of the members of the General Assembly once again reaffirmed their belief that no just and lasting peace could be achieved in the Middle East without the restoration of these inalienable rights. It was also emphasized that the question of Palestine forms the core of the problem of the Middle East, and therefore a just solution to that question is essential.

112. There will be no lasting peace in the Middle East unless a just solution of the problem of Palestine is achieved on the basis of the inalienable rights of the Palestinians, including their right to establish their national State, in accordance with decisions adopted by the United Nations.

113. The attempts to solve the Middle East problem, both in the United Nations and outside it, have thus far not produced tangible results. New efforts are indeed necessary in order to achieve a comprehensive solution that, *inter alia*, must envisage the restoration of the inalienable rights of the people of Palestine.

114. The relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council provide the basis for a negotiated settlement in this regard. Recent events amply indicate that reconvening the Geneva Conference in the near future for the resumption of negotiations is necessary. It is also obvious that any negotiations without the participation of all the parties involved in the conflict will not bring any tangible results. Therefore, in our view the participation in any future negotiations of the legitimate representatives of the people of Palestine—namely, the PLO—is indeed necessary.

115. Having expressed the position of my delegation on the question of the Middle East, I wish to state that my delegation fully supports the draft resolutions introduced by the representative of Sri Lanka, as contained in documents A/31/L.26 and Add.1-3 and A/31/L.27 and Add.1-3. As far as draft resolution A/31/L.24 is concerned, my delegation fully endorses the amendments which have been proposed to this draft resolution in document A/31/L.25.

116. Mr. DE PINIES (Spain) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Once again the General Assembly is discussing the item entitled "The situation in the Middle East", and once again we find that that situation, which threatens security and

international peace in that region, has deteriorated because of the very existence of a conflict which, although latent at the present time, has left so many victims in its wake.

117. This conflict is of particular importance to Spain for a number of reasons. First, a situation exists that is contrary to the United Nations Charter and the resolutions of the Security Council. It is the result of Israel's military occupation of some Arab territories after the 1967 war, and has become even worse because of the denial of the national rights of the Palestinian people. Secondly, reason is on the side of the Arab peoples, and we have a special friendship with them. In this respect the Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs has before this Assembly stated:

"Our support for the just causes of the Arab nation remains unalterable, and I am pleased to proclaim it so today. Our cultural links and the fund of friendship and mutual understanding show us the political ways and means and plans of co-operation which are called for today." [5th meeting, para. 124.]

Thirdly, the conflict is taking place in the Mediterranean area, and my country is situated on the Mediterranean.

118. I shall quote once again the Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs, who on 27 September before this Assembly stated:

"We give maximum priority to our concern with the objective of a prompt and satisfactory solution of the Middle East conflict on the necessary basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and with the inclusion of three equally necessary and interdependent elements: the withdrawal of Israel from all occupied Arab territories; international recognition and guarantee of the frontiers of all the countries of the region; and recognition of the national rights of the Palestinian people. We wish to believe that a negotiated solution to the conflict on that basis is not far off...". [*Ibid.*, para. 100.]

119. Once a solution to the serious conflict that has afflicted Lebanon has been found, and after there have been certain changes in the international situation, we believe the time will have come to return to the Conference table and to resume peace negotiations in Geneva on the basis of the Security Council resolutions. For that reason my delegation is one of the sponsors of the draft resolution submitted to this Assembly in document A/31/L.27, which asks the Secretary-General to resume the contacts established on 1 April 1976, which are reported on in document A/31/270-S/12210, with a view to preparing for the prompt resumption of the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East, and requests the Security Council to consider the situation so as to promote the process of establishing a just and lasting peace in the area.

120. If there is a real desire to seek a genuine and lasting peace, in that Conference the interested parties should consider the immediate withdrawal of Israel from Arab territories occupied since the 1967 war; the recognition of and international guarantees for the boundaries of all the countries of the area, and the recognition of the national rights of the Palestinian people in accordance with United Nations resolutions.

121. The withdrawal of Israel from the occupied territories is essential since its military presence there is contrary to the United Nations Charter, which prohibits the acquisition of territory by force, and to resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), to the implementation of which all repeat all-interested parties, as well as all Members of the United Nations, are bound. The occupation of Arab territories involves problems and gives rise to practices which violate not only international agreements but also resolutions of the General Assembly, once again to the detriment of the Arabs who should live there, but who had to abandon their homes as a result of acts of war.

122. While speaking of the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Arab territories, I should also like to recall that on 21 November 1974, before this Assembly, I stated:

“My delegation must mention and very especially stress its constant preoccupation with the illegal occupation of the Holy Land of Jerusalem, city of the monotheistic religions, a city which has been totally occupied since 1967 and which since then has been undergoing a process of Judaization which we duly denounced and which distorts its Moslem and Christian nature.”⁶

123. International recognition of and guarantees for the boundaries of all countries of the area are other essential points on which the peace negotiations in Geneva should be based so that all the countries of the area, including, of course, Israel, may live in harmony.

124. Also of the greatest importance in those negotiations should be the recognition of the national rights of the Palestinian people. We could not conceive of a solution of the Middle East question—a global solution in accordance with General Assembly resolution 3375 (XXX)—without the participation in that quest of the Palestinian people, a people that has already decided for itself who are its representatives.

125. We trust that the Secretary-General, in view of the authority he now enjoys after having been re-elected and given a new mandate—on which I wish to offer him my warmest congratulations—will be able to re-establish contacts with all the parties in the conflict and with the Co-Chairmen of the Peace Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with his initiative of 1 April 1976, in preparation for the prompt convening of the Peace Conference on the Middle East. Spain hopes and trusts that peace will be established within the framework of the United Nations and that the standards set forth in the Charter of this Organization will be observed in that area of the world also.

126. Let us not miss this opportunity. Time presses. This is an appropriate occasion, and we wish to believe that Israel, as well as the Arab countries, has decided to put an end to a conflict which has lasted all too long. Today, political guarantees and the goodwill of the parties are much more important than conquering a hilltop or controlling a valley. Such concepts have been superseded. Let us see an end to this conflict next year.

127. Mr. STRASSER (Austria): The General Assembly of the United Nations has been seized of questions concerning the Middle East since 1947. Now, nine years after the war of 1967 and three years after the latest conflagration in that region, we are again called upon to examine the situation in the Middle East.

128. If any one thing has become clear by now it is that ample proof has been provided that there is no such thing as a military solution to the problems of the Middle East. Our further actions and our further proceedings will have to be guided by the acknowledgement that a solution to the problems of that area must be found by peaceful means.

129. In the wake of the 1973 war a forum was set up for negotiations aimed at achieving a just and durable settlement of the Middle East problems. We consider the setting up of the Geneva Peace Conference under the auspices of the United Nations to be of major importance, since it established for the first time a body which is, basically, in a position to elaborate an over-all and comprehensive settlement.

130. Another element of major importance was introduced on the Middle East scene by the conclusion of agreements concerning military disengagement between Israel on one side and Egypt and Syria on the other. These agreements have considerably reduced tensions and frictions in the area. We tend to see these agreements also as a step forward in building up confidence and mutual trust between the parties involved.

131. There is another aspect of this development: the disengagement agreements have reduced the amount of occupied territory, occupation being one of the most onerous consequences of the Middle East wars. As there is a clear link between occupation and security, any reduction in occupation means an increase in security.

132. However, and we note this with deep regret and disquiet, no further progress has been achieved since the conclusion of the last agreement on military disengagement. A state of stagnation has prevailed for the past two years. A situation of stalemate is, in our view, most dangerous. We can compare it to the state of a dormant volcano: one does not know when the next eruption will occur.

133. During the course of this year, within the framework of the United Nations but also on the occasion of important international meetings held outside the United Nations context, the international community has voiced its growing concern with the situation in the Middle East.

134. In view of the stagnation during the past year, we are all the more appreciative of the efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in the course of the year aimed at securing a resumption of the negotiation process. We gather from the report of the Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly for consideration under this item that there is a large measure of agreement among the Member States concerning the necessity of resuming negotiations for a just and lasting settlement in the Middle East. Although differences of opinion remain, we encourage the Secretary-General to continue his efforts towards the resumption of the negotiating process.

⁶ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-ninth Session, Plenary Meetings*, 2294th meeting.

135. Austria maintains traditional links with all the peoples in the Middle East. Thus it takes a keen interest in the situation examined under this item of the General Assembly's agenda. One way in which my Government shows its willingness to contribute towards a lessening of tension in the Middle East is its participation in the peace-keeping operations of the United Nations in that region. There is no need for me to reiterate today the importance of the stabilizing influence of the United Nations peace forces in the region.

136. The Austrian delegation is hopeful that 1977 will offer better prospects for negotiations. In this context, we note with great relief that the situation in Lebanon has finally become stabilized and the tremendous suffering of the population there has come to an end. We consider this a positive sign on the way to renewed efforts for a solution in the Middle East, efforts in which the Co-Chairmen of the Geneva Peace Conference also carry an important responsibility.

137. There exists an immense degree of mistrust between the parties involved in the conflict. We believe that it should be one of the main tasks of this Assembly to do its utmost to remove this mistrust and to establish an atmosphere conducive to the success of negotiations.

138. The basis for the solution of the Middle East problem has been laid down in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). Austria attaches so much importance to these resolutions because they embody basic principles which should govern not only the solution of the Middle East problem but also the proper conduct of international relations in general.

139. The eventual settlement in the Middle East, in order to respond to the often-mentioned criteria of justice and durability, must also be acceptable to all the peoples in the Middle East. With this in view, we are of the opinion that all the peoples concerned, through their representatives, must be given an opportunity to express their views. We are therefore of the opinion that the Palestinian people have also to be associated in the negotiating process.

140. Austria has on many occasions professed its conviction that the right to self-determination is to be counted among the basic human rights. We cannot deny this right to the Palestinian people. A high measure of ingenuity and flexibility may be needed to ensure that this basic right can be exercised by the Palestinian people; but a formula must be found which ensures the right of self-expression to this people in a framework which does not endanger the rights of other peoples or States in the area. Let me recall that every right has its limits where other rights, the rights of other peoples, might be infringed upon. We acknowledge the legitimate interests and rights of the Palestinian people, and we equally acknowledge the existence of Israel and the rights of the Israeli people.

141. Only in a negotiated settlement shall we be able to reconcile the differences of opinion and to find a balanced solution acceptable to all the peoples in the Middle East. Austria is therefore most anxious that negotiations be resumed at an early date and that a procedural framework be established in which the legitimate interests and rights of the Palestinian people are appropriately taken into account.

142. While we are open to other procedures we think that the reconvening of the Geneva Peace Conference should be envisaged in the first place. One might wish to combine this multilateral and formal approach with bilateral and/or more informal contacts.

143. But we urge the parties concerned to make use of the Geneva Peace Conference and to accept unequivocally, as a basis for their negotiations, Security Council resolutions 242 (1976) and 338 (1973), while also giving due attention to the legitimate interests and rights of the Palestinian people by associating them in the negotiating process.

144. Mr. VERRET (Haiti) (*interpretation from French*): The Middle East question has continually aroused increasing interest in the international community because of the breadth of the conflict which has for many years opposed peoples that were destined by their origins, customs and habits to share the vineyard of the Lord. This conflict, which is in any case not new in human history, revives the old quarrels of the Philistines and the Hebrews. The latter, like the former, were of the Semitic race, and, according to the sacred books, came out of Mesopotamia into Asia Minor and were settled in Palestine from time immemorial, following the steps of their father Abraham. The spirit of conquest inherent in human nature had already been at work in that territory—previously flowing with milk and honey—and, thanks to fanaticism, the land of Palestine became the prey of conquerors from Asia and from Europe. Alexander the Great descended upon it like the night. The Caesars of Rome absorbed it. The Crusades made a Christian kingdom of it after the blazing armies of the Prophet had planted their standards on the minarets of the mosques which were raised to the glory of Allah the Almighty. Thus goes the world. Man makes God in his own image.

145. As we can see, Palestine—this part of the Middle East—was subjugated, parcelled out and even annihilated by the colonialists until the very middle of the twentieth century, until this new day of the liberation of peoples and the resurrection of defunct States, this era in which we now live and which might be called the era of the United Nations.

146. Today, it is the State of Israel, created by a United Nations resolution providing for the return of the Jews to Palestine, which, by an ill-starred fate, finds itself at the heart of the Middle East conflict. It is a sacred right of all peoples, in whatever period, to affirm their own moral and spiritual values. The unshakable will of the Israeli people to ensure the security of their territory is marked by heroism and faith, by stubbornness and the dimensions of their struggle. In view of that people's determination to preserve themselves and to survive, the United Nations—the sole guarantor of the rights of States, large and small—whose task it is to maintain a climate of peace among its Members, must redouble its vigilance to prevent the situation in the Middle East from degenerating into a world catastrophe in which the security of all nations would be jeopardized.

147. It is to be feared that the condemnation and expulsion of the State of Israel from the Organization, which some Members seem to want to propose, would result in an unprecedented upheaval within this great

international family and lead it to the sad fate of the League of Nations. The Government of Haiti, which is so honourably led by His Excellency Jean-Claude Duvalier, President-for-Life of the Republic, feels that, except on grounds laid down in the Charter, the expulsion of a Member State is a rash act, contrary to the ideals of peace that form the fundamental basis of the Organization, whose duty rather, is to preserve within it any State whose behaviour might be incompatible with its ideals, thus offering it the possibility of returning to a better way of thinking.

148. As the President of this session of the Assembly has so well stated, a settlement of the Middle East conflict can be achieved only if all the parties concerned agree to implement the elements of a solution, none of which having priority over the others, and this presupposes that all forcible acquisition of territory by a State is inadmissible and that, to make a valid contribution to the maintenance of that peace, States must agree to live within frontiers that are secure and recognized by their neighbours.

149. The Egyptian delegation thinks that the General Assembly should request the reconvening of the Geneva Conference in the early months of 1977 with the participation of all the parties concerned, and that the Secretary-General should immediately contact the parties with a view to preparing the Conference and report back to the Security Council and the General Assembly within a given time. The Israeli representative, for his part, has stressed his Prime Minister's statement that his country agrees to a reconvening of the Geneva Conference as originally constituted. Although a general consensus exists on the need to resume peace negotiations, there are still major points of difference, according to the Secretary-General. The Haitian Government would associate itself with any efforts that might be made to achieve the objectives of the Charter, accepted by all Member States, and, with the help of men of goodwill, to crush the seeds of tension that exist almost everywhere in the world, and especially in this troubled region of the Middle East.

150. In the meantime, before the Organization finds a solution satisfactory to all parties concerned, it is imperative that the latter should refrain from any unfortunate move or action that might jeopardize the difficult progress made since the emergence of the conflict and might prevent the United Nations from pursuing its efforts towards the final establishment of a just and durable peace. Let us not judge lest we be judged. It is in this context that the Haitian delegation will support the draft resolution submitted by Israel to this Assembly [A/31/L.24], which shows Israel's firm determination to arrive at an agreed solution with the parties concerned, so that the old nightmare of Palestine may be ended and peace flourish on the banks of the Jordan. May God watch over Israel and its unfortunate sons!

151. Mr. BULLUT (Kenya): The situation in the Middle East continues to pose a threat to international peace and security, despite persistent efforts by this body to devise ways and means to solve the matter by peaceful means. My delegation has had an opportunity on several earlier occasions to state its position on this issue and would like to reiterate its stand once more.

152. Kenya views the Middle East situation with grave concern for several reasons. First, although the situation now manifests itself in a state of "no war, no peace", it is fraught with all the elements of danger to international peace and security. Secondly, the situation has not only created a people that has been forced for many years to live a life of refugees without a homeland and to rely on others' charity for its means of existence, but has also involved great loss of both life and property. Thirdly, the situation has created, or at least appears to have given rise to, a belief on the part of some of the parties to the dispute that military might—which has permitted the occupation of other peoples' territory—provides a way of solving political problems. This precedent is fraught with danger, not only for this Organization but for the world as a whole. Indeed, this precedent may have been used a few times already, and has created serious problems for this Organization.

153. The situation has also created a pattern of perverse development among both the parties to the conflict and the arms suppliers, whereby, for many years now, resources needed for social and economic development have been diverted to means of confrontation and destruction—a situation which, if viewed in its proper perspective, is indeed very tragic. The people in that area of the world have seen no less than four major wars, to say nothing of numerous military operations across their borders. In each case the people in the Middle East have seen lives lost and invaluable property destroyed.

154. My delegation believes that the problem in the Middle East could be solved if all parties concerned resolved to find a solution by compromise and negotiation. For this reason, my delegation would like to take this opportunity again to call upon Israel to implement the decisions and resolutions of this Organization and return to the Arabs all lands it occupied as a result of armed conflict in 1967.

155. That is the most meaningful way the Middle East problem can be solved.

156. My delegation has studied closely the statement on this item, made on Thursday afternoon, 2 December 1976, by the representative of Israel [87th meeting]. We continue to be disappointed by the approach of the representative of Israel. At first we thought it a matter of style, but it has become increasingly clear that it is a matter of policy to inject into the debates of this Organization destructive and irrelevant elements. This Organization has given attention to the situation in the Middle East precisely because Israel has decided to violate its resolutions and decisions all these years. We reject in their entirety any arguments that would tend to undermine the objectives and aspirations of this Organization as laid down in the Charter.

157. The Israeli representative, quoting his Prime Minister's speech to the Socialist International in Geneva some few weeks ago, suggested:

"...Israel is willing to negotiate with its neighbours peace boundaries that are different from the existing ones, short of squandering away again our vital security and defence". [87th meeting, para. 145.]

And yet, on Monday, 6 December, Israel was circulating a draft resolution asking for a peace conference without prior

conditions. In the view of my delegation, this is double talk. The fact that Israel in going to the peace Conference would have a reservation on withdrawal from occupied Arab lands is already a prior condition. Such deliberate ambiguity of intention and purpose is not acceptable to my delegation. We cannot condone it, as it offers no answer to finding a just and lasting solution to the Middle East problem. We do not see how Israel can seek—in its words—“coexistence, security, trade, technology, co-operation and human bridges” with the Arab States if it intends to retain some of the Arab lands under its occupation.

158. However, it is the view of my delegation also that, should Israel be willing to attach more seriousness and sincerity to the search for a solution of the Middle East situation, Arab countries should look with greater objectivity at this situation. We hold that Israel must evacuate all occupied Arab territories in order that a permanent home may be established for the Palestinian people. We believe that once Israel has withdrawn to its 1967 boundaries in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), it should be possible for both Arabs and Israelis to find a permanent solution to the problem of the Middle East.

159. My delegation also believes that the situation in the Middle East has been further complicated by the involvement of external forces in furtherance of their own selfish interests. We, therefore, call for an end to all foreign meddling in the area, as we hold that, left on their own and with the assistance of this Organization, the disputing parties would work out a just and permanent solution to their differences.

160. We should like, therefore, in the light of the new initiatives from both Cairo and Tel Aviv, to call upon all parties concerned to convene without further delay the Geneva Peace Conference with the participation of all concerned, including the PLO. We should further like to associate ourselves with their efforts in this matter, and hope that through this Conference a just and final solution may be found for the Middle East problem.

161. The problem in the Middle East is one that needs an immediate solution. While we sit here, the people of Palestine continue to suffer and live in fear of a renewal of war. While we sit here, Israel continues to occupy Arab lands, denying the Arabs the right to settle in their legitimate lands and exploit the resources therein for their economic development and social progress. The situation, owing to its uncertainty, is rife with all the elements that negate both human and material development.

162. We should, therefore, like to see the situation resolved without delay, if those concerned have regard for human life and human development.

163. In conclusion, my delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for the efforts he has made, as described in his report on the Middle East situation and would like to request him to continue to render his services and good offices to the solution of this problem.

164. Mr. EL-SHIBIB (Iraq) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The delegation of Iraq is once more participating in the

debate on the situation in the Middle East in the plenary meetings of the General Assembly.

165. It is unfortunate that this item had to be submitted once again for discussion. It would have been better if we could have put an end to the Israeli aggression, which is the only reason for this grave situation.

166. There are central and basic facts which, I believe, everybody has come to realize are the core of this problem.

167. The first fact is the serious nature of this situation, which poses a threat to international peace and security and which could lead to the outbreak of a world war that would be a threat to the whole of mankind, resulting in unforeseeable consequences.

168. The second fact is that the occupation of the lands of other countries by force and the continuation of that occupation is contrary to all the principles embodied in the United Nations Charter and numerous resolutions and decisions adopted by the General Assembly.

169. There is another established fact recognized by the overwhelming majority of the members of this Assembly, namely, the fact that the Palestinian people having been deprived of its rights to its land was the first cause of this grave situation in our region, which, if allowed to continue, can never lead to the establishment of a peace based on justice.

170. I need not dwell at length on the first point. Numerous speakers before me in this debate have reaffirmed and emphasized the grave situation in the Middle East and the possibility of the outbreak of armed conflict at any time, the serious consequences which that would have, the possible participation of other parties in such a conflict and its impact on the qualitative and quantitative production of various types of arms.

171. That danger imposes on the international community represented in this Assembly and in the Security Council the need for an immediate and decisive treatment of this explosive situation.

172. But, most unfortunately, we notice that almost 10 years have passed since the June 1967 aggression and nearly three decades since the Palestinian people were evicted from their homeland but the situation remains as grave as ever, without any serious attempt having been made to eliminate the causes of that situation.

173. Israel's continued occupation of Arab lands in the wake of the 1967 war and its attempt to make that aggression permanent, to turn it into a fait accompli by means of the establishment of Jewish settlements and towns on Arab lands, and to change the Arab character of the occupied territories—all this is in clear violation of the United Nations Charter, the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and the principle of the unity and territorial integrity of a State. The countries victims of that aggression have the full right, in accordance with the Charter, to take any measures to recover their land. The Arab countries victims of that aggression have on numerous occasions from this rostrum and elsewhere

reaffirmed their insistence on exercising that right. The glorious October war is one proof of the seriousness of that determination.

174. In the wake of the June 1967 war, it was the duty of the Security Council to adopt a resolution that would make it clear to any aggressor that aggression is not acceptable to the international community and that the acquisition of any gain through aggression is not only rejected but also a subject of condemnation and denunciation.

175. But, unfortunately and to our disappointment, we found that in November of that year, the Security Council merely adopted resolution 242 (1967) in which it attempted a balanced treatment of the aggressor and the victim of the aggression.

176. We are not ignorant of the so-called facts in international relations; but, as a non-aligned country not linked to any foreign pact, we allow ourselves the right to interpret for ourselves and, we hope, to convince others of what we consider to be the true formula for international relations.

177. The main element in this formula is recognition of the right of all colonized peoples to self-determination, a right embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the General Assembly.

178. It is difficult for us to find another people which has suffered and fought to regain that right as the Palestinian people has done.

179. As I look around this hall and see many nations that have gained their independence and are occupying their place in the international community, I cannot but feel sorry at the fact that the Palestinian people have been denied the right to be represented in the international community as an independent, sovereign State in the land of Palestine.

180. We believe—and our belief is very firm, in spite of our occasional disappointment—that justice will always triumph over force, that all the revolutionary forces in the world will be triumphant in the end, and that what the powerful considered to be a lost cause remains—thanks to the determination of peoples—a cause that survives.

181. Representatives who are familiar with the Palestine question know that at certain stages it has been considered to be only a matter of finding a just solution to a refugee problem.

182. But today I ask, Can any reasonable person say that that question is a problem of refugees and not of a people which has been denied its right to self-determination and on which suffering has been inflicted? We all know very well the suffering that has been inflicted on them; it is very painful for us to recall that now.

183. It may be repetitive to say that the grave situation in the Middle East has been caused by the considerable support that Israel receives from the United States, in the first place, and from other quarters such as the racist régime of South Africa.

184. That United States support—which General Brown admitted imposes a great burden on the United States—if maintained, will become a great burden on the international community, which will be constantly threatened by the start of an armed conflict in the Middle East.

185. It is our firm belief that if an end is put to that support and to all dealings with the Zionist entity there will be a lessening of Israel's obstinacy and disregard for the will of the international community.

186. The October 1973 war was a good example of the solidarity of the Arab nation and its determination to continue the fight to regain its freedom and dignity. That just struggle enjoyed the unparalleled support of all peoples of the world, foremost among them the peoples of struggling Africa.

187. That will has not been weakened or shaken. Iraq, which in that glorious battle offered the blood of its own sons, would like today to reaffirm—by word and by deed—its full readiness to place all its resources at the service of the Arab liberation struggle. We believe that this is the only way to teach the aggressor a lesson that it can understand.

188. The struggling people of Palestine is fully aware of Iraq's firm position in that respect. The sister Arab countries which are still suffering under the yoke of the aggressor know that they will always find in Iraq a genuine ally in the battle for liberation.

189. Mr. HARRIMAN (Nigeria): Yet another year has gone by and we are again seized of the same subject. The situation in the Middle East. It appears to be fast achieving the status of many hardy perennials of the General Assembly. If we attempt to take stock of what we have achieved towards the pacification of the Middle East we shall only end up painting a very gloomy picture. It took the 1967 war to shake the world, and in particular the institutions of the United Nations, from its slumber in its approach to the explosive situation in the Middle East. It took the 1973 conflagration to stir us from yet another slumber. Again the United Nations Security Council and the General Assembly appear to be drifting into another period of complacency. I believe that there is a hope in certain quarters that new crises which have developed in the Middle East have changed the picture and that this will provide some respite to forces of occupation and aggression in the Middle East. During last year's debates on this question and in the resultant resolution 3414 (XXX), the General Assembly, with almost unanimous support, again highlighted the basic problems plaguing the Middle East. Again, this year, we have a draft resolution on this subject, which my delegation has sponsored, condemning Israel's continued occupation of Arab territories, drawing the attention of the world to the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people, calling for the speedy implementation of Security Council and General Assembly resolutions in accordance with an appropriate time-table, and calling for the resumption of the Geneva Conference on the Middle East with the participation of all those concerned. [A/31/L.26 and Add.1-3]. In effect, we are again calling for the application of the Charter of the United Nations Organization and relevant international conventions in the

Middle East so as to end the illegal occupation of Arab lands and to solve the Palestinian problem created by the establishment of the State of Israel and the subsequent expansionism of its leaders. We are today calling for a comprehensive solution of the Middle East problem.

190. The world cannot afford another war in the Middle East. We must not conclude that because there is today a semblance of a peace owing to the approach of the leadership of the Arab world, the Arab people can afford to accept a *fait accompli* in the Middle East. The volcano may appear quiescent today, but it could erupt any day now.

191. We must all have read the report—yet another report—of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories [A/31/218]. The mandate of that Committee is limited to human rights, but the report has brought out considerable fresh information to corroborate existing evidence which creates an impression that the main objective and thrust of international Zionism is to take over the whole of Palestine as a Jewish homeland in accordance with the aspirations of the Zionists at the turn of the century. The basic problems today are certainly not different from what they have been since the establishment of the State of Israel. They have only worsened because of this gradual expansion of Israel, which has set aside the original objectives of the Balfour Declaration and the League of Nations and decided on an expansionist policy by which, following the 1967 war, Israel took over the whole of Palestine, including Jerusalem, and even went beyond that. Today, occupied territories are being settled and transformed by occupation forces on the pretext of creating “outposts”, “defensible borders” and one excuse after the other. This can never lead to a realization of a just and lasting peace in the region in the interests of all concerned, including Israel, the non-Jewish Palestinians, the leaders, Governments and in particular the peoples of the Arab world.

192. The draft resolution once again this year underlines that peace, being indivisible, cannot be obtained without a comprehensive settlement, including all parties concerned in the Middle East. Thus, the displaced Palestinians cannot be ignored as the core of any solution that is just and lasting in that area. The Balfour Declaration included a proviso that in settling the Zionists in a Jewish national home in the heart of Palestine “nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine”.⁷ Unless those principles are reapplied or other arrangements made to satisfy the wishes and aspirations of the Palestinian people, unless we work towards a comprehensive settlement, unless we avoid stagnation in the negotiating process, unless we grapple with the basic issues of the Middle East, peace will continue to elude us and there will continue to be a threat to peace in the Middle East with all the consequent repercussions on normal and healthy development in that part of the world—a part of the world that is an inspiration to much of humanity, be it Christian, Jewish or Moslem. A part of the world which is the cradle of civilization is today the cradle of tension, bitterness and disaster.

193. The environmentalists and ecologists know that if one tampers with one's habitat, one sets in motion a number of factors which may not end up by being in the over-all interest of man and the biosphere; so it is with people. For by uprooting people, by displacing people and by depriving people of their homeland, as in the Middle East, there have been created not only a sociological problem, but also human and political problems that the world must solve.

194. I now come back to the report of the Special Committee. The membership of that Committee covers a wide spectrum and its report was signed and presented by the President of the General Assembly as Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka, Chairman of the Committee, and by the representatives of Senegal and Yugoslavia, after its adoption by the Special Committee without reservation.

195. The report stated, *inter alia*, that the main problem affecting human rights in the occupied territories had its roots in a policy of Israel “directed towards a process of annexation of these territories” [see A/31/218, para. 321]. Settlements which Israeli representatives deny exist are reported to be in accordance with “previous approved plans of the Government [of Israel]” involving “the transfer of Israeli citizens to these settlements” [*ibid.*].

196. The report establishes and affords abundant evidence of the denial of the right of return of those Arabs who fled their homes and abandoned their properties during the hostilities in 1967. It reports on the excessive repression of all demonstrations or protests against occupation, including reprisals involving the demolition of homes and the prohibition of the export of produce by so-called co-operatives. Was it only yesterday there was some conflict with the occupation forces over taxation of the Arabs in occupied territory? The report further comments on a “homeland doctrine” of the Government of Israel supported by the parliamentary opposition—in other words, by the whole governmental structure of Israel—which regards territories occupied in June 1967 as being within the national boundaries of the State of Israel. Israel does not consider these areas as occupied territories within the definition under international law. Israel even has a “Ministerial Committee for the Settlement of the Territories”. Yet these allegations continue to be denied.

197. A couple of delegations have taken refuge in Security Council resolution 242 (1967) as the be-all-and-the-end-all of the basis of approach and action in a Middle East settlement. Let us examine this Security Council resolution.

198. First, it calls for withdrawal from occupied Arab territories. This is the right of the Egyptians and Syrians and others concerned. It can never be a concession by Israel. I shall not be presumptuous by trying to prescribe a formula for the solution of the Middle East problem. A Peace Conference to that end is essential. But any acceptable formula must settle the Palestinians in their own homeland; it must review the status of Jerusalem.

199. Secondly, all sides, by calling for the reconvening of the Geneva peace talks, have, I believe, accepted the end of a state of belligerency. This was also inherent in their support of resolution 242 (1967). This position by the

⁷ *Ibid.*, Second Session, Supplement No. 11, vol. II, annex 19.

Arabs, in spite of continued occupation of Arab lands and the present fate of the homeless Palestinians, is yet another concession by the Arabs.

200. Thirdly, the Arabs have come a long way to a *de facto* recognition of Israel, judging from the perspectives of the recent history of the Middle East. In addition, they have during the past two years called for a peace conference. This conference has been commented upon by Israel, but its comments are still very hazy. There is a vicious circle of Israel wishing to be recognized by the PLO, while Israel will not even agree to recognize the participation of the PLO in a peace conference which, with PLO participation, would in fact amount to recognition of Israel as an international person in such negotiations.

201. Fourthly, there is the just settlement of the refugee problem in Palestine reflected in resolution 242 (1967). The definition of "refugee" is a question of interpretation in the context of this resolution.

202. My delegation would not accept the position taken by a few that resolution 242 (1967) excludes the basic problem of Palestinians and *ipso facto* the PLO, unless one wishes to beg the question and see the term "refugee" in a limited sense. More important is the fact that Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) were both emergency resolutions adopted when the Council was preoccupied with the question of war and peace and the cessation of hostilities, in 1967 and 1973 respectively, and when it could not have gone into the whole basis of a solution of the Middle East question. In addition, while resolution 338 (1973) called for the implementation of resolution 242 (1967) in order to underline the limitations and particular nature of that resolution, it further called for "... negotiations ... between the parties concerned ... aimed at establishing a just and durable peace in the Middle East." Subsequently, General Assembly resolutions 3314 (XXIX) and 3375 (XXX) have filled in the details. The whole spectrum of relevant resolutions, including resolution 3375 (XXX), must be brought to bear on the reconvening of the Peace Conference.

203. From the scenario I have painted, Israel has conceded nothing in all this. As I said earlier, the return of territory illegally occupied by force is no concession. We hope that on this occasion Israel will agree to respond to the appeal of the community of nations to go to Geneva and to bring in the PLO and to work towards a negotiated settlement of the Middle East problem in the interest of all.

204. It is a matter of regret to my delegation that, at the recent Security Council debate on the Palestinian question, the representative of Israel reduced the question to how much better off the Arabs were as serfs living in great luxury in the occupied territories rather than as a matter of the inalienable rights of the Arabs in the occupied territories to be free and to direct their own destiny. Before the General Assembly he again quantified the time and the cost to the United Nations of the debates on the Middle East. He related the contributions of oil-producing Arab States to how much time they spent talking. I believe that he missed the point of the General Assembly and the

United Nations system. My delegation hopes that there will be a change of heart about the participation of the PLO and that the Geneva Peace Conference will be convened soon.

205. The leadership of the Arab world might today be amenable to negotiation. The Arabs have moved from a position of no dialogue with Israel to calling for peace talks with Israel. They have agreed to peaceful coexistence in the Middle East. They have protested to the United Nations and refrained from action in self-defense to achieve self-determination, while Israel continues to settle Jewish communities in occupied Arab land. They have seen Arab Palestinians denied their inalienable human rights and hounded and harassed in their camps. Some complain about the "terrorism" of some underprivileged Arab refugees without examining the basic causes of such action. Stateless persons are expected to accept peaceful intercourse among States in which, being stateless, they cannot participate. When they react, we talk about peace and pigeons and doves. We fail to consider the basic motivations of such people. These are double standards.

206. In any organized society the will of the people will always prevail. Governments and leaders in this context are ephemeral. In their actions, leaders have to reflect the will of the people they lead. As I said earlier, there might be a semblance of peace in the Middle East because of the so-called division among the Arabs. No people who are underprivileged and ignored by society can continue indefinitely to swallow their pride and live in indignity. By delaying the solution of the basic problems of the Middle East, we only fan the flames of hate and work inexorably towards conflict.

207. The Jews throughout the world and all those who give Israel the opportunity to be contemptuous about working towards a comprehensive and just solution in the Middle East have a grave responsibility to the people of that region.

208. What we all call for is not anti-Semitism nor the destruction of Israel. We are calling for justice for all States in the Middle East, including the Palestinians, led by the PLO. Israel deserves secure borders and territorial integrity, as the Palestinians have a right to their home and as the Arabs must not be humiliated by aggressive occupation and settlement of their territory.

209. The tide today is in everybody's favour. Pronouncements credited a few days ago to the leaders of Egypt, Syria and the PLO indicate that they are not closing any options whatsoever that could lead to a settlement. Every objective person, however, can see that there can be no peace without the settlement of the Palestinian question.

210. A few years ago the representative of Egypt made the following statement from this rostrum. This statement was later repeated by the representative of Israel, Mrs. Golda Meier, reflecting the prevailing spirit. The representative of Egypt said:

"With the great majority of the peoples of the world, Egypt has been saying, and will continue to say, that all

nations can and should, for their own good, moral as well as material, live together in equality, freedom and fraternity, and with modern science and its vast potentialities at the service of man, enabling him, carried by the momentum of liberty, freedom and faith, to live an infinitely more productive and honourable life.”

211. My delegation believes that the ethos evoked by these sentiments, which appeared to be mutually shared by both the Arabs and Israel, is again with us today and must not be allowed to slip away.

The meeting rose at 6.40 p.m.