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President: Mr. Adam MALIK (Indonesia).

AGENDA ITEM 22

The situation in the Middle East (continued)

1. The PRESIDENT: I wish to inform Members that, in addition to draft resolution A/L.650 and Add.1 and 2, the General Assembly has before it two new draft resolutions, A/L.651 and A/L.652 and Add.1.

2. Mr. Bahadur SINGH (India): The lands where west Asia and North Africa approach each other are among the most important areas of our world. They are among the cradles of our civilization. From ancient times they have been the cross-roads of three continents. In modern times their importance has been even more enhanced. It is a matter of deep concern that this important area is also the scene of continuing tensions and conflicts which threaten international peace and security. This concern and anxiety is redoubled when we look at the root-causes of these tensions and note that such attempts as are made to solve them are time and again frustrated.

3. The root-causes of the tension in the area of the Middle East are well known and have been well known for many years. Vast territories in the Middle East remain under foreign military occupation. Hundreds of thousands of persons have been displaced from their homes, many of them for the second and third time in their lives. It is the continuation of these factors which has created permanent tension in the area and given rise to conflict. But the causes are of even more abiding significance. Wherever in the world they exist, they create tension and jeopardize peace. Whenever territories come under forcible foreign military occupation, whenever people are deprived of their inalienable rights and driven out of their homelands, whenever human rights and dignity are violated, there is always tension, conflict and a threat to international peace. Speaking about this question in the general debate in September, our Foreign Minister said the following:

"In the Middle East, the lack of progress in the implementation of Security Council resolution 242 (1967) is creating new tensions. The cease-fire, accepted as a temporary measure to help the parties negotiate a settlement through Ambassador Jarring, has unfortunately tended to freeze the situation in favour of

the aggressor, despite the willingness shown by the Arab countries to go to the farthest limit in meeting their obligations under the above-mentioned resolution. Our own conviction that no country should be allowed to retain foreign territories taken by force of arms remains unshaken, and we would reiterate that this problem will not be solved unless Israel withdraws from the Arab territories which it has occupied since 5 June 1967 and restores the legitimate rights of the Palestinian refugees." [1940th meeting, para. 83.]

That was the statement made in the general debate by Sardar Swaran Singh, our Foreign Minister.

4. As I was saying, wherever situations exist which are likely to lead not only to tensions but to conflict, it is very necessary for us to address our minds to the situation. Not only in the Middle East but in other areas of the world also we see today that alien military domination, the dispossession of peoples from their homelands and the denial of their rights lead to situations of tension and conflict. India has always had a consistent approach to these questions. We are against the acquisition of territories by military conquest and we believe that foreign military annexation should be vacated. We also firmly believe that the inalienable rights of people dispossessed from or driven out of their homelands should always be respected. Only in this way can peace and harmony prevail.

5. These views are based on principle and not on bilateral considerations. Thus in the Middle East question we have always held that a permanent solution ensuring peace and justice can be found only on the basis of Israel's vacation of the foreign territory it at present occupies and on the basis of respect for the inalienable rights of the people of Palestine.

6. These and the other elements of a solution of the Middle East question were contained in Security Council resolution 242 (1967). I recall that that resolution was unanimously adopted by the Security Council and there is a wide, continuing consensus that it provides a just basis for a settlement of this question. However, three years have passed, and it still remains to be implemented. In the absence of its implementation, tensions have persisted and have on several occasions erupted into hostilities. At present there is a precarious cease-fire and tensions continue to mount. To avoid the eruption of hostilities once again—and it must be remembered that any resumption of hostilities in that area would be fraught with far-reaching consequences—it is a matter of the greatest urgency that the process of the implementation of resolution 242 (1967) be set into motion without any further delay.

7. In his report [A/8541] the Secretary-General has given a concise and comprehensive account of the efforts made

by his representatives with a view to giving effect to resolution 242 (1967). It is unmistakably clear from that report why these efforts have so far failed. The Secretary-General has stated:

"After recalling the responses of the United Arab Republic and Israel to Ambassador Jarring's initiative of 8 February, I said that I continued to hope—as I still do—that Israel would find it possible before too long to make a response that would enable the search for a peaceful settlement under Ambassador Jarring's auspices to continue." [A/8541, para. 27.]

8. It is not necessary for me to dwell on the details of the attempts which have been made by the Secretary-General's representatives over the past few months. These details are too well known and they have been repeated here by a number of speakers who have preceded me. In essence, Israel is not prepared to give a commitment that it will withdraw from Arab territories occupied by it. The representatives of Israel have themselves said so. It is clear for all of us to see that that is the main obstacle today in the search for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

9. We believe that the object of our present debate should not be confined merely to reactivating the Jarring mission, but it should in addition make sure that this mission will succeed. That, of course, depends on Israel, for whose favourable response the Secretary-General has appealed. It also depends upon those who support and encourage Israel in the course of action which it has followed so far.

10. It is well known that the United States is the principal supporter of Israel. The United States is a great Power with global responsibility and influence. It is also a party to Security Council resolution 242 (1967). It was only the other day, in another context, that we heard the representative of the United States impressing upon us the duties of Members of the United Nations to act in accordance with the Charter provisions. But, if I may be allowed to say so, one's practice must be consistent with one's preaching. The practice has shown a greater concern with the letter of the Charter than with the spirit. We cannot quote the letter of the Charter, and that all too selectively, and altogether forget its spirit. We cannot ignore fundamental values and realities in regard to any problem which the United Nations has to consider. Protestations of support for peace should not be accompanied with actual support for those who dominate territories by military force and deprive people of their inalienable rights.

11. Withdrawal is urged not upon those who occupy foreign territories by force and are out to annex them but upon those who act in self-defence in support of popular aspirations. Ultimately it is the people and their inalienable rights which count, whether this is in the Middle East or in Viet-Nam or in Bangladesh.

12. When the mission of Ambassador Jarring ran into difficulties for the reasons so clearly given in the Secretary-General's report, the United States took the initiative in seeking an interim solution. When the proposal was made by Secretary of State Rogers in this regard, we were very hopeful that its outcome would resolve some of the difficulties which existed in that area. Unfortunately, in

spite of the best efforts and the positive contribution made by the Arab Governments—principally the Arab Republic of Egypt—the situation did not unfold as we thought it would. The results of the work undertaken by Ambassador Jarring have to be borne in mind consistently as the principal objective which we should have in mind. We also note with great satisfaction the efforts which have been made by the African Heads of State in their recent tours of the area and in their very careful and deliberate consideration of how they could contribute to peace in this area. This reflects the deep desire of Africa for peace and justice. The results of the mission are not fully known to us. We hope that the mission will succeed in removing the obstacles which are clearly identified in the Secretary-General's report. We look forward to the Assembly reaching a conclusion of its work which will lessen rather than heighten tension in the area.

13. The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Nigeria on a point of order.

14. Mr. OGBU (Nigeria): I should like to apologize to representatives who have inscribed their names to speak this morning, but today an international civil servant, a good friend of the people of the Middle East, Mr. Ralph Bunche, is going to be buried, and my delegation feels very strongly that it would be only fair that those of us who are being represented by the chairmen of groups of States who want to pay our last respects to this noble servant of the world should be given the opportunity to do so. My delegation is aware of the time element involved and we are just as concerned as anybody else to see the work of the General Assembly ended. But we feel that this is the least that could be done to show the family of Mr. Bunche the great esteem we had for him. Therefore, my delegation wishes to propose, in accordance with rule 78 of our rules of procedure, that we suspend further discussion until this afternoon to enable those who want to attend the funeral service to do so.

15. The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of the United States of America on a point of order.

16. Mr. DERWINSKI (United States of America): As an American, I naturally appreciate the great respect in which Mr. Bunche was held, but it seems to me totally inconsistent with the recommendations made recently by the General Committee [A/8500/Add.5] that at this time we should, for any reason, interrupt this serious debate. As I understand it, the General Committee has taken note of our tremendous backlog of work, has suggested restrictions on the length of statements and on points of order, has recommended Saturday and night meetings and has indicated that any further delay would automatically produce a meeting on Sunday, 19 December.

17. My delegation, taking into account the great career of Ralph Bunche in the United Nations and his special interest in the Middle East, thinks that it would be a far greater sign of respect for him to continue working on this subject than to postpone this meeting. We think that Mr. Bunche would have been far more understanding of progress for peace than of any delay—even if caused, as in this case, by a tribute to his memory.

18. Therefore, we do not support the motion and respectfully suggest that it should not be carried.

19. The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Tunisia on a point of order.

20. Mr. DRISS (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): We have just heard the proposal made by our colleague the representative of Nigeria and we support it. I believe that Mr. Bunche deserves to have a tribute paid to him by his colleagues for the work he accomplished. In order to enable delegations to be present at Mr. Bunche's funeral, I think we should suspend our work. We could resume work on Monday and at that time those who have not spoken as yet will be able to do so—in a hall where there may perhaps be more interest. At that time of course we could proceed to vote on the draft resolutions.

21. If we must choose between continuing the debate merely to mouth words and acting, my delegation pronounces itself in favour of the most solemn of actions. I therefore feel that the proposal submitted by our colleague of Nigeria should be accepted.

22. The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Australia on a point of order.

23. Sir Laurence McINTYRE (Australia): I should like, very briefly, to support the appeal that the representative of the United States has just made to the representative of Nigeria to withdraw his motion, which as I understand it—I was not in the hall at the moment when he made it—is that this morning's meeting should be suspended.

24. I agree fully with what the representative of the United States said. I am sure Mr. Bunche himself—for whom nobody has greater respect, or indeed had a longer friendship, than I—would have preferred that in the condition in which the Assembly finds itself, with its programme of work, we should carry on this morning and

follow the recommendation of the General Committee that we should lose no time between now and the closing date of the Assembly. I therefore would, as I say, add the voice of my delegation in appealing to the representative of Nigeria to withdraw his motion and enable us to carry on throughout this morning.

25. There is, so far as I can see, a perfectly satisfactory attendance here and I believe that no account should be taken of one or two absences. It is in my view more important that we should continue our work.

26. The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Ghana on a point of order.

27. Mr. AKWEI (Ghana): It is inconceivable to my delegation that anyone here—and particularly the delegation of the United States of America—could oppose the motion by the representative of Nigeria, who moved his motion under rule 78. I think, Mr. President, you may wish to put the matter straightaway to the vote in accordance with the rule.

28. The PRESIDENT: Rule 78 reads:

“During the discussion of any matter, a representative may move the suspension or the adjournment of the meeting. Such motions shall not be debated, but shall be immediately put to the vote. The President may limit the time to be allowed to the speaker moving the suspension or adjournment of the meeting.”

29. The motion is to adjourn the meeting to 3 o'clock this afternoon. I now put it to the vote.

The motion was adopted by 47 votes to 24, with 29 abstentions.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.

