



Security Council

Fifty-fifth year

Provisional

4248th meeting

Monday, 18 December 2000, 8 p.m.

New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Lavrov	(Russian Federation)
<i>Members:</i>	Argentina	Mr. Listre
	Bangladesh	Mr. Ahsan
	Canada	Mr. Heinbecker
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Jamaica	Miss Durrant
	Malaysia	Mr. Hasmy
	Mali	Mr. Ouane
	Namibia	Mr. Andjaba
	Netherlands	Mr. Hamer
	Tunisia	Mr. Jerandi
	Ukraine	Mr. Kuchynski
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

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00-80363 (E)



The meeting was called to order at 8.15 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Israel, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite the representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Lancry (Israel) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 18 December 2000 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, which will be issued as document S/2000/1206, which reads as follows:

"I have the honour to request that, in accordance with its previous practice, the Security Council invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations to participate in the meeting of the Security Council to be held on Monday, 18 December 2000, with regard to the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem."

I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to participate in the current debate in accordance with the rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The Security Council will now resume its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior

consultations. Members of the Council have before them document S/2000/1171, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Bangladesh, Jamaica, Malaysia, Mali, Namibia and Tunisia.

The first speaker on my list is the representative of Israel, to whom I now give the floor.

Mr. Lancry (Israel): I would like to congratulate the President on his assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. I would like also to take this opportunity to congratulate his predecessor, Ambassador van Walsum, for his most capable leadership.

At the outset, I would like to express my satisfaction at the recent renewal of official high-level contacts between Israel and the Palestinians, in particular the agreement of both parties to attend meetings in Washington this week. It is my hope that by turning to the framework of negotiations we can peacefully find a way to resolve all outstanding issues, including the question under deliberation today.

We do think that the core of the matter is clear. Although many would have us believe otherwise, what we are witnessing is the deliberate choice by the Palestinian leadership to simultaneously pursue the intifada, as well as the welcome resumption of dialogue. The current confrontation, which was deliberately initiated by the Palestinian leadership, continues to be nurtured in various ways as a strategic choice on their part.

If there is any lingering doubt that this is in fact the case, I would invite the Council to ask itself who is benefiting here. Whose interest does it serve to perpetuate a variable-intensity conflict of the kind we have been experiencing? Even a cursory consideration of the facts suggests that this conflict clearly serves the interests of the Palestinian leadership rather than the interests of Israel. In the aftermath of the Camp David Summit, Chairman Arafat found himself increasingly isolated, even criticized in certain circles, for failing to be forthcoming in reaching a final peace agreement with Israel. Barely four months later, the Palestinian cause is the beneficiary of front-page coverage from the international media. While Israel has been unjustly portrayed as the militaristic aggressor, the Palestinian leadership has benefited tremendously by avoiding the implementation of the necessary steps to which it committed itself to bring about a final settlement.

It now seems as if the leading role that the Palestinian leadership has played in the current spate of violence is finally being admitted. The Palestinian semi-official daily Al Ayyam reported on 6 December that the Palestinian Minister of Telecommunications, Imad Al Falouji, confirmed that the Palestinian Authority had begun preparations for the outbreak of the current intifada from the moment the Camp David talks concluded, in accordance with instructions given by Chairman Arafat himself. Mr. Falouji went on to state that Arafat launched this intifada as the culminating stage of "Palestinian steadfastness" in the negotiations, and not merely as a protest against Israeli opposition leader Ariel Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount. Here is the original Arabic.

(spoke in Arabic)

"Imad Al Falouji, the Telecommunications Minister, stressed that the Palestinian Authority began preparations for the outbreak of the current intifada after returning from the Camp David negotiations, on the order of President Yasser Arafat, who anticipated the outbreak of the intifada as the culminating stage of Palestinian steadfastness in the negotiations and not merely as a protest against Sharon's visit to Haram al-Sharif."

(spoke in English)

Despite this and other overwhelming evidence, the Palestinian leadership has been remarkably successful in obscuring this fact. They have incited their street to violence and holy war, while at the same time placing full blame for the crisis on Israel's shoulders. This practice continued even as negotiations took place in Paris, Sharm el-Sheikh and Gaza on ways to end the confrontation and return to negotiations. Officials of the Palestinian Authority were quoted as calling for escalation at the same time as they accused Israel of horrific acts of war. They ordered their illegally armed militias to fire on Israeli soldiers and civilians in the same breath as they demanded that Israel renounce its right to self-defence. And now, while illegal Palestinian paramilitary groups continue their assaults on Israel, their leaders come to ask the world for protection. This is a manipulation of reality and a perversion of the truth.

It must be further noted that the current crisis is also due to the failure of the Palestinian leadership to cultivate mutual understanding and tolerance among

the Palestinian people. Rather than educate for peace, they have consistently and systematically fostered a culture of hatred and rejection, manifested in official Palestinian textbooks which deny the legitimacy of Israel. Such a failure cannot be rectified by a resolution of the Security Council, nor by any action of the international community. This state of affairs can be changed only by the Palestinians themselves. The peace process will succeed only if mutual recognition and non-violence is enshrined, not only on paper, but in the hearts and minds of peoples.

This is precisely what Chairman Arafat pledged to accomplish in September 1993 when he committed, in a watershed letter to the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, to renouncing the use of violence and terrorism and to settling all outstanding claims through negotiations. This commitment was fundamental, and for Israelis it represented much more than mere verbiage. After years of PLO-sponsored terrorism, Chairman Arafat's letter reflected the recognition that, after decades of confrontation, the destiny of the region would now be determined at the negotiating table and not by violence and terrorism. Moreover, Chairman Arafat spoke on behalf of all the Palestinian people and was consequently recognized by Israel as their leader. He cannot now go back on his word and continue to receive international support as if he had not.

Today, however, both the Government and people of Israel are obliged to confront a stark reality, one which suggests that the Palestinian leadership remains ambiguous in its fulfilment of the basic commitment that formed the bedrock for seven years of peacemaking. Evidence of this departure was apparent weeks ago. The release of scores of Hamas and Islamic Jihad terrorists from Palestinian jails, an act which has now led to a number of terrorist bombings in Israeli cities, offers compelling proof, as do the activities of the Tanzim, the illegal paramilitary arm of Chairman Arafat's Fatah faction who have repeatedly directed live gunfire and roadside ambushes at Israeli soldiers and citizens. Even as the Palestinians ask the Council today for protection from the consequences of their own actions, they are making clear that they feel no obligation to fully relinquish the path of intifada, which is not an unarmed popular uprising, but rather a drawn-out expedition of guerrilla warfare.

And yet, with the exception of some rare — and therefore remarkable — voices in the Security Council, the United Nations has made no official mention of the

incitement to violence in the official media, of the green light given to terrorists by the Palestinian Authority, of the desecration of Jewish holy sites and of a host of other Palestinian violations. Instead, we are sitting here today debating the merits of sending an international force to protect the Palestinians from their own choice to engage in violence.

Today's draft resolution represents a blatant attempt to abuse the goodwill of the international community and to obscure the strategic choice made by the Palestinians. The Security Council must not be a party to it. The United Nations cannot be called upon to put out fires on behalf of the same party that has kindled them and fanned the flames. What kind of precedent would this set? What kind of message will it send to the Palestinians and others?

Our position on the question of an international presence has been made clear. We are not opposed to some form of international presence provided it is established within the context of a comprehensive bilateral agreement. This has always been the accepted sequence. An international presence is not something we intrinsically reject, but it must be used to cement an agreement, not as an alternative to one.

The Council must be cognizant of the fact that sending a United Nations force, as demanded, has the potential to actually escalate the violence and further destabilize the region, for it would send a message to the Palestinians that there is no need to negotiate or coordinate with Israel and no need to seek compromise. Indeed, I can think of no greater incentive than this to continue the caustic struggle. Thus, peace and security would not be enhanced by an international force; they would be undermined. If the international community wishes to see a return to dialogue and negotiation and the ultimate realization of the legitimate aspirations and needs of both parties through a peaceful process, it must insist that the Palestinian leadership fulfil its obligations. This Council must not take action that would be interpreted as endorsing violence and unilateral imposition.

Furthermore, international intervention appears wholly unnecessary. Chairman Arafat has the ability to protect the lives of his people, and the steps necessary to do so are clear. He must relinquish the path of confrontation, disarm his illegal militias and control Hamas and Islamic Jihad terrorists, all of which he has already committed himself to do. Furthermore, he must

assume his responsibility as the leader of the Palestinian people, committed by his own free choice to seek an honourable peace, to uphold the foundation of the peace process and to foster a culture of peace between our two peoples. I assure the members of this Council that were the Palestinian Authority to take these steps, the violence, death and injuries would cease and we could once again focus on negotiating a lasting peace settlement.

Yet the Palestinian Authority prefers the safety of ambiguity, a fact that has even been recognized in some Arab circles. Egyptian commentator Mahmoud Al-Manem Morad, writing in *al-Akhbar* on 1 December, was moved to ask,

"How is it that the Palestinians are seeking the deployment of an observer force which will act as a buffer between themselves and the Israelis, if, in the same breath, they also seek to continue the intifada, which will require close contact between the Palestinians and Israelis?"

Let me repeat: the current intifada is not an unarmed popular uprising, but a guerrilla campaign, which the Palestinians have little interest in having brought to a close. We maintain that just as the current violence began with a calculated and deliberate order from the highest echelons of the Palestinian leadership, so must it end. The Palestinians are not in need of protection from Israel, but rather from the misguided policies of their own leaders.

What is needed from the Security Council is not intervention, but support for the parties and the efforts to achieve peace that will get under way this week in Washington. Protection forces, United Nations observers — all these only distract us from the real issues at hand. The Palestinian Authority's perpetual ambiguity with regard to ending the violence is indicative of a lack of fortitude and political will on their part to make the historic compromises that are needed. An international force will not increase the Palestinian determination to make peace; rather, it will decrease their willingness to do so.

The Council's overriding objective must be to encourage both sides to embrace the reasonable peace. I would urge the Council to consider whether sending an international force to the region will advance this goal. The draft resolution before us today is a recipe for long-term instability in the region, and I therefore

strongly urge the members of the Council not to support it.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Israel for the kind words he addressed to me.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I shall first call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Andjaba (Namibia): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and Ukraine.

On 7 October, the Security Council adopted resolution 1322 (2000), which, inter alia, condemned the violence, especially the excessive use of force, against Palestinians. It also called for the cessation of violence and called upon Israel to abide scrupulously by its legal obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention.

However, the violence has continued and the Council has not taken any action to address the situation. It was in this regard that the NAM caucus some weeks ago proposed the establishment of a protection force for Palestinian civilians in the occupied territories. After extensive consultations, it was decided to change the proposed force to an observer force. It is our strong conviction that such a force would not only protect civilians, but would have a stabilizing effect on the situation in the region. We will always maintain that peace will benefit both Palestinians and Israelis.

The NAM caucus, under all circumstances, endeavoured to engage all Council members and, in particular, had useful exchanges with the French and United Kingdom delegations, and we thank them for that. The caucus had, on request, delayed action on the draft resolution several times to accommodate the views of other members, and in particular to give the Secretary-General and other actors involved in mediating the situation an opportunity to proceed with their efforts.

The caucus has furthermore amended its own draft several times to accommodate the views of other members. The latest amendments include a substantive change in operative paragraph 3, which now, instead of deciding to establish a United Nations observer force, only expresses the Council's determination to establish such a force. This clearly takes into consideration other actors involved. The draft resolution therefore contains the minimum action that the Council should take, bearing in mind the tragic situation in the occupied Palestinian territories.

The argument has been advanced that the Council should wait for bilateral peace efforts to run their course before action is taken on this draft resolution. It has also been suggested that the consent of both parties is required before an observer force can be established. We strongly disagree with both those views. We do not believe that Council action is subject to peace negotiations, although we actively support those initiatives. The Council has its own important responsibility in the maintenance of international peace and security. By establishing the observer force, the Council can substantially contribute towards stabilizing the situation in the region. We also do not believe that the consent of the parties is required to establish the force, but we agree that their cooperation is needed.

The Non-Aligned Movement strongly supports the efforts of the Secretary-General to get the peace process in the Middle East back on track. We also strongly support the efforts of all the other players involved. The Non-Aligned Movement, however, believes that the Council has its own role to play in these circumstances. It is in that regard that we have submitted this draft resolution, which is balanced. The members of the Non-Aligned Movement and Ukraine will therefore vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): Several weeks ago, France proposed that an observer mission be sent to the Palestine territories to contribute to ending the violence and to protecting civilians. The violence has claimed far too many victims, most of them Palestinians. I want to repeat here how moved we are by that tragic toll, and that we condemn the excessive use of force.

Over the past few weeks, France, along with the United Kingdom, has tenaciously argued in favour of an agreement on creating an observer mission. On 17

November, on the basis of a French proposal, the Council unanimously entrusted Mr. Kofi Annan with

“the task of conducting consultations with the two parties ... to examine the possibility of, and define acceptable modalities for, the presence of United Nations observers in the territories”.
(S/PV.4226 (closed)).

On that basis, the Secretary-General initiated contacts with the parties, and last Friday he informed us that he intended resolutely to pursue them. On 8 December, at Nice, the European Council, on a French initiative, spoke out along the same lines.

The bilateral dialogue between Israeli and Palestinian leaders has resumed, and it will continue in coming days at Washington. Mr. Védrine's recent visit to the region contributed to that outcome.

In that context, France wonders about the timeliness of adopting this evening the draft resolution upon which we are to vote. I wish to stress that France has no difficulty with the substance of the text, and I wish to thank the non-aligned members of the Council, with which we have worked in the most constructive spirit. But France considers that, in the light of the ongoing efforts of the Secretary-General and of the resumption of bilateral negotiations, this is not the most suitable time; we would have preferred to await the outcome of the ongoing discussions before proceeding any further. For that reason, and that reason alone, my delegation will abstain in the vote on the draft resolution before the Council.

In no way is France giving up the possibility of sending observers, which we consider to be more necessary than ever before. Just as we have always done in the past, we shall continue to make every effort to promote peace in the Middle East.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): My delegation fully associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Namibia, who spoke also in his capacity as coordinator of the non-aligned caucus.

My delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution, of which we are a sponsor, because we strongly believe that the Council must act to stop the killing of Palestinian civilians in the occupied territories. It is more than two months since the current situation began, and to date more than 300 Palestinian civilians have been killed and many thousands wounded at the hands of Israeli security forces, who,

despite Council resolution 1322 (2000) of 7 October 2000, continue to use excessive and disproportionate force. The match is clearly an uneven one: stones and catapults against automatic rifles, artillery, tanks and helicopter gunships. The Council cannot continue to watch from the sidelines and do practically nothing.

The Security Council, which is quick to intervene in other conflict situations and to protect civilians caught in other armed conflicts, must now do the same to defuse the situation and to provide a modicum of protection for the Palestinian civilians. For the Council not to do so after more than two months would be a dereliction of its responsibilities with respect to the maintenance of international peace and security.

The negotiations on the text of the draft resolution before us have been protracted, covering several weeks. The sponsors of the draft resolution have demonstrated their flexibility and their spirit of accommodation. Deadline after deadline has been given, and the sponsors have indicated their preparedness to consider concrete proposals on the text. Unfortunately, to date, no concrete counterproposals on language or amendments have been made, which only shows that there is a lack of seriousness on the part of some members of the Council with respect to considering the text.

Those opposed to the Council taking action on the draft resolution have argued for more time to allow for the two parties, that is Israel and Palestine, to arrive at an agreement between themselves over larger issues, which might include the establishment of such a monitoring force. But that is subjecting the establishment of a United Nations force to the vagaries of a tortuous and uncertain peace process. In the process, the killing of Palestinian civilians will continue unchecked, and the toll in terms of deaths and injuries will mount over the coming days and weeks. That is clearly unacceptable to my delegation and to the other sponsors of the draft resolution.

The proposed monitoring force is intended to calm the situation on the ground so that further deaths and injuries can be avoided. Indeed, such a monitoring force would be an important confidence-building measure, which would in fact contribute constructively to the peace process. It was for that purpose that my Minister for Foreign Affairs travelled to New York, along with several of his colleagues from the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), under

the leadership of the Foreign Minister of Qatar, representing the chairmanship of the OIC summit. My minister and his colleagues addressed the Council and made a strong plea for the establishment of a United Nations protection force. They were honoured to have been able to address the Council, and had hoped that their pleas would have convinced members of the Council to take action to create such a force.

The idea of a United Nations protection force was also directly addressed by President Yasser Arafat when he came to the Council on 10 November to make his case. It is therefore a matter of deep regret and profound dismay that, in spite of modifications made to the original proposal and the flexibility shown by the sponsors of the draft resolution, there was no concrete engagement by those that are opposed to the proposal, other than their saying that the time is not opportune. But when is the opportune time? We believe that such an opportune time will not come in the foreseeable future, if at all, as long as Israel, the occupying Power, cannot accept such a monitoring force. From what we have just heard, such a force is clearly unacceptable to Israel, except, perhaps — and it is a big perhaps — in the context of a comprehensive bilateral peace agreement with the Palestinians, whenever that may be arrived at.

We do not believe that the fate of such an important — indeed, indispensable — United Nations monitoring force should be subject to the uncertainties of the peace process. We believe that if the Council is serious about establishing such a monitoring force, now — not some uncertain date in the future — is the time to do it.

May I conclude by expressing my delegation's deep and sincere appreciation for the diplomatic efforts undertaken by the European Union, specifically by Foreign Minister Védérine of France. We thank him for the efforts made, but regret that, given the ongoing violence and the slaying of civilians in the occupied territories, which continue unabated, my delegation and the other sponsors of the draft resolution do not have the luxury or the patience to wait out what is likely to be a long, protracted process.

We also support the efforts of the Secretary-General, but we believe that such efforts can be pursued in parallel with the efforts of the Council. We do not believe that these efforts contradict each other.

Mr. Hamer (Netherlands): The Netherlands agrees with the principle objective of the present draft resolution, which is the establishment of the United Nations observer force in the Middle East. Such a United Nations presence could be useful, because it is clear that the parties themselves are not currently capable of bringing about the necessary de-escalation. Nevertheless, the Netherlands will abstain on this draft resolution. We feel strongly that its adoption now would critically undermine attempts at convincing the parties to accept such a United Nations observer force. Moreover, this draft resolution may hinder ongoing efforts to achieve what is our first priority, namely, the successful resumption of the peace talks themselves. In the light of the caution urged on us by the Secretary-General last week on precisely these points, we are disappointed that the Council is being forced to vote on this draft resolution at this moment.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Two months have elapsed since the most recent outbreak of conflict between Palestine and Israel, with casualties on both sides, but with heavy civilian injuries on the Palestinian side in particular. The Israeli blockade has subjected the large civilian population of Palestine to hardship in their daily life. To date, there has been no sign of a de-escalation of the situation on the ground. The peace process in the Middle East is therefore faced with a severe test.

China is deeply concerned about the situation and reiterates its opposition to violent activities of any kind. China calls upon both parties to stay calm and heed reason and, in the fundamental and long-term interests of the peoples of the region, to adopt all necessary measures to prevent the situation from worsening further.

The Security Council has recently been discussing the possibility of dispatching United Nations or international observers to the region. In an effort to defuse the conflict between Palestine and Israel and to maintain peace and security in the Middle East, the Security Council should effectively fulfil its responsibilities, as mandated by the United Nations Charter. Not only would that be in the interests of Palestine and Israel, but it is the ardent hope of the majority of the States Members of the United Nations. The Chinese Government has therefore steadfastly worked to achieve the goal of dispatching observers to the region. We support the draft resolution submitted to the Council by the Non-Aligned Movement caucus. We

hope that the United Nations observers can be deployed to the region as soon as possible.

We will continue our support for the mediation efforts of the Secretary-General and all the parties concerned, and stand ready to make our own contribution to putting an end to the violent situation and restoring the peace process in the Middle East.

Mr. Kuchynski (Ukraine): My delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution before us today. We base our position on the assessment that the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian military confrontation has brought the situation in the Middle East to its most critical stage in the past few decades. Like many others, we are convinced that in current circumstances, the presence of a third party, representing the international community, on the ground, is critically important to prevent the whole region from sliding into an abyss of war. My delegation believes that action today by the Security Council is indispensable to address the situation in an appropriate manner. The very fact of the adoption by the Security Council of a draft resolution expressing its determination to establish a United Nations force of military and police observers in the Palestinian territory could contribute to topping the continuing senseless bloodshed.

If adopted, today's draft resolution will contribute to the ongoing diplomatic efforts aimed at stopping all acts of violence and excessive use of force in the Palestinian territory and Israel. The draft resolution provides a strong encouragement to the parties to implement the Sharm el-Sheikh understandings faithfully and without further delay. In our judgement, the main thrust of the draft is largely in line with the positive signs that have emerged during the past few days in terms of the resumption of peace talks between the two sides. We look forward to the outcome of the forthcoming talks in Washington.

While we are supportive of the current draft, it is our understanding, however, that its practical implementation would require additional time and diplomatic efforts. As a contributor of troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations for the past eight years, Ukraine fully recognizes that the deployment and functioning of a United Nations force in the Palestinian territory will be impossible without the cooperation of Israel.

It is important that draft requests the Secretary-General to continue consultations with the parties on

the details of the acceptable composition and modalities for this force in order to reach a compromise solution and secure full cooperation.

Lastly, I would like to put on record that today's vote by Ukraine is not prejudicial to one of the guiding principles of United Nations peacekeeping, that is, the consent of the conflicting parties to the deployment of United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Mr. Ouane (Mali) (*spoke in French*): My delegation associates itself fully with the statement made by Namibia on behalf of the non-aligned caucus. I would nevertheless like to make three brief observations.

First of all, I would like to say that Mali will vote in favour of the draft resolution under consideration because we believe that the Security Council must take a decision in the face of the tragic and violent events that have been taking place in the Palestinian territories since 28 September, which have taken many victims, mainly Palestinians. We must act to put an end to the violence. We must bring an end to the excessive use of force. We must ensure the protection of Palestinian civilians. It is for these reasons that we fully support the creation of an observer force. We believe that the deployment of such a force will contribute to stabilizing the situation while being of great benefit to the Palestinian and Israeli civilian populations.

Secondly, I would like to underscore the fact that Mali continues to fully support the peace process as a whole. In that connection, we are pleased with the resumption of the bilateral dialogue between the parties. We hope that the ongoing diplomatic efforts will bring about concrete results consistent with the Sharm el-Sheikh and earlier agreements.

Thirdly, and lastly, I would like to say that my delegation regrets that, despite the great degree of flexibility demonstrated by the sponsors, no consensus was achieved on the draft resolution on which we are about to vote. We consider that the text of the draft resolution is balanced and that it seeks to find common ground between the parties by giving the Secretary-General a leading role.

My delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution before us.

Mr. Listre (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation supported the ideas presented by France here in the Council regarding the establishment of an

observer force in the West Bank and Gaza that would have three objectives. First, that force would monitor in the field the development of the tragic events that have been taking place without interruption since Ariel Sharon's visit to Al-Haram Al-Sharif on the fateful date of 28 September 2000. Secondly, the force would inform the Secretary-General and the Security Council about those developments. Thirdly, it would employ good offices between the parties to avoid an escalation of the conflict and, more importantly, to contribute to de-escalating it and ending the violence. At that time we said that, for practical reasons and because of the particular situation in the occupied territories, a mission of this type would have to have the consent of the parties. Unfortunately, consensus has not been achieved to make it possible for the Council to draw up and adopt a resolution in keeping with those guidelines.

My delegation also has reservations about the timeliness of the draft resolution under consideration at a time when it appears that negotiations towards a peace settlement may resume, and that is the only way to resolve this tragic conflict. We are also concerned about the effectiveness of the draft resolution. We wonder whether the draft resolution before us will be effective in promoting the peace process through negotiations between the parties. It is for these reasons that Argentina will abstain in the voting on this draft resolution.

Nevertheless, we cannot fail to express our solidarity with the suffering of the Palestinian people. As this may be the last meeting of the Council in which we will participate during our current term of membership, we must also take this opportunity to appeal to the parties to be committed, flexible and generous — qualities that should be demonstrated by the stronger party in particular. We believe that acting with greatness, magnanimity and a sense of history at the peace table, instead of with meanness and pettiness, is the way to achieve peace, for which there is no alternative. There can be no winners in this conflict through the use of force; there will be only losers.

Given the possibility of a resumption of direct dialogue between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, which we welcome, we nevertheless believe that many things have occurred since the parties last met. We cannot continue to go round in circles while being reticent and making pusillanimous calculations. We call on the parties to reach an agreement in which they

each recognize the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to organize itself as an independent State, as well as Israel's right to live within internationally recognized and secure borders. In order to ensure the agreement we all call for, the United Nations must be involved. The Organization can count on Argentina's support.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I shall now put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/2000/1171.

A vote was taken by a show of hands.

In favour:

Bangladesh, China, Jamaica, Malaysia, Mali, Namibia, Tunisia, Ukraine.

Against:

None.

Abstaining:

Argentina, Canada, France, Netherlands, Russian Federation, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The result of the voting is as follows: 8 votes in favour, none against and 7 abstentions. The draft resolution has not been adopted because it did not obtain the required majority.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make a statement after the voting.

Miss Durrant (Jamaica): The Jamaican delegation associates itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Namibia in his capacity as coordinator of the non-aligned caucus in the Security Council.

Jamaica voted in favour of the draft resolution contained in document S/2000/1171, in which the Council would have expressed its determination to establish a United Nations force of military and police observers to be dispatched throughout the territories occupied by Israel since 1967, with the aim of contributing to the implementation of the Sharm el-Sheikh agreements, the cessation of violence and enhancing the safety and security of Palestinian civilians.

My delegation is deeply disappointed that the draft resolution did not receive the necessary votes to enable its adoption. We believe that the adoption of the draft resolution and the subsequent deployment of the

United Nations observer force could have served as a deterrent to further violence and as a confidence-building measure between the parties, and furthered the implementation of Security Council resolution 1322 (2000).

We remain concerned at the increasing number of casualties and injuries — for the most part among the Palestinian civilian population, especially children — as well as at the serious humanitarian and economic situation.

The Jamaican delegation commends the strenuous diplomatic activities of the Secretary-General, as well as of leaders of several countries, to restart the peace process. We are therefore pleased to learn that the parties have agreed to attend discussions in Washington, D.C., later this week under the aegis of the President of the United States. It is against that background, and within the context of the Council's responsibility for international peace and security, that Jamaica co-sponsored the draft resolution contained in document S/2000/1171. It will be noted that the draft requested the Secretary-General to consult both sides on the modalities of the deployment and functioning of such a force, and to report to the Council no later than 8 January 2001. Only then would a decision on further action have been taken.

Jamaica continues to encourage an end to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict through an active negotiating process that takes into account the right to security of all the States in the region, including Israel, as well as the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. We will continue to support the efforts to achieve a just and lasting peace within the framework of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). We believe that the establishment of a United Nations force of military and police observers would have contributed to this process.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): We are meeting on the most difficult issue at the most difficult time. And although there are distinct differences among members of the Council, I warmly appreciate the effort that all — particularly members of the Non-Aligned Movement caucus — have made to try to find a common way forward.

The level of violence in the region is gravely disturbing, and the resulting number of civilian deaths and injuries, overwhelmingly in the Palestinian community, is unacceptable. The United Kingdom

believes that an observer mission in the West Bank and Gaza could be of benefit to both parties. The presence of objective witnesses could serve to calm the violence and help both sides take the necessary steps back from confrontation. We have worked with other delegations around this table and with the Secretary-General to try to reach agreement on the steps that would allow such a mission to be established, and we are glad to have worked particularly closely with the delegation of France.

It is too early to give up on this aim. We firmly believe that trying to impose observers against the wishes of one party would in practice be fruitless. We therefore abstained on the draft resolution under consideration, because we believe that it cannot be implemented without further work to build confidence and because we feel that bringing it to a decision today makes the establishment of a mission less rather than more likely.

We remain ready to engage on a proposal that can find consensus. What is important now is to concentrate our efforts on supporting the direct dialogue which has resumed between the parties and which offers the best hope for a just and lasting peace in the region based on resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

The resumption of talks in Washington this week demonstrates the importance both sides place on finding a lasting solution, and we hope the parties will not allow the result this evening to detract from their ongoing efforts to find peace. The prospects for these remain our primary criterion and have guided our approach on the proposal which we have considered today.

Mr. Heinbecker (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Canada is deeply concerned about the cycle of violence in the West Bank, Gaza and Israel. This violence mocks the safety of the inhabitants and their communities. We are firmly committed to support the protection of all civilians.

(*spoke in English*)

The experience of peacekeeping has taught us the value of clear and achievable mandates. We do not believe that this draft mandate meets either test. Canada would welcome any initiative — including the concept of an observation or monitoring force — that would succeed in stabilizing the situation in the region

and promote the protection of non-combatants. But Canada believes that both the eventual deployment and the effective operation of such a force would be jeopardized if the Council were to press ahead now, without the acceptance of both parties being assured and an appropriate mandate being developed. Nor do we believe that the time is right for this resolution. For these reasons Canada has abstained on the draft resolution.

We are certain that the Security Council should continue to support the Secretary-General in his efforts, as mandated by the Council, to explore options with the parties for bringing an end to the violence and getting them back to the negotiating table. We are encouraged by the decision of the parties to resume talks under the guidance of the United States. Canada has long advocated such dialogue as the only avenue to a just and comprehensive settlement based on resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). In our view, the Council should remain prepared to assist this process, including with an observer or monitoring mission, should one be accepted by both parties.

Mr. Cunningham (United States): The Council has acted wisely this evening on an ill-timed and inappropriate draft resolution. The draft resolution failed because it lacks sufficient support, as the vote shows. Had there been a chance of it passing, my delegation would have cast a veto.

The Council's lack of support for and refusal to adopt the proposed resolution is an important signal. Now is the time to support renewal of negotiations and dialogue, and not for actions that will not in fact advance the cause of peace and that do not have the consent of the parties.

Israeli and Palestinian delegations arrived tonight in Washington and talks begin tomorrow. We will work hard to help rebuild confidence and trust and to restore dialogue, and we will also work hard to support what Palestinians and Israelis agree would be useful. That should be our common focus, and that will have the most positive and salutary effect on the ground.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I will now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Russian Federation.

From the very beginning of the Palestinian-Israeli crisis, the Russian Federation has condemned the violence and the excessive use of force and has done

its utmost to put a stop to these actions and to resume the peace process. To this end, the President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Russia, Mr. Putin and Mr. Ivanov, have been in constant contact with Palestinian and Israeli leaders, leaders of other interested Governments and the Secretary-General. These contacts are continuing at this time.

We note that the combined efforts of the international community to overcome the crisis on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip are beginning to bear fruit. As has been announced, proximity talks between officially authorized Israeli and Palestinian delegations will begin on 19 December in Washington. Perhaps this will prove to be a significant step towards resuming direct dialogue. We expect that it will allow progress to be made towards providing international protection for the Palestinian civilian population on the West Bank and in Gaza — an objective we fully subscribe to and which perhaps realistically can only be achieved if both the Palestinians and the Israelis consent to it.

We deem it particularly important, therefore, at this crucial stage not to take measures that would further complicate the diplomatic efforts undertaken and exacerbate the situation without making it possible to get closer to the objective of protection — specifically, the protection of Palestinian civilians.

In view of all of these factors, the delegation of the Russian Federation abstained in the voting on the draft resolution. That decision was not an easy one for us, as a sponsor of the peace process. However, we are convinced that the only way to act is with the consent of both parties. We believe that an international presence in the occupied Palestinian territories can be ensured only if the two parties agree on the conditions. We will continue to try to achieve that objective.

In more general terms, we will continue to undertake efforts to try to find an early settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian crisis on the basis of what has been agreed between the parties to the conflict and with the support of the international community.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the Permanent Observer of Palestine.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council, and I extend my gratitude to your predecessor.

Regrettably, the draft resolution was not adopted. In our view, this is a sad day for the Security Council.

First of all, we would like to extend our sincere thanks, on behalf of the Palestinian people, to the non-aligned States members of the Security Council — Bangladesh, Jamaica, Malaysia, Mali, Namibia and Tunisia. We would like also sincerely to thank Ukraine and China for having voted in favour of the draft resolution, together with its sponsors. We deeply appreciate their position of principle and their strong sense of responsibility vis-à-vis the events that have taken place in our occupied territories, where Israel, since 28 September last, has been waging a bloody military campaign against our Palestinian people.

More than 300 Palestinians have been killed at the hands of the Israeli occupation forces, and more than 10,000 have been injured, one third of them children under 18. The destruction and sabotage of our property continues, as does the siege. Yet today the representative of Israel comes to us with yet another statement that does not respect the intelligence of the international community and tries our patience and tolerance. We can only condemn that statement and all of its contents.

All of this is taking place despite the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 1322 (2000) on 7 October last and despite the resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 20 October last, during its resumed tenth emergency special session.

The Palestinian people and the Arab countries, as well as the members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the members of the Non-Aligned Movement, have requested adequate protection for the Palestinian people through the establishment of a United Nations observer force. We have been moving, patiently and slowly, in that direction in the Security Council since 25 October last.

We have attempted to deal with all the parties concerned in order to reach an agreement. During that period, President Arafat personally came to New York and met with the Council, as did the members of the Ministerial Committee of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Representatives of the Non-

Aligned Movement also came to New York more than once during that time.

The Security Council held an open meeting on the situation, as well as a number of informal consultations. Despite all of this, however, the bloody Israeli campaign against our people and against Palestinian civilians continued, making the need even greater for adequate international protection for those innocent civilians, or, at the very least, for a contribution towards providing such protection through a United Nations observer force.

The non-aligned caucus in the Security Council submitted its draft, after making certain important changes to it. The draft's sponsors showed a great deal of flexibility in dealing with the other members of the Security Council, with a view to reaching an agreement. Among other things, they accepted the idea of a two-phased approach, as proposed by other members of the Security Council. They were also willing to accept further changes so as to increase the level of support, if not achieve agreement and consensus. That willingness extended to postponing the adoption of a draft resolution based on specific demands by specific members of the Council.

But our people have continued to ask important questions. Why is this taking so long? Why is the international community allowing Israel, the occupying force, to continue to oppress our people? Why do some suggest the idea of getting the approval of the occupying force, although the issue involves occupied territories that are not under the sovereignty of the Israeli occupying force?

Along with the sponsors of the draft resolution, we demonstrated great flexibility up to the last minute. The sponsors introduced further changes in the draft. Nevertheless, none of this was enough to change the final result.

We were then obliged to take a necessary decision. We did so with extreme difficulty, with the highest sense of the responsibility required by realities in the Security Council and on the ground in our occupied territories, and in the absence of any other practical options. We asked our friends in the Security Council to submit the draft resolution to a vote, regardless of the result of the voting, so as to confront the Security Council with its responsibilities and to show our people their options for action. Once again,

we highly appreciate our friends' clear request to hold a vote on the draft resolution.

The obvious result now is that the Security Council has shown itself unable or as yet unprepared to take even a minimal step to establish a United Nations observer force to protect Palestinian civilians, despite the horrific material and human losses and the ongoing siege. Some have tried to suggest that their positions are connected with tomorrow's resumption of the talks. In our view, that is incorrect. Events in Washington should not preclude action in the Security Council. On the contrary, the Council's successful adoption of the right decision could only help the projected talks, which can achieve no agreement that can be implemented without the essential measures addressing the situation on the ground.

The representative of Israel informed us today that his country does not object in principle to a foreign presence. By this, he is in fact telling us that this Council should understand that it can do nothing without his approval. We have not accepted and will not accept Israel's approval as a precondition for the Security Council's assumption of its responsibilities.

In our view, the result which the Security Council achieved today has only one explanation and one cause — the position of the United States, which is openly and surprisingly linked to that of Israel, the occupying force, and the heavy pressure exerted by the United States on all the other members of the Security Council. Regardless of whether the United States used the veto or found another solution to prevent the adoption of the draft resolution, as we have just heard, the result is the same.

We say with all due respect that some members, our friends, have taken positions that have occasionally varied. Others have taken positions that we could not understand, at times rejecting texts that they had previously proposed. The reason for this is no mystery. Once again, we believe that the main cause — and there could be others — is the position of the great Power and its influence in this Security Council.

For us, this phase of the Security Council's work is over. We feel no shame, and our friends should feel no shame, that we have not succeeded in adopting a resolution today. The results of today's action will not absolve the Security Council of its responsibility for events in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem. Today's actions have persuaded the Palestinians and other Arabs that they cannot rely on the Security Council for justice. It would seem that the Security Council takes action only in issues involving the enemies of the United States, not, of course, in issues involving Israel, despite that country's violation of the United Nations Charter, international law, international humanitarian law and Security Council and other United Nations resolutions.

There is not one noble objective declared by the international community that Israel has not contradicted, such as the protection of human rights, of civilians in times of war and of the vulnerable, particularly children, or the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, and so on. Nevertheless, all these rejections are ignored when the situation involves Israel. That is the pattern of automatic protection prevailing here.

I cannot determine the consequences of the Security Council's failure to fulfil its duties on the ground, nor can I foretell the price that will be paid by Palestinian civilians under the continued Israeli campaign or its repercussions throughout the region. We can only expect things to remain bad, but we still hope that justice and peace will ultimately prevail.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the Permanent Observer of Palestine for his kind words addressed to the presidency.

There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 9.40 p.m.