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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 6 December 1989, at 3 p.m.

President:

Mr. GARBA

(Nigeria)

- Question of Palestine [39] (continued)

- (a) Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People
- (b) Report of the Secretary-General
- (c) Draft resolutions
- (d) Report of the Fifth Committee

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 39 (continued)

QUESTION OF PALESTINE

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE (A/44/35)
- (b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/44/731)
- (c) DRAFT RESOLUTIONS (A/44/L.43 to A/44/L.45, A/44/L.50, A/44/L.51/Rev.1)
- (d) REPORT OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE (A/44/846)

The PRESIDENT: May I remind representatives that the debate on this item was concluded at the 71st plenary meeting, held on Friday, 1 December.

We will now turn to the consideration of draft resolutions A/44/L.43, A/44/L.44, A/44/L.45, A/44/L.50 and A/44/L.51/Rev.1.

In this regard I reiterate my appeal to the sponsors not to press draft resolution A/44/L.50 to a vote. Accordingly, I wish to propose that consideration of agenda item 39 not be concluded and, specifically, that consideration of the draft resolution be deferred.

I call on the representative of Egypt, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States.

Mr. BADAWI (Egypt) (interpretation from Arabic): I have the honour to address the General Assembly today in my capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States at the United Nations. I should like to put before the delegations here assembled a few remarks in connection with what you have just stated, Mr. President, concerning one of the draft resolutions under discussion.

To start with, it may be appropriate for me to shed some light on the nature of draft resolution A/44/L.50, which is basically the result of the new Palestinian trends that initiated historic transformations on the international scene during the meetings of the General Assembly held in Geneva last December.

(Mr. Badawi, Egypt)

In essence, the draft resolution is not an ambitious one. For practical reasons it closely follows the provisions of General Assembly resolution 43/177, whereby the General Assembly acknowledged the proclamation by the Palestine National Council of the State of Palestine - that historic event which, God willing, will be translated into reality in the near future.

The purpose of draft resolution A/44/L. 50 was not to solicit international recognition for the State of Palestine; that recognition has already taken place. Over 100 States have now recognized the State of Palestine. It has also acceded to full membership in the Non-Aligned Movement, on an equal footing with the other States members of the Movement. The objective of the draft resolution was to give new political momentum to the search for a solution to the question of Palestine and to reaffirm the requirement that the Palestinian State participate in all efforts aimed at achieving a peaceful settlement of the Middle East problem, the core of which is the question of Palestine, and thus to ensure the full implementation of the letter and spirit of General Assembly resolution 43/177, particularly with regard to the position of the Palestine delegation to the United Nations.

The debates held in the General Assembly, and the important statements made by various delegations, confirm that the principal objectives contained in the draft resolution have actually been achieved. They provide new evidence of full international acknowledgement of the gains made by the Palestinian cause as well as of the major role played by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and its wise leadership, in all the stages of the international effort to promote peace. They also reaffirm the need for PLO participation in all initiatives in that direction, with a view to the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, that would ensure a just

(Mr. Badawi, Egypt)

and comprehensive peace in the Middle East through the realization of the Palestinian people's national legitimate rights and the establishment of its own State.

The intensive and continuous consultations in the General Assembly over past few days have established beyond a shadow of a doubt certain facts that we must constantly keep in mind to ensure the proper functioning of the Organization and increase its effectiveness in the consideration of all matters of concern to the international community. Those facts are especially manifested in the international community's rejection, in form and in substance, of any pressure or threat, regardless of their source. They also reaffirm that all of us must abide by the United Nations Charter in letter and in spirit to preserve the Organization's role and ensure that it can work in a constructive and democratic atmosphere to the benefit of all, in order to honour all the contractual obligations we have taken upon ourselves. In this connection, the statements made by you, Mr. President, and by the Secretary-General have clearly enunciated and reaffirmed all these facts.

In my capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States, I wish to express our deep regret at the steps taken by the United States and at its threats with regard to draft resolution A/44/L.50. The United States is a permanent member of the Security Council and, as such, bears special and extremely sensitive responsibilities vis-à-vis the maintenance of international peace and security under the Charter.

In the light of those facts and in response to the appeal made by you, Sir, the Group of Arab States, sponsors of draft resolution A/44/L.50, will not insist at present on that draft resolution being put to the vote. However, we request that the item "The question of Palestine" remain open for discussion.

(Mr. Badawi, Egypt)

I wish to seize this opportunity to extend my sincerest thanks to all the friendly States that have expressed their support for our efforts in line with their consistent backing for the Arab and Palestinian cause. The Group of Arab States, and the Palestinian leadership in particular, have proved once again, by this stance, that they have a keen interest in co-ordinating their efforts within the framework of the Organization, in a manner that ensures and safeguards the ultimate interest of the international community and enhances the effectiveness of the United Nations as the corner-stone of the contemporary international system. They have demonstrated their faith in the fact that the peace-loving States Members of the United Nations will spare no effort to bring about the Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories and enable the Palestinian people to exercise its right to self-determination and establish its State on its national soil.

The PRESIDENT: I wish to thank Ambassador Badawi of Egypt for the constructive statement he has just made. In the light of that statement I understand that the sponsors of draft resolution A/44/L.50, in response to my appeal, do not insist that the draft resolution be put to a vote.

May I therefore take it that it is the Assembly's wish that consideration of agenda item 39 not be concluded at this time and that consideration of draft resolution A/44/L.50 is deferred?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of Yugoslavia, who will speak in his capacity as Chairman of the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. PEJIC (Yugoslavia): The efforts to break the blockade of the process of the peaceful solution of the problem of Palestine through the introduction of draft resolution A/44/L.50 on the status of Palestine in the United Nations enjoyed

(Mr. Pejic, Yugoslavia)

the support and understanding of the non-aligned countries. The developments that followed those efforts demonstrated in a most dramatic way the gravity and complexity of what, at this moment, is probably the most difficult and important international problem. The intifadah, the two-year-long uprising of the Palestinian people against foreign domination and occupation, received the broadest support and sympathy during the General Assembly's debate on this problem at this session. This has once again emphasized the need to find an urgent solution to the problem of Palestine on the basis of the realization of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and independence.

(Mr. Pejic, Yugoslavia)

The debate also reaffirmed the position of the vast majority in this Organization that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. It stressed also that the PLO is a rightful and must be an equitable partner in all endeavours to initiate a peace process and that without its full participation from the beginning there can be no lasting and comprehensive solution to the problem of Palestine. This reality must be understood also by those forces in Israel that oppose a just and comprehensive solution, as well as by those major international factors that can contribute to the opening of the peace process.

We therefore point out once again the justifiable request by Palestine that the present realities be adequately reflected by the adoption of an appropriate resolution by the General Assembly on the representation of Palestine in the United Nations. This request has its firm legal basis in General Assembly resolution 181 (II). The non-aligned countries will continue to extend active support to Palestine's request to be accorded its rightful status, for which the foundations were laid by the adoption of General Assembly resolution 43/177 last year. We resolutely call on those that continue to oppose this just request by Palestine to reconsider their position in the interest of a speedy and peaceful solution to the problem of Palestine and to make a contribution towards the settlement of this issue in a constructive manner.

The non-aligned countries categorically rejected the pressures that were used in connection with the consideration of this request, which at one point threatened to throw the world Organization into crisis and call into question its functioning. Such pressure and threats are absolutely unacceptable. There is no need to repeat that the United Nations was founded on the principle of the sovereign equality of countries, irrespective of their size or military, political or economic might.

(Mr. Pejic, Yugoslavia)

For the non-aligned countries and the great majority of Member States, the United Nations has been, and continues to be, the main democratic forum in which they can realize and protect their vital interests through constructive and equitable dialogue. Accordingly, the non-aligned countries will remain firm in defence of the democratic character of the United Nations and the principles of the Charter by making an active contribution to the creation of conditions for the solution of outstanding international issues, among which the question of Palestine is one of the major preoccupations.

The promotion of an atmosphere of dialogue and the constructive solution of outstanding international issues constitute a test of responsibility and wisdom for all States Members of the United Nations. By its flexibility and readiness to compromise, the delegation of Palestine has demonstrated its own political maturity and statesmanlike wisdom. At the same time it has provided the most eloquent proof of its determined orientation towards dialogue and negotiations. We believe that its strategy for the peaceful solution of the problem of Palestine, by which it has acquired enormous political capital, will soon bring political benefits in the form of recognition of the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and independence.

The non-aligned countries expect that the importance of this statesmanlike move by Palestine will also be understood by those that oppose the adoption of the draft resolution. We consider that all Member States should bear in mind the fact that almost 100 countries have so far recognized the Palestinian State and that it is a full member of the Non-Aligned Movement.

At the same time, I should like to express our sincere appreciation to the sponsors of draft resolution A/44/L. 50 for their resolute support for the just request of the Palestinians and for the flexibility and sense of responsibility

(Mr. Pejic, Yugoslavia)

they demonstrated in agreeing that a decision on the draft resolution be postponed. The sponsors of draft resolution A/44/L. 50 have thereby made an important contribution to averting confrontation and polarization and maintaining the favourable atmosphere at this session, thus preserving the possibility of initiating a peaceful process towards a lasting and just solution of the problem of Palestine. In their decision, as well as in all the negotiations that preceded it, the sponsors of draft resolution A/44/L. 50 enjoyed the full co-operation and support of the non-aligned countries in the United Nations.

Mr. BLANC (France) (interpretation from French): The Twelve have already had several opportunities to speak on the question of Palestine at the current session. They have especially stressed the need to reach a lasting, just and comprehensive settlement of this question, which is at the heart of the Israeli-Arab conflict. The States members of the European Community have constantly stressed the need for all parties to show moderation and to act constructively. They are therefore happy to note that moderation has prevailed in the matter under discussion and wish to make known their particular appreciation of the spirit of compromise on all sides.

The Twelve reaffirm their satisfaction at the support given at the Extraordinary Arab Summit Conference in Casablanca to the decisions of the Palestine National Council in Algiers regarding acceptance of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the resulting recognition of Israel's right to exist, as well as the renunciation of terrorism.

The Twelve again emphasize that in their opinion every aspect of the Israeli-Arab conflict must be settled within the framework of negotiations. Their position concerning the settlement of that conflict is well known. It was set out in the Venice Declaration of June 1980 and in the Madrid Declaration of last June

(Mr. Blanc, France)

and is predicated on two fundamental principles which in our view are indivisible: the right of all States in the region, including Israel, to security - that is, to live within secure, recognized and guaranteed boundaries; and the right of all the Peoples of the region to justice, including recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, among them its right to self-determination, with all that that implies.

The Twelve are convinced that it is within the framework of an international peace conference under the auspices of the United Nations that a peaceful solution based on these principles must be found. They believe that such a conference would be an appropriate forum for direct negotiations between the parties concerned with a view to a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement. The Twelve reaffirm that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) must participate in that process.

The serious situation in the occupied territories demonstrates the urgent need for a settlement and the importance of fostering this peace process. In this connection, the Twelve encourage the efforts under way and hope that they will become a constructive step on the road towards the convening of an international conference.

Mr. FORTIER (Canada): I should like to join in the tribute that is being paid to the sponsors of the draft resolution contained in document A/44/L.50. The spirit of compromise and the willingness to engage in a dialogue with others that they have demonstrated repeatedly during the past week has led to a solution which represents the United Nations at its best.

For its part, Canada will continue to play a role, here at the United Nations as well as elsewhere, which we hope will contribute to the building of peace in the Middle East through a process of negotiations between those most directly concerned. Only through such a process can a lasting peace be built which will enable all the inhabitants of the region to enjoy life in peace and security.

I am pleased to advise the General Assembly that New Zealand and Australia have associated themselves with this statement.

Mr. ELIASSON (Sweden): I wish to join other representatives and, on behalf of the Swedish delegation, commend and thank the sponsors of draft resolution A/44/L.50 for their co-operation, which has enabled the General Assembly to deal constructively with the issue before us in circumstances that have posed a major challenge for the United Nations. This outcome - the result of the work of many good forces - will undoubtedly facilitate the peace process in the Middle East. In addition, it serves as a reminder that the United Nations was created above all to solve international problems, not to be a divisive battleground.

I wish also to express our great appreciation of your personal efforts in this matter, Mr. President. In this connection, let me also stress how important it is, in our view, that considerations extraneous to the issues not be introduced, for that could threaten the proper functioning of the United Nations. We must always be guided by our obligations under the Charter. The United Nations is our common possession, to which we owe a common commitment. Let us continue our work together in this spirit.

Mr. ZACIMANN (German Democratic Republic): In my capacity as Chairman of the Group of Eastern European States, I should like to welcome the wise agreement on draft resolution A/44/L. 50 that was reached in the course of consultations conducted by you, Mr. President, with the parties concerned. It seems to me that more time is needed to consider the draft. We therefore fully agreed with your proposal that consideration of agenda item 39 - Question of Palestine - not be concluded and that further consideration of draft resolution A/44/L. 50 be deferred. I believe that this will greatly facilitate the efforts to ensure that no adverse consequences arise for the process towards settlement of the Middle East conflict - a process for the initiation of which the Eastern European Group has been making every endeavour. In my view, this is the most appropriate way of advancing the international process of dialogue and negotiation.

In this connection, we should like to express our full agreement with the Secretary-General and with you, Mr. President, that the contributions of Member States to the budget of the Organization are legal obligations under the Charter and cannot be linked to anything that happens in the General Assembly or elsewhere in the United Nations.

It is our belief that the intricate structures of the Middle East conflict can be disentangled only by way of a constructive dialogue and a fair balance of interests between the sides involved. This position notwithstanding, we shall not relent in our support for, and our solidarity with, the Palestinian people in its efforts to win further international recognition of the State of Palestine, and we shall also remain committed to the furtherance of our friendly relations with that people. We are in favour of promoting and advancing the just cause of the Palestinian people in the framework of the United Nations.

(Mr. Zachmann, German Democratic Republic)

We also support the demand voiced by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

"that the State of Palestine should be accorded its rightful place within the international community and the United Nations". (A/44/35, para. 112)

In the future also we shall work resolutely for the implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, led by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), its sole, legitimate representative.

Mr. TORNUDD (Finland): On behalf of the delegation of Finland, I wish to express deep satisfaction at the outcome of the intensive discussions on draft resolution A/44/L.50, which is due to the restraint and the responsible behaviour of those principally concerned. We greatly appreciate the efforts that you, Mr. President, have made in this connection.

The position of Finland on the question of Palestine and the Middle East is on the record. In our view, a comprehensive, just and durable settlement can be achieved only through negotiations on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), guaranteeing the right of all States in the region, including Israel, to exist within secure and recognized boundaries, as well as on the basis of securing the legitimate rights of the Palestinians, including their right to national self-determination. In our view, all parties concerned, including the Palestinians and the Palestine Liberation Organization, as their most significant representative, have the right to take part in the negotiations on their own future.

A comprehensive settlement of the conflict in the Middle East, the core of which is the question of Palestine, is long overdue. Therefore it is vital that the process towards achieving such a settlement be started effectively.

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Senegal, who, in her capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, will introduce draft resolutions A/44/L.43, A/44/L.44 and A/44/L.45.

Mrs. DIALLO (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (interpretation from French): I should like to thank you, Mr. President, for once again giving me the opportunity to address the Assembly in my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, in order to introduce in the General Assembly draft resolutions A/44/L.43, A/44/L.44 and A/44/L.45, which deal with the question of Palestine. I am pleased to inform the Assembly that Afghanistan, the German Democratic Republic and Yugoslavia have also become sponsors.

These draft resolutions are basically the same as those introduced in previous years with a view to enabling the Committee, the Division for Palestinian Rights and the Department of Public Information to carry out their programmes of work in keeping with the programme budget established for the biennium 1990 to 1991.

By draft resolution A/44/L.43 the General Assembly would endorse the recommendations in the Committee's report and draw the attention of the Security Council to the fact that it has not yet taken action on those recommendations, which, had they been implemented, could have made a significant contribution to finding a settlement of the question of Palestine.

By the draft resolution the Assembly would also invite the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate, to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations, to carry out its programme of seminars, symposia and meetings for non-governmental organizations concerned to continue to extend its co-operation to those organizations, and to take the necessary steps to expand its contacts with them. It would request the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine

(Mrs. Diallo, Chairman, Committee on
the Exercise of the Inalienable
Rights of the Palestinian People)

and other United Nations bodies that deal with the question of Palestine to continue to co-operate fully with the Committee. Lastly, the Assembly could ask the Committee to report to it at its forty-fifth session.

Draft resolution A/44/L.44 deals specifically with the role of the Secretariat in the settlement of the question of Palestine. The General Assembly would request the Secretary-General to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights with the necessary resources to ensure that it continues to discharge the tasks detailed in previous resolutions, including the organization of seminars, meetings and symposia for non-governmental organizations, as well as the preparation of studies and information material.

In the draft resolution the Assembly would invite all Governments and organizations to assist the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in performing their tasks. I should like to mention here that, as the General Assembly knows, the Division, thanks to the dedication and competence of its staff and the objectivity it has shown in carrying out its tasks, has succeeded in making international public opinion aware of the question of Palestine.

Draft resolution A/44/L.45 relates to the role of the Department of Public Information. The Committee is extremely grateful to that Department for the support it has always given the Committee with a view to the achievement of its objectives. The Department's contribution is especially important and that is why this draft resolution is now before the Assembly. Its aim is to invite the Department to continue - in close co-operation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People - its special information programme on the question of Palestine for the biennium 1990 to 1991, with particular emphasis on public opinion in Europe and in North America; to continue

(Mrs. Diallo, Chairman, Committee on
the Exercise of the Inalienable
Rights of the Palestinian People)

to disseminate information on all the activities of the United Nations system relating to the question of Palestine; to continue to issue and update publications on the various aspects of the question of Palestine; to expand its audio-visual material; and to organize fact-finding missions and encounters for journalists.

These three draft resolutions have traditionally received the unconditional support of the vast majority of Member States in the General Assembly. Hence, on behalf of the sponsors, I ask all delegations to vote overwhelmingly in favour of their adoption in order once again to express solidarity with the Palestinian people.

The PRESIDENT: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their vote before the voting on any or all of the draft resolutions in documents A/44/L. 43, A/44/L. 44, A/44/L. 45 and A/44/L. 51/Rev.1.

May I remind representatives that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Representatives will also have an opportunity to explain their vote after all the votes have been taken.

Mr. PICKERING (United States of America): In my remarks to the General Assembly on 1 December, I discussed the views of the United States on the fundamental issues involved in bringing peace to the Middle East, as well as our vision of a realistic framework for reaching a negotiated settlement. We have also listened carefully to the views expressed by others in their statements on this important issue. Much has been said here about the need to move the peace process forward, and the United States fully concurs.

(Mr. Pickering, United States)

The Assembly is now ready to vote on a number of draft resolutions which are not new, in documents A/44/L.43, A/44/L.44 and A/44/L.45. They endorse the activities of various United Nations organs that are dedicated to expounding a very one-sided perspective on the Palestinian issue. In perpetuating an unbalanced picture of this complex problem those United Nations bodies do not contribute to serious efforts to achieve peace; and in that sense, in our view, they do a disservice to the real interests of the Palestinian people in achieving a comprehensive and just peace. The United States urges the United Nations organs concerned to re-examine their programmes and dispense with unproductive polemics, focusing instead on positive, practical action that would create an atmosphere more conducive to the search for peace. For those reasons, the United States will vote against these draft resolutions.

Draft resolution A/44/L.51/Rev.1, on convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, fails to address the central importance of direct negotiations between the parties. The United States believes that direct negotiations are essential to concluding a just and lasting peace. In this regard, we have said that at the appropriate time we could support a properly structured international conference - one designed to facilitate direct negotiations between the parties concerned. We cannot support, however, the type of conference proposed in draft resolution A/44/L.51/Rev.1.

(Mr. Pickering, United States)

Instead of addressing the importance of direct negotiations, the draft resolution prescribes certain "principles for the achievement of comprehensive peace", thereby purporting to determine in advance issues that must be resolved in negotiations. We do not believe a conference should have the authority to impose a prescribed solution or to overturn agreements reached between the parties.

In our view, draft resolutions such as A/44/L. 51/Rev.1 do not further the prospects for peace in the region but rather impose obstacles to arriving at direct negotiations. For these reasons we cannot support this draft resolution and we will vote against it.

Finally, I wish to repeat for the record that my Government objects to phrases such as "Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem". As we have said, we consider that these phrases describe the territories demographically, are limited to territories occupied in 1967 and do not prejudge their status, which can be resolved only through negotiations. We are convinced that Jerusalem must remain undivided, but that its final status should be decided through negotiations.

Mr. FORTIER (Canada): Canada will vote this year in favour of the draft resolution calling for the convening of an international peace conference - A/44/L. 51/Rev.1. My delegation has changed its vote from an abstention for two reasons.

First, the ongoing intifadah, now two years old, has made it clear that the status quo in the occupied territories is untenable and that this is a dispute for which a negotiated settlement must be found. Secondly, Canada has been encouraged by the various positive political developments over the past months, which have witnessed notable movement towards a dialogue between Israel and the Palestinians. The Israeli Government's welcome May initiative and the later suggestions offered by Egyptian President Mubarak and United States Secretary of State Baker are

(Mr. Fortier, Canada)

important steps along this path, as today's encouraging announcement in Washington underlines. We believe that a dialogue between the main parties directly involved could provide the necessary preliminary negotiations that would create a propitious climate for the convening of an international peace conference. As the Canadian Government underlined in a statement earlier this year, we believe the fundamental principles for a comprehensive settlement are those contained in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which provide for the exchange of land for peace and security for all States in the region.

Although my delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution, we maintain serious reservations about several elements in paragraph 3 which do not reflect current realities and circumstances, which have changed much with the passage of time. Among those elements are references to the problem of Palestinian refugees and the States named in resolution 181 (II). We also cannot endorse fully the new sixth preambular paragraph as drafted, because it is unbalanced.

Finally, my delegation wishes to record that we understand the term "the occupied Palestinian territory" to mean the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, which have been under Israeli occupation since 1967. The Canadian vote today in favour of the draft resolution does not indicate any change in the view of my Government on the status of these territories.

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now take decisions on the draft resolutions before it.

The report of the Fifth Committee on the programme budget implications of draft resolutions A/44/L.43, A/44/L.44 and A/44/L.45 is in document A/44/846.

The Assembly will begin the voting process by taking a decision on A/44/L.43.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Democratic Kampuchea, Democratic Yemen, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, German Democratic Republic, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against: Dominica, Israel, United States of America

Abstaining: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Belize, Canada, Denmark, Equatorial Guinea, Finland, France, Germany, Federal Republic of, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Draft resolution A/44/L.43 was adopted by 132 votes to 3, with 21 abstentions (resolution 44/41 A).

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/44/L.44.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba,

Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Democratic Kampuchea, Democratic Yemen, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, German Democratic Republic, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against: Dominica, Israel, United States of America

Abstaining: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Belize, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Federal Republic of, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Draft resolution A/44/L.44 was adopted by 133 votes to 3, with 20 abstentions (resolution 44/41 B).

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/44/L.45.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Democratic Kampuchea, Democratic Yemen, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Gabon, Gambia, German Democratic Republic, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali,

Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against: Dominica, Israel, United States of America

Abstaining: Australia, Belgium, Belize, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Federal Republic of, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Draft resolution A/44/L.45 was adopted by 136 votes to 3, with 17 abstentions (resolution 44/41 C).

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution

A/44/L.51/Rev.1.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Democratic Kampuchea, Democratic Yemen, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, German Democratic Republic, Germany, Federal Republic of, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Sao Tome and

Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against: Dominica, Israel, United States of America

Abstaining: Belize

Draft resolution A/44/L.51/Rev.1 was adopted by 151 votes to 3, with 1 abstention (resolution 44/42).

The PRESIDENT: I shall now call on delegations which wish to explain their vote. I remind delegations that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of votes are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. AL-MASRI (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic): The vote of the delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic in favour of draft resolution A/44/51/Rev.1 does not imply recognition of Israel, which does not recognize the national rights of the Palestinian people and continues to occupy the Syrian Arab Golan Heights and other Arab territories, in contravention of United Nations resolutions and the principles of international laws.

Mr. HOSSEINI (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation did not participate in the voting on draft resolution A/44/L.51/Rev.1. Our decision in this regard was not made because we do not whole-heartedly support the intifadah of the Palestinian people or because we do not hold that the Zionist entity has illegally occupied the land of Palestine and consistently committed crimes of every kind against Palestinians. Our decision was mainly based on the fact that the draft resolution does not call for the exercise of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to establish their own independent State in the entire land of Palestine, which has been occupied by Zionist usurpers since 1948. Any decision, resolution or conference that contradicts this Palestinian right and directly or indirectly implies any recognition of the Zionist base is not acceptable to the Muslim Umma.

My delegation does not recognize a non-Palestinian State in the land of Palestine. That land is an Islamic land and Zionist forces must withdraw unconditionally from all Palestinian territories, including those occupied prior to 1967.

Mr. KAGAMI (Japan): Japan supports the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East, in the belief that an international framework of some sort is needed for the settlement of the Middle East peace issue and that it is necessary to maintain the peace process in the interest of the stability of the Middle East. My delegation therefore voted in favour of draft resolution A/44/L. 51/Rev.1.

With regard to the phrase:

"to place the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, under the supervision of the United Nations for a limited period," in paragraph 4 of that resolution, my Government would like to study carefully the details of the modality of that supervision.

Mr. FREUDENSCHUSS (Austria): Austria has repeatedly had the opportunity to explain its position on the question of Palestine. This position, which is well known and has been consistent over the years, is the reason why we abstained, as in the case of similar draft resolutions in previous years, on draft resolutions A/44/L. 43 and A/44/L. 44.

In view of valuable activities undertaken by the Department of Public Information with regard to the question of Palestine, Austria voted in favour of draft resolution A/44/L. 45.

Owing to its long-standing commitment to the early convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East, Austria, as with similar draft resolutions in the past, also voted in favour of draft resolution A/44/L. 51/Rev.1.

In concluding, let me express Austria's appreciation of the spirit of compromise that has prevailed today. It is indeed this spirit that will be necessary to arrive at a durable, just and comprehensive solution of the question of Palestine which is the core of the Middle East problem. In the meantime Austria continues to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the sole

(Mr. Freudenschuss, Austria)

representative of the Palestinian people and the proclamation of a Palestinian State as an expression of their right to self-determination.

Mr. TELIMANN (Norway): Norway voted in favour of draft resolution A/44/L. 51/Rev.1, which contains essential elements for the achievement of peace in the Middle East. We should, however, like to repeat our concern to ensure that the modalities of the peace conference and the content and framework of the negotiations be fully decided upon by the parties themselves. We believe that it is of the utmost importance that Israel and the Palestinians seize the opportunity for progress towards negotiations. Efforts should be made on both sides to build trust so that the circle of violence and hatred may eventually be broken and negotiations bear fruit. We, as a world community, have a responsibility to aid in this process.

Mr. VAN SCHAIK (Netherlands): The Netherlands voted in favour of draft resolution A/44/L. 51/Rev.1 because we support the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East. A well-structured conference held at the right moment could indeed provide a suitable forum for the necessary negotiations between the parties most directly involved.

So that the process of negotiations may be successful and lead to a lasting and comprehensive peace settlement, the Netherlands regards it as an essential preliminary requirement that a direct dialogue between Israel and the Palestinians be established. We support the ongoing efforts to bring this about.

The Netherlands has certain reservations on the wording of the resolution, notably where it pronounces on issues which, as set out in the Venice and Madrid Declarations of the European Community, should be addressed, and can only be resolved, in negotiations proper. This concerns, among other things, the issue of secure and precise borders and the question how to resolve the refugee problem.

(Mr. Van Schaik, Netherlands)

The question of settlements, which we have always considered to be illegal, will also have to be addressed in the negotiations. The nature of possible transitional arrangements is another matter that will require prior agreement between the parties directly concerned.

All these issues, including the vital question of the exercise of the right of self-determination of the Palestinian people, require a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement, which can be achieved only through negotiations. We feel that the process of negotiation should be followed in order to promote the settlement of a burning issue that has remained unresolved for so long.

Mr. MUNTASSER (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (interpretation from Arabic): The delegation of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya voted in favour of all the draft resolutions on the question of Palestine. However, it would like to emphasize that that in no way implies recognition - direct or indirect - of the Zionist entity. This should be reflected in the official records.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the Observer of Palestine, in accordance with resolutions 3237 (XXIX), of 22 November 1974, and 43/177, of 15 December 1988.

Mr. TERZI (Palestine): It is almost midnight Palestine time, and our people are all there waiting to hear the good news: 151 votes for the draft resolution, with 3 against and 1 abstention, will encourage our people that the peace process is under way. One must believe that, with a proportion of 50 to 1, the cause of justice is better served.

Let me begin, Mr. President, by expressing great appreciation of your unending efforts to overcome an obstacle that was unnecessarily raised by big announcements from Washington, the capital of the United States. I also wish to express great appreciation, on behalf of my people, those who are listening to us now, of the efforts of the sponsors of draft resolution A/44/L.50 and, more than appreciation, respect for their decision to yield to your appeal. The matter is still going on; the struggle is long, but we shall persevere.

(Mr. Terzi, Palestine)

The 151 votes give us greater conviction that come next summer the Secretary-General will not tell us that he could not convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East because one member of the Security Council does not believe in the process. We believe that that one member which has proved to be the obstacle may now yield to 151 other States and join in the peace process.

Last year President Arafat presented our peace initiative to the Assembly, albeit in a different locale, and we are committed to pursuing that peace initiative. We all well recall that three weeks ago the General Assembly almost unanimously endorsed a resolution on enhancing international peace, security and international co-operation in all its aspects in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. We are delighted that at last the principles of the Charter have been reaffirmed. We know it took quite some time, but finally that reaffirmation became a reality. Everybody supported the resolution, but there is a heavier responsibility on those that sponsored it to adhere to what it says.

At this point it is important to refer to the declared position of the United States Government as set out in the statement made on 1 December. We admit that the aim of any move should be a comprehensive settlement and we believe that it is a positive step by the United States Government to suggest that such a comprehensive settlement should be

"based on United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) ... and legitimate political rights for the Palestinian people."

(A/44/PV. 70, p. 73)

Yet, in that same statement on 1 December, the representative of the United States said:

"the United States does not support the creation of an independent Palestinian State, nor can we support annexation or permanent Israeli ... control of the West Bank and Gaza." (ibid.)

(Mr. Terzi, Palestine)

I wonder what the representative of the United States wants. What plan does he have?

Here we pause to ask another question. What are the legitimate political rights of the Palestinian people? Are not independence and freedom and all that those concepts imply political rights?

Again, it is clearly indicated in that statement that

"Principles alone, however, are not enough to move the parties forward ..."

(ibid.)

There is an admission there that principles are the prime factor; if we do not adhere to principles the world will be dealing with methods alien or even contrary to what the United Nations was established for.

Among the principles enshrined in the Charter is the principle of self-determination. Only yesterday, 5 December, the representative of the United States said in a statement that was distributed here:

"Our Declaration of Independence contains principles that have inspired the people of the world as they have sought self-determination."

Strange, is it not? We read in the Congressional Record of 5 June 1986 a letter addressed to the Hon. Lee Hamilton by the Department of State, which says, inter alia:

"The term 'self-determination' has in the Middle East context come to connote the establishment of a Palestinian State. The United States does not support the establishment of an independent Palestinian State. Therefore such a reference" - that is, to self-determination - "is not consistent with United States policy."

I wonder whether self-determination means different things in different places. That is a matter that one should ponder on, particularly when dealing with the Government of the United States.

(Mr. Terzi, Palestine)

The resolution that was adopted on "Enhancing international peace, security and international co-operation in all its aspects in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations", represents a landmark for us Palestinians. It was sponsored by the United States, the Soviet Union and the members of the Security Council, among others, and this was probably the first time the General Assembly witnessed such joint constructive action. We believed it augured well, particularly since it affirmed adherence to the principles of equal rights and self-determination of peoples. So we hailed it then. The Palestinian people believed - or made themselves believe - that the United States had adopted a significant stand in its "principled positions". But we have yet to see a concrete realization of that position; and, unfortunately, only yesterday the representative of the United States said something quite different.

But, again, how did the entire story start here? I shall not speak about 1917 or 1947; however, when one reads history one learns a great deal. Thus, in a letter marked "Top Secret" and dated 19 January 1949, from the then Acting Secretary of State, Robert A. Lovett, to Mr. Mark F. Ethridge, the American representative on the Palestine Conciliation Commission, a basic position was set forth for guidance, as follows:

"Disposition of Arab Palestine" - just dispose of it, and here is how to do it - "U.S. favours incorporation of greater part of Arab Palestine in Trans-Jordan. The remainder might be divided among other Arab States as seems desirable."

What does that mean? Was it just a free-for-all? They were not satisfied with partition only; they wanted the mini-partition to be a mini-mini-partition.

Those directives were issued notwithstanding the so-called commitment by the United States to carry out the terms of the partition plan. And what do we read in that partition plan?

(Mr. Terzi, Palestine)

"Independent Arab and Jewish States and the Special International Régime for the City of Jerusalem ... shall come into existence in Palestine ...".

(resolution 181 (II), part I A, para. 3)

We also read that the General Assembly called upon the inhabitants of Palestine to take such steps as might be necessary on their part to put the plan into effect. In its wisdom, the General Assembly was also prepared for some eventualities when it stressed that:

"The period between the adoption by the General Assembly of its recommendation on the question of Palestine and the establishment of the independence of the Arab and Jewish States shall be a transitional period."

(ibid., para. 4)

There was no prescription. There was no time-limit.

We are all aware that in November 1988 the Palestine National Council, on behalf of the Palestinian people, took such a step and proclaimed the independent State of Palestine. Yes, it is under foreign occupation; we all admit that. And then, when we say "accept resolution 181 (II), with all that it implies", we are told "then we will not pay you money anymore". That is an act of financial terrorism.

If anything is to be deduced from that, it is that the United States Government was never in favour of respecting its international legal obligations in so far as such obligations are related to the future of peace in the Middle East and to the future of the Palestinian people and Palestinian territory - be it independence or self-determination.

(Mr. Terzi, Palestine)

(spoke in Arabic)

In a few days time, the uprising of our Palestinian people will enter its third year. The intifadah has over the past two years made enormous strides. Our people will persist in its glorious uprising, demonstrating heroism and making sacrifices towards ending the occupation and establishing an independent State of Palestine.

One historical inevitability is that the people eventually will win. The United States Administration fully recognizes this fact. Being aware of the inevitable victory of the Palestinian people and the eventual establishment of the independent sovereign State of Palestine on the land of Palestine, it knows that this victory and this State will inevitably be realized. Thus, the authorities in Washington, D.C. resort to all possible means in order to put spikes in the wheel of history in a bid to impede or postpone this historical inevitability. The State of Palestine does exist, irrespective of all the pressure tactics, blackmail and threats of financial sanctions against the United Nations, in the form of withholding assessed contributions to the budget of the United Nations and its agencies.

The escalation of the Palestinian uprising and the intensification of political action, led by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which represents the provisional Government of Palestine, are factors that must be borne in mind at all times.

Our favourable response to your appeal, Mr. President, not to press for a vote on the draft resolution in question represents a constructive step. However, we maintain that the draft resolution remains valid and relevant, and we intend to resubmit it at a more appropriate time. At this time, what we have to do is pursue our efforts until the time is ripe, even though the United States Administration

(Mr. Terzi, Palestine)

might opt to maintain its obdurate position, because the right of the Palestinian people is certainly too strong to be compromised by United States threats and blackmail.

(continued in English)

As we are approaching Christmas, would it really be too much - or too unrealistic - to hope that come next Christmas, in 1990, we shall all be together to celebrate in my home town and in Bethlehem, the shepherds' field and Beit Sahur a merry and peaceful Christmas, and a future of peaceful coexistence amongst peoples and States?

The PRESIDENT: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 39.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.