



## General Assembly

PROVISIONAL

A/43/PV.69

8 December 1988

ENGLISH

Forty-third session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SIXTY-NINTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Monday, 5 December 1988, at 3 p.m.

President:  
later:

Mr. MORTENSEN (Vice-President)  
Mr. ESSY (Vice-President)

(Denmark)  
(Côte d'Ivoire)

- Programme of work
- The situation in the Middle East [40] (continued)
  - (a) Reports of the Secretary-General
  - (b) Draft resolutions

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the Official Records of the General Assembly.

Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, within one week, to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Department of Conference Services, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

In the absence of the President, Mr. Mortensen (Denmark), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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

#### PROGRAMME OF WORK

The PRESIDENT: In order to assist delegations in planning their work I should like to inform members of the programme of the Assembly for this week.

This afternoon, the Assembly will continue its consideration of agenda item 40, "The situation in the Middle East".

Tomorrow, 6 December, in the morning, the Assembly will continue its consideration of agenda item 40, on the situation in the Middle East, and will take up reports of the Second Committee on agenda item 148, "Conservation of climate as part of the common heritage of mankind" and sub-item (b) of agenda item 86, on special programmes of economic assistance. In the afternoon, the Assembly will consider all reports of the Special Political Committee.

On Wednesday, 7 December, in the morning, the Assembly will hear an address by the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. It will also consider agenda item 49, on the review of the efficiency of the administration and financial functioning of the United Nations. In the afternoon, the Assembly will consider all reports of the First Committee.

On Thursday, 8 December, in the morning, the Assembly will consider agenda item 38, on the fortieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. That afternoon, it will consider all reports of the Third Committee.

On the morning of Friday, 9 December, the Assembly will consider reports of the Sixth and the Second Committees.

(The President)

In addition, the President intends to take up all pending items as appropriate during the course of the week, with the possible exception of those assigned to the Fifth Committee.

AGENDA ITEM 40 (continued)

THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

- (a) REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/43/272, A/43/683, A/43/691, A/43/687)
- (b) DRAFT RESOLUTIONS (A/43/L.44 to A/43/L.46)

The PRESIDENT: I should like to remind representatives that, in accordance with the decision taken this morning, the list of speakers in the debate on this item will be closed today at 4 p.m. I therefore request those representatives wishing to participate in the debate to inscribe their names on the list as soon as possible.

Mr. BADAWI (Egypt) (interpretation from Arabic): Once again the General Assembly is considering the situation in the Middle East, that region of the world rich in history and resources, but fraught with conflicts and contradictions. Although the world has succeeded, in recent years, since the establishment of the United Nations, in avoiding the threat of global confrontation, the international community has failed to put an end to the sequence of violence and bloodshed in that region, which gave the world man's first steps towards the codification of systems and values. The region's geographic location at the crossroads of civilization is probably responsible for the extent of its contribution to various stages of history, just as it accounts for its instability at other times, especially in recent decades.

The accumulation of scientific and technological know-how and capital in the world and in that region, together with the persistence of the Arab-Israeli conflict, which exposes the Middle East to various forms of military confrontation, make it necessary for the world to realize that it must give top priority to the threat posed by the continuation of that conflict and the instability prevailing in that region. The military arsenals in that region may bring about unprecedented destruction. This means that present or future conflicts are likely to spread and seriously harm areas outside the region, or draw them into the whirlwind of conflict.

Egypt soon realized what the situation was; we have therefore participated in the international community's efforts to put an end to such developments and work for a solution to the main problems in the region, in keeping with the principles and values recognized by the world. We have also relentlessly endeavoured to relax tension. The initiative taken by Egypt in the 1970s with a view to declaring the

(Mr. Badawi, Egypt)

Middle East a nuclear-weapon-free zone was a step in that direction. Egypt then put forward its peace initiative in 1977, which was a second, giant step in the same direction.

The dangers threatening the Middle East can go beyond the region and threaten peace and security in the Mediterranean region as well. The stability established in Europe since the Second World War would be consolidated if it could encompass the eastern part of the Mediterranean and the western part of Asia. We are living in times when nuclear bombs and offensive systems have no respect for the borders of States and do not distinguish between the nationalities or colours of their victims. The deployment of nuclear weapons in the region would jeopardize stability and escalate conflict. Egypt therefore acceded to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and has accepted the principle of international control over its peaceful nuclear activities.

We express the wish that all the countries in the region, including Israel, will adhere to that treaty and abide by that principle, allowing their nuclear installations to be supervised by the representatives of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

In the same context, we are gratified to see that the First Committee of the General Assembly, on 15 November, adopted by a consensus a draft resolution submitted by Egypt on the declaration of the Middle East as a nuclear-weapon-free zone. We hope that that resolution, as well as the others adopted on that subject since my country took its initiative in 1974, will be applied and supported by the international community, providing the legislative framework and the required material basis for achieving that end.

In August this year, the Iraq-Iran conflict came to an end. That was perhaps the only positive development in the region this year. The war had taken thousands

(Mr. Badawi, Egypt)

of lives and caused widespread destruction in the two countries, costing them billions of dollars. The conflagration spilled over into other countries of the region. The parties, in accepting Security Council resolution 598 (1987) and the initiation of direct talks between representatives of Iran and Iraq in Geneva, marked a new era in the region, which, we hope, will lead to good-neighbourly relations between the two countries, enabling them to devote their material and economic resources to development and reconstruction. Thus Iraq has quite clearly shown that it has the necessary will to accept the choice of peace, just as it proved its courage in defending its territory.

Those years of armed conflict have left behind many complex problems which require patience, flexibility and perseverance on the part of all the parties concerned in order to reach a lasting solution, with the active participation of the United Nations and the international community. On behalf of the Government of Egypt I wish to convey our deepest gratitude to the Secretary-General for his efforts in this and other areas. His efforts have made such progress possible, and we hope that he will keep up his efforts until our objectives have been achieved.

Developments in the Iraq-Iran conflict have shown that the international community is able to resolve conflict if we display the necessary political will. In particular we wish to refer to the responsibilities of the permanent members of the Security Council. The role played by the United Nations with regard to progress in this area and in other regions of the world has rekindled our hopes in the Organization. It has also increased its credibility and its prestige. We hope that this trend will continue.

(Mr. Badawi, Egypt)

More than four decades of armed conflict in the Middle East have proved that the question of Palestine is at the very core of the problem. There we find the roots of many other conflicts. Important events have taken place there in the last few months, encompassing various aspects of the problem and offering greater possibilities than ever before of achieving a negotiated settlement of the conflict.

The Palestinian national uprising in the occupied territories was indeed proof of the fact that the Palestinian people rejects the vicious circle created by the illegal Israeli occupation and the resort to brutal force to maintain that occupation.

Then came the decision by Jordan towards the end of July to cut its legislative and administrative ties with the West Bank in order to emphasize the representative nature of the PLO and the Movement of Arab Parties, and the Aqaba meeting towards the end of October between President Mubarak, King Hussein and Yasser Arafat of the PLO. That meeting demonstrated that the Palestinian party respects international legality and that the strategic choice of the Palestinian and Jordanian peoples is to establish future relationships on a confederate basis. The Palestinian party has continued to work towards bringing about conditions conducive to a negotiated settlement of the problem.

In pursuit of that programme, resolutions were adopted by the Palestine National Council in Algeria last month. Those resolutions were adopted on the basis of democratic practices and showed beyond question the willingness of the Palestinian people to work for the success of the peace initiatives and efforts.

The declaration of the Palestinian State and the political communiqué in which it is contained represent two enormous steps along the way to the establishment of lasting peace in keeping with the principles recognized by the international community.

(Mr. Badawi, Egypt)

Egypt is totally convinced that the United Nations bears a special responsibility in that area. As is evident from the Palestinian declaration and communiqué, resolution 181 (II) on the partition of Palestine, adopted by the General Assembly in 1947, continues to provide the framework of international legality guaranteeing to the Palestinian people its right to independence and to co-exist with Israel within the 1967 borders, in keeping with resolutions of the General Assembly and of the Security Council.

Palestinian decisions have clearly shown that the Palestinian party rejects terrorism in all its forms and that the PLO respects the contents of the 1985 Cairo declaration, while respecting the rights of the Palestinian people, in conformity with all laws, to resist the occupation of its territory. It has also affirmed the commitment of the Palestinian State to the principles of the United Nations and the International Declaration of Human Rights, as well as to a policy of non-alignment, freedom of beliefs, and a democratic parliamentary system based on freedom of beliefs and the creation of political parties under an independent judicial system.

We continue to hope that now that the Palestinian party has demonstrated the sincerity of its peaceful orientation, all the other parties will meet it half way, if only by establishing contacts with its legitimate representatives in order to work towards a lasting solution, instead of breaking off contacts and shutting doors. That is an attitude which could only lead to the encouragement of extremist trends and violence by both parties, and it would damage the credibility and neutrality of those of whom we expect a positive role in keeping with their avowed principles.

The explicit acceptance by the Palestine National Council of resolutions of the Security Council concerning the Palestinian question, in particular Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), can help encourage the holding of an international peace conference on the Middle East under the aegis of the United

(Mr. Badawi, Egypt)

Nations, with the participation of all the parties concerned. We feel that such a conference would provide the best means of reaching a lasting and total settlement guaranteeing the framework of negotiations between the parties concerned, including the representatives of the Palestinian people, who are indispensable for the restoration of the situation in the region.

My country believes that the super-Powers bear a responsibility for the holding of the conference. Here, we note with satisfaction the statement contained in paragraph 33 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/43/867) concerning the conviction of all members of the Security Council of the need to convene an international peace conference and their invitation to the Secretary-General to continue his efforts and consultations in that regard.

We should also like to refer to paragraph 35, which mentions the need for the Security Council to commit itself to a review of the situation with a view to adopting a pragmatic approach to that end.

Egypt appeals to the two super-Powers to shoulder their responsibilities in this field. We also believe that the European group, which reacted positively to the declaration of the Palestinian State, could help strengthen the dialogue and contact with the representatives of the Palestinian people, especially in the light of the historical and cultural links between Europe and the eastern part of the Mediterranean region and between Europe and the Arab world as a whole.

Egypt believes that it would be wrong for Israel or for any other party to ignore this development which may lead to peace, since the only alternative would be to reduce the chances for the peace the Middle East so greatly needs.

Today Israel must face its children, the international community and the conscience of humanity and show its good intentions with regard to the establishment of a just and lasting peace by withdrawal from the occupied territories, because by pursuing its policy of illegal occupation and usurpation of

(Mr. Badawi, Egypt)

the territories of others it is prolonging the suffering of peoples and the destabilization of the situation in the Middle East.

The United Nations Charter and Security Council resolution 242 (1967) prohibit the acquisition of territory by force. That principle applies to all the Arab territories occupied since 1967.

(Mr. Badawi, Egypt)

This principle applies to the Syrian Golan Heights because its continued occupation by Israel, under the pretext of security, is in flagrant violation of international norms. We call upon Israel to withdraw from all Arab territories and renounce its pretexts, which have proved futile and have been rejected by the international community.

The situation in Lebanon continues to be a source of grave concern for the people and Government of my country. It is regrettable that the situation continues to deteriorate and that the Lebanese people have not been able to elect a President of the Republic within the legally established time-frame since the outbreak of hostilities in the 1970s. While there are many internal factors inherent in the conflict, we should not forget the policy of gaining spheres of influence and the interference in the internal conflict by other parties. Such an approach cannot lead to national reconciliation in Lebanon.

Egypt appeals to the international community to put an end to foreign interference and bring about conditions that will permit the Lebanese to arrive at a settlement guaranteeing the independence and territorial integrity of Lebanon.

The complex situation in the Middle East requires those in the world that enjoy freedom to take the initiative in their own societies in bringing about a comprehensive settlement of the problems of the region. Neither the constantly changing situation nor the sometimes conflicting interests should lead us to forget that the destiny of mankind is indivisible and that right and justice are the only foundations for peace and security.

Egypt, as usual, will continue to work for a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East problem, in keeping with international law and, in particular, with the right of peoples to self-determination and to respect for human rights and the right of all the peoples of the region to live within recognized boundaries. We are convinced that good intentions, perseverance and patience will prevail and make

(Mr. Badawi, Egypt)

the Middle East a more secure region in which peoples and States will co-operate to ensure prosperity for all and guarantee international peace and security.

Mr. PITARKA (Albania): The important events that have taken place in the Middle East since the last session of the General Assembly have had, and continue to have, their impact on the latest political developments in the region.

For almost one year now the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza have been seething with the Palestinians' massive revolt. The young men and women that at present clash with the Israeli occupiers in Ramallah, Nablus and elsewhere belong to that Palestinian generation that was born and brought up in conditions of Zionist occupation and domination. This fact alone proves that the Palestinian people are determined to make every sacrifice for the realization of their lofty national aspiration to live free in their homeland.

In the southern part of the region, the fratricidal Iraq-Iran war, which caused heavy human losses and incalculable material damage to both sides, has lately taken a new course owing to the established cease-fire. This complies not only with the aspirations of the Iranian and Iraqi peoples but also with the aspirations of the entire region to peace and security. The ending of the Iraq-Iran war also contributes to the relaxation of tension in the entire Middle East area. At the same time, it is a development that is not welcomed by Israel, because that way served as a focus that distracted attention and energies from the Zionist and imperialist aggression that goes on in the region.

Nor can one leave out of the overall picture of events the super-Powers' interference in the internal affairs of the Middle East countries and their rivalry and collaboration, which are manifested in their feverish diplomatic and military activities allegedly for the solution of the Middle East question, the preservation of peace, the safety of navigation in the Persian Gulf, and so forth.

(Mr. Pitarka, Albania)

The Middle East crisis cannot be assessed and judged detached from the background of present-day international developments. The peoples' struggle for freedom and independence and their independent and sovereign rights has compelled the big "protectors" to review their tactics and perfect co-ordination between them in order to preserve domination in their respective zones of influence. This is also one of the focal topics of the institutionalized United States/Soviet dialogue: discussion and decision on regional conflicts. Although in various parts of the world there is actually a tendency to put an end to regional conflicts, as the Iran-Iraq case shows, this does not apply to the whole Middle East crisis. Various and multifarious are the causes that keep this crisis alive.

It should not escape attention that for more than four decades now at the core of the Middle East crisis has lain the Palestinian question, in all its graveness. A whole nation is being subjected to a systematic policy of genocide designed to liquidate it physically, to say nothing of the denial of the national right of the Palestinians to live free in their homeland. Another important dimension of the Middle East crisis is the Arab-Israeli conflict, which is given practical expression in repeated Israeli acts of aggression against the Arab countries, resulting in the occupation by Israel of entire Arab territories. To this must be added the crisis in Lebanon, which has been continuing for 10 years. Besides committing acts of aggression and frequent bombardments, Israel keeps the southern part of the country under occupation. Moreover, Lebanon is suffering the consequences of a civil war between political factions and ethnic and religious groupings which must be considered one of the most serious wounds in the whole complexity of the Middle East crisis.

This overall grave situation in the Middle East develops against the background of the rivalry and, indeed, collaboration between the two super-Powers,

(Mr. Pitarka, Albania)

the United States and the Soviet Union. There is no doubt that this rivalry and collaboration further complicates the situation in the region, which is serious enough as it is.

Over the years the super-Powers, each on the basis of its own interests, have continued to make plans for the alleged settlement of the Middle East problem and the restoration of peace and tranquillity in that neuralgic region. Yet the feverish diplomatic activity that has taken place in the period since the previous session, wins our attention because of its intensity and complexity. It is certainly not their concern to put an end to the suffering and misery of the Arab countries and peoples that propels the super-Powers into such undertakings, much though they proclaim that they stand for the settlement of the Middle East question. On the contrary, it is the struggle of the Arab peoples, notably the massive revolt of the Palestinian population in the occupied territories, that repudiates and makes null and void the pan-imperialist consensus on "neither war nor peace".

It is the unflinching determination of the martyred Palestinian people to gain their national rights, and the assistance that the other Arab peoples render to their struggle, coupled with the supportive solidarity of world public opinion, that compel the super-Powers, willingly or unwillingly, to count the Palestinian factor as essential to the solution of the Middle East problem. It is these very elements that have shattered the foundations of the existing status-quo imposed by the super-Powers and Zionism, forcing them to conceive and co-ordinate new tactics so that they do not lose control of events.

(Mr. Pitarka, Albania)

The unprecedented escalation of violence and terror by the Israeli occupiers and the intensification of Washington's activity in connection with the so-called peaceful settlement of the whole Middle East question are instances of the familiar "carrot and stick" tactics, which serve one and the same unchanging imperialist policy - the perpetuation of Zionist domination in the occupied Arab lands. Neither Zionist genocide nor United States schemes, under a wide variety of labels, which ignore the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to an independent and sovereign homeland and do not recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the Palestinians' sole, legitimate representative, can bring about a settlement, and both are doomed to failure.

In these hard times for Israel and the United States, the Soviets are trying not to fall behind, and they avail themselves of every opportunity that looks favourable and suits them to be part of the plans and settlements that are being charted on the Middle East question.

Nevertheless, the massive revolt of the Palestinians and the world-wide support it enjoys are ruining the game of the super-Powers, which, despite their frequent meetings and consultations, are failing to shape the settlement of the complicated Middle East problem after the models set in the bargains previously struck on other regional problems. It is not without significance that the current United States Administration is passing on the Middle East question to the Administration-elect for solution.

Just as in the past, the new United States initiatives do not aim at providing a solution to the Middle East crisis, for Washington is concerned only with justifying its intervention, and perpetuating the occupation régime and the "no war, no peace" situation, which ensures the flow of profits from arms sales and the privileges of its presence in this oil-rich basin.

(Mr. Pitarka, Albania)

The international conference on peace in the Middle East continues to be presented, primarily by Soviet diplomacy, as a forum that could take upon itself the responsibility for solving the Middle East problem. The Albanian delegation maintains the view that no conference or forum will be able to bring about a useful result, much less solve the Middle East problem, unless the Palestinian Liberation Organization participates in it with full and equal rights as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and without the solution, first, of the key problem of the Middle East issue, the Palestinian question.

It is understandable that the United Nations should be empowered to assist in assessing and solving regional conflicts, the Middle East included, in conformity with its Charter and in accordance with the aspirations of peoples to preserve peace and security in the world. Proceeding from sincere goodwill, the delegation of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania is of the opinion that in exercising this function the Organization should keep in mind the fact that the main part must be played by the parties directly involved in a conflict and primarily interested in solving it. The super-Powers should be given no chance to use the United Nations as a cover-up and to turn international law into a labyrinth of pseudo-jurisprudence to conceal and justify their imperialist intrigues and plots.

The heroic struggle of the Palestinian people is an expression of their growing awareness and national consciousness, as well as vivid proof of their determination to gain their homeland. Moreover, it is evidence of the colossal potential that the Arab peoples can put in motion to stop those who endeavour to speculate with their sacred aspirations to freedom and independence by offering them solutions that carry the seed of future conflicts.

As in the past, the People's Socialist Republic of Albania and the Albanian people will unreservedly support the legitimate struggle of the Palestinian and other Arab peoples to put an end to imperialist and Zionist aggression and the

(Mr. Pitarka, Albania)

occupation of Arab lands and fully to restore the lawful national right of the Palestinian people to a free and independent homeland. Consistent with its support for the just cause of the Palestinian people and their right to their independent State, the Government of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania has recognized the Palestinian State proclaimed by the Palestine National Council. We will give our determined support to every legitimate endeavour of the Palestinian and other Arab peoples to ensure the restoration of their lawful national rights and achieve genuine peace and security in the Middle East region.

Mr. RANA (Nepal): The situation in the Middle East has been the foremost concern of the United Nations ever since the Organization came into being. Five major wars have been fought in the region. They have all been as destructive as they have been indecisive. The United Nations has been instrumental in arranging a cease-fire after each war. Scores of resolutions on various aspects of the problem and the deployment of peace-keeping forces in different sectors underline the international community's concern for and interest in a just and durable peace in the Middle East. It has been established beyond doubt that the involvement and efforts of the United Nations can be effective only when the parties concerned display the necessary political will and a spirit of co-operation and accommodation.

The cease-fire in the Gulf war is an example. This prolonged and tragic conflict contained the seeds of wider conflagration, threatening international peace and security. The cease-fire is the result of the confidence that both Iran and Iraq have placed in the United Nations to promote a just and lasting solution to their differences - a negotiated political settlement that will ensure peace, progress and prosperity for both countries. My delegation welcomes the cessation of hostilities between these two countries, both of which are friends of Nepal,

(Mr. Rana, Nepal)

and reiterates its full support for the Secretary-General in his laudable efforts to ensure the implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1987).

The continuing and deepening tragedy of Lebanon, on the other hand, clearly reveals the dangers inherent in allowing the status quo in the Middle East to continue. The situation there is a matter of deep concern to us all. We firmly believe that the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Lebanon must be respected by all. Smooth and full implementation of the constitutional process, without outside interference, is the first necessity in Lebanon today. Our commitment to the independence and territorial integrity of Lebanon is reflected in our continued participation in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

In the troubled history of the region, the past year has marked yet another climax in the cycle of violence and human suffering. The continuing Palestinian uprising in the Territories occupied by Israel since 1967 has highlighted as never before the urgent necessity of serious negotiations.

(Mr. Rana, Nepal)

The uprising symbolizes the spontaneous rejection by the Palestinian people of life under continued foreign occupation. The reaction of Israel, the occupying Power, to the civilian protest has been a source of deep concern to the international community. That concern springs from the repressive measures and methods adopted by the Israeli security forces and from the Israeli Government's policy of such collective punishment as the demolition of houses, deportations in open defiance of relevant Security Council resolutions and arbitrary economic measures designed to harm and harass the Palestinian people. Nepal joins in condemning such policies, which are not only inhuman but also contrary to recognized international conventions.

Strict observance of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, however, will not in itself bring peace to the region; the problem will continue so long as the fundamental issues are evaded. There is now broad agreement that the underlying problem of the Middle East can be resolved only through a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement based fundamentally on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). The settlement would have to include the withdrawal of Israel from territories occupied since 1967 and unqualified respect for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to a State of their own. Equally important, the settlement has to ensure Israel's right to live in peace within recognized boundaries, free from threats or acts of force.

In the Middle East, the status quo has clearly become untenable and the international community must exert every effort to promote the peace process. The Security Council bears a special responsibility in this endeavour. Like the overwhelming majority of the Members of the United Nations, Nepal believes that an international conference, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and

(Mr. Rana, Nepal)

the permanent members of the Security Council, offers the best hope for beginning meaningful negotiations on a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Years of war and conflict have left a terrible legacy of mistrust and hatred in the Middle East region. Bold and imaginative statesmanship is required to break the vicious circle. In this context, my delegation believes that the recent declaration by the Palestine National Council in Algiers constitutes a positive step in this direction. The Palestine National Council has rejected the threat or use of force, violence and terrorism against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State. It has called for a peaceful solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and for arrangements to ensure security and peace for all States of the region. The historic declaration offers an unprecedented incentive for the convening of an international conference. Nepal welcomes the historic declaration and hopes that it will pave the way for meaningful negotiations to resolve the conflict on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). The international community must seize the opportunity and give peace a chance in the Middle East.

Nepal regrets the circumstances that have led to the General Assembly decision to shift consideration of the question of Palestine at the forty-third session from Headquarters in New York to Geneva. While we respect the inherent right of the United States, or any State, for that matter, to protect its legitimate interests, the decision to deny an entry visa to Chairman Yasser Arafat was a clear violation of the host country Agreement. What made the decision even more unfortunate was that it came at a time when there was a real prospect of breaking the stalemate in the Middle East. Such actions can only delay or damage the prospects for the peaceful settlement of the issues in the Middle East. Nepal earnestly hopes that the parties concerned will not allow this unfortunate episode to dampen the renewed

(Mr. Rana, Nepal)

hope for a meaningful movement towards a negotiated and just settlement of the Middle East conflict.

Mr. FAKHOURY (Lebanon) (interpretation from Arabic): The basic link between agenda items 37 and 40 is the question of Palestine and the Palestinian people, half of whom live under Israeli occupation while the other half live in diaspora as refugees in other Arab countries.

Israel's inhuman practices in quelling the uprising in the occupied Palestinian territories cannot be condoned under any law, norm or agreement. The uprising alone proves that the occupation is not accepted, even if Israel tries to camouflage that occupation to give it the false appearance of a paradise.

This year has seen substantive progress towards the resolution of a number of regional conflicts. The United Nations, through the efforts of its Secretary-General, has regained its credibility, vitality and freedom of movement. This has given rise to the hope that similar efforts will be made to deal with conflicts in the Middle East, particularly with regard to the Palestinian and southern Lebanon causes.

Lebanon has its cause too. Although it began as an offshoot of the Palestinian cause, it has now become a serious independent issue, which, thanks to Israel's continued policy of aggression and its ambition to acquire more land and water resources, is now an urgent problem calling for a radical solution.

It is to be feared that, in the absence of a determined deterrent stand by the international community, represented in our Organization and its organs, particularly the Security Council, the situation in the region in general and in southern Lebanon in particular may deteriorate to the point of explosion. Fire, which at a distance may be perceptible only by the glow of its flames, may suddenly spread in every direction and burst into a conflagration that could engulf international peace and security.

(Mr. Fakhoury, Lebanon)

Only then will the world feel the burning heat and become aware of the destruction and the bloodshed. The Secretary-General has foreseen all this. Hence his report on the Middle East warns of that danger and calls for action to avoid the calamity.

In my statement to the General Assembly in the general debate I dealt with the demands of Lebanon, which are well known to everyone here. However, I have to state here that so long as Israel remains in occupation of part of southern Lebanon, and so long as it continues to pursue its practices and acts of aggression, peace in Lebanon will remain threatened and normalization of the life of Lebanon will continue to be out of reach. The crisis which has swept over the country from the south can be solved only from the south, through full and unconditional Israeli withdrawal. That solution is within the power of the Security Council, and is the responsibility of the Security Council. The Security Council is responsible; the Security Council has the power to act. We call upon it to take a collective stand and adopt a strong binding resolution in the interest of international peace and security, the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Lebanon and the preservation of the lives, property and dignity of the people of Lebanon.

Some describe the Lebanese national resistance in a way that sometimes may brand it as terrorist or put it on the same footing as the Israeli aggressors. But the right of every people to resist occupation is legitimate and legal. We cannot believe that in the time that has elapsed since the Second World War some countries have forgotten their own resistance to nazi occupation or that others have forgotten the human and material support and information provided by them, to the resistance movements landed.

Having said this, we must point out that national resistance is the right of every occupied people wherever it may be. We in Lebanon take pride in our

(Mr. Fakhoury, Lebanon)

resistance to Israel's occupation. Time will never cause us to forget the saga of that resistance; we have written it in the blood of our martyrs and the tears of our widows and orphans.

I should like to pay a tribute to the positive role played by the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). That role is basically part of the task entrusted to the Force under Security Council resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978). Let the record show Lebanon's gratitude to the Secretary-General and the Assistant Secretary-General with direct responsibility for the Force, as well as to the Force itself, its leadership, command and personnel, and to the troop-contributing countries. Lebanon reaffirms its support for the Force and the need to enable it to fulfil its task - a task that Israel is still impeding, as it has continued to do for more than 10 years.

Mr. AL-MASRI (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic): Today the General Assembly begins its consideration of the grave situation in the Middle East, at a time when the revolutionary uprising of the Palestinian people against the Israeli occupation is entering its second year. That revolutionary uprising has demonstrated unequivocally the determination of the Arab Palestinian people to liberate their homeland, Palestine, from Israeli occupation. It has also proved that the will of the Arab Palestinian people is much stronger than the fascist, repressive practices of Israel. It has also proved that the Palestinian people's strong determination to liberate their occupied land can never be crushed, however great the challenge. This revolutionary uprising, together with the heroic resistance in southern Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Golan Heights, both occupied by Israel, has exposed the annexationist objectives and racist, aggressive character of Israel. Israel came into being as a result of a racist movement within the

(Mr. Al-Masri, Syrian Arab Republic)

framework of settler colonialism. It was built on the imperative of settling in Palestine and expelling its Arab people. The Zionist leaders, have realized throughout that to enable zionism to realize the dream of establishing Greater Israel the land must be cleared of its owners and original inhabitants.

This was expounded by the British Zionist writer Zingwell in a speech he made in New York in 1904, in which he said:

"We must be prepared to expel the Arabs from Palestine by the force of the sword."

That is exactly what has been done over the past 40 years through a series of fascist massacres, operations of deportation and expulsion and the creation of an atmosphere of panic, to force the Arabs to flee from their lands and their homes. That is exactly what is being done in a heightened form in the occupied Arab territories. Strangely enough, there are those that choose not to see all this, and speak of the possibility of living in peace in the region with the grandchildren of Hertzl, Jabotinsky, Zingwell and Ben-Gurion.

Colonialist ambitions in our Middle East region and greed for its wealth and unique strategic position have been the prime motives in the conspiracy to establish a settler-colonialist Zionist entity in Arab Palestine, so that that entity may create a situation of perpetual tension in the region and expand whenever circumstances allow in order to safeguard the interests of the colonialist Powers in this sensitive region.

(Mr. Al-Masri, Syrian Arab Republic)

Israel's intentions and annexationist and aggressive aims have never lacked proof. Originally, Israel was an expansionist settler-colonialist enterprise that had its foundations in aggression and expansion at the expense of the Arabs' land and the Arab people. Its expansionist policy became clear when it annexed Arab Jerusalem and the Arab Syrian Golan and went on building hundreds of settlements in those territories, as well as on the West Bank and in Gaza and removing the inhabitants of those occupied lands. This proves beyond any doubt that peace is not what Israel wants. Israel wants land, expansion, and the building of more settlements. It is for this reason that Israel refuses to recognize the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian Arab people and resorts to many terrorist and nazi practices in repressing the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian lands, to force them to leave, exactly as it does in the Syrian Arab Golan and southern Lebanon.

How, then, can there be talk of peace? Those that weave the illusion of solutions that may be reached, while Palestinian land remains under occupation and the Palestinian people are denied their national rights, including the right to return to their homeland, Palestine, to self-determination and to establish their own independent State on their own soil, have not learnt the lessons of the past, and do not realize that a just peace in the region cannot be achieved under occupation, settlement and expansion.

The situation in the occupied Arab territories is extremely grave and is progressively becoming more so owing to the repressive and barbaric practices of the Israeli forces of occupation against the inhabitants of those territories, in blatant violation of the norms of international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. Thus every avenue that might lead to a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the

(Mr. Al-Masri, Syrian Arab Republic)

establishment of a comprehensive and just peace is blocked and international peace and security are seriously endangered.

To Israel, peace is the peace of occupation, expansion and the acquisition of land by force. This, of course, runs counter to any real concept of peace built on the ending of occupation and the full and unconditional restoration of the inalienable rights of the inhabitants of the occupied territories. So long as this contradiction between real peace and the Israeli concept of peace persists, the achievement of peace will remain a remote dream and the Arab struggle will continue until the Arabs liberate their land and regain their rights.

My country has repeatedly made it clear that peace has certain elements. The most important of those elements are justice and equity, the ending of occupation and the restoration of usurped rights. There is no peace under occupation. There will be no peace unless and until the Arabs regain all their lands and all their rights. It is sophistry and a grave mistake for some people to believe that peace can be achieved in this region without total, unconditional Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories and without giving the Arab Palestinian people the opportunity to enjoy their inalienable national rights. Those who speak of peace and ignore its requirements and conditions make a serious error of judgment.

Israel does not want peace in the region. This is a fact that it does not need great acumen to appreciate. Israel simply wants the Arabs to knuckle under and accept its expansionist ambitions. It is for this reason that Israel rejects the international conference and insists on direct negotiations, because in this way it can achieve the aims which it works for, as it did in the case of the Camp David agreements. However, history does not repeat itself, and what happened at Camp David will never happen again, because Camp David, with all its agreements and

(Mr. Al-Masri, Syrian Arab  
Republic)

its approach to the issue, has brought nothing to the region but a continuing threat to its peace and security. Suffice it to recall that those agreements enabled Israel to achieve more expansion and put more obstacles in the way of peace. It annexed Arab Jerusalem and the Arab Syrian Golan; it invaded Lebanon, destroyed its capital, Beirut, and occupied its southern part; and it stepped up its repression of the inhabitants of the occupied Arab territories and reinforced its settler policies there by building more settlements. All of this strongly refutes the claims of those that would have the world believe that Israel wants peace. At the same time, it shows Israel to be an aggressor, a racist settler-colonialist entity and an active force against peace and security in the Middle East and the world as a whole.

Having realized this fact, the General Assembly adopted, on 10 November 1975, its resolution determining that Zionism is a form of racism. On 5 February 1982, after the application of Israeli laws to the Arab Syrian Golan, the General Assembly declared that Israel's record and actions confirmed that it was not a peace-loving Member State and that it had not carried out its obligations under General Assembly resolution 273 (III) of 11 May 1949.

The long terrorist history of Israeli occupation of the Arab Syrian Golan, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and southern Lebanon calls to mind the barbaric acts of the racist régime of Pretoria against the South African people and the people of Namibia and the Nazi crimes against civilians in Europe during the Second World War.

(Mr. Al-Masri, Syrian Arab Republic)

Since it occupied the Syrian Arab Golan Heights in 1967, Israel has continued to impose measures aimed at annexation of the territory and encouragement of its settlement by Israelis. That is why, on 1 December 1981, Israel took a decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the Syrian Golan Heights and Israeli identity on its Syrian Arab inhabitants. Those who refused to accept that identity were harassed and treated very harshly. The Israeli occupation authorities confiscated the lands of the Syrian Arab inhabitants and converted those lands into military sites and settlement areas. They also took over the natural water sources and prevented the Syrian Arab inhabitants from moving and working freely in the territory.

The situation in the Syrian Arab Golan Heights, as in other occupied Arab territories, is deteriorating further. Every day the Syrian Arab inhabitants face very brutal treatment at the hands of the Israeli occupation forces. Their basic human rights are systematically violated.

Since Israel occupied the Golan Heights in 1967, it has pursued the well-known Israeli strategy of aggression against the inhabitants of the territory. Its objective has been to Judaize the Syrian Golan Heights, eradicate the national identity of its inhabitants, destroy its economic infrastructure, take over its water resources and change its social and cultural character, in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, particularly Security Council resolution 497 (1981), adopted unanimously on 17 December 1981, and General Assembly resolution ES-9/1, adopted on 5 February 1982, at the ninth emergency special session, and reaffirmed at every session of the General Assembly since then.

(Mr. Al-Masri, Syrian Arab  
Republic)

It is no secret that the tragic situation in southern Lebanon is the result of the Israeli occupation of that part of Lebanon and of Israel's use of armed mercenaries and puppets to commit acts of terrorism and violence against the Lebanese populace.

Israel rejected Security Council resolution 425 (1978) and subsequent resolutions calling for the full and unconditional withdrawal of its forces from all Lebanese territory and the deployment of United Nations forces in the area to carry out its functions.

The Israeli occupation forces have turned whole towns and villages in southern Lebanon into quasi-concentration camps. Life there is hell. The Israeli occupation forces carry out acts of repression, murder and destruction from air, sea and land.

It is a mistake for anyone to believe that concessions by the Arab Palestinian people can help establish peace in the Middle East. It must have become quite clear that making one set of concessions after another only serves Israel's settler-colonialist and expansionist designs and makes possible great gains for Israel, especially in the direction of war and aggression. Those concessions have not moved us one step towards peace.

Syria is aware of the nature and reality of the Arab-Israeli conflict and therefore has always called for focusing on a national Palestinian entity, in the face of Zionist claims. Syria has always struggled for the attainment by the Arab Palestinian people of their national rights, including the right to return, self-determination and the establishment of their independent and sovereign State on their national soil. Syria has always taken a principled stand based on the linkage between the restoration to Syria of the Golan Heights, the restoration to

(Mr. Al-Masri, Syrian Arab  
Republic)

the Arab Palestinian people of their occupied land, the guaranteeing of that people's national rights and the liberation of all the other occupied Arab territories.

Syria has constantly called on public opinion to support our just struggle for Palestinian rights and to express that support by recognizing the inalienable rights of the Arab Palestinian people, especially their right to establish an independent State. Such a position is in conformity with the decisions of the Arab summit conferences and international law.

Through their heroic uprising, the Arab Palestinian people have rejected the Israeli occupation and demonstrated their determination to regain their national rights. Syria feels that the unification of the Palestinians on strong militant grounds, support for the uprising by the people, and Arab resistance against Israeli occupation are the right things to do if the territory is to be liberated and the Arab Palestinian people are to regain their rights. That is why Syria has strongly supported the establishment of an independent Palestinian State. That is entirely in keeping with our policy.

The road to a just peace is a one-way road that passes through an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and the permanent members of the Security Council.

In essence, peace means justice; it means returning rights to those who have been denied them and putting an end to aggression and occupation. That is the kind of peace for which we struggle. The peace we desire follows the road of the implementation of United Nations resolutions relevant to this question, including

(Mr. Al-Masri, Syrian Arab  
Republic)

those pertaining to the holding of the international conference. Unless Israel withdraws from all the occupied Arab territories, unless the question of Palestine is solved in a way that guarantees the rights of the Palestinian people, there will be no peace in that region. For, if there is no just peace, aggression and occupation will continue and, consequently, resistance to occupation and aggression will continue, in the Syrian Arab Golan Heights, in the Arab Palestinian land and in southern Lebanon. That resistance is the natural result of continued occupation.

Mr. BELONOGOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The discussion of the situation in the Middle East at this session of the General Assembly is taking place at a time when the process of improvement in world affairs and the widespread realization by the international community of the need for active dialogue and for fostering an atmosphere of trust have opened up new prospects for promoting interaction.

In its turn another extremely important aspect of the interrelatedness of the contemporary world has come into play, namely, the correlation between regional conflicts and the general state of international affairs. A noticeable departure from old stereotypes and the logic of confrontation, a readiness for constructive dialogue and a more prominent role for the United Nations have made it possible to achieve a breakthrough in the matter of settling the situation around Afghanistan and for there to be practical movement towards resolving the Iran-Iraq conflict. Settlements are indeed taking shape in many other hot spots of the contemporary world.

Unfortunately, however, Middle East developments have proved to be among those lagging furthest behind. The Arab-Israeli conflict continues to remain unresolved. Israel, which is continuing to occupy the West Bank and Gaza, the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon, is stubbornly attempting to suppress by force the uprising of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories. The unrestrained growth of the arms race in the Middle East is beginning to cause particular concern. The fact is that that area has become saturated with the most up-to-date forms of weaponry. Apart from the grave economic consequences of the arms race for the peoples of the region, further militarization may well bring the Middle East up to a new level of explosive confrontation with unforeseeable consequences that represent a serious threat to the region and to the international situation as a whole.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

Nevertheless, even here factors have emerged that will help to facilitate movement towards a political settlement. On the positive side of the picture is the attitude taken by the Arab countries favouring a settlement by political means through the convening of an international conference on the Middle East as well as the constructive and realistic attitude towards this matter adopted by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

A very important step in this connection are the resolutions adopted at the extraordinary session of the Palestine National Council, which was held in Algiers.

The Soviet Union has constantly supported the Palestinian people in its desire to enjoy its inalienable national rights, including the right to establish its own independent State. Our people understand the feelings of political zeal and enthusiasm the Palestinians and their brother Arabs are expressing in connection with the resolutions adopted at the Algiers session of the Palestine National Council. The Soviet Union, in keeping with the fundamental principle of freedom of choice, recognized the proclamation of the Palestinian State, since it is our understanding that to achieve a comprehensive settlement will also in fact lead to the practical culmination of the historic significance of the process of creating that State.

In the Soviet Union these resolutions of the Palestine National Council have been greeted with interest and approval. As emphasized in the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union on 18 November this year,

"Since they are imbued with a deep sense of realism and responsibility, as evinced by the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, these resolutions in the aggregate represent a major contribution to the process of achieving a just political settlement in the Middle East."

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

As a result we now have a situation where the parties directly involved in the conflict have acknowledged that the way to achieve peace and peaceful coexistence between the Arabs and Israel is to be sought through talks based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

In his report of 28 November this year, the Secretary-General correctly states that the Algiers session of the Palestine National Council

"has generated a new momentum in the diplomatic process and ... offers fresh opportunities for progress towards peace which should be seized". (A/43/867, para. 37)

It is precisely in this way that these resolutions were welcomed by an overwhelming majority of States Members of the United Nations.

Against this background a particularly negative tone was set by the decision of the United States State Department to refuse to issue an entry visa to the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Mr. Yasser Arafat, to speak before the General Assembly. In Moscow this decision was regarded as both unconstructive and unlawful. It was taken at a time when the Palestine Liberation Organization has clearly shown itself to be both responsible and a necessary partner at peace talks to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict.

We must note with some regret that in the Middle East region as well not everyone has grasped the imperatives of our times. Israel is still trying to evade any resolution of the fundamental aspects of a Middle East settlement at an international conference, and continues adopting palliatives and depriving the Palestinian people of an opportunity to determine their own future.

The process of achieving a Middle East settlement, as we have seen, is influenced by various positive and negative factors. Nevertheless, at the present juncture we do have a political foundation for launching the process for a

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

for a settlement. The presence of such a foundation provides us even now with an opportunity to start preparatory work to convene a conference and get down to purposeful bilateral and multilateral contacts in order to discuss the fundamental aspects of a settlement and work out mutually acceptable agreements on concrete ways and means of achieving it. The point of departure for this could be consultations among the five permanent members of the Security Council, as well as efforts by all the members of the Council.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

An international conference, as a universal tool for resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict, could realize the principle of a balance of interests by enabling the Palestinian people to exercise its right of self-determination in a fashion equal to that guaranteed the people of Israel, by returning the occupied territories to the Arabs on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and by guaranteeing all peoples and States of the Middle East an opportunity to live in peace and security. Participants in the conference should include representatives of all the parties involved in the conflict, including the Arab people of Palestine, whose sole legitimate representative is the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and the five permanent members of the Security Council.

To be sure, the complexity and gravity of the problems might require the adoption of interim steps, but these should be considered and implemented in the context of a conference, and as a part of a comprehensive settlement.

The range of problems afflicting the Middle East is not confined to the Arab-Israeli conflict itself; we cannot ignore the growing militarization, the economic problems or the serious humanitarian issues. It is time to consider what the United Nations can do to solve these problems. We must examine carefully the question of preventing the proliferation of nuclear and chemical weapons in the Middle East and creating a non-nuclear zone there.

Within the United Nations and its Security Council there is general understanding of the urgent steps that need to be taken to bring about a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement in the Middle East. As the 30 September 1988 report of the Secretary-General puts it,

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

"It is necessary ... to find a political solution which will satisfy both the legitimate political rights of the Palestinian people and the right of Israel, like other States in the area, to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats of acts of force". (A/43/691, para. 6)

The means to that end may be found in an international conference, the convening of which, as stated in the letter dated 21 September 1988 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General, "all the members of the Security Council believe ... desirable" (para. 3)

We are convinced that we now have a unique opportunity, which it would be unforgivable to let slip. The Soviet Union appeals to all countries to seize this opportunity and begin preparations for an international conference on the Middle East.

Mr. AKSIN (Turkey): Of all the regional disputes considered by the General Assembly, the question of the Middle East is the most intractable. Over the past 40 years the question of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict have been at the core of the troubles in that region, and have been the direct cause of endless human suffering and a number of major wars.

Over the years Turkish Governments have been steadfast in pursuing consistent policies in that volatile and unstable region. We have a direct and natural interest in the Middle East and in the fate of its peoples living adjacent to our borders. We therefore welcome this opportunity to set out once again before the General Assembly our views on the Middle East question, which awaits a just and lasting settlement.

(Mr. Aksin, Turkey)

Since last year's debate on this item in the General Assembly we have witnessed a number of crucial developments. The uprising in the occupied territories, which erupted last December, continues to gain intensity. Jordan severed the administrative and legal ties between itself and the West Bank. The Palestine National Council declared an independent Palestinian State at its recent meeting in Algiers. It is evident that these major events, which occurred during the past few months, call for careful consideration by the international community. At a time when there are positive signs in the global political environment, the Middle East stands out as the only area of regional conflict where there has yet to be any breakthrough.

In the course of the debate on the situation in the Middle East last year, we pointed out in the General Assembly that

"The post-war world has lived with the Middle East conflict since the inception of the United Nations. A whole generation has experienced the frustrations of an intractable problem that intermittently leads to explosions of violence and constantly threatens international peace and security. Yet the will to act to resolve the problem, which emerges after every military conflict, quickly evaporates when the sense of crisis recedes 'leading to] an atmosphere of despondency and resignation. We believe that the explicit or implicit abandonment of the search for a just solution only postpones a far greater upheaval. We cannot forget that the Middle East conflict has many dimensions, that its continuation not only can provoke at any time a new confrontation between the antagonists but also undermines the stability of an extremely sensitive region and nurtures the ingredients of a future catastrophe the magnitude of which we cannot even conceive". (A/42/PV.86, pp. 39-40)

(Mr. Aksin, Turkey)

Therefore, it came as no great surprise to us when in December last year the situation in the Arab territories under Israeli occupation deteriorated drastically and the Palestinian civilian population rose in protest against the Israeli occupation. The uprising was confronted with extremely harsh and violent measures.

Since then we have been following with anguish and apprehension the developments in the occupied Palestinian territories. The Secretary-General's recent report (A/43/806) and the report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency drew our attention to the miserable conditions in which the Palestinians live and to their growing despair. In the reports and their annexes we read that more than 200 Palestinians were killed and thousands injured by the Israeli authorities during the first eight months of the uprising.

In view of the tragic loss of life and the human suffering, the Government of Turkey has repeatedly denounced the arbitrary Israeli measures and practices that gravely violate the human rights of the Palestinian people living in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and has called on Israel to refrain from all acts of violence against the civilian population. The Secretary-General's report (A/43/559) dated 26 August 1988 contains substantive information given by Turkey on this issue in accordance with General Assembly resolution 42/160 F.

As stressed in Security Council resolution 605 (1987), adopted last year, and also in the statement of the President of the Council issued on 26 August 1988, the policies of Israel, and in particular the killing and wounding of defenceless Palestinian civilians, are bound to have grave consequences for the endeavours to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

(Mr. Aksin, Turkey)

The deportation of Palestinian civilians from the occupied territories by Israel, which was the subject of Security Council resolutions 607 (1988) and 608 (1988), adopted early this year, and the shocking practice of breaking into Palestinian homes and beating up civilians, the curfews imposed on the refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the desecration of holy places, the prevention of the distribution of food and various other economic and political measures mentioned in United Nations documents cannot be tolerated, whatever the pretext. These are arbitrary measures of desperation, and they constitute a violation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. It is evident that such measures have contributed to the escalation of tension in the occupied territories. We have reminded the Israeli authorities of this fact.

My Government has stated on various occasions that it sees a close link between the sufferings of the Palestinians and the political settlement of the Middle East problem. In this connection, it is useful to recall the Secretary-General's report, S/19443, submitted to the Security Council. In studying the report, one cannot but agree with the views expressed to United Nations officials by the Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip who have rejected the Israeli occupation and insisted that the plight of the Palestinians is a political problem requiring a political solution. Priority, they have said, has to be given to the negotiation of such a settlement, and measures to alleviate the suffering of the civilian population should not be allowed to become a substitute for an urgent solution of the underlying political problems.

The political nature of the Middle East question is also stressed in paragraph 9 of the Secretary-General's report A/43/806, dated 21 November 1988. As underlined in paragraphs 32 and 34 of the Secretary-General's most recent report, A/43/867, dated 28 November 1988, the intifadah is a direct result of the stalemate

(Mr. Aksin, Turkey)

in the search for a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It should be viewed not only in the context of Palestinians and Israelis, but as a broader political dispute with many complex and interrelated aspects.

The proclamation of an independent Palestinian State by the Palestine National Council, meeting in Algiers last month, constitutes a historic milestone in the efforts to find a just and lasting solution to the Middle East question.

It has been the conviction of Turkey that a lasting and equitable solution in the region depends on the withdrawal of Israel from the Arab territories it has occupied since 1967, recognition of the rights to self-determination of Palestinians and recognition of the right of all States in the region, including Israel, to live within secure and internationally recognized boundaries. In keeping with its consistent policy regarding the Middle East, my Government has welcomed the decisions taken by the Palestine National Council as realistic and constructive steps towards achieving peace in this critical region, and, with this understanding, it has recognized the newly established State of Palestine. This decision of the Government has been fully endorsed by all the Turkish political parties.

The lack of a proper negotiating process has been one of the major impediments to addressing the substantive questions of the Middle East in a meaningful manner. A lasting political settlement in the region can emerge only from comprehensive negotiations between all the parties concerned. The current uprising has highlighted once again the urgent need to devise an effective negotiating process so that the parties concerned can overcome their deep-rooted suspicions.

In this connection, the endorsement of an international peace conference on the Middle East at the highest level by the Arab countries in the Amman Summit last year was an important development. We witnessed the same positive approach at the Extraordinary Arab Summit Conference held at Algiers in June this year. Most

(Mr. Aksin, Turkey)

recently, the realism which prevailed at the Palestine National Council meeting held in Algiers was yet another encouraging development for the peace process.

In this respect, we should like to underline the views expressed by the Secretary-General in his report on this item. He rightly points out:

"The recent session of the Palestine National Council has generated a new momentum in the diplomatic process and ... it offers fresh opportunities for progress towards peace which should be seized." (A/43/867, para. 37)

It is evident that the Declaration adopted by the Palestine National Council contains constructive elements which deserve thoughtful responses. The moderate tone of the Declaration is most encouraging. We hope and believe that the decisions taken in Algiers will contribute to the achievement of peace in the Middle East, where all States will be able to live side by side in secure and internationally recognized borders. It is our earnest desire that these constructive steps taken by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) will be assessed positively by all the interested parties and will be reciprocated in the same spirit, so that the peace process may go ahead.

With this understanding, we should have preferred to see Mr. Arafat, the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO address the General Assembly in this Hall and participate in the debate on the Palestine question. It is our view that it would have been more appropriate if the granting of a visa to Mr. Arafat had been handled in conformity with the Headquarters Agreement rather than with political considerations in mind. The positive attitude displayed by the Palestine National Council at its last meeting must be encouraged if we are to further the Middle East peace process.\*

---

\*Mr. Essy (Côte d'Ivoire), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Aksin, Turkey)

I should like to conclude my statement by referring briefly to the situation in Lebanon and the Iran-Iraq peace talks. As regards Lebanon, we have been closely following the tragic developments in that country for the past 13 years. We attach great importance to the maintenance of Lebanon's territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty. The solution to the problems facing the country should be found by the Lebanese themselves.

The cease-fire announced between Iran and Iraq last August came as a great relief, not only to the countries in the Middle East but also to the world at large. We fully support the untiring efforts of the Secretary-General for the implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1987) to restore peace between Iran and Iraq, countries with which we have friendly relations. Turkey attaches importance to the creation of an environment of mutual trust and confidence among the countries in the region so that the occurrence of similar conflicts can be prevented. In line with this, my Government has taken the initiative in taking practical steps to secure this aim.

Mr. ENDREFFY (Hungary): This year has in general been a good one as regards regional crises and hot-beds of tension; with the active involvement of the United Nations, of our Secretary-General, most of them seem to be on the way to a solution.

In striking contrast to this favourable picture, the situation in the Middle East remains a cause of serious concern. The problem at the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the question of Palestine, remains unsolved; the Israeli occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories continues. The purported annexation of East Jerusalem and of the Syrian Golan and the continued violation of Lebanon's territorial integrity are a constant source of tension, necessitating the continuous stationing of large-scale United Nations peace-keeping forces - the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) and the United Nations Interim

(Mr. Endreffy, Hungary)

Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) - in the area. While we express our appreciation to the soldiers serving the cause of peace, I should also like to express our support for these peace-keeping activities.

Turning our attention now to the question of the occupied Palestinian territories, we have to state that the situation there has dramatically worsened. The unwillingness of the Palestinian people to live under occupation found a new, powerful form of expression in the intifadah. This unarmed resistance brought upon the Palestinian population especially harsh and cruel forms of Israeli repression.

(Mr. Endreffy, Hungary)

The General Assembly, in resolution 43/21, adopted on 3 November 1988, rightly condemned Israel's persistent policies and practices violating the human rights of the Palestinian people and, in particular, such acts as the firing by the Israeli army and settlers that resulted in the killing and wounding of defenceless Palestinian civilians, the beating and breaking of bones, the deportations, the demolition of houses, and collective punishments. These Israeli policies and practices constitute serious violations of international law and can only aggravate the tension already prevailing in the area.

This situation is unacceptable and cries out for a speedy solution, the conditions of which have long been recognized by the international community. First, Israel must withdraw from the territories occupied since 1967; secondly, the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination, should be recognized; and, thirdly, the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all States in the region, including Israel, should be respected.

It is our conviction that the best way to reach a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the Middle East situation would be by the convening of an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all the parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, as well as the five permanent members of the Security Council.

The recent session of the Palestine National Council in Algiers has offered fresh opportunities for progress towards peace in general and for the convening of the international conference in particular. The reaffirmation of the determination of the PLO to reach a comprehensive political settlement, the acceptance by the Palestine National Council of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and

(Mr. Endreffy, Hungary)

338 (1978), with all that that implies, and its repeated rejection of terrorism in all its forms have been widely welcomed and supported.

We appeal to all parties concerned to seize this opportunity, contribute to overcoming the stalemate and engage in a peace process that takes into account the concerns and satisfies the security interests of all the parties.

Mr. ZACHMANN (German Democratic Republic): Yet again the problems of the Middle East region are on the agenda of the General Assembly. What has already become apparent in the general debate, during consideration of agenda items concerning Israeli practices and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and, not least, in the discussion on matters of international security is the sheer number of the different questions, ideas, proposals - and also contradictions - that relate to this set of problems, and, more significantly, the gravity of the concern felt by the majority of States in the face of the threats emanating from the Middle East conflict. That is also confirmed in the report submitted by the Secretary-General on the situation in the Middle East.

Although no solution has yet been found for that tormented region, one can rightly say that an impact has been made by the decade-long efforts exerted by various States and international organizations, notably the United Nations, as well as by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Arab League, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and socialist countries. The analysis of the Middle East conflict in all its aspects has led to a deeper understanding of the problems involved and to a growing awareness of the need for a political solution. The call for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the conflict raised time and again during all those years and decades has not remained unheeded.

(Mr. Zachmann, German Democratic Republic)

Negotiations, a matter-of-fact dialogue conducted by equals - that is, a common endeavour towards a collectively assured future for all States and peoples in the region - should be points of departure in seeking a settlement of the Middle East conflict, with the question of Palestine at its core.

The call for an international Middle East conference under the auspices of the United Nations is therefore more topical than ever before. In the aforementioned report, the Secretary-General states:

"It is true that all the members of the Security Council believe that it is desirable to convene an international conference and it is at least possible to identify in the replies of the parties agreement that there should be an international framework for the negotiation of a just and lasting settlement. But the familiar and deep differences remain about the nature of that framework, about its powers, about the basis on which it would be convened and about who should take part in it." (A/43/691, para. 5)

Peace, security and stability are pressing needs for the Middle East. They are the prerequisites for enabling a region that has done so much to develop human civilization and culture and is of such importance economically to break the vicious circle of war and absence of war and make an effective contribution to the advancement of humanity and the solution of major global problems. The potential for that does indeed exist and could well be used for the benefit of the region and the world at large.

Responsibility for the continued existence of the Middle East conflict, with the unresolved question of Palestine at its core, lies with those who keep placing their stakes on violence and terror, in disregard of international law and the decisions adopted by this forum. What can generally be said about the destiny of

(Mr. Zachmann, German Democratic Republic)

man in the conditions of the nuclear and space age, namely, that we can only perish or survive together, is particularly true of the Middle East: either we face up to the problems jointly and resolve them in the interest of all, or we put humanity's very existence at risk.

The German Democratic Republic noted with satisfaction the call for common action on behalf of peace in the Middle East made at the summit meeting of Arab States last June. My country has also welcomed the decisions taken by the Palestine National Council at its most recent session - decisions that give a fresh impetus to the search for a comprehensive and just settlement of the Middle East conflict - and it has recognized under international law the Palestinian State established in conformity with the United Nations Charter.

In a message of greetings conveyed on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people, Erich Honecker, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and Chairman of the German Democratic Republic Council of State, said:

(Mr. Zachmann, German Democratic Republic)

"In view of the aggravated situation in the occupied Palestinian territories it becomes ever more obvious that without the recognition and implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to the establishment of an independent State, no solution can be found which will take into account the interests of all States and peoples in the region. In the view of the German Democratic Republic, an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations will be the proper way to achieve this objective."

No State should remain indifferent to what is happening in the Middle East, still less a State such as the German Democratic Republic, whose existence was virtually founded on the ruins and lessons of a bitter world war. It is therefore easy to understand why we side with those who are working towards a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. My country's position has been set forth repeatedly here in the United Nations and has been reflected in its bilateral and multilateral activities. It is based on the realization that any conflict, in whatever region and between whatever States or peoples it arises, must be resolved by exclusively peaceful means and in conformity with the generally recognized norms of international law and in conformity with the purposes and principles set forth in the United Nations Charter. There is no alternative to that and it is indeed the only way in which to contribute to the strengthening of international peace and security.

On this premise, the German Democratic Republic has approved and supported the call for convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of all interested parties, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, Israel and the five permanent members of the Security Council, just as it has supported the many

(Mr. Zachmann, German Democratic Republic)

resolutions adopted by the General Assembly on this subject and the principles set forth in them in regard to a settlement. It has also supported the call for the implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory it has occupied since 1967, and for guaranteed rights to independence and secure borders for all States in the region.

It would really be timely for the United Nations Security Council, and in particular its five permanent members, to take practical steps in preparation for the Middle East Conference. As it is easy to foresee how complicated and time-consuming the process of preparing and implementing an appropriate negotiating mechanism will be, any further delay should be avoided at all costs.

When it adopted resolution 598 (1987) with a view to settling the conflict between Iran and Iraq, the Security Council proved that it was capable of united and coherent action. If the same degree of commitment was applied to the solution of the conflict in the Middle East, this would certainly serve to enhance the authority of the Council and that of the United Nations as a whole.

More than ever before, the States and peoples expect positive moves to result from this General Assembly session as far as the Middle East is concerned. The General Assembly is called upon to take decisions that will help bring us closer to the solution of one of the most complex and protracted conflicts of our time. The more nearly unanimous the vote of States will be, the better are the prospects of success. It would no doubt be most effective if the Security Council adopted a decision that would facilitate at least preparatory steps for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. We are in favour of encouraging the Secretary-General of the United Nations to continue the efforts envisaged in his report.

(Mr. Zachmann, German Democratic Republic)

The United Nations may rest assured that the German Democratic Republic will continue, to the best of its ability, to seek to make a contribution towards progress on the path to a political settlement of the conflict in the Middle East.

Mr. BAGBENI ADEITO NZENGEYA (Zaire) (interpretation from French): More than ever before the situation in the Middle East has brought the attention of the international community, in particular that of the United Nations, into focus at a time when efforts are being made to bring about a peaceful settlement of regional conflicts.

Hatred, reprisal, recourse to force, collective punishment, violations of the law of nations and harassment of all types are the daily lot of the people in the Middle East.

The popular uprising in the occupied territories that began early in December 1987 against the ongoing occupation and the progressive annexation of occupied Palestinian territories, and also against certain repressive practices, has brought to 248 the number of Palestinians killed by Israeli armed forces as of 27 September 1988, as stated in the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (A/43/35).

That report also states that 126 more died as a result of blows they had sustained, the inhalation of tear gas and other causes related to the action of the Israeli armed forces and settlers.

That Committee was alarmed at the large number of youth and children among the victims and it was also troubled by reports published by humanitarian aid organizations that had visited the region. According to those reports, medical personnel was refused access to the camps and villages, which had been closed down by the military; hospitals had been attacked, equipment destroyed, patients beaten

(Mr. Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya,  
Zaire)

and arrested, and members of the medical staff brutally attacked. The health situation in the occupied territories has become disastrous and is of concern according to the Special Committee of Experts of the World Health Organization.

The Committee notes elsewhere in its report that the Israeli authorities placed an estimated 5,500 Palestinians in preventive detention without charges or trial. Mention was also made of several cases of expulsion, in violation of Security Council resolutions and of provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Not to dwell further on these facts, I will merely say that the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories has deteriorated greatly as a result of the repressive policy and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, in response to the Palestinian uprising, the intifadah, which began in December 1987 against Israeli occupation.

(Mr. Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya,  
Zaire)

In abstaining on draft resolution A/43/L.21 on the uprising of the Palestinian people, adopted by the General Assembly at its 45th plenary meeting on 3 November 1988, Zaire wished to make the two parties in question understand that it was in their interests to enter into a dialogue to resolve the differences between them instead of engaging in armed attacks.

It should be added that despite repeated appeals, the Security Council has failed to follow up the recommendations proposed to it that it adopt a constructive position, opening up possibilities for reaching a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Israeli-Arab conflict in the Middle East, at the core of which is the question of Palestine. My delegation will return to this question in Geneva in order to highlight the shortcomings we have observed in the report of the Security Council in document A/43/2 of 9 November 1988.

Nevertheless, we wish to dwell on the other aspect of the Middle East conflict which has exacerbated an already tense situation. I am referring to the deterioration of the situation in southern Lebanon as a result of repeated attacks by Israel and all other measures and practices directed against the civilian population there.

If there is one State which has suffered the consequences of the Middle East war to the point of jeopardizing its independence, its territorial integrity and its freedom, that State is Lebanon. Less than 12 years ago, that country was a true oasis of peace, especially the tourist city of Beirut and its surroundings which were well known by holiday makers from all over the world. Unfortunately, it has now become a country torn apart and threatened, where security, public order and unity are no longer guaranteed. It has become a battlefield and an arena of confrontation for all parties.

(Mr. Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya,  
Zaire)

During the period from 16 June 1987 to 15 June 1988, the Security Council met many times to consider the complaints brought by the representative of Lebanon, the special reports of the Secretary-General and the letters of the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

The Security Council has also had before it draft resolution S/19434 (1988), which calls on Israel to put an end to all territorial encroachment, road-building and closings of the borders, as well as any attempts to occupy Lebanese territory, modify its status or impede the return of the effective authority of the Lebanese Government in sovereign Lebanese territory.

The United Nations, which has military staff and peace-keeping forces in that area in keeping with Security Council resolution 338 (1973), has been asked to ensure strict respect for the sovereignty of Lebanon, its independence, its unity and its territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

The time has come, under Security Council resolutions 425 (1978), 426 (1978) and 509 (1982), to demand that Israel unconditionally and immediately withdraw all of its military forces to the internationally recognized borders.

At the outcome of the 2,815th meeting of the Security Council on 31 May last, and after the adoption of resolution 613 (1988) calling on the interested parties immediately to implement Security Council resolution 338 (1973), and renewing the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, the President of the Council made the following statement:

"As is known, the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (S/19895) states, in paragraph 24: 'Despite the present quiet in the Israel-Syria sector, the situation in the Middle East as a whole continues to be potentially dangerous and is likely to remain so,

(Mr. Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya,  
Zaire)

unless and until a comprehensive settlement covering all aspects of the Middle East problem can be reached.' That statement of the Secretary-General reflects the view of the Security Council." (S/19912)

As can be seen, the concern of the Secretary-General is thus shared by all the members of the Security Council and should be shared by all delegations, given the many armed confrontations which have taken a toll of human life and property and which are kindled by impassioned feelings, misunderstanding and lack of dialogue.

The very concept of peaceful coexistence in the context of a lasting peace, which should progressively be taking hold in the States of the region on account of the efforts of the United Nations, is practically non-existent.

In our view, peace in the Middle East presupposes the following: respect for law, that is to say respect for the principles of international law governing friendly relations and co-operation among States; recognition of the sovereignty of all States; respect for the territorial integrity and political independence of all States of the region, and the right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries; inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force or through war; and the guarantee of a just settlement of the problem of refugees.

Considering those principles, it is therefore up to the United Nations and the Security Council in particular to ensure that law and justice prevail in the Middle East, replacing the spirit of war, confrontation and hatred by that of concertation and constructive dialogue.

The standard-setting work of our Organization is part of our legacy of international law. It would therefore be fitting for it to succeed in giving the Palestinians a Palestinian-Arab State, as it was able to establish a State for the Jews.

(Mr. Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya,  
Zaire)

Of course, the basis for the settlement of that conflict is Security Council resolution 242 (1967), which calls for the withdrawal of all Israeli armed forces from the occupied territories and respect for, and acknowledgement of, the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area, and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force.

The State of Israel is a fact. It was created by the United Nations in 1949 by resolution 181 (II), and on 11 May 1949 it was admitted to membership of this Organization. The time has come for the United Nations to refer back to the same resolution and establish a Palestinian Arab State.

The many peace plans, which have been prepared by the Arab States at the Twelfth Arab Summit Conference held in Fez in September 1982, by the President of the United States on 1 September 1982, and by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on 15 September 1982 and 29 July 1984, should be updated to take account of new developments, namely, the declaration by King Hussein of Jordan on 31 July 1988 at Amman on the administration of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and the historic proclamation of the Stat. of Palestine by the Palestine National Council in Algiers on 17 November 1988.

Furthermore, all the elements of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of the Middle East are to be found in the many resolutions of the Organization. Indeed, if taken together, and with all the peace plans known to this date, those resolutions without question provide our Organization with a consistent and well-integrated basis for ending the conflict which it inherited from the League of Nations.

(Mr. Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya,  
Zaire)

Since 1947 war has failed to provide the parties to the conflict with a settlement. No other strategy based on force, or, for that matter, the denial of a visa to the leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization will lead to a solution of the thorny problem of the Middle East.

(Mr. Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya,  
Zaire)

The Republic of Zaire, which has diplomatic relations with the two main parties to the Middle East conflict, cannot but encourage the emergence of a climate of co-operation and friendship in the region so that lasting peace and security may prevail.

It is in that context that we welcome the statement made in Amman on 31 July 1988 by King Hussein on the status of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and in Algiers on 17 November 1988 on the proclamation of the State of Palestine, which offer our Organization a unique opportunity to play a role in the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East, bringing together all parties to the conflict, and with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council, leading to a definitive and comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict.

Mr. SUTRESNA (Indonesia): Despite the new climate of conciliation and mutual accommodation that appears to be taking hold throughout the world, the situation in the Middle East continues to reflect a dangerous escalation of an already extremely volatile situation. Indeed, the crisis that has gripped the Middle East for over four decades is the result of Israel's unrelenting pursuit of a policy of aggression and expansion against its neighbours and strategic domination over the region as a whole. Israel has time and again brought the world to the brink of conflagration through its reliance on force, including the violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of States near and far, the illegal occupation and annexation of Palestinian and Arab lands, and the denial to the Palestinian people of their legitimate rights and aspirations, which is and always has been at the core of the conflict.

It is a truism that the region has undergone a drastic deterioration over the course of the past year, owing to Israel's resort to wanton brutality and violence

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

unleashed against the Palestinian people's revolt in the territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem. Yet, despite the indescribable repression, the valiant Palestinians have conclusively demonstrated that there is nothing episodic to the intifadah - their sustained popular uprising - which has now gone on for a year, and that there can be no return to the status quo of the previous two decades. For through their heroic resistance, the Palestinians have shattered Israel's delusions that it can any longer bludgeon them into submission by force of arms. This undeniable reality has now permeated the consciousness of the international community as a whole, which today is united as never before on the urgent need for progress on the diplomatic front.

This determination has been spurred by the bold new initiative launched by the meeting of the Palestine National Council (PNC), held at Algiers last month, which proclaimed an independent Palestinian State. Thus the Palestinian people themselves have taken the historic decision to exercise their right to self-determination, political independence and sovereignty over their territory. Significantly they have done so by also committing themselves in the proclamation to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, while at the same time accepting all relevant United Nations resolutions on the question of Palestine.

It is a matter of deep satisfaction to my delegation that the international community has overwhelmingly welcomed these momentous decisions, thereby demonstrating its firm support for Palestinian independence. In this regard as well, I should like to quote in part from the statement issued on 16 November by the Department of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia according recognition to the Palestinian State:

"The decision of the Government of the Republic of Indonesia recognizing the independent Palestinian State is fully in line with Indonesia's consistent

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

support for the struggle of the Palestinian people to achieve their inalienable right to self-determination and to sovereign and independent statehood in Palestine.

"This support of the Indonesian Government is in accordance with the noble ideals enshrined in the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, which states that independence is the right of every nation and therefore colonialism must be abolished in the world.

"The Government and people of the Republic of Indonesia are convinced that this development will make a concrete contribution to the achievement of peace in the region of West Asia and in the world as a whole". (A/43/823, annex, p. 2)

Indonesia, within its means and abilities, will continue to render all possible assistance to the Palestinian people's struggle, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), their sole, legitimate representative, and to all efforts by the international community in the realization of their legitimate aspirations. My Government's unyielding support for the PLO, is further reflected in the decision of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia to attend the meeting of the General Assembly on the "Question of Palestine" to take place in Geneva later this month. In this regard, my delegation believes that the unjustifiable decision by the United States Administration to deny Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the PLO, a visa to attend the Assembly at United Nations Headquarters in New York, in violation of its treaty obligations under the Headquarters Agreement, should not divert our attention from the need to build upon the new prospects for a political settlement generated by the Algiers meeting of the PNC. To this end, the Indonesian delegation will at the Geneva meeting elaborate its firm position on the need for increased political and diplomatic

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

pressures to convince Israel and its friends of the urgent necessity to demonstrate the same political will and constructive spirit of the PNC by recognizing the right of the Palestinian people to their own independent and sovereign State. At this juncture, therefore, my delegation would like only to emphasize that both the intifadah, which has become the dominating factor in the Middle East, and the proclamation of the independent Palestinian State have irreversibly transformed the political dimension of the conflict. In these changed circumstances, the onus of responsibility for any further deterioration of the situation will fall squarely on Israel, whose policies and actions have always been the root cause of the exacerbated tensions and conflicts in the region.

While the attention of the international community has been rightly riveted on the acute crisis in the occupied Palestinian territory, we should not lose sight of the other aspects of the situation in the Middle East.

As the events of the past year show, Israel's aggressive and expansionist designs on the region are further manifest in its illegal occupation of sovereign Lebanese territory, in utter defiance of numerous resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council, which demand its unconditional withdrawal to internationally recognized boundaries. It is imperative that Israel be compelled to cease its repeated military strikes against Lebanese territory, and all other measures and practices designed to make life unbearable for the Lebanese citizens and Palestinian refugees with a view to forcing them out of the area along the so-called security zone in southern Lebanon. In this regard, it is to be recalled that the Security Council met in January and May this year to address these policies, with the latter meeting devoted to the large-scale invasion of southern Lebanon by Israeli forces. On both those occasions draft resolutions could not be

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

adopted owing to the negative vote of one permanent member. My delegation deeply regrets that the veto prevented the Council from discharging its duty, especially as this cannot but put at greater risk the already dangerous situation facing the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Indeed, it is unconscionable to mandate UNIFIL to undertake the task of assisting the Lebanese Government in re-establishing its effective authority in the area and then to thwart all efforts to have the Security Council adopt measures that are fundamental to securing that objective. It is essential that the authority of the Lebanese Government be upheld and UNIFIL enabled to fulfil its mission.

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

Israel's occupation and annexationist policies are further confirmed by the fact that it has continued to pursue unabated the infamous settlements policy in the West Bank and Gaza. Moreover, the further colonization and Judaization of Jerusalem and the Syrian Arab Golan, which Israel annexed illegally, has rendered the resolution of the conflict immeasurably more difficult. Israel has thus rendered any hope for the initiation of meaningful negotiations exceedingly remote.

Yet the stakes are so high, and the imminent threat to international peace and security so great that Indonesia has always been acutely aware of the need for all of us to persevere on the only sensible path towards a peaceful and comprehensive settlement, which is through a process of negotiation involving the international machinery that we have collectively created and designed for this very purpose - the United Nations.

In this regard the international community established, at the 1983 International Conference on the Question of Palestine, clear and concrete terms of reference for such negotiations. These are: the attainment by the Palestinian people of its legitimate, inalienable rights, including the right to return, the right to self-determination and the right to establish its own independent State in Palestine; recognition of the right of the PLO to participate on an equal footing with other parties in all efforts to settle the Middle East conflict; recognition of the need to secure Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem; rejection of de facto situations created by Israel, such as its settlements policy in the occupied territories and its policy designed to alter the character and status of Jerusalem; recognition of the right of all States in the region to existence within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; and the convening of an international conference on peace in the Middle East under

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

the auspices of the United Nations. All subsequent sessions of the General Assembly have affirmed by overwhelming majorities these reasoned and balanced provisions.

The International Peace Conference on the Middle East represents the only viable means of bringing peace and justice to the region, and immediate progress should be made on convening it, for the intifadah is the direct result of the stalemate that has persisted for so many tragic years, and it cannot be divorced from the broader Arab-Israeli conflict. Furthermore, my delegation fully concurs with the following observation of the Secretary-General in his report on the situation in the Middle East:

"The recent session of the Palestine National Council in Algiers has generated a new momentum in the diplomatic process and I believe it offers fresh opportunities for progress towards peace which should be seized. Every gesture towards peace should be nurtured if we are to overcome the mistrust that is so deeply felt on all sides." (A/43/867, para. 37)

Thus have the Palestinians responded positively in the interests of peace by advancing new and bold political initiatives. It is therefore imperative that Israel finally realize that the situation brooks no further delay. The Organization, especially the Security Council, must not shirk its responsibility; it must move forward decisively in a concerted effort to remove all the obstacles in the way of the commencement of genuine negotiations leading to a comprehensive, just and peaceful settlement in the Middle East.

Mr. KAGAMI (Japan): Since ancient times the Middle East has been one of the centres of world civilization. In addition to its rich cultural heritage, it is blessed with natural resources which make the region a focus of global economic activity. We believe, therefore, that it has a unique capacity to play a

(Mr. Kagami, Japan)

stabilizing role in the world. Is it not all the more unfortunate, then, that when we consider the Middle East today it is the region's profound and seemingly intractable problems that demand our attention?

I feel compelled to begin my statement on this item by addressing the question of Palestine briefly, although my delegation intends to speak at length on this agenda item next week in the debate which, owing to an unfortunate chain of developments, will be held in Geneva.

To say that the Palestinian question is the core of the Middle East peace problem has become something of a cliché. What must also be understood, however, is the core of the Palestinian question, which in our view is the issue of Israeli-Palestinian coexistence on the basis of Israel's right to exist and the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, including the right to establish an independent State. Any approach that ignores the real nature of the question is an exercise in futility. The uprising of the Palestinians in the occupied territories throughout the past year indicates clearly the need to take a closer look at this central issue.

It was from this point of view that Japan followed with great interest the events leading up to the convening of the nineteenth session of the Palestine National Council in Algiers last month and the debate held there. The outcome of that meeting is an important landmark that merits our serious consideration.

The Government of Japan has long maintained the position that in order to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive solution of the Middle East peace problem Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) must be fully and promptly implemented, and the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, including the right to establish an independent State, and Israel's right to exist should be recognized and respected.

(Mr. Kagami, Japan)

Moreover, in the belief that these aims should be achieved through negotiation, the Government of Japan has been appealing to the parties concerned to convene an international conference at an early date. The Government of Japan therefore welcomed as an important step forward the Palestine National Council's statement that such an international conference should be held on the basis of those Security Council resolutions, among others. The Government of Japan also considers that the declaration of an independent State by the Palestine National Council is of great significance as an expression of Palestinians' long-cherished national desire.

Further, my Government noted with great interest the reference in the statement to the rejection of terrorism, as this will contribute to the creation of a suitable environment for starting peace negotiations. We fully share the view expressed by Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar that, as a result of the Palestine National Council declaration, fresh opportunities now exist for progress towards peace, and that all concerned should seize the opportunity to make a new and determined effort to achieve a just and lasting solution of the conflict in the Middle East.

Particularly in these new circumstances, we believe that it would have been extremely useful for the Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Mr. Yasser Arafat, to address the General Assembly here in New York and, if possible, to exchange views with various parties concerned.

(Mr. Kagami, Japan)

The Government of Japan is of the view that it is regrettable that such an important opportunity was missed, but hopes that, despite all the difficulties, every effort will be made to take full advantage of the new situation resulting from Mr. Arafat's initiative.

Another aspect of the situation in the Middle East about which the Government of Japan is deeply concerned is the unrest in Lebanon. Lebanon's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity are all at stake now. The apparent impasse in the preparations for the presidential election must be overcome as a first step towards national reconciliation, which is long overdue. In that regard, the Government of Japan takes note of the ongoing efforts the Lebanese people themselves are making and wishes them success in realizing their important objective.

The volatile situation in southern Lebanon continues to be a source of particular concern. It is therefore imperative that we pursue more vigorously implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which calls for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanese territory, the restoration of international peace and security and the re-establishment of the Lebanese Government's effective authority in the area.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my Government's profound gratitude to all United Nations peace-keeping operations in the Middle East for the indispensable role they are playing in ensuring a degree of stability in the region. The awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize is clear testimony of the high regard which the international community has for the United Nations peace-keeping operations.

Japan pays particular tribute to the soldiers of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) who often face great personal danger in carrying out their responsibilities. We were reminded of that fact again this year as we

(Mr. Kagami, Japan)

learned the tragic news that several soldiers had lost their lives and that scores had been injured.

I must also mention the ordeal of Lieutenant-Colonel William Richard Higgins, a United States officer serving as Chief of the Military Observers of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization in Palestine assigned to assist UNIFIL, who was kidnapped in February this year and has not yet been released. I join the chorus of voices appealing for his immediate release.

In that connection, I wish to touch upon terrorist acts in the region. During the past year, we have again witnessed a series of terrorist incidents, including the taking of hostages, among whom, as I have mentioned, are United Nations personnel. The Government of Japan condemns those criminal and cowardly acts against innocent people and calls upon all parties concerned to do their utmost to prevent them. We demand that all the hostages in Lebanon be released unharmed and without delay.

Japan believes it to be the fundamental obligation of Member States to work towards the elimination of terrorism. At the same time, we must unite to rectify the conditions that incite terrorist activities.

The cease-fire between Iran and Iraq achieved last summer after eight years of killing and destruction demonstrates that the United Nations can play a constructive role in the realization of peace in the Middle East. On behalf of the Government of Japan, I wish to reiterate my appreciation for Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar's tireless efforts that resulted in that achievement.

We are all aware, however, of the precarious nature of the present cease-fire. The need to secure the implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1987) in its entirety cannot be overemphasized. There will be no just, lasting and comprehensive peace between the two countries until that resolution is fully implemented and strictly observed. The Secretary-General's

(Mr. Kagami, Japan)

ongoing efforts towards that end deserve our active support. While pledging its assistance in every possible way, the Government of Japan appeals once again to both countries to extend to him their full co-operation.

In conclusion I wish to express my sincere hope that the Secretary-General's efforts on the Iran-Iraq conflict will be met with success, for I cannot help but believe that this would in turn lead to significant progress in efforts to solve other problems in the region and, finally, to the restoration of peace throughout the Middle East.

Mr. HOHENFELLNER (Austria): When we considered the agenda item "The situation in the Middle East" last year, we stated that the region, a cradle of civilization, was once again a hotbed of tension that continued to endanger international peace and security. While the basic situation has not changed in the course of the last 12 months, important events have none the less taken place that highlight the urgency of finding a just and lasting political solution to the complex problem of the Middle East.

December 1987 saw the start of the intifadah, the uprising of the Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The intifadah has shown that even 20 years of occupation cannot destroy the aspirations of a people. In the summer of 1988, Jordan severed its legal and administrative ties with the West Bank. On 15 November 1988, the Palestine National Congress (PNC) in Algiers proclaimed the creation of a Palestinian State. Forty years after the creation of the Jewish State provided for in General Assembly resolution 181 (II), the Palestinian people has finally taken its fate into its own hands by proclaiming the Palestinian State in the aforementioned territories presently occupied by Israel as a result of the 1967 war.

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

Austria considers the Algiers Political Communiqué and Declaration of Independence - which must also be seen in the light of the now one-year-old intifadah - as a positive step in the search for a solution to the conflict. References to General Assembly resolution 181 (II) and to Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which recognize Israel's right to exist, the renunciation of terrorism and the declared intention to organize the Palestinian State as a parliamentary democracy are important contributions to a peaceful solution. The decisions of Algiers constitute proof of the responsible attitude of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). It is to be hoped that the positive elements in the PNC's decisions will meet with an encouraging response from the other parties to the Middle East conflict, in order to seize this opportunity to initiate a peace process.

My delegation would have deemed it natural to hear the Chairman of the PLO, an organization that enjoys observer status with the United Nations, in the debate on the question of Palestine here in New York. My country, Austria, itself a host country of the United Nations, regrets that the Chairman of the PLO was barred from addressing the General Assembly from this rostrum through a decision that is clearly not in conformity with existing obligations under international law.

Austria has consistently raised its voice against the way in which Israel is administering the occupied territories and the way the Israeli Army is reacting to Palestinian demonstrations.

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

We believe that the Israeli authorities are obliged under international law to ensure the application of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilians in Time of War. Austria considers the extension of Israeli legislation, jurisdiction and administration to occupied territories as contrary to the temporary character of a military occupation, and thus invalid. Austria has also on numerous occasions rejected the Israeli settlement policy in the occupied territories as a major obstacle to a negotiated political solution.

The year of the intifadah has been marked not only by a climate of increasing tension in the occupied territories but also by an increase in violence committed against the civilian population. The United Nations Special Committee to investigate Israeli practices in the occupied territories has recently reported a dramatic deterioration of the human rights situation. Up to now more than 300 Palestinians have been killed and thousands have suffered injuries as a result of the deliberate infliction of fractures, the use of rubber and plastic bullets and exposure to strong concentrations of tear gas. Collective punishments, such as the demolition of houses, administrative detention and the deportation of individuals, have become day-to-day routine. Almost 6,000 Palestinians have - according to a report of the International Committee of the Red Cross - been detained since the beginning of the uprising, often under particularly severe conditions. We have also noted with concern the enforced closure of all educational institutions on the West Bank.

The Austrian Government has on numerous occasions raised its voice in protest against these practices of the occupying Power and called upon Israel to comply with the provisions of international and especially humanitarian law. We also call upon the international community to increase its efforts to that end and to provide humanitarian aid and assistance to refugees and civilians under occupation.

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

When commenting on the situation in the Middle East one should not overlook the extensive involvement of the United Nations in dealing with various aspects of this problem. The situation in the Middle East and the question of Palestine have for the last four decades been a focal point of United Nations activities. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and its thousands of employees have since 1949 been working to improve the situation of the Palestinians in the refugee camps. UNRWA, for which Austria is proud to be currently providing headquarters in Vienna, is carrying out its noble task efficiently, even in difficult times.

As the United Nations will at the end of this week receive the Nobel Peace Prize for its peace-keeping forces, we should not overlook the contribution of the thousands of brave soldiers, among them many Austrians, who have served and are still serving with the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF), the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), thus contributing to a stabilization of the volatile situation in the Middle East.

When speaking of the situation in the Middle East in general and the occupied territories in particular we have to mention war-torn and internally divided Lebanon. More than a dozen years of civil war, external interference, armed invasion and foreign occupation of parts of its territory have seriously threatened the very existence of that once prosperous State.

How can we find a way out of the present dangerous spiral of violence and repression in the occupied territories? In our view peace cannot be based on unilateral measures but must be based on respect for international law and Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). We therefore consider the reference to those resolutions in the political communiqué of Algiers, which, inter alia,

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

recognize the right of all States, including Israel, to exist within secure and internationally recognized boundaries, as an important step towards a peaceful solution of the conflict.

Resolution 338 (1973), unanimously adopted by the Security Council in 1973, also shows how a just and lasting peace should be established. The resolution calls for the starting of negotiations between the parties concerned under appropriate auspices for the establishment of a just and durable peace. What was deemed to be good 15 years ago should also be considered good in 1988. There are, however, two significant changes that have intervened during those years: the recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the representative of the Palestinian people by the United Nations and the recent proclamation of a Palestinian State.

The "parties concerned" of Security Council resolution 338 (1973) include, in the view of my country, the PLO. The situation will have to be reviewed if and when a Palestinian Government in exile, which would act on behalf of the Arab population of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, is established.

Austria has consistently advocated the holding of an international peace conference on the Middle East under United Nations auspices, with the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council and all other parties concerned. Austria continues to believe that such a conference is the only way that would lead to a just and peaceful solution for one of the most enduring and tragic conflicts of our time. In view of the recent progress made by the United Nations in bringing about political solutions to a number of regional conflicts, all parties to the Middle East conflict should soon entrust the United Nations with the organization of such a conference.

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

One of the noblest goals of the United Nations, under its Charter, is the maintenance of international peace and security. That goal reaches beyond the present peace-keeping efforts of the United Nations in the region. Let us therefore give the United Nations, through an international conference on the Middle East, the chance to move from peace-keeping to peace-making, thus contributing a just and lasting peace to the area.

Mr. DOS SANTOS (Mozambique): Once again, the General Assembly is seized of another issue on our agenda which ranks among those situations of major concern to the international community, due to the magnitude of the threat it entails to international peace and security.

In the midst of the uncertainty, violence, destruction and bloodshed which still characterize the Middle East, some signs of hope are discernible. The cease-fire agreement between Iran and Iraq is entering its fourth month. Happily, it brought to an end a senseless and bloody war that had claimed thousands of lives and the destruction of an immeasurable amount of resources of the warring parties. Just recently an exchange of prisoners of war has taken place. This positive act constitutes a major step in the right direction.

(Mr. Dos Santos, Mozambique)

My delegation wishes to take this opportunity to pay a tribute to both countries for this achievement and to commend the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for the important role which he has played and continues to play. I hope that his mediation on the Cyprus issue will be crowned with success and bring an end to the division and occupation in that troubled country.

While mentioning these positive trends in the Iran-Iraq war, I also note, with horror, the situation resulting from Israel's continued aggression, which remains the single major source of the ever deteriorating situation in the Middle East. In spite of all the energy spent, and resources deployed, by the General Assembly in its efforts to find a lasting solution to this question, the situation is tending to deteriorate still further owing to Israel's intransigence, arrogance and disregard for the most elementary principles of international law governing relations among States and to its defiance of relevant United Nations resolutions and decisions.

Indeed, many resolutions have been adopted by both the General Assembly and the Security Council calling upon Israel to respect the provisions of the United Nations Charter and international law. Several units of the United Nations peace-keeping operations have been dispatched to the region and their duty renewed several times. None of these efforts have yet born the desired fruit.

In fact, Israel is continuing its policy of occupation and annexation of Palestinian and Arab territories which it conquered by force more than 20 years ago and its acts of aggression against neighbouring countries. It continues to perpetrate acts of brutality against Palestinians in the occupied lands. Israel continues to deny the Palestinian people their birthright to self-determination and independence. This is the underlying cause of the question of the Middle East.

(Mr. Dos Santos, Mozambique)

There can be no genuine peace anywhere in the world if the policy is that of occupation and deprivation of the people's inalienable rights to self-determination.

In 1967, Israel, in total disregard of the most basic principles of international law, unleashed the war of aggression and occupation against Palestinian and Arab territories. Those who fostered this policy hastily looked for a justification of such acts before world public opinion, because they recognized that in the era following the Second World War the policy of conquering territories by force was over and outdated. They were aware that self-determination was the current theme all over the world. The world therefore heard from the Israeli régime the fabricated argument that the occupation of such territories was temporary in nature and necessary only in order to provide buffer zones to prevent attacks and safeguard its security.

However, what is taking place today in Palestine and the Arab occupied territories is quite the opposite. Today the truth is coming to light. Activities and measures are being undertaken aimed at annexing those territories. The process of Judaization is already at a very advanced stage. More settlements are being established in the occupied territories; the Palestinian people are being turned into refugees in their own fatherland; Israeli jurisdiction is being extended to cover the occupied territories; Israeli identification cards are being issued and distributed among Palestinians, and attempts to impose the teaching of Hebrew are under way in certain schools in these territories.

In short, the demographic, geographical and legal status of these territories is being changed. Moreover, within Israeli circles, these territories are no longer called West Bank and Syrian Golan Heights but Israeli districts of Judea and Samaria. Yet Israel talks about its commitment to peace and, ironically, claims to be the victim of the Palestinian people. One wonders whether, when the annexation process is completed, more buffer zones will not be needed to safeguard the

(Mr. Dos Santos, Mozambique)

security of these new Israeli territories. The military occupation of southern Lebanon by Israel corroborates this scepticism.

These annexationist undertakings are accompanied by other steps to force Palestinians to flee their fatherland. Persecution, repression and torture are carried out against those resisting subjugation. People accused on trumped-up charges are penalized by having their homes razed by bulldozers. The dispossessed, struggling people of Palestine, deprived of their basic rights, including the right to own a home, found themselves faced with no choice but to revolt and resist the occupationists. Fearlessly, with bare hands or armed only with sticks and stones, they staged a solid resistance to the Israeli army.

This month the intifadah will be a year old. The extraordinary Israeli machinery of repression has failed to crush it. It is time that Israel learned that no amount of force can crush a people's dream of self-determination and independence. Israel should learn from history that, no matter how many people you massacre, you can never annihilate a whole nation. Hitler massacred six million Jews, but was not able to kill all the Jews. The existence of Israel itself is living testimony to this fact. Likewise, the Palestinian people will endure until their dream is completely fulfilled. The people's uprising in the occupied territories is a clear message to the occupationists that, for Israel, the only choice is negotiation, and not bullets; heeding the voice of peace and not war.

The Israelis answered this upheaval with escalating brutality and repression perpetrated against children, the elderly and women and with the burying of people alive. The death toll since the intifadah began is in the hundreds. These acts of genocide have created a world-wide uproar and condemnation and attracted sympathy for the victims from every quarter, including Jewish personalities, around the world.

(Mr. Dos Santos, Mozambique)

Israel, availing itself of its powerful propaganda machinery, adopted the strategy of branding the PLO, the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, a terrorist organization and every Palestinian who associated himself or herself with it a terrorist as well. This was done in the belief that it would help pave the way for Israel to legitimize, in the eyes of its allies, its policies and practices of aggression against Arab States. It was also done to legitimize the massacre and genocide perpetrated against Palestinians wherever they seek shelter.

It is ironic that Israel, a State of the survivors of the holocaust of the Second World War in which Hitler persecuted millions of Jews, dares to adopt such methods against Palestinians. The killings and massacres in Shabra and Shatilla, Sidon and Tyre remind us of the sad days in human history when Hitler persecuted the Jews.

(Mr. Dos Santos, Mozambique)

Recent events in Israel and elsewhere are not conducive to a negotiated settlement of the question of Palestine. Attempts to prevent Chairman Arafat from addressing the General Assembly cannot be construed as a step designed to promote the peace process.

There are, however, grounds for optimism. The Algiers Declaration, adopted recently by the Palestine National Council, opens a new era of opportunities for genuine peace in the Middle East. Therefore, Israel should take advantage of this opportunity by displaying goodwill. The Declaration, which proclaimed the independence of Palestine, is truly a display of political realism by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Palestinian people. It is the fulfilment of the hopes long held by the dispossessed people of Palestine. It is indeed well-deserved compensation for the martyred people of the occupied territories, who with bare hands have heroically resisted the Israeli military occupation. The Declaration constitutes an invitation to Israel to lay down its arms and go to the table of negotiations for peace. Israel once again has shown its allergy to any word or action aimed at peace in the Middle East. It has not only rejected the offer but also labelled it an act of propaganda by the PLO.

My delegation believes that the resort to military power will hinder the efforts towards a lasting peace in the Middle East. We strongly believe that the international conference on peace in the Middle East called for by the United Nations, with the participation of all parties concerned, including the PLO, would be a major step in that regard.

Israel seems to be running against all efforts undertaken in favour of peace. It rejects the conference by imposing one-sided conditions.

Coming from a country with an extensive common border with racist South Africa, my delegation is particularly concerned at the existing co-operation

(Mr. Dos Santos, Mozambique)

between Israel and apartheid South Africa, especially in the field of military and nuclear technology, which poses a grave threat to the region and to international peace and security. This co-operation was born out of similarities between the two régimes. Both are the only bloodthirsty régimes subjugating the majorities in their respective territories. In the Middle East Israel subjugates the Palestinian people, while in South Africa the apartheid régime ruthlessly dominates the black majority. The two régimes derive their political philosophies from religious beliefs. Israel is believed to be the promised land, and in South Africa the racist régime believes that the justification of apartheid is consecrated in the Bible. Both are apologists of brute force. Racist South Africa convicts innocent people on the basis of common purpose, and Israel destroys inert objects on the basis of their association with its foes. They are the only régimes in the world that destabilize entire regions, using either puppets or regular forces to wreak havoc and destruction. They are both régimes isolated in the international arena because of their abominable policies, and their survival depends on common allies. The alliance between zionism and apartheid is grounded in the identity of their pattern of behaviour.

Peace in the Middle East requires that Israel withdraw its forces from all Palestinian and occupied Arab territories, recognize the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and independence, put an end to its occupation of southern Lebanon and respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of States in the region as well as their right to live in peace and freedom.

Finally, my delegation takes this opportunity to reiterate its support for the PLO and the Palestinian people for the resolute and courageous manner in which they have been struggling for their motherland. We wish also to take this opportunity to salute the newly born State of Palestine.

A Luta Continua.

Mr. VACEK (Czechoslovakia): In spite of all the efforts exerted by the international community for many long years, it has not been possible thus far to solve the basic problems that for more than 40 years have been a source of the volatile situation in the Middle East, which remains a grave threat to peace and security in the whole world.

None the less, we believe that the new way of political thinking that is finding an expression in international relations - a victory of reason and humanism - will work its way also into the solution of the complicated Middle East crisis that still persists.

We see the key to the settlement of that crisis in a just solution to the question of Palestine. The massive uprising of the Palestinian people - which has now lasted a whole year - in the West Bank of the Jordan, in the Gaza Strip and in Eastern Jerusalem, against the Israeli occupation, confirms the special and critical urgency of finding a just solution for the tragic destiny of the five and a half million Palestinian people. If they are not allowed to exercise their right to self-determination - conceded to them, in fact, as long ago as 1947 in General Assembly resolution 181 (II) as well as by a number of other resolutions - it will not be possible to lay the realistic groundwork for lasting peace and security in all the countries and among all the peoples of the Middle East. The Israeli authorities have found out recently for themselves that evading a solution to this question does not guarantee a normal life even for Israel and that it is impossible in the long run to maintain the unacceptable status quo. Continued occupation of the Arab lands, the trampling under foot of the fundamental human rights of the Palestinians, brutality and terror are not the path toward a settlement of the Middle East situation or toward peace for Israel.

(Mr. Vacek, Czechoslovakia)

It is a sad fact that, owing to Israel's expansionist policy, a trend towards military confrontation and approaching problems from a position of strength has been characteristic of the Middle East region for decades. During its entire existence Israel has launched a number of acts of aggression against the neighbouring Arab countries. Israeli raids on Lebanon have been repeated this year also. That kind of policy is directly contrary to the efforts to resolve the Middle East crisis. The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic regards it as imperative that Israel cease to be a threat to the neighbouring Arab countries.

It will not be easy to surmount the heritage of the decades of animosity, injustice and mutual mistrust in the Middle East as well as the images and prejudices deeply rooted in the consciousness of the people as a result of the abnormal situation. However, objective reality shows absolutely clearly that there is no way to eliminate the basic Middle East problems by military means and on the basis of strength. The only possible way out of this situation lies in a peaceful solution by negotiation on the basis of mutually acceptable compromises and with due respect for the legitimate rights of all the parties directly involved.

(Mr. Vacek, Czechoslovakia)

Czechoslovakia highly appreciates the results of the special session of the Palestine National Council. It demonstrated both the firm determination of the Palestinian people to struggle for the realization of their inalienable rights and a sense of political reality. The proclamation of the State of Palestine is in full conformity with General Assembly resolution 181 (II), which provides for the establishment of two States - Jewish and Palestinian. Czechoslovakia has welcomed and recognized the proclamation of the State of Palestine.

After the important and constructive session of the Palestine National Council, it is inconceivable and inexcusable that the host country of the United Nations denied an entry visa to the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Mr. Yasser Arafat. A transfer of consideration of agenda item 37, "Question of Palestine", to Geneva has been a necessary step in the present circumstances in order to make it possible for Mr. Yasser Arafat to bring his message to the attention of this General Assembly session.

We evaluate positively the activities of the United Nations, its Secretary-General and the large number of countries that have been engaged in the search for a mutually acceptable solution of the Middle East situation. The need for a just settlement in that region is understood by the overwhelming majority of the States of the world today. An almost general international consensus has been reached on the convening of a substantive international Middle East conference, which appears to be the only way to a solution of this prolonged regional conflict. The course of the discussions held thus far is sufficiently convincing. It is, however, inevitable that a transition be made from declarations to a practical solution of all problems barring the way to the convening of an international Middle East conference. First of all, it must be clear that the Arab-Israeli conflict can be resolved only on the basis of the principles of the

(Mr. Vacek, Czechoslovakia)

Charter and the rules of international law. Such a settlement must be aimed at reinstating legality and law in the Middle East.

The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic is of the opinion that the only possible basis for a solution is constituted by Security Council resolution 242 (1967) and by recognition of the inalienable national rights of the people of Palestine, without which it will not be possible to meet the security concerns of all States in the region, including those of Israel. Israel's arguments that its security cannot be provided for within its pre-1967 borders and is incompatible with the existence of an independent Palestinian State are unwarranted. We are convinced that with the good political will of all the parties concerned it would be possible, on the basis of a just settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and of its core, the question of Palestine, to find and set up an effective international system of security guarantees for Israel, Palestine and other neighbouring Arab States.

The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic fully supports, and has supported on a long-term basis, international efforts to resolve the Middle East conflict through the convening of an international Middle East conference with the participation of all parties concerned. It provides full moral and material support for the cause of the Palestinian people.

In conclusion, I would like to state that a group of representatives of Czechoslovak public and scientific circles has decided to hold a model international Middle East conference in Prague, which will be opened tomorrow, 6 December. It will be attended by prominent personalities from countries potential participants in a substantive international Middle East conference as well as by officials from international organizations. We believe that this forum in Prague will help to identify the real possibilities of resolving the crucial problems of the Middle East crisis and will be a positive contribution to its

(Mr. Vacek, Czechoslovakia)

solution. The Secretary-General's message dispatched to Prague today is sure to be received with great attention, and it represents significant support for this model international conference on peace in the Middle East.

Mr. OUDOVENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): The discussion on the situation in the Middle East is taking place in circumstances that are fundamentally different from those that existed a year ago. The positive changes in international relations that have resulted from the implementation in practice of the principles of the new political thinking have enabled States, through their joint efforts, to make significant progress in resolving a number of regional conflicts. The conclusion of the Geneva Accords on Afghanistan, the cease-fire on the Iran-Iraq front and the start of the negotiations between the two countries on the basis of Security Council resolution 598 (1987), the negotiations to resolve the Namibian problem and the achievement of some progress in seeking mutually acceptable solutions to other conflicts cannot but be encouraging. The move away from confrontation towards a political settlement of these various complicated problems, with the active participation of the United Nations, can and should be a significant feature of the late 1980s.

However, it must be pointed out that a number of regional conflicts have not entered the stage of practical solution and continue to be a serious threat to international peace and security. The situation in the Middle East is of particular concern. As was stated in Mikhail Gorbachev's message to the President of Algeria, Mr. Bendjedid, on the occasion of the convening of the Arab Summit Conference

"The Arab-Israeli conflict has entered a phase at which its rapid solution has become an urgent imperative of our time. The continuance of the tense situation in the Middle East contrasts with the changes for the better that we are witnessing in international relations."

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

In the opinion of my delegation, the favourable climate emerging in the world should be used to speed up the process of bringing about a just, comprehensive settlement in the Middle East on the basis of the principles of international law and the United Nations Charter and decisions, balancing the interests of all parties. The major pre-condition of such a settlement is the withdrawal of Israeli troops from territories occupied since 1967, namely, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Syrian Golan Heights and southern Lebanon, while the Palestinian people should be given the right to self-determination, and all States and peoples of the region, including Israel, should enjoy a secure existence in conditions of peaceful development.

The emergence of a qualitatively new situation in the search for a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict has been brought about not merely by changing external factors in the international climate, but, of particular significance, the radical changes in the situation in the occupied territories.

On 21 January this year the Secretary-General submitted to the Security Council a report that fully confirmed the fact that at the beginning of this year the mass demonstrations by Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip - the intifadah - were assuming proportions of widespread popular unrest.

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

The Secretary-General's report, containing information on victimized civilians, mass arrests, deportations and other massive violations of fundamental human rights in the occupied territories, illustrates the tragic plight of the Palestinians.

Israel's actions in the occupied territories are a shocking violation of the United Nations Charter and the numerous decisions of the Security Council and the General Assembly; they also directly violate the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and other basic instruments of international law. Official statements by Israeli leaders leave no doubt that they intend to continue their policy of annexation and colonization and to rule the occupied territories with an iron fist. The popular uprising by Palestinians in the West Bank has shown how untenable that policy is. The Arab people of Palestine is showing the world its indomitable determination to decide on its future for itself. The Palestinian uprising is having a major impact on the entire international view of the Middle East situation, including the positions of the parties directly concerned.

As noted in the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (A/43/35), a fundamentally new element has been added with the decision by the Government of Jordan to terminate its legal and administrative relationship with the West Bank and the stated willingness of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to assume full responsibility for such matters as the administration of the occupied Palestinian territories.

Given those facts, it is a matter of grave concern that Israel's ruling circles are obstinately refusing to learn a lesson from the long, inglorious history of occupation and agree to a political settlement of the Palestinian problem, which is at the core of the Middle East conflict.

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

We agree with the conclusions of the Secretary-General, as stated in his report on this item. I shall quote a rather lengthy passage from that report, which truly describes the present situation in the region.

"The intifadah in the occupied Palestinian territories, which began on 9 December 1987, has for nearly a year been a dominating factor in the political agenda in the Middle East. It was the focus of the Arab Summit Conference in Algiers last April and the inspiration behind the recent session of the Palestine National Council in Algiers. It has also generated an intense debate among Israelis about the peace process and about their role in the occupied territories. Born of the frustration and despair of a population that has lived under occupation for more than 20 years, the intifadah is a direct result of the stalemate in the search for a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict". (A/43/867, para. 32)

A step towards breaking the stalemate was taken by the Palestine National Council when it proclaimed the establishment of a peace-loving Palestinian State and its recognition of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) as the basis for the convening of an international peace conference. In that way the Palestine National Council demonstrated realism, political will and readiness for businesslike, open negotiations with the Israeli party, within the framework of the United Nations, and on the basis of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. The declaration of independence issued at the Palestine National Council's session has won wide endorsement from the international community, which wishes to convene, under United Nations auspices, an international peace conference on the Middle East in conformity with the provisions of resolution 38/58 C.

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

We are convinced that such a conference is the only forum that could bring about a radical change in the Middle East settlement process. The conference should include the participation of all interested parties, including the Arab people of Palestine as represented by its sole, legitimate representative, the PLO, and the permanent members of the Security Council.

It is obvious that the idea of such a conference has won widespread international support at all levels and has become an important factor with an impact on a whole range of problems relating to a settlement. There is a growing international consensus in favour of the early convening of an international conference on the Middle East; this has, in fact, become the unanimous position of Member States on this issue. The Government of Israel is virtually alone in opposing the convening of such a conference.

The new situation in the region requires a shift to practical steps to set in motion the machinery of a conference. A concrete strategy must be devised within the United Nations framework, along with plans for assisting conference participants to establish a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. The United Nations has both the authority and the necessary facilities to accomplish this.

The permanent members of the Security Council have an exceptionally important role to play in this process. We believe the Council could begin consultations on related issues.

My delegation believes that a conference on the Middle East should truly turn out to be a powerful, viable, flexible machinery that can formulate mutually acceptable solutions on the whole range of problems involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is important that the format of its workings not impinge on the rights or interests of any party, and that it facilitate compliance with the

Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

principle of strict respect for sovereignty and independence and for the right of all peoples to self-determination and the choice of their own path of independent development.

We feel particular attention should be given to the question of Palestinian representation, as the Palestinian question is at the core of the Middle East conflict. Of course, the PLO should participate in the conference on an equal footing. That organization has authority among the Palestinians, which guarantees the acceptability to the Arab people of Palestine of agreements reached with the participation of the PLO. Past experience and the present situation in the Arab territories occupied by Israel show that any decision that does not take into account the view of the PLO - and hence that of the Palestinians, who are represented by that organization - is doomed to failure.

Any attempt to exclude the PLO from a Middle East settlement would be inappropriate and inadmissible. Yet we note with regret that such attempts continue. Everyone in this Hall will remember the efforts of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General and the International Court of Justice to stop the United States from closing the Permanent Observer Mission of the PLO in New York. Only a few days ago, notwithstanding protests from the entire international community, the United States unjustifiably denied an entry visa to the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO, Mr. Yasser Arafat. That decision has placed new obstacles in the path of a comprehensive settlement, and has harmed the relevant United Nations efforts now under way.

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

By rejecting the idea of an international conference, under various far-fetched pretexts, Israel, too, is continuing to block a Middle East settlement. Reliance by the ruling circles of that country on confrontation and the imposition of their own will, which is the essence of their present policy and practices against the Palestinian people, is inhuman and futile.

Arrogance towards the decisions and peace-making machinery of our Organization, political short-sightedness by Israel with regard to the question being discussed and unwillingness to adopt a constructive compromise have become a feature of its position at the United Nations.

I should like to take this opportunity once again to appeal to the Government of Israel to reconsider its position, to join in the broad international consensus in favour of a conference and join in the collective efforts to find lasting, just peace in the Middle East, which would be in the interests of all the States of the region - including, we are convinced, the people of Israel itself. We feel that collective discussion of the situation that has now emerged in the Arab-Israeli conflict should lead to a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East. At present there are a number of problems that, by their nature, cannot be resolved bilaterally.

I wish to dwell on another aspect of the present situation in the Middle East, which with every passing year is becoming increasingly prominent and acute. Under the non-proliferation Treaty, which has been in operation for almost 20 years, States that do not possess nuclear weapons undertake not to acquire such weapons of mass destruction. The Treaty, which came into force in 1970, soon enjoyed broad international recognition. Now a significant majority of States have become parties to it. Therefore, one is particularly concerned that one of the parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict, Israel, is obstinately refusing to accede to that Treaty

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

and fully to accept International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) monitoring of its nuclear activities. That fact is noted in resolution 487 adopted by the General Conference of the IAEA on 23 September this year. The resolution decisively condemns Israel's unwillingness to renounce the possession of nuclear weapons as well as its refusal to stop collaborating with South Africa in developing nuclear weapons and delivery systems. Israel's policy in that regard has an extremely negative impact on both the international non-proliferation régime worked out on the basis of the Treaty and the security of the region of the eastern Mediterranean and the Near and Middle East. The danger of that policy to international peace and security, given the constant tension in the Arab-Israeli conflict, is quite clear.

Success in resolving the Middle East conflict and other complex regional problems will be determined by the level of political maturity shown by the States Members of this Organization, and it will be a yardstick of the United Nations effectiveness as political machinery. The emblem of our Organization is a globe framed by olive branches. Farmers know the hard work needed for a shoot growing out of an olive pit to produce the first fruit. Time waits for no man. If we want the olive trees planted on the day of the establishment of peace in the Middle East to produce fruit in this century, the concrete practical steps towards achieving that peace must be taken today.

Mr. RAZALI (Malaysia): The situation in the Middle East has been at the forefront of our agenda for over four decades now, and, despite the efforts of the United Nations and other initiatives, the Arab-Israeli conflict remains as intractable as ever. Recent trends which have brought promising developments to other conflicts have not had their impact on the problems of the Middle East. As the Secretary-General stated in his report (A/43/691),

(Mr. Razali, Malaysia)

"Recent months have seen tangible progress towards the settlement of many of the major conflicts which beset the world ... These beneficent winds of change have not yet reached the Arab-Israel conflict, which remains one of the most tragic and threatening in the world." (A/43/691, para. 7)

The responsibility for continuing deterioration in the situation in the Middle East must rest with the intransigence and expansionist policies of Israel. Basing itself on its burgeoning military strength, Israel has spurned every opportunity for a comprehensive and durable peace in the region. It has been able to do so owing to the support of certain Powers, which have evinced a clear inability or unwillingness to act in the larger interests of all States in the region. A Middle East policy anchored on the basis of Israel's superior armed strength cannot, from the geo-political point of view, be sustained. It is a mistake to believe that such a policy can serve the long-term interests of any Power or by any calculation promote peace and stability in the region.

Israel has exploited its armed strength to perpetrate aggression and the occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories. It has justified its illegal occupation by its security requirements in order to mask its objective of aggression and expansion into Palestinian and Arab lands. The international community has repeatedly condemned Israel and called for total and unconditional withdrawal from all territories. The annexation of East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights has been declared null and void, just as Israel's attempts to change the religious, cultural and socio-economic character of the occupied territories have been universally condemned.

The central aim of Israel's policies is the continued denial of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to an independent State. For over 21 years the Israeli illegal occupation of Palestinian

(Mr. Razali, Malaysia)

land has been accompanied by policies and practices that seek to crush Palestinian aspirations and to liquidate the Palestinian identity. The Israeli strategy for peace in the Middle East is premised upon the total subjugation and emasculation of the Palestinian nation, thus removing the core of the Middle East conflict: the question of Palestinian rights.

Yet, despite 20 years of iron-fist policies, the Palestinian people have not succumbed. They have demonstrated their indomitable spirit and resilience by their sustained uprising, the intifadah, which will commemorate its first anniversary in a few days' time. The Palestinians have borne the brunt of arrests, deportation, expulsions, loss of lives, loss of property and the establishment of illegal settlements by the Israelis. Malaysia joins the international community in condemning the brutal policies of the Israeli occupying authorities, which are flagrant violations of fundamental human values and of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949.

(Mr. Razali, Malaysia)

The intifadah has demonstrated to the world the rejection by Palestinians of Israeli occupation and their willingness to pay the price for their legitimate rights to self-determination and an independent homeland. As the Secretary-General stated in his report:

"The intifadah in the occupied Palestinian territories, which began on 9 December 1987, has for nearly a year been a dominating factor in the political agenda in the Middle East. It was the focus of the Arab Summit Conference in Algiers last April and the inspiration behind the recent session of the Palestine National Council in Algiers." (A/43/867, para. 32)

The declaration of an independent Palestinian State and the acceptance of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) by the Palestine National Council on 15 November 1988 have received the overwhelming support of the international community. Malaysia is proud to be among the first to recognize the independent Palestinian State. That event was a historic development, lauded not only by Palestinians but by all countries that seek peace and justice.

My delegation also fully concurs with the Secretary-General's conclusions with regard to the Palestine National Council meeting, when he stated in his report:

"The recent session of the Palestine National Council in Algiers has generated a new momentum in the diplomatic process and I believe it offers fresh opportunities for progress towards peace which should be seized."

(ibid., para. 37)

Unfortunately, those fresh opportunities have been spurned. Even the opportunity to address the Assembly was denied to Chairman Yasser Arafat, the leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). That decision has been deplored by an overwhelming majority of the Members of the United Nations, who have also decided

(Mr. Razali, Malaysia)

to accord Chairman Yasser Arafat the honour of addressing the Assembly at the United Nations in Geneva. What is being denied in New York will be rectified in full at Geneva. The Palestinian cause must have its just hearing.

The acceptance by the Palestine National Council of resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) enhance the prospects for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, as envisaged in General Assembly resolutions 38/58 C and 42/66 D. Malaysia fully supports the convening of that Conference under the auspices of the Secretary-General and with the participation of all parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing. We believe that only through the convening of such a conference could a comprehensive, just and durable settlement of the problem be achieved and the Palestinian people be accorded their inalienable rights to self-determination and a national homeland. Malaysia fully supports the efforts of the Secretary-General to convene such a conference, which has been overwhelmingly endorsed by the international community. It is regrettable to note in another of the Secretary-General's reports that

"familiar and deep differences remain about the nature of that framework, about its powers, about the basis on which it would be convened, and about who should take part in it." (A/43/691, para. 5)

Malaysia calls upon Israel and those in support of its prevarication to lend full support to the Secretary-General to make possible the early convening of the International Conference.

Lebanon, an independent and sovereign nation, has also fallen prey to Israel's expansionist thirst for territory. Since 1982 Israel has maintained a so-called security zone in south Lebanon under its total control. Lebanese citizens have

(Mr. Razali, Malaysia )

been arrested, abducted, deported, tried and sentenced under Israeli laws. Scores of Palestinians from the occupied territories have also been deported to Lebanon by the Israeli occupying authorities. Iron-fist policies of repression of all opposition to Israeli occupation have continued with undiminished ferocity, in violation of international laws and of the Fourth Geneva Convention, of 1949. Israel's intervention in Lebanon's internal affairs has inflamed the factional conflicts within Lebanon's body politic in order to serve its own expansionist interest in annexing south Lebanon permanently as part of greater Israel.

This year has witnessed repeated Israeli invasion and aerial bombardment of Lebanon, resulting in the loss of lives and in the destruction of homes and property. Such wanton acts of aggression against a sovereign State violate the Charter, international laws and United Nations Security Council resolutions 425 (1978), 508 (1982) and 509 (1982), which demand a full, immediate and unconditional withdrawal by Israel from all Lebanese territory, airspace and territorial waters and the immediate cessation of aggression and other practices directed against Lebanese territory.

Malaysia would like to reaffirm its solidarity with the Government and people of Lebanon and to join the international community in calling for full respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Lebanon, free from foreign intervention and interference.

Dame Ann HERCUS (New Zealand): The report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Middle East makes sober reading. As the Secretary-General notes, it has not yet proved possible to launch a negotiating process acceptable to all the parties to the conflict. Accordingly, the stalemate in the peace process continues, with its attendant dangers. Violence is endemic. Israeli continues to

(Dame Ann Hercus, New Zealand)

occupy Arab territories acquired in 1967 and to conduct itself there in ways the entire international community considers to be contrary to international law. The Secretary-General rightly notes the impact of the uprising in the occupied Palestinian territories as a dominating factor in the political agenda in the Middle East.

The Secretary-General's comments provide a frank reminder of the situation. He notes that the intifadah was born of the difficulties and despair experienced by a population that has lived under occupation for more than 20 years and that it is a direct result of the stalemate in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Like many other countries, New Zealand is deeply concerned about policies and practices that violate the human rights of the inhabitants of the occupied territories, and we join those who have called upon Israel to abandon those practices and to abide immediately and scrupulously by its international legal obligations. The Secretary-General's observations are a timely reminder of the frustrations and despair of the Palestinian population. Accordingly, it is to be regretted that there is not yet sufficient agreement to allow the search for a durable settlement to proceed. We have noted his remarks in regard to the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. Despite the difficulties he foresees, we welcome the Secretary-General's intention to continue his efforts in accordance with the invitation given to him by the Security Council to pursue his consultations. It would be highly desirable if the evidence of progress towards settlement in other conflicts - and the generally more positive international climate - were able to be translated into movement on this most intractable of issues.

(Dame Ann Hercus, New Zealand)

My Government was heartened by the outcome of the Palestine National Council in Algiers. In our view the outcome of that meeting needs to be carefully assessed, but it is movement in a positive direction - a significant gesture of reconciliation by the Palestine National Council. We would like to have had the opportunity to hear the Chairman of the PLO here in New York. We therefore will be looking forward with interest to this Assembly taking up the issue of Palestine in Geneva. In the mean time, we welcome in particular the indication of the Council's positive attitude concerning the principles on which a comprehensive peace settlement should be based. Those principles have been the corner-stone of the international community's search for a settlement.

To reach understanding on the principles which will underpin a settlement is crucial. We also look for agreement on the procedures to be followed in order to bring about this settlement. The Secretary-General rightly sounds a note of concern in his report at the absence of a generally accepted and effective negotiating process which, as he says, is of fundamental importance.

As a distant observer of developments in the Middle East, but one which takes a principled interest in the situation there and recognizes the vital importance of the region for global stability, New Zealand shares these concerns. My Government is very conscious of the dangers alluded to by the Secretary-General. We regret that neither regional initiatives nor great-Power involvement has pointed a way out of the current impasse. Each year that goes by without a solution adds to the intractability of the problem.

For its part the United Nations has played a useful and constructive role over the years, seeking to create the conditions in which the problems of the region may be resolved. The peace-keeping operations and the activity of the Secretary-General himself all bear witness to the constant and patient efforts of

(Dame Ann Hercus, New Zealand)

the United Nations to this end. New Zealand will continue to give active support to those efforts.

In New Zealand's view the basis for a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East is provided by Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). The principles laid down in the former resolution are clear and just. It should be implemented in all its parts. That resolution emphasizes the inadmissibility of acquiring territory by war. Accordingly, Israel must withdraw from all the territories occupied in 1967. We regret that it has shown no inclination to do so and that many of its actions point in a contrary direction. New Zealand does not, for example, recognize the validity of Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem, nor the establishment of new settlements in the occupied territory.

In New Zealand's view, any settlement must take account of the rights and aspirations of the Arab people of Palestine. Palestinian refugees are entitled to be repatriated or compensated. My Government has long held that their rights include the right of self-determination. New Zealand welcomes the initiatives taken by the Palestine National Council, but expects final status of the occupied territories will be determined in the context of an overall peace settlement.

New Zealand recognizes and supports the right of Israel, as an independent and sovereign State, to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries, free from threats or acts of force. We have regretted the reluctance among Israel's neighbours and the Palestine Liberation Organization to accept unequivocally that Israel has this right. That reluctance will need to be overcome clearly and unequivocally if there is to be a durable settlement. A negotiated peace calls not only for flexibility and compromise but for recognition of the rights of all parties.

(Dame Ann Hercus, New Zealand)

Without a willingness to consider reciprocal concessions, the Secretary-General's gloomy assessment of the prospects for the establishment of a viable negotiating process in the foreseeable future seems likely to be borne out. New Zealand supports the convening of a conference under United Nations auspices in which all parties concerned could conduct direct negotiations. Those parties include Israel, the Palestinians and the neighbouring Arab States. Who should represent the Palestinians is a matter for they themselves to decide. No settlement will be lasting if it is not negotiated by representatives acceptable to the Palestinian people.

The success of an international conference will rest in large measure on a prior demonstration of readiness to resolve the long-standing and complex dispute by peaceful means and a determination among the parties to achieve agreements that will secure a just and durable peace. We encourage those involved to press on with their efforts and welcome the commitments of the United Nations Secretary-General in that regard. The plight of the people of Palestine requires that further and substantial endeavours be made to secure a future for them. Only in that way will stability and peace for the people of Israel also be secured.

Mr. RAMIREZ (Colombia) (interpretation from Spanish): The Middle East, the cradle of civilization and the fountainhead of numerous cultures, is today strife-torn, with fighting on many fronts. This long-standing situation marked by conflict has been of great concern to the international community, and through our Organization it has tried to create an atmosphere of peace in which the peoples of the Middle East, with their rich traditions and cultures, may experience a rebirth.

Colonial intervention, there as elsewhere, brought in elements alien to local cultures, thereby creating a desire for independence. In the process the

(Mr. Ramirez, Colombia)

differences and similarities of the minorities that have lived for centuries on the same territory became particularly marked.

We welcome the fruits of the present relaxation of tension, and we also welcome the actions of the Secretary-General.

This has led to the beginning of an understanding in the conflict between Iran and Iraq. We hope that the peace movement there will continue and lead to a lasting peace and secure boundaries.

The present situation in Lebanon and the violence experienced there for many years continue deeply to concern the international community. We hope there will be a speedy understanding between the nationals of the two countries and that Lebanon will soon resume the outstanding position it occupied in the region as a centre for development and an example of harmony and progress.

My country continues to observe with concern the crisis in the Middle East, where recently there have been serious signs of turbulence.

(Mr. Ramirez, Colombia)

We believe that peace in the area should be sought through the United Nations and should be based on global solutions in keeping with the spirit of the resolutions repeatedly adopted by the Security Council. These solutions will lead to progress only if they fully acknowledge the right of the Palestinian people to have a sovereign territory. That situation bears a striking resemblance to the one in which Israel found itself in 1947.

The situation in the Middle East, which has been so threatening, would be much more promising if there were a return to the spirit and letter of resolution 242 (1967) adopted by the Security Council on 22 November 1967. The contents of that resolution even today continue to be the basis for peace in the area.

Ever since the creation of the United Nations Colombia has taken a balanced and fair position on the Middle East. The elements in the resolution I have just mentioned involve recognition of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and recognition of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory through the use of force, withdrawal of Israeli troops from all occupied territories, and the termination of all belligerent situations and respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all States in the area and respect for their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries, free from any act of force or threat of the use of force.

We firmly support the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The relationship between the various conflicts in the area further complicates the geo-political balance there, creating a very complex situation. Negotiations will have enormous repercussions not only on parties to the conflict but on the

(Mr. Ramirez, Colombia)

region as a whole. For this reason we should promote any peace initiative capable of leading both to bilateral solutions and to regional negotiations, which in turn might lead to a just peace on a basis of equity.

Mr. MUDENGE (Zimbabwe): We should like to express our gratitude to the Secretary-General, Javier Perez de Cuellar, for the very lucid and informative reports on the item before us today contained in documents A/43/272 of 31 March 1988, A/43/683 of 11 October 1988, and A/43/691 of 30 September 1988.

Following the adoption of resolution 41/43 D (1986) by this Assembly two years ago, on 7 May 1987 the Secretary-General presented a report on the basis of intensive consultations regarding the possibility of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East (A/42/277). That report brought the pleasant news that in recent months there had been indications of greater flexibility in attitudes towards the negotiating process, and that this had to be encouraged. The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, through its Committee of Nine on Palestine, made an effort to encourage that new positive trend and to support the efforts of the Secretary-General.

When this Assembly last considered the item on the Middle East on 11 December last year, in its resolution 42/209A (1987) it reaffirmed that the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations was the appropriate way to find a peaceful, comprehensive and just solution to the Middle East problem. The Assembly therefore requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts, in consultation with the Security Council, with a view to convening the Conference.

The report contained in document A/43/272 indicates that in March this year the Secretary-General made contacts and communicated with the members of the Security Council as well as with all the parties directly involved in the Middle

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

East conflict. The Secretary-General informed us that his contacts indicated that sufficient agreement did not exist either among the parties directly concerned or within the Security Council to permit the convening of the International Peace Conference.

Document A/43/691 indicates that yet another effort was made by the Secretary-General as recently as two months ago, in pursuance of his mandate contained in this Assembly's resolution 42/209 A (1987). That effort did not yield any positive result either. We were informed that deep differences remained about the nature of the international framework for the negotiation of a just and lasting settlement; about its powers; about the basis on which it would be convened; and about the participants. The Secretary-General made the important observation that

"positions will have to change if an international negotiating process acceptable to all is to be established." (A/43/691, para. 5)

We had hoped that at this time, when we are witnessing real progress towards the resolution of many of the major regional conflicts, the Middle East problem, which has been on the agenda of this Assembly longer than any other issue, would also benefit from the new winds of change in international relations.

But today the menace of an impasse hovers over the efforts to convene the International Peace Conference. The opportunity offered by the growing international sentiment in favour of the peace conference following the adoption of resolutions 38/58 (1983) and 41/43 D (1986) was wasted. The Secretary-General's report contained in document A/43/691 indicates that at a time when the entire international community was calling for the early convening of the international conference under the auspices of the United Nations one important member of the Security Council was pursuing its own unilateral initiative. We were to learn that the initiative was based on the so-called three steps: first, a vaguely defined

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

international conference; secondly, direct talks between Israel and a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation on a transitional period of self-rule for the occupied territories, and thirdly, talks between Israel and a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation on the final status of the West Bank and Gaza. Other conditions were also made. We were told that the gathering would be open only to parties which accepted United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and renounced terrorism.

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

We in the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries welcome any efforts aimed at bringing peaceful solutions to international conflicts. We have actively encouraged the peace initiatives undertaken in the various regions, including Central America, South-East Asia, the Persian Gulf and the Middle East itself. However, we find it deeply disturbing that when there is a universally endorsed multilateral effort under way, within the framework of the United Nations, an important member of the Security Council should come up with a rival initiative the goals of which are not consistent with those envisaged by the United Nations effort.

A United States contribution to Middle East peace efforts is welcome, indeed indispensable. But we cannot help questioning the sincerity of an effort which deliberately seeks to disregard the core of the Middle East problem: the question of Palestine. To disregard the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people, including the right to establish a Palestinian State, and to exclude the participation, on an equal and independent footing, of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the authentic representative of the Palestinian people, amounts to ignoring the fact that the question of Palestine lies at the heart of the Middle East problem.

A few weeks ago we witnessed a historic event which brought new hopes for the Middle East peace process. The Palestine Liberation Organization, meeting in Algiers during its intifadah session, proclaimed the establishment of the State of Palestine on Palestinian territory on the basis of General Assembly resolution 181 (II), and endorsed Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as the basis for the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, thus meeting one of the conditions insisted upon by the United States.

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

This decision of the Palestine National Council (PNC) has created a fresh atmosphere for the revival of the stalled peace process. We should not allow this new opportunity to be wasted once again. The Chairman of the PLO, Mr. Yasser Arafat himself, called for the resuscitation of the peace process immediately after the PNC session. Already, there are disturbing signs that some wish to slam this recently opened door for peace. Israel, which since the beginning has been the major obstacle to the convening of the International Peace Conference under United Nations auspices, is moving more and more in an extremist direction and had rejected in advance the important decisions taken by the PNC. The United States, which had in its recent initiative insisted that participants in the negotiations must accept Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), now appears to be groping for other excuses.

The recent refusal by the United States to give a visa to Chairman Arafat is a major blow to the cause of peace in the Middle East. It diminishes the prestige of the United States and strengthens the position of the hard-liners in Israel. A morally weakened United States cannot be a force for the promotion of peace in the Middle East and that is of no benefit to anybody: not to the United States, not to the Palestinian cause, and certainly not to Israel. The vast majority within the United Nations family is ready to seize the historic opportunity offered by the PNC decision to initiate the peace process. In a statement issued on 17 November, the Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries called upon Israel and its allies to show diplomatic flexibility in these changed circumstances, by agreeing to the early convening of the International Peace Conference at which the PLO, as the authentic representative of the Palestinian people, would participate on an equal footing with other parties.

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

The 12 States members of the European Community, in a declaration issued in Brussels on 21 November 1988, reacting to the results of the PNC meeting, pointed out that the PNC decisions included positive steps towards the peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and appealed to all parties concerned to take this opportunity and contribute to the peace process in a positive way. The Soviet Union and the whole socialist fraternity share similar positive sentiments about the Algiers decisions.

The intifadah, the popular uprising of the Palestinian peoples, and the recent Algiers session of the PNC, have redefined the realities in the Middle East. The time has now come for Israel to adjust its position to the new realities and to heed the call of the Secretary-General, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the European Community to change their position. This is the only way that the progress towards peace that is being experienced in other regions can also be extended to the Middle East. The reality on the ground now calls for bold statesmanship and not prevarication.

The situation regarding other areas in and around the Middle East region has not improved. This year has witnessed an escalation of Israeli threats and aggression against the Arab front-line States. Last August, Israel launched a new terrorist assault on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Tunisia, as a result of which Mr. Khalil Al-Wazir, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Forces of the PLO, was assassinated, together with other Tunisian nationals. Lebanon also continues to face a dangerous situation. Israel has continued its occupation of parts of southern Lebanon and launched terrorist attacks against Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. We call upon the Security Council to ensure full implementation of its resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978), and its resolutions 508 (1982) and 509 (1982), calling for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

of Israeli forces from all Lebanese territory up to the internationally recognized borders of Lebanon.

In conclusion, we wish to express our satisfaction at the manner in which the sister non-aligned countries of Iran and Iraq have continued to co-operate with the Secretary-General in his efforts to complete the negotiations under way in Geneva.

Mr. MAHALLATI (Islamic Republic of Iran) (interpretation from Arabic):

"To those against whom  
War is made, permission  
Is given (to fight), because  
They are wronged;--and verily,  
God is Most Powerful  
For their aid;--

(They are) those who have  
Been expelled from their homes  
In defiance of right,--  
(For no cause) except  
That they say, "Our Lord  
Is God". Did not God  
Check one set of people  
By means of another,  
There would surely have been  
Pulled down monasteries, churches,  
Synagogues, and mosques, in which  
The name of God is commemorated  
In abundant measure. God will  
Certainly aid those who  
Aid His (cause);--for verily  
God is Full of Strength,  
Exalted in Might,  
(Able to enforce His will)." (The Holy Koran, XXII:39,40)

(Mr. Mahallati, Islamic Republic  
of Iran)

(continued in English)

The core of the Middle East problem during the past 40 years has been the Zionist occupation of Palestine. Between 1947 and 1987 the Zionist base was the cause of five ferocious wars, and it has been the home of permanent combat between those dispossessed of their homeland and the Zionist forces of occupation ever expanding the extent of their usurpation of Palestine.

The occupation of Palestine, which has seriously disturbed the peace and security of the region and has led to the present plight and grievances of the Palestinian people, is a major concern of the international community. Since the usurpation of Palestine by Zionist immigrants, Palestinians have been subjected to unspeakable violence, terror and appalling crimes. The blame for this historic crime must be placed on those arrogant Powers that were the driving-force behind the conspiracies leading to the creation of the Zionist base, thus turning that part of the world into a centre of conflict, confrontation, war and bloodshed. By setting up an artificial State in Palestine, they not only sent millions of Palestinian people into homelessness but also destroyed peace and tranquillity in the Middle East.

Unfortunately, the United Nations too, owing to the permanent presence of the arrogant Powers with colonialist ambitions, was involved in the actual creation and official registration of the Zionist occupation of Palestine. Hence it is even partially responsible for the victimization of the Palestinian people. The adoption, by the General Assembly in 1947, of resolution 181 (II) on the partition of the land of Palestine and the establishment of the Zionist entity was itself in violation of provisions of the United Nations Charter, as well as of the rules of international law.

(Mr. Mahallati, Islamic Republic  
of Iran)

The indescribable suffering of Palestinians under Zionist occupation is one of the most tragic chapters of recent history. For many years the régime occupying Quds has been expelling Palestinians from their land. Sadly, however, the international community has remained undecided and has limited itself to mere expressions of concern. Under such circumstances, Palestinians driven from their homeland or living under occupation and subjugation by the Zionist régime had no choice but to rise and demand their own legitimate rights. Whenever the Palestinian people have intensified their struggle to free themselves from the oppression of occupiers and to liberate their homeland the occupying régime has enacted the most oppressive and savage measures to suppress them. The reaction of the Zionist régime to the recent uprising was no exception to this rule. The systematic use of terror and violence has become the daily practice of the Zionist criminals. Since the inception of the glorious uprising last year hundreds of our Palestinian brothers, who always felt duty-bound to defend their usurped rights, have been martyred, injured, detained and expelled by the forces of occupation.

This Zionist intransigence on the policy of suppression of Palestinians and its persistence in the usurpation of Palestine stem from and are, indeed, made possible by the unlimited economic, financial, military and political support offered by the United States and certain other Powers. These ardent supporters of the artificial State of Zionism must bear the prime responsibility for its survival, which is a factor working against regional and international peace and security.

The continued occupation of Palestine and sections of other Islamic and Arab lands, the crimes perpetrated by the Zionist régime in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, its repeated aggression against southern Lebanon, bombardment of Palestinian

(Mr. Mahallati, Islamic Republic  
of Iran)

camps and massacre of innocent civilians and Palestinian refugees prove that the crisis in the Middle East will not be resolved unless the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of their own independent State in the entire land of Palestine are restored.

There are, of course, two aspects of the question of Palestine. On the one hand, it is the homeland of Palestinian people, who have every right to this homeland and must therefore be allowed to return to it. This must, without any hesitation, be the concern of the international community. On the other hand, Palestine is an Islamic territory that cannot be given away to the Zionist usurpers under any conditions. It is the holy land which embraces the second-most-important Muslim sanctuaries; it is forbidden to surrender these sanctuaries or their land to a Zionist base. It is the duty of every Muslim to strive and struggle for the liberation of the Holy land. Any decision conflicting with the Islamic duties of Muslim nations of the world will have no legal validity and will only increase turbulence and bloodshed in the region.

The people and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, together with hundreds of millions of Muslims of the world, strongly condemn the occupation of Palestine by the Zionist occupiers. We also condemn those policies and practices that have contributed to this illegal occupation.

The Islamic Republic of Iran supports the holy struggle of Palestinians and will spare no effort to ensure the emancipation of the entire land of Palestine. In pursuit of this policy, we concur with the announcement concerning the establishment of a Palestinian State. This constitutes the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to their own independent State for the implementation of the cause of Palestine. Nevertheless, we emphasize that any recognition of the Zionist

(Mr. Mahallati, Islamic Republic  
of Iran)

base and negotiations with that non-entity, which is tantamount to the abandonment of the holy struggle, is not acceptable to the Muslim Ummah.

In this connection, it is to be stressed that the United Nations should utilize all its resources to end the occupation of Palestine and the Arab lands and give effect to the inalienable rights of Palestinian people to return to their homeland and establish a Palestinian State. The United Nations is constitutionally obliged to stop the bloodshed and bring meaningful peace to the region.

Mr. ZEPOS (Greece): I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the 12 States Members of the European Community.

The Twelve have important political, historical, economic and cultural ties with the countries and peoples of the Middle East. They cannot be passive about or indifferent to the serious problems affecting a region so close to them, problems that have serious repercussions for international peace and stability. The Twelve have on several occasions expressed themselves in declarations on the Arab-Israeli conflict, the conflict between Iran and Iraq, and the situation in Lebanon.

(Mr. Zepos, Greece)

Although some positive developments have given rise to hope, other problems of the region remain unresolved and have even been aggravated in some cases. The Twelve are greatly concerned at the suffering of which the peoples in many parts of the Middle East continue to be the victims as a result of regional tensions and armed confrontations in the area.

The long-standing position of the Twelve is that there is an urgent need for negotiated solutions to those problems. The aim must be to bring about a just, global and lasting peace in the region and good relations between neighbours, and to allow economic, social and cultural development, which in some cases has been adversely affected for too long.

The views of the Twelve on the question of Palestine will be expressed more fully in the debate on agenda item 37.

This year's debate comes shortly after the decisions adopted by the Palestine National Council in Algiers on 15 November 1988. The Twelve attach particular importance to those decisions, which reflect the will of the Palestinian people to assert their national identity and which include positive steps towards the peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The prolongation of that conflict endangers peace and security in the region. The Twelve have repeatedly made clear the principles for the establishment of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Near East, set out in the Venice Declaration of 13 June 1980 and in their subsequent statements on the issue. Those principles must be respected by all the parties concerned, including the Palestinian people and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which will have to be associated with the negotiations. In that context, the Twelve welcomed the acceptance by the Palestine National Council on 21 November 1988 of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) as a basis for an international

(Mr. Zepos, Greece)

conference, which implies acceptance of the right to existence and security of all States of the region, including Israel. Respect for that principle goes together with that of justice for the peoples of the region and in particular with the right of self-determination of the Palestinian people, with all that that implies. The essence of a settlement must be a full, just and lasting accommodation between Israel and the Palestinian people, so that they can live together in peace and security.

The resolution of the problems between Israel and its neighbours should be based on the Charter principles of non-recourse to the use of force and of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war. Israel must put an end to the territorial occupation it has maintained since 1967 and give up its illegal policy of settlements. We reaffirm our position that any change in the status and demographic structure of the occupied territories is illegal under international law and constitutes a serious obstacle to peace efforts. Military occupation can only be regarded as a temporary situation and does not confer upon the occupying Power rights of annexation or disposal or the right to extend its law, jurisdiction or administration to the occupied area. The Twelve reiterate that Israeli policy concerning East Jerusalem and the Golan heights is contrary to international law. Therefore, all measures taken within the framework of that policy are to be considered null and void.

In the debate on agenda item 77, the Twelve had occasion to set out in detail their deep concern, in particular over the past twelve months, at a number of Israeli actions and policies affecting the human rights and living conditions of the population of the occupied territories. In this debate, we shall confine ourselves to reiterating our call upon Israel, as the occupying Power, pending its withdrawal to fulfil its obligations under the relevant Hague and Geneva Conventions, to ensure immediate protection of the population in compliance with

(Mr. Zepos, Greece)

international law and human-rights obligations and to lift restrictions on political and economic activities.

Once again we stress the urgency of reaching a political solution. In a statement made on 21 November 1988, the Foreign Ministers of the Twelve called on all the parties concerned, while abstaining from any acts of violence and any action that could further aggravate the tense situation in the Near East, to seize the new opportunities and contribute to the peace process in a positive way with a view to a just, global and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. That solution can only be achieved through an international peace conference under the auspices of the United Nations, which represents the suitable framework for the necessary negotiations between the parties directly concerned.

The Twelve are profoundly concerned that a breakthrough in the efforts to reach agreement on an international peace conference has not yet been made. In his report to the General Assembly, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 42/209 A on the question of convening an international peace conference, the Secretary-General assessed that the necessary agreement does not exist for the convening of the conference, because of deep differences remaining with regard to a basis acceptable to all. We have also taken note of the Secretary-General's report, submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 42/209 B, in which attention is drawn to the need for new and determined efforts to be made to bring about a peaceful settlement to the conflict. The Twelve fully support the Secretary-General in his efforts and they fully share his view on the urgent need to establish a process acceptable to all for the negotiation of a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East. The Twelve will, for their part, continue their close contacts with all the parties concerned and will do all in their power to play their role fully in the search for such a settlement.

(Mr. Zepos, Greece)

In Lebanon, after 13 years of war and suffering, it is vital that a political solution be found. A worsening cycle of violence is bound to lead to a further deterioration of the situation. Whether as a result of acts of resistance against foreign occupation, intercommunal strife, actions in southern Lebanon by the Israeli forces and their associates or attacks of one kind or another by whomsoever across the international border, there will always be innocent victims. This year again we have witnessed a very serious situation in and around some of the Palestinian camps in Lebanon, together with a continuation of violence, hostage taking and killings in different parts of Lebanon. Once again, we express our great concern for the fate of all hostages, including a number of our own citizens, held in Lebanon and appeal strongly on humanitarian grounds for their release as soon as possible.

In their statement on 21 November 1988, the Twelve expressed the hope that that friendly country should soon be able to overcome the acute crisis it is currently experiencing. The proper functioning and strengthening of Lebanon's constitutional bodies is a pre-condition for a political solution. We regret that the mandate of President Gemayel expired without a new President being elected. We strongly appeal to all parties to promote the election, in all freedom and without external pressures or interferences, of a President able to carry out the task of national reconciliation, and to safeguard the unity, independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Lebanon. The European Council convening in Rhodes on 3 December 1988 reaffirmed those principles and expressed the view that the United Nations should in particular contribute to the satisfactory holding of the Presidential election, if that would be useful.

(Mr. Zepos, Greece)

A solution also requires total Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. The so-called security zone and the continued presence of Israeli forces in south Lebanon, contrary to Security Council resolutions, can only hinder the restoration of stability to the area. Bearing this in mind, the Twelve firmly support the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and urge that it be enabled to fulfil its mandate in the best possible security conditions for its members, three of which belong to the Twelve. We reaffirm once more the obligation of all Member States to meet their financial obligations so that a solution of the serious financial difficulties of UNIFIL may soon be found. We appeal to all parties to co-operate with the Force in its efforts to carry out its mandate and its task of maintaining stable conditions and protecting the civilian population in its area of operation.

The Twelve welcomed the announcement of a cease-fire by the Secretary-General and its observance by the Governments of Iran and Iraq, followed by direct talks under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary-General. The success of the Secretary-General's efforts contributes to the prestige of the United Nations and paves the way for an increasing role by the Organization in maintaining international peace and security. The Twelve express their satisfaction at the observance of the cease-fire and at the establishment of the United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIMOG) to supervise the implementation of paragraph 1 of resolution 598 (1987). However, Security Council resolution 598 (1987) should be swiftly and fully implemented in all its parts. In this connection the Twelve continue to support the Secretary-General's efforts to secure the implementation of the resolution and urge both parties to co-operate closely with him in order rapidly to achieve a comprehensive, just, honourable and durable settlement of the conflict, in full compliance with Security Council resolution 598 (1987), so that peace and security may be restored in the region.

(Mr. Zepos, Greece)

The Twelve will follow developments in the Middle East with great attention and concern. Peace in the region is of vital importance to the Middle East itself, to Europe and indeed to international peace and security at large. The Twelve will, as in the past, continue to support all efforts designed to bring about a peaceful and lasting settlement of the problems of the Middle East.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I call on the representative of Israel, who wishes to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

I remind him that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. NISSIM-ISSACHAROFF (Israel): Notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, I feel compelled to make some brief comments regarding the statement made this morning by the representative of the United Arab Emirates on behalf of the Arab Group. I shall not refer to all the points he raised, as for the most part they lack any substance and to do so would lend those assertions a dignity they, frankly, do not possess.

My delegation was particularly astonished that the representative of the United Arab Emirates chose to include in his verbal attack on Israel an inappropriate reference to nazism. In so doing he revealed a stark ignorance of the history of the Second World War and the horrendous Nazi atrocities and genocide which wiped out a third of the Jewish people. Moreover, his statement also revealed a fundamental misunderstanding of Zionism and the ardent determination of the Jewish people to establish and maintain its homeland on the basis of the timeless sense of morality with which the Jewish people is imbued.

(Mr. Nissim-Issacharoff, Israel)

The true enemy of man and the source of conflict is not merely hostility but rather ignorance and the distortion of moral reality. The representative of the United Arab Emirates demonstrated this morning his evident capability on both counts.

My remarks would also be appropriate in relation to the representative of Mozambique, who spoke this afternoon in a similar surrealistic vein.

The meeting rose at 8.30 p.m.