



DIVISION FOR
PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

**UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL MEETING
ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE**

Theme: "The Road to Israeli-Palestinian Peace"

**Madrid
17 and 18 July 2001**

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I. Introduction

1. The United Nations International Meeting on the Question of Palestine was held in Madrid on 17 and 18 July 2001, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 55/52 and 55/53 of 1 December 2000.
2. The Committee was represented by a delegation comprising Ibra Deguène Ka (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee; Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba), Vice-Chairman of the Committee; Ravan A.G. Farhâdi (Afghanistan), Vice-Chairman of the Committee; Walter Balzan (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee; Sotirios Zackheos (Cyprus); and Nasser Al-Kidwa (Palestine).
3. The Meeting consisted of an opening session, three plenary sessions and a closing session. The themes of the plenary sessions were “The Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts: an overview”, “The situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem” and “The road to peace”.
4. Presentations were made by 14 experts from different regions, including Palestinians and Israelis. Rawya Shawa, member of the Palestinian Council, was one of the invited experts but was unable to travel to Madrid due to Israel’s travel restrictions. Representatives of 62 Governments, Palestine, three inter-governmental organizations, six United Nations bodies and 46 civil society organizations as well as special guests of the host country and representatives of the media, universities and institutes attended the Meeting.
5. The main points of the discussion were highlighted in the General Remarks of the Meeting (see annex I).

II. Opening statements

6. **Josep Piqué**, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Spain, stated that the basic terms of reference of the peace process, which had been established by the Madrid Conference in 1991, needed to be reiterated more than ever since they constituted the only possible avenue to peace, namely Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace. Despite numerous diplomatic efforts undertaken by the international community and the efforts of the Palestinian Authority to stop the violence, the situation had continued to deteriorate and would become worse unless a policy was adopted to break the sequence of violent actions and reactions. Israel’s illegal raids into the territories under the control of the Palestinian Authority and its disproportionate and excessive use of force, the terrorist attacks carried out by radical Palestinians, the continuation of the settlement policy, the demolitions of Palestinian homes and the extrajudicial executions were some of the links in the spiral of violence that must be halted. It was urgent to guarantee respect for international legality, especially the Fourth Geneva Convention, and to grapple with the deep-rooted causes that motivated such actions.
7. Mr. Piqué noted that the direct effects of violence, the policy of blockade and isolation of the Territory and the suspension of Israeli transfers from the collection of VAT had brought about a serious deterioration in living conditions in the Territory and a substantial decrease in the Palestinian Authority’s resources, which would eventually have an impact on the Israeli economy itself. There was a grave risk for regional stability as well. He emphasized that the change in the voting trend during the last elections could not be attributed to unwillingness for peace but to a grave sense of insecurity.
8. Mr. Piqué expressed optimism that the Camp David negotiations and those in Taba, which had brought the parties closer than ever to an agreement, were bound to bear fruit. The international

community must take advantage of the fragile window of opportunity opened by diplomatic efforts. It was necessary to implement without delay the recommendations of the Mitchell Committee Report in its entirety. The establishment of a timetable and some kind of international supervisory mechanism would contribute to the implementation of the recommendations. Palestinians must be able to see an end to the occupation and the creation of a viable and democratic Palestinian state, and Israelis must be guaranteed their right to live in peace and security. It was also necessary to achieve a just and lasting solution to the questions of Jerusalem and the refugees, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, international legitimacy and the agreements signed by the parties. Referring to Spain's assumption of the Presidency of the European Union in a few months, Mr. Piqué assured that his Government, in that capacity, would spare no effort to contribute to the creation of conditions necessary to achieve a just and lasting peace for all the people in the region.

9. **Kofi Annan**, Secretary-General of the United Nations, in a message read out on his behalf by his representative, Terje Rød-Larsen, United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, said that since last September, violence in the region had claimed over 600 lives, with thousands injured, the vast majority of the victims being Palestinians. He condemned all acts of terrorism and stated that the crisis had deepened the sense of anger, bitterness and suspicion between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Those tragic events underscored the urgency of pressing forward with efforts to bring calm, stabilize the situation and enable the parties to resume their dialogue. He noted that the United Nations had fully endorsed the Mitchell Report and would remain at the disposal of the parties and the co-sponsors of the peace process in their efforts to implement the Report's recommendations. Leaders on both sides must show the political will and courage to resume the peace talks to reach a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace. Referring to the fragile ceasefire negotiated the previous month, the Secretary-General insisted that both sides should make every effort to restore the ceasefire and move rapidly towards the implementation of the Report's recommendations. The cease-fire, the cooling-off period and confidence-building measures were critical steps on the way to resuming a meaningful political dialogue.

10. The message reviewed the effects of military actions directed at Palestinian towns, villages and agricultural facilities as well as other Israeli policies that had brought the Palestinian economy to a standstill. The Secretary-General stressed the necessity of a massive and urgent assistance programme that would allow Palestinians to rebuild their lives and households. The United Nations would continue its work of rehabilitating the Palestinian economy, with a special focus on effective emergency assistance to the Palestinian people. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which had provided generations of Palestinians with social services, schooling and health care, was experiencing recurrent financial problems. He called upon donors to continue to assist UNRWA and to contribute generously to its budget. The co-sponsors and other international parties should prevent the unravelling of the peace process. The Secretary-General pledged to do, on his part, whatever it would take to contribute to those peace efforts.

11. **Ibra Deguène Ka**, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, pointed out that the Committee had been much alarmed by the continuing violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and the excessive use of force by the Israel Defence Forces. The Committee had always maintained that an international protection force should be deployed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Committee had also joined the world community's condemnation of the practice of extrajudicial killings of Palestinians by Israeli security forces, a policy which was contrary to international law and a violation of the recently signed ceasefire agreement. The Committee fully supported the balanced findings of the Mitchell Committee and urged the swift implementation of its recommendations in their entirety. In that respect, the Committee deplored the

Israeli tactic of using isolated incidents of violence as a pretext to delay indefinitely compliance with recommendations such as the freeze on settlement activity. One side to the dispute could not purport to play the role of arbiter at the same time. That was why a fixed framework for the implementation of the Mitchell Report recommendations was needed, together with an impartial mechanism to monitor compliance. Anything less would perpetuate the unjust status quo of occupation and aggression and increase the desperation and instability in the entire region.

12. The position of principle of the Committee was that the heart of the question of Palestine was the illegal occupation by Israel of the Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, the illegal settlement activity and other illegal policies and practices. The Committee would continue to call upon the Government of Israel to respect and abide by the principles of the Fourth Geneva Convention and the provisions of relevant United Nations resolutions. The Committee had voiced its special concern at the dangers posed by the rapid disintegration of the Palestinian economy as a result of restrictive policies pursued by the Israeli Government. Repeated closures of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, restrictions on the movement of people and goods, withholding of customs and tax income and other measures of collective punishment had had a disastrous effect on the economy and the livelihood of individual Palestinian families. There was real concern over the fiscal crisis of the Palestinian Authority, its institutions and their ability to continue to function.

13. Mr. Ka called for efforts to help the parties return to the negotiating table to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and General Assembly resolution 194 (III). He reaffirmed the position of the Committee that the United Nations should continue to maintain its permanent responsibility towards all the aspects of the question of Palestine until it was resolved in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions and international legitimacy and until all the rights of the Palestinian people were fully realized. He welcomed and encouraged the close engagement of the Secretary-General and called upon the co-sponsors of the peace process, the European Union, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, other regional groups and all other actors with an international presence to alleviate the hardship of the Palestinian people and assist the parties in achieving peace.

14. **Miguel Angel Moratinos**, Special Envoy of the European Union to the Middle East Peace Process, said that the peace process was an effort that must be maintained. Peace was possible and the international community must underscore its commitment to peace. Violence resulted in more violence and efforts to halt it had been in vain. The many initiatives for peace had come up against the same wall of obstinacy raised by a few, despite a majority of people of good will that existed among both the Palestinians and the Israelis. There was great mistrust on both sides. Those interested only in the conflict were destroying the hope for peace, in order to show that the only possible reality was that of war. In the past, despite divergent opinions about the way forward, nobody had doubted that the leadership of both parties favoured peace. As a result of the recent months of violence, the political will for peace no longer appeared obvious. One positive element was the new attitude of the international community, which had now to address both the lack of alternatives and the crisis in political will. There were several important initiatives for peace, including, most recently, the recommendations of the Mitchell Report, which should be implemented before they became a dead letter.

15. Mr. Moratinos said that there was a loss of trust not only between the parties but also within each side. The Israeli peace camp had for the first time cast doubt on the possibility of ever achieving peace. They were now starting to realize that this worked in favour of the hard-liners. On the Palestinian side, an agenda of violence had been imposed by extremist groups. Europe would always be against terrorism and would not accept extrajudicial executions of Palestinians. Provocations, incitement and mutual recriminations had to be avoided and discouraged, while the policy of settlements had to be definitively frozen. Calling attention to the serious deterioration of the political and economic situation for both

Palestinians and Israelis, he said that the European Union had tried to help alleviate the economic suffering of the Palestinians and to support the viability of the Palestinian Authority. Any attempt at destabilizing the Palestinian leadership would be met with a harsh European response, as it would play into the hands of the radicals and would lead to total anarchy.

16. Mr. Moratinos said that peace was possible but it required the political will to move ahead. The current situation must not be allowed to deteriorate. There had been significant efforts by the Palestinian Authority to curb the violence, but more must be done and the international community must support those efforts. The Mitchell Report offered an adequate basis for the cessation of violence and the resumption of negotiations, which would build on the progress previously made at Oslo, Sharm el-Sheikh, Camp David and Taba. The various international actors should continue to maintain an effective presence in the region and strengthen their coordination, which was already significant among the United Nations, the European Union, the United States and Russian special envoys.

17. **Yasser Abed Rabbo**, Minister for Information, Culture and Arts, Palestinian Authority, representative of Palestine, said that the principal factor undermining opportunities for a just peace was Israel's continued occupation of the Palestinian land. The current crisis in the region was attributable to the failure to implement any of the United Nations resolutions calling for an end to the Israeli occupation and apply international law. Successive Israeli Governments had persistently attempted to obstruct the implementation of the agreements that had been signed between the two parties since the Declaration of Principles.

18. The world should not seek partial solutions to the daily persecution of Palestinians. Palestinians rejected violence because they were a people who had been victims of violence for 34 years under the Israeli occupation. He regretted the campaign in Israel and the United States that equated the victim with those who violated the rights of the victim. He also regretted the fallacious idea promoted in Israel and the United States that Palestinians had refused Israel's generous offer during the Camp David negotiations and therefore deserved the policy of extremism pursued by the current Israeli Government. In fact, what had been offered to the Palestinians at Camp David was merely an Israeli scheme to detach extensive areas of the Palestinian territory, thereby fragmenting it into cantons isolated from each other, maintaining control over a large part of the borders with the Arab world, perpetuating control over the airspace and ground water, retaining military bases in the territory in order to legitimize ongoing occupation, rejecting any solution to the question of the refugees, and keeping Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty while granting to Palestinians formal administrative powers there.

19. In order to prevent Israel from talking about cessation of violence while continuing violence, there must be the presence of international observers to guarantee the implementation of the Mitchell Report's recommendations and supervise the total cessation of Israeli settlement activities and the implementation of the signed agreements. He appealed to Israelis to reject the propaganda of occupation and aggression and to defend together a just peace through the implementation of the United Nations resolutions and the principle of land for peace.

20. Statements were also made by representatives of Governments and intergovernmental organizations. The representative of Egypt said that Israel could not continue its embargo against the Palestinians and at the same time complain about security. He called upon the Israeli Government to implement its commitment to the recommendations of the Mitchell Report and supported the establishment of an international supervisory mechanism in the Territory. He hoped that under the Spanish Presidency, the European Union would play a greater role in the peace process. The representative of Malaysia said that the Mitchell Report provided a good basis to break the deadlock and build a bridge back to the negotiating process. The Madrid process and the Oslo accords must be pieced together on an urgent basis. He commended the Palestinian Authority for unambiguously accepting the

Mitchell Report and regretted that the Israeli Government continued to reject major parts of the Report, including the call for complete cessation of settlement activity. With its good relations with countries in the region, Europe would be an important and welcome interlocutor. Israel should desist from further military action and not launch large military operations or a full-scale invasion against the Palestinian Authority, as was widely speculated. That would deliver a catastrophic blow to whatever remained of the peace process. The representative of China said that the Israelis had used force to cause sizeable losses and humiliation to the Palestinian people, pushing the peace process to the brink of collapse. United Nations resolutions and the principle of land for peace must be the basis for the peace process. The question of Palestine was the core of the Middle East conflict. As a permanent member of the Security Council, his Government had actively worked through different channels to achieve a solution. It had encouraged Israel to use a moderate policy and to restrain its use of force. His Government would continue to work for a total solution to the Middle East problems, including the question of Palestine.

21. The representative of India said that his Government had fully supported the Palestinian Authority since its inception and extended all possible assistance and political support. India would continue to give material and technical assistance to the Palestinian people so as to enable them to consolidate their gains towards self-determination. He joined international demands that restrictions on the Palestinians by Israel should be eased immediately and that funds that were due to the Palestinian Authority should be made available. He also expressed concern over Israel's settlement construction activity. The representative of Indonesia said that the gravity of the ongoing conflict demanded that the Security Council reconsider its position as a matter of urgency, to dispatch an international observer force to the Occupied Territory in line with its mandate to maintain international peace and security as called for by the Charter of the United Nations. Indonesia had supported the just Palestinian cause from the outset. His Government sought for the Palestinian people nothing more than what it had achieved for its own people – true independence and justice, in freedom and dignity.

22. The representative of the Dominican Republic said that his Government had always been a firm supporter of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). It also supported the guidelines of the 1991 Madrid Conference. He condemned all types of violence and terror, stating that there was only one way to peace between the Israeli and Palestinian peoples – dialogue and negotiation. He appealed for intensified and redoubled efforts towards re-establishing the much-desired peace. The representative of Mexico said that his Government was deeply concerned about the rapid deterioration of the situation in the Middle East. The excessive use of force would only exacerbate the negative feelings between the two parties. The Mitchell Report should shed new light on the situation and help the parties to return to dialogue. He supported the full recognition of the right of peoples to self-determination. A political solution was the only way to peace.

23. The representative of the Organization of the Islamic Conference said that Israeli acts of barbarity had led to the death of more than 600 Palestinians. Israeli restrictions abrogated the right of movement. Israel continued to confiscate lands and to allow settlers the freedom to attack Palestinians, their lands and their crops. The cordoning off of the Palestinian Territory had led to the collapse of the Palestinian economy. Social services such as health care were deteriorating. Meanwhile, total freedom was given to the Israeli settlers. The Israelis were openly trying to remove Mr. Arafat. They not only had designs against Palestinians, but against all Arabs in the region. Israel had not respected the ceasefire, invading the territory under the Palestinian Authority and continuing to destroy entire Palestinian neighbourhoods in Jerusalem on the pretext that no permits had been given for building those premises. People had been expelled from their homes so that Israelis could take over their properties. Settlers cut off electricity and water sources. Palestinians saw their water being siphoned off in broad daylight while the international community did nothing. He stressed that the United States was aiding Israel while Israel rejected any international or regional assistance to the Palestinians. These Israeli actions called for a firm position by

the international community, which must assume its responsibilities and bring to trial all those guilty of crimes against mankind and against the Palestinians.

24. The representative of the League of Arab States said that since the Madrid Conference, the peace process had passed through many stages. The League had considered the Madrid process an important step for peace. There had been agreements between Palestinians and successive Israeli Governments. As an inevitable result of the frustration felt by the Palestinians and the provocation carried out by Mr. Sharon, the Al-Aqsa Intifada had begun. He said that Mr. Sharon's plans, as established already in 1997, when he served as Minister of National Infrastructure, had as their main objective changing the demographics of the area in order to maintain an upper hand. That involved setting up Jewish colonies in Palestinian lands and building roads between those approximately 200 settlements so that there would be more than a million new settlers within 20 to 30 years. He said that Israel had also planned to set up a new Palestinian Administration under another authority. All of that was taking place under the eyes of the international community, which was lacking any decisive response. The League was determined to provide the utmost political and economic support to the Palestinian people. The Palestinian people had united their national forces towards one objective to face all challenges. He welcomed the efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations who should take the necessary steps to thwart Israeli aggression. He expressed shock at the attitude of the political parties of Israel, parties that had said they favoured peace. Palestinians were ready to implement their right to self-defence with whatever means they found at their disposal. He called upon the Governments of the States members of the European Union to stand with the Palestinians in their crisis.

25. The representative of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) said that the stalled peace process had been accompanied by continuing hardship for the Palestinians, with Israeli settlements being the major obstacle towards peace. In most cases, settlements either surrounded Palestinian communities or huge tracts of Palestinian land were confiscated for future Israeli settlements. Prospects for Palestinian sovereignty were compromised by Israeli security arrangements. An ESCWA report registered the negative repercussions of the Israeli occupation and indicated that the upsurge in settlement expansion had continued to negatively affect the peace process. According to the report, water and the environment remained critical issues. The deforestation of land further contributed to the deterioration. The report also revealed that Israeli occupation inhibited investment and growth. The restriction on the movement of goods and people contributed to the loss of income, and withholding revenues by Israel further accentuated the problems. ESCWA was currently seeking funds for intensifying its assistance to the Palestinian Territory. He stressed the recommendations of the Mitchell Report and that the principle of land for peace should be put into practice.

26. The representative of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) said that Habitat was the United Nations agency that had "shelter for all" and "sustainable human settlements" as its two main foci. In relation to the Palestine question, the Centre was mandated to implement its resolution entitled "Illegal Israeli human settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories". The resolution called upon Israeli authorities to implement a number of measures to enable the Palestinian people to ensure their housing needs, including ending the confiscation of Palestinian lands and the establishment of settlements. The resolution also called upon Israeli authorities to accept the de jure applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the Occupied Territory. Also under the resolution was a request to the Executive Director of Habitat to organize a meeting on the establishment of a human settlements fund for the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. He invited the participants to join in the organization of the meeting by providing political and financial support for the preparation of studies needed for the establishment of the fund.

27. The representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) said that for more than 21 years the UNDP Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (PAPP) had offered technical

and capital assistance worth more than US\$ 350 million. It was an important partner in programmes relating to infrastructure, water, sewage, roads, rural development and capacity-building. Referring to the deepening economic crisis since the intifada, he said that two thirds of the population was below the poverty line and that there was over 50 per cent unemployment. While it was rarely mentioned, the situation had a serious impact on the psychological health of the people. Many small villages were cut off from supplies. Palestinian municipalities were facing serious problems because they did not receive necessary funds and were unable to provide basic services. Numerous families were no longer able to continue to support the education of their children. He said that there had been a lack of response to the situation by the international community, which had resulted in a collective loss of the gains of development assistance. The Programme used a two-track approach regarding development and emergency activities. An amount of \$33 million had been devoted to emergency assistance. He called for support for rehabilitation, health, education, housing and agriculture.

III. Plenary sessions

Plenary I

The Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts: an overview

28. Speakers in this plenary examined the Madrid peace process; the Oslo accords and subsequent agreements and understandings; interim and permanent status negotiations: progress and obstacles; and recent developments in the peace process.

29. **Yossi Katz**, Member of the Knesset, said that the political programme introduced by former Prime Minister Barak at Camp David, with minor changes, should be the basis of peace accords between Israel and the Palestinians. The accords would recognize an independent Palestinian state. The borders would be the ones of 1967, with slight adjustments so that one or two blocks of settlements could be established. The rest of the settlements would be evacuated. The Palestinian state would receive alternate land and the right of passage in exchange for the lands it would relinquish. The State of Israel would recognize the injustice and suffering that had been caused to the Palestinian refugees during the 1948 war and would be at the centre of wide-scale international efforts to solve once and for all the Palestinian refugee problems, by aiding States with Palestinian refugees, particularly the Palestinian state. Israel would absorb about 100,000 refugees within the Green Line. Jerusalem would be divided between the sides. Israel's sovereignty would be recognized in the western part, including Givaat Zee, Maale Adumim and several other new neighbourhoods established after the 1967 war. The Palestinian Al-Quds would include the East Jerusalem neighbourhoods and the villages around Jerusalem such as Abu Dis, Anata and others. The Old City should be run by a special regime, and its status should be determined in another 10 or 20 years. The status of the holy places would be dealt with in a separate agreement.

30. He stated that Israel should not enforce a solution on the Palestinians through the use of its power and that the Palestinians would be unable to enforce a solution on Israel through violence. He criticized the demolition of Palestinian homes and the use of disrespectful language directed against Chairman Arafat. Instead, the Palestinian leadership should be encouraged to take all the necessary measures to prevent terrorist activities. He said that Shimon Peres was a member of the Government only because he believed that he might be able to advance peace and that the sides could be brought back to the negotiating table. For that to happen, the violence must stop. The Palestinian leadership must reach serious decisions. Only when there was a bilateral ceasefire could the Israeli peace camp demand that Prime Minister Sharon show all his cards regarding permanent accords. It should not be considered that if the Sharon-Peres coalition fell apart, a Labour government would immediately replace it. Unfortunately, the immediate alternative would be an extremist right-wing government or a government headed by Mr. Netanyahu.

31. Mr. Katz continued that under the current Government, Israeli public support for the peace process had declined dramatically as the number of terrorist attacks increased and the military conflict became more severe during the intifada. Although a clear majority of Israelis considered that settlements interfered with the advancement of peace and should be evacuated, each violent act against settlers led to an increase in solidarity with them and a decrease in confidence in the peace process. Experience had shown that the Left had been much more successful in paving the way to peace, but a final settlement would necessitate drastic measures, including the evacuation of settlements. A broad-based government had a better chance of convincing the public of the necessity of taking such measures, and Mr. Sharon had proved his ability to take such measures during the evacuation of the settlements in Sinai at the time of the peace agreement with Egypt. The immediate important task was to implement the recommendations of the Mitchell Report without any excuses. Only full implementation would lead the parties back to the negotiating table.

32. **Valerian Chouvaev**, Head of the Division for Palestine and Israel, Department of Middle East and North Africa, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Russian Federation, said that the important place the Middle East occupied in the world made the situation fraught with consequences for international peace and security. The Mitchell Report was critical primarily because the two parties and the international community had accepted it. The first step towards the realization of the Mitchell plan was that both parties must implement the understanding for a ceasefire. It was essential to prove flexibility and a will to compromise. The plan was like a package deal and the political elements were aimed towards the resumption of substantive negotiations. He stressed that it would be impossible to ensure security without the return of the parties to the negotiating table. While it was difficult to say what would happen in the future, one of the points to be discussed would be putting into place measures for the transitional period. The problem now was to convince political circles and the public to embrace the recommendations.

33. Mr. Chouvaev pointed out that the approach of the relevant Security Council resolutions on the principle of land for peace should not be cast aside or forgotten. He noted that the peace process launched in Madrid had come a long way but it remained fragile and must be kept from dangerous reversals. All parties concerned must encourage positive statements and actions. Violence led to nothing; pursuing violence did not contribute to the security of the Israelis or to the realization of the rights of the Palestinian people. Within the context of international relations, the Middle East played a particular role and had a strategic position. The task of drawing up specific agreements rested primarily with the parties concerned, but it was sometimes difficult to untie the knot of accumulated problems. Only by charting a course with the participation of the two parties and the co-sponsors could peace be achieved. Ten years after the Madrid Conference had not elapsed in vain. Russia would do its best to see that the lofty goal of peace in the Middle East was accomplished.

34. **Manuel Marín**, Member of the Spanish Parliament, said there was hardly any peace process to which so much attention had been devoted as had been to the Madrid Conference and the subsequent agreements and understandings. He did not question the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people or the right of Israelis to security. International agreements must be respected. When there were Labour governments, the possibility for peace improved. Under conservative governments, the possibilities for peace shrank. However, international agreements should be respected regardless of what party was in power. Agreements were the responsibility of the State, not of the party.

35. He said that violence was the main adversary of the Palestinian Authority. It was pointless to try to single out who had the greatest responsibility. One of the problems with the peace process was that international diplomacy had put it into a capsule. Time and again there was talk that there would be a war, but it had not happened. The peace process had gone on too long. Compliance with the existing arrangements was imperative. The burden of proof lay with Mr. Sharon, and since that was so, he was pessimistic. If the Labour Party were in power, the outlook would be better.

36. **Ignacio Alvarez-Ossorio**, Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Alicante, Spain, highlighted the shortcomings of the Madrid peace process. The framework of the Madrid negotiations had so many limitations that any observer could have predicted difficulties. The peace process had a loose foundation. The framework defined by the United States Administration clashed with United Nations resolutions and showed suspicious similarities to Israeli negotiating proposals, which marginalized other international actors. The will of the United States was manifest. Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) should guide the process. Although the Bush Administration had submitted a letter of guarantee, certain lines should not be crossed. No favour was given to the creation of an independent Palestinian state. At the same time, the Palestinians were assured of the United States opposition to continued Israeli settlements. It did not exclude, however, a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation. The Bush Administration had attempted to maintain an even-handed stance. While it got the Israelis and the Palestinians to the negotiating table, the shortcomings appeared in the long run.

37. Mr. Ossorio recalled that Israel had military and economic power and that the peace process would perpetuate that asymmetry. Once the Declaration of Principles had been signed, it was clear that the Israeli criteria of separation of land from peace prevailed over Palestinian criteria. During the five interim years, Israel had had a free hand to expand its settlements. The Palestinians had to give up or postpone their claims to a sovereign state. The delaying tactics assumed by successive Israeli Governments had created new facts. The demographics of Jerusalem and the West Bank had been altered by the expropriation of lands, and the cantonizations had divided the Palestinians into three separate zones. The main drawback was that it was not based on principles accepted by all parties. In Madrid, certain issues had been avoided. Palestinian refugees had been hardly mentioned, although 4 million people had been affected. Another fundamental aspect was that Israel had occupied Arab territories since 1967. A further issue not fully considered was the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. He cautioned that any agreement not based on those principles would be doomed to failure.

38. **Yasser Abed Rabbo**, Minister for Information, Culture and Arts, Palestinian Authority, said that the main concern of the Israeli Government was to prove that the dialogue had come to a standstill and there was not a Palestinian partner. Among Palestinians, there was great disappointment, perhaps based on their experiences over the years. He said the situation was more complex than it used to be, but it was not blocked. The current extremism could not be dealt with simply through technical means. Political means had to be employed to deal with the reasons for the extremism. In the case in point, the reason was the occupation. He understood the need of Israelis for security anywhere in Israel. Palestinians also needed normal living conditions. It was possible for the Israelis to have security without it being at the expense of minimum living conditions for Palestinians. That minimum included self-determination. He said there could be differences when the issue of settlements entered into the question of security. There was no way to deal with the violence without a political settlement of that issue.

39. Israel had accepted only the part of the Mitchell Report dealing with security, demanding that before the implementation of the Report's recommendations, there must be no violence for seven days. That unrealistic precondition was an attempt to put an end to the Mitchell Report's recommendations. When the Americans had accepted that stipulation, Sharon had put forth another condition that he should be the one to decide whether there had been a week free of violence. He said the attacks against Mr. Arafat and others, including insults and calls for assassinations, had reached levels unknown since the end of the cold war. The extremists in Israel had said that Mr. Arafat had refused a generous offer for peace, but in fact it was they who had refused peace. Recalling as a participant the negotiations in Camp David, he criticized the isolationist attitude of the Israeli delegation. Mr. Barak, during three weeks, had met only twice with Mr. Arafat and only in the presence of President Clinton. The Israelis had hoped that the American delegation would carry out Israeli policies and put pressure on the Palestinians. Arafat had not rejected a generous offer of peace at Camp David. The offer put forth did not meet the minimum requirement – the right to self-determination. However, the Palestinians had remained patient and had

continued to negotiate till Taba. He stressed again that the intifada was not the choice of the Palestinians. Peace was their only choice.

Plenary II

The situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem

40. In this plenary, experts discussed the security situation since September 2000; the need for international protection of the Palestinian people, including the application of the Fourth Geneva Convention; international efforts at ending the crisis and restarting the peace process; the issue of Israeli settlements; and the state of the Palestinian economy. A paper by Ms. Rawya Shawa, who was unable to participate, was distributed. Mr. Allam Jarrar, Vice-President of the Palestinian Council for Justice and Peace, made himself available to speak on the topics of the session.

41. **Allam Jarrar**, Vice-President of the Palestinian Council for Justice and Peace, Ramallah, said that Mr. Sharon's visit to the Al-Aqsa mosque had ignited the intifada. Prior to that, however, frustration among Palestinians had been building because attention to the essential issues of concern to them had been deferred and postponed. Mr. Arafat had not given the order to start the intifada. It had risen from the people themselves. The Israeli military force had tried to crush the ambitions of the people who wanted a solution that would guarantee a minimum respect for their rights, including the end of the occupation, the withdrawal of all Israeli forces to the borders of 1967 and sovereignty over their land, including Jerusalem. Moreover, there must be a solution to the refugee situation in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions. Any solution must guarantee the security of all countries in the region.

42. When the settlements had been established, the Israelis knew that they were illegal. Palestinian refugees came from Palestine and therefore had rights in Palestine. There was only one solution: to put an end to the Israeli occupation. He pointed out that Mr. Sharon's ascent to power had complicated the situation. His Government had no clear programme on the question of Palestine. It was an emergency Government whose main purpose was to cope with the intifada, not to deal with its root causes. The current situation was very dangerous, with implications for the entire region.

43. Mr. Jarrar said that thousands of Palestinians had been wounded by Israeli soldiers. Medical services had been reduced to practically nothing in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Citizens had no access to emergency services. Palestinians had lost two thirds of their production, and the unemployment rate was now at about 48 per cent. To find a solution, there must be an agreement on the principles and a yardstick that applied to everyone such as those contained in international resolutions. The present situation could not be dealt with through military means. There was a moral and political responsibility to be shouldered by the international community to ensure that international resolutions were implemented. The Palestinian Authority had already given its approval to the Mitchell Report. Despite that, Israeli troops had been deployed and as late as yesterday had invaded Palestinian territory. The situation was highly explosive and, without the intercession of a third party, it would only deteriorate.

44. **Jeff Halper**, Coordinator of the Israeli Committee against House Demolitions, Jerusalem, said that Israel had succeeded in making the occupation invisible. Within Israel, since 1993 until January 2001 in Taba, all the attention had been focused on the peace process, while Israel had doubled the number of settlers, constructed a massive system of bypass highways and imposed closures on the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Israel had also succeeded in making the occupation invisible in the international arena. The Israeli offer of 95 per cent of the occupied land and its rejection by the Palestinians at Taba had widely stopped international criticism of Israel. He emphasized that it was imperative to make the occupation visible. He pointed out that Israel needed a Palestinian state, because it could not give citizenship to all the Palestinians. Becoming a bi-national state was unacceptable to

Israel. Moreover, continuous occupation would lead to a de facto apartheid situation and thus cause greater opposition in the international arena. However, Israel did not want to give up control. The solution for Israel was “occupation by consent”, in which Palestinians would receive enough territory to establish a mini-state and Israel would still maintain control. In order to maintain control for a long period of time and to avoid international opposition, the control had to be subtle, invisible and bureaucratic, through thousands of regulations and a so-called civil administration that was actually run by the military.

45. Mr. Halper described the Matrix of Control, the system imposed by Israel over the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Matrix needed to be dismantled to achieve a just peace and a viable sovereign Palestinian state. The Matrix was composed of three layers. One of them was military actions both in response to the intifada and in “normal times”. Those in normal times included the use of undercover units and collaborators who undermined the very fabric of Palestinian society. Since 1967, there had been about 2000 orders issued by the military commanders of the West Bank and Gaza, supplemented by civil administration policies. The second measure was creating facts on the ground: expropriation of land, construction of more than 200 settlements, carving the Occupied Territory into areas which confined Palestinians to some 190 islands. It also included a massive system of highways; severe control on Palestinian movement; construction of industrial parks; control over aquifers; and exploitation of holy places as a pretext for maintaining a security presence. The third and the subtlest mechanism was bureaucratic or legal in nature. It entangled Palestinians in a tight web of restrictions including temporary closures of the West Bank and Gaza, a discriminatory system of work, entrance and travel permits restricting freedom of movement, and active displacement through exile, deportation and induced immigration. Land expropriation, house demolitions, schemes of transfer, a freeze on the natural development of Palestinian town and villages, restrictions on the planting of crops and their sale came under such bureaucratic controls. The advantage of the Matrix of Control was its invisibility. Since it was a low-intensity control, it was not covered by the media even though it absolutely defined Palestinian life.

46. He concluded that the international community should make the occupation visible. In his view, peace was not going to come from within Israel, but through international pressure. He appealed for funding for grass-roots organizations, which would go a long way in helping them to provide information about what was happening on the ground and would also complement diplomatic-level activities.

47. **Francis Okelo**, Deputy United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, said that his body’s mandate was to participate in the Middle East peace process and to mobilize and coordinate resources in support of the process. It supported a peace that was based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace; a peace that guaranteed security for all in the area, and it totally rejected violence and terrorism. The pursuit of those principles had not been easy or fully successful. On the Israeli side, there was concern about Palestinian enactment of their security obligations. The Palestinians were concerned about sovereignty over territory.

48. The full implementation of the Mitchell recommendations was the only hope of returning to the negotiating table. In constructing a house, one had to build the foundation, the wall and the roof. In the house of peace, the foundation was the need to improve the living conditions of the Palestinian people. The wall represented the need to restore the hope of the Palestinian people. The roof was the security of both parties. You could not build a house starting with the roof. The political issues must be taken care of in tandem with the security concerns.

49. Mr. Okelo recalled that the nine months of violence and unrest had exacted a heavy toll on Palestinians and Israelis, but moreso on the Palestinians. The economic situation was severe. Poverty was breeding hate, and hate created violence. The future was grim. The situation illustrated the need for

job creation to alleviate the nearly 50 per cent unemployment in Palestine. Another need was the provision of health services and other critical services, such as education and relief services — food and shelter. The steady deterioration of Palestinian institutions would be difficult to restore. The restrictions on internal movement were monumental and counterproductive. The continuation of violence showed that those restrictions did not work as a security measure.

50. **Luisa Morgantini**, Member of the European Parliament, said that, as a member of the European Parliament and other organizations, she worked together with grass-roots organizations to help protect the Palestinian people. She appreciated in particular the work of small Israeli grass-roots groups who tried to stop the demolition of Palestinian homes. The international community was doing nothing to stop the collective punishment meted out by the Israelis. The European Parliament must take action to ensure that Israel fulfilled the accords to which it had agreed.

51. As a believer in non-violence, she deplored terrorism. Peace was possible but there was little chance of finding a solution between the Israeli and Palestinian leadership. The duty of the European Parliament was to ensure Palestinian rights, including the right to their own state, with Jerusalem as a shared capital. It was not enough to be aware of the situation and to provide financial assistance. The Parliament should have a policy in which human rights were not just words but principles to be implemented. The international community must be pushed to stop the Israeli settlement policy. Peace could not be possible when the Palestinians saw their land being expropriated every day. One had to personally see trees being uprooted and land that had been cultivated for generations turned into a desert. The current double standard could not continue. The international community must work together to implement United Nations resolutions.

52. **Felipe Sahagun**, Professor of International Relations at Complutense University, Madrid, noted that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict received disproportionate attention compared to the other 25 or 30 ongoing conflicts around the world. The tendency was for Western journalists, especially in Spain, to favour the victim, in this case perceived to be the Palestinians. That was, however, nuanced by the powerful Israeli propaganda machine, the negative image of the radicalism of some Arab groups and the influence of Jewish communities in many European countries and in the United States. He said that the Palestinians were learning to defend themselves better in the propaganda war. They had mounted a web page that kept track of media reporting on the situation. It studied the reports on the conflict published in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* over the period of one month and found, for example, that when victims happened to be Israeli teenagers reference was made to the “loss of innocent life”, a term never used when the victims were Palestinian children or teenagers. Israeli attacks were called “retaliation” or “response”, whereas attacks by Palestinians were never referred to as a response to the Israeli occupation. Biographical facts and often photographs of Israeli casualties were printed, but no personal details were given about Palestinian casualties.

53. He stated that Israeli terminology was mostly accepted by the press, whereas Palestinian terminology was subjected to all kinds of qualifications. The sacrifice of a Palestinian suicide bomber was a terrorist attack, whereas selective Israeli terrorism against Palestinian leaders of Hamas or Jihad was simply a reprisal. The source of such terminology was often the Israeli army, which had, for example, recently distributed to the Israeli media a new list of recommended terms for use with reference to the conflict with the Palestinians. Such terms were: “armed confrontation” instead of intifada; “preventing the entry into Israel” instead of closure or blockade of the Palestinian areas; “security measures” instead of actions of reprisal or punishment. Numerous electronic and more traditional publications were exclusively dedicated to challenging what they considered tendentious or false information on the conflict. The main conclusion that they came up with was that Western media presented Israel as the aggressor, whereas they portrayed terrorism as an acceptable means in the Palestinian struggle against Israel.

54. Mr. Sahagun was of the view that the international media were subject to strong propaganda and misinformation campaigns. By and large, that was overcome by contrasting the versions offered by both sides and correcting errors, but it was increasingly more difficult to find the proper terminology for reporting on the conflict without appearing biased towards one side or the other.

Plenary III **The road to peace**

55. In this plenary, speakers examined permanent status issues, including Palestinian statehood; United Nations resolutions and decisions; and the role of the co-sponsors, the United Nations, the European Union and other international actors.

56. **Mahdi Abdul Hadi**, Head of the Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs, Jerusalem, questioned whether the road to peace, as stipulated by the co-sponsors, was the right road for the Palestinians. The land for peace formula needed a serious commitment from the two parties with mutual recognition and accountability for all, but the so-called recognition was based on deception, on realpolitik. Rabin had been made to believe that to be the only way to give the Palestinians autonomy. Mr. Arafat had been in a similar position as he could not miss the chance to have an independent state. Palestinians and Israelis today were in a worse situation. They hated and distrusted each other because they had never accepted mutual recognition. The Israelis were saying no to all of the Palestinian demands. Palestinians could not be governed by settlers. They needed borders and sovereignty.

57. Israeli society was divided, with no clear vision on how to deal with the Palestinians. Shimon Peres was destroying the Labour Party. Benjamin Netanyahu wanted to go back to square one and ignore all the understandings and agreements. Ehud Barak wanted to annex 20 per cent of the Occupied Territory and to build a synagogue on the Haram al-Sharif compound. Ariel Sharon had carried it one step further by going himself to the Al-Aqsa mosque. He concluded that there was no Israeli partner. Mr. Sharon's intent was to delay the establishment of a Palestinian state for as long as he could. There was no Israeli sense of justice. Most recently, 15 houses had been destroyed in Jerusalem without one Israeli voice of dissent. On the other hand, Palestinian society was also not in order. International legitimacy had not been implemented. The problem was not in Washington, Brussels or Amman. The young Palestinians committed suicide not because of religion but because of a position of despair. Today the Israelis were even questioning recognition of Mr. Arafat and the PLO. There was no decision in Washington on how to deal with the situation, and Europeans were just talking. The international community should wake up the Israelis.

58. **Richard Murphy**, Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, New York, and Chairman of the Middle East Institute, Washington, DC, said that the United States Administration seemed more open today to a greater measure of internationalization of peace process diplomacy than had been the case under previous administrations. The tone of the Administration's reception of the Mitchell Report and the comments of the President and the Secretary of State showed a greater warmth towards involvement of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the European Union in the peace process than had been the case in the 1980s and 1990s. He cautioned, however, that the main driving force for future progress would probably continue to result from the interaction of the parties themselves, assisted principally by the United States, Egypt and Jordan.

59. The Mitchell Report was a useful contribution to the thinking of the American Administration, which had endowed it with an aura of authority. In fact, when asked if there was a fallback position, Secretary of State Colin Powell had said the Mitchell Report was plan A, B and C for the Middle East. It had everything needed to move forward: cessation of violence and hostility; and confidence-building measures to restore trust and security cooperation and lead to negotiations on final status. There were

some sceptics, however, who said that the constant references to the Mitchell Report were an indication of the bankruptcy of United States policy. He expressed the view that Washington's embrace of the Mitchell Report might be an indication of renewed American readiness to tackle the issue of settlements more frontally. The Report asserted that a freeze of settlement construction, including that done in the name of "natural growth," was necessary, as it would be a key inducement for the Palestinians to return to the negotiating table. He cautioned, however, that successive American administrations had been active in varying degrees on the issue but had never been able to effect a prolonged pause in settlement construction. History had shown that the settler movement could be constrained only by domestic forces within Israel, which were most effective when there was a clear prospect of advancing towards peace. He was pleased to note the publication of more rounded accounts of Camp David. The commentaries of some of those involved disputed the conventional wisdom that Prime Minister Barak had made a surprisingly generous offer or that the Palestinian rejection of the offer revealed that the basic Palestinian position was to destroy the State of Israel.

60. **Yael Dayan**, Member of the Knesset, noted that over 60 per cent of the electorate had voted for Mr. Sharon. She had to live with the result of the election and to try to work from inside. She suggested that the Palestinians should unilaterally declare a state, a step that would be supported by the mainstream in Israel. The illusion of Camp David had given the right wing a terrible weapon. Mr. Barak's approach at Camp David had harmed all the parties. While there might not be other offers as generous as that put forth at Camp David, the totality of the offer, the take-it-or-leave it aspect, had made it unacceptable. If there was principal agreement on the 1967 borders, there was always room for negotiation, even though those borders were inappropriate for Israel in terms of security. Jerusalem was a separate issue. If the last thing on the agenda after a Palestinian state had been secured was the last square kilometre of the Haram al-Sharif compound, she was sure that the two peoples would find some agreement. She thought that a solution to the question was reachable and she hoped it would be found before there was a new war. There would be separation between the two states at first, but it would not take them as long as the Europeans to come together. She would like to believe that there would be no more terrorism once the misery and suffering were removed, but she found that a difficult concept. Religious fundamentalism had to be dealt with on all sides.

61. **Hussein A. Hassouna**, Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States to the United Nations, said that since its creation in 1945, the League of Arab States had been the main forum for the formulation of an Arab common policy and the coordination of its member States' policies regarding the question of Palestine. Over the years, the States members of the Arab League had constantly reaffirmed their adherence to United Nations resolutions, international conventions and agreements, and international humanitarian law, as well as basic principles of humanity and justice, which the international community considered applicable to the question of Palestine. Since the adoption of Security Council resolution 242 (1967), the Arab League had been calling for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from all the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied in 1967, and the restoration of the national rights of the Palestinian people.

62. The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people included the right to self-determination, the right to national independence and sovereignty and the right to return to their homes. Although General Assembly resolutions affirming those Palestinian rights might be considered mere recommendations, the adoption of those resolutions year after year over the past half-century by an overwhelming majority of the United Nations Member States had endowed them with considerable political and legal authority and moral weight. They had indeed become evidence of international customary law reflecting the international community's acknowledgement of the existence of such rights and of the necessity of their implementation.

IV. Closing session

63. **Walter Balzan**, Rapporteur of the Committee, introduced the General Remarks of the Meeting (see annex I).

64. **Miquel Nadal**, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Spain, said that throughout the 10 years that had elapsed since the Madrid Conference, the peace process had gone through many phases and had had to overcome many problems posed by the inherent difficulties of a negotiating process of such a magnitude as well as by attacks and provocations from those who did not believe in it. Nevertheless, there had also been many achievements on the road to solving the conflict, most important among them the creation of the Palestinian Authority, the embryo of what would become a viable and democratic Palestinian state. When the current crisis erupted, Israelis and Palestinians had just begun to address the most difficult issues at the heart of the conflict, such as water, Jerusalem and the refugees. Even after the outbreak of the crisis, the parties had continued to negotiate the issues, so much so that in Taba they were in a position to declare that they had never before been closer to reaching an agreement.

65. He stated that his Government was aware that partial steps were in themselves not enough. Only by preserving the comprehensive nature of the peace process that had begun in Madrid would it be possible to find a viable solution. A new dynamic was needed for the resumption of the negotiations. As had been declared by the European Union a few days before, there was no other option than the immediate implementation of the Mitchell Committee recommendations in their entirety, otherwise any delay or additional condition would only facilitate extremism and the perpetuation of violence. Every effort must be made to stop the violence, combat terrorism and avoid steps that could be perceived as provocative or able to prejudice the outcome of the negotiations, such as extrajudicial executions and the illegal settlement activity.

66. Mr. Nadal pointed out that the Mitchell Report contained a wide range of confidence-building measures. It was a balanced package that required total implementation leading to the resumption of negotiations. The creation of an international monitoring mechanism could contribute to overcoming the obstacles in the implementation process. He stressed the importance of international support for the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority. Continuing European Union policies, Spain would make Europe's contribution to the peace process one of its highest priorities upon assumption of the EU Presidency on 1 January 2002 and would maintain the closest possible coordination with the parties and the rest of the international actors, notably the United States.

67. **Nabil Marouf**, General Delegate of Palestine to Spain, representative of Palestine, said that the Israeli leadership was continuing the military escalation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as though it was determined to end the peace process and go to war. The Palestinians, in defence of their rights, were waging a war for peace. There would be no end to the conflict without an end of the Israeli occupation and the creation of a Palestinian state, with Jerusalem as its capital. The situation threatened international peace and security. The international community should provide international observers. He expressed confidence that the international community and the international organizations would help to preserve the rights of the Palestinians.

68. **Ibra Deguène Ka**, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, said that the process set in motion at the Middle East Peace Conference held in Madrid was now at a standstill, with clear signs of a dangerous turnaround as regards the Israeli-Palestinian track. The achievements of Oslo, Wye River Plantation, Sharm el-Sheikh and more recently Camp David and Taba seemed very distant indeed. Procrastination tactics, the absence of tangible outcomes and an illegal occupation going on for decades had intensified the hardship and exasperation felt by the Palestinians and had made them rise once again in protest in September 2000. The change of

leadership in Israel had undercut whatever momentum there had been for reaching a final and comprehensive agreement, thus leaving only hardship, loss and frustration for the Palestinians. The Palestinian people had been obliged to revert to a struggle for survival and the satisfaction of basic day-to-day needs, rather than work for strengthening their institutions and for achieving long-term development and prosperity. Efforts by the international community had brought about some glimmers of hope, in terms of the provision of much-needed humanitarian and fiscal assistance; increasing recognition that the use of excessive force and the resulting loss of life are unacceptable; and provision of a blueprint for the way out through the Fact-Finding Committee's report.

69. Mr. Ka said that efforts at bringing the peace process back on track continued. The co-sponsors of the Middle East peace process, the European Union and, of course, the United Nations organs and the Secretary-General were trying to influence the parties towards ending violence and restarting substantive negotiations. There were many delicate issues on which agreement had to be reached for a comprehensive final status arrangement to materialize. The way ahead was not easy but was well charted in the Mitchell Committee's report and required strict adherence to norms of international law, as enshrined in international conventions and United Nations resolutions. Clearly, it should be possible to reach a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine if only all those concerned adhered strictly to established and internationally recognized principles and rules, in particular Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and General Assembly resolution 194 (III).

Annex I

General Remarks

1. The United Nations International Meeting on the Question of Palestine, under the theme “The road to Israeli-Palestinian peace”, was organized by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People on 17 and 18 July 2001 in Madrid. Participants in the Meeting included international experts, eminent political personalities, representatives of Governments, intergovernmental organizations, United Nations system entities, Palestine, parliamentarians, civil society organizations, representatives of academia and the media.

2. The Meeting was convened by the Committee with the aim of generating a broad debate over the past, present and future of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process since the Madrid Middle East Peace Conference of 1991. Ultimately, the aim of the Committee was to encourage a re-evaluation of the achievements, shortcomings and prospects of the peace process. It also sought to mobilize support by Governments, intergovernmental and civil society organizations for the success of the ongoing efforts to ensure a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine and the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

3. The Meeting was held at a time of continuing crisis in the peace process. The situation on the ground remained until very recently one of dangerous and escalating violence. It was still characterized by excessive use of force by the occupying Power, “targeted assassinations”, settlement expansion, repeated closures of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and other illegal Israeli practices.

4. The participants expressed their strong conviction that:
 - (a). The recommendations contained in the report of the Fact-Finding Committee chaired by former United States Senator George Mitchell and the ceasefire agreement subsequently brokered by the United States should be swiftly implemented, as a whole;
 - (b). The excessive use of force by Israel, the occupying Power, the closures and the economic blockade of Palestinian population centres, the incursions into Palestinian-controlled areas and all other illegal measures of collective punishment against the Palestinian people must be brought to an end immediately;
 - (c). In view of the excessive use of force against Palestinian civilians and continued Israeli illegal settlement activity, the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention should expedite the reconvening of the Conference of the High Contracting Parties, in accordance with the statement adopted by the Conference in Geneva on 15 July 1999;
 - (d). Special significance must be attached to the need for the swift implementation of the Fact-Finding Committee’s call for a complete freeze in settlement expansion and its suggestion that Israel should consider the evacuation now of some settlements for security reasons;
 - (e). An international presence must be established, to protect innocent civilians and to monitor the implementation of agreements and understandings reached. In this respect, the United Nations Security Council should fully discharge its responsibilities under the Charter;

- (f). Israel should transfer without delay the revenue it was withholding from the Palestinian Authority in contravention of signed agreements.

5. The participants were of the view that, for peace to be attained, the parties should resume negotiations in an atmosphere of genuine commitment to the agreed basis of the peace process, namely Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace. It was noted with concern that, in recent months, actions taken by the Government of Israel threatened to offset progress achieved in the past and narrow the framework and scope of the negotiations, in a way incompatible with the spirit and the letter of the agreements and understandings reached by the parties.

6. The participants reviewed the various permanent status issues, including the question of Palestinian statehood. They stated that Palestinian statehood was a natural and inalienable right flowing from the rights to self-determination, independence and sovereignty of the Palestinian people. The international community was once again called upon to support these rights of the Palestinian people and spare no effort in making them a reality.

7. The participants discussed the role played in the peace process by the co-sponsors, the European Union, the United Nations, regional organizations and other interested international actors. They stressed that the role of all those States and multilateral institutions in support of the Middle East peace process remained crucial and had to be closely coordinated for better results, particularly in the current critical period.

8. The participants reaffirmed the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with respect to all the aspects of the question of Palestine until it was resolved in a satisfactory manner, in conformity with relevant United Nations resolutions and norms of international law, and until the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people were fully realized.

9. The participants expressed their appreciation for the contribution to the peace process made by the States members of the European Union and by the institutions of the Union itself, and in particular by the Special Envoy of the European Union to the Middle East Peace Process. The EU's political support and generous economic assistance were viewed as vital to the efforts at putting the peace process back on track and at preserving the fiscal viability of the Palestinian Authority, as well as at rehabilitating and developing the Palestinian economy.

10. It was reaffirmed that the donor community's assistance was of great importance to the Palestinian people, particularly during the ongoing period of extreme hardship caused by prolonged violence and economic blockade, as well as the refusal by Israel to transfer tax and customs revenues collected on behalf of the Palestinian Authority and withheld in contravention of signed agreements. Despite the current adverse circumstances, international assistance continued to lay the foundations for the viability and sustainability of the Palestinian economy and society. The role played by international donors would remain equally critical in the period following the establishment of a Palestinian state.

11. The participants acknowledged the important role played by international civil society, both in providing emergency relief to the suffering population of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in mobilizing support for the attainment of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

12. The participants commended Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for his consistent support of the rights of the Palestinian people and his unrelenting personal efforts in the search for peace and stability in the Middle East. They also expressed appreciation for the work performed on a

daily basis on the ground by the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and his Office.

13. The Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, H.E. Mr. Ibra Deguène Ka, and the delegation of the Committee were received by H.E. Mr. Josep Piqué, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Spain, who stressed the importance of supporting the Middle East peace process and the rights of the Palestinian people. The Committee delegation expressed its deep appreciation of the active and constructive role played by Spain in the search for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region.

14. The participants expressed gratitude to H.E. Mr. Josep Piqué, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Spain, and to the Government of Spain for hosting the Meeting and for the assistance and support extended to the Committee and the United Nations Secretariat in its preparation.

Madrid, 18 July 2001

Annex II

List of participants

Speakers

Mr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi
Head, Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA)
Jerusalem

H.E. Mr. Yasser Abed Rabbo
Minister for Information, Culture and Arts
Palestinian Authority

Mr. Ignacio Alvarez-Ossorio
Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Alicante
Alicante, Spain

Mr. Valerian Chouvaev
Head of the Division for Palestine and Israel, Department of Middle East and North Africa
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Moscow

Ms. Yael Dayan
Member of Knesset (Labour)
Tel Aviv

Mr. Jeff Halper
Coordinator, Israeli Committee against House Demolitions
Jerusalem

H.E. Mr. Hussein Hassouna
Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States to the United Nations
New York

Mr. Allam Jarrar
Vice-President, Palestinian Council for Justice and Peace
West Bank

Mr. Yossi Katz
Member of the Knesset (Labour)
Jerusalem

Mr. Manuel Marín
Member of the Spanish Parliament
Madrid

Mr. Miguel Angel Moratinos
Special Envoy of the European Union to the Middle East Peace Process
Nicosia

Ms. Luisa Morgantini
Member of European Parliament
Milan

Mr. Richard Murphy
Senior Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations
New York

Mr. Francis Okelo
Deputy United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process
Gaza

Mr. Felipe Sahagun
Professor of International Relations, Complutense University
Madrid

Ms. Rawya Shawa*
Member, Palestinian Council
Gaza

Delegation of the Committee on the Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

H.E. Mr. Ibra Deguène Ka
Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations
Chairman of the Committee and Head of the Delegation

H.E. Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla
Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations
Vice-Chairman of the Committee

H.E. Mr. Ravan A.G. Farhâdi
Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations
Vice-Chairman of the Committee

H.E. Mr. Walter Balzan
Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations
Rapporteur of the Committee

H.E. Mr. Sotirios Zackheos
Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations

H.E. Mr. M. Nasser Al-Kidwa
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations

* Ms. Rawya Shawa was not able to participate due to Israeli travel restrictions; her paper was made available to participants.

Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations

Mr. Terje Rød-Larsen
United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and
Personal Representative of the Secretary-General

Governments

Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belize, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, China, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Finland, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Morocco, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay

Non-member States maintaining permanent observer missions at Headquarters

Switzerland

Entities having received a standing invitation to participate as observers in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly and maintaining permanent observer missions at Headquarters

Palestine

United Nations organs, agencies and bodies

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
United Nations Centre for Human Settlements
United Nations Development Programme
United Nations Information Centre, Madrid
United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process

Intergovernmental organizations

European Union
League of Arab States
Organization of the Islamic Conference

Civil society organizations

Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organization (AAPSO)
 Al-Ittihad newspaper
 All Africa Students Union (AASU)
 Asamblea de Cooperación por la Paz
 Asociación pro Derechos Humanos de España (APDHE)
 Caritas Española
 Centro de Iniciativas de Cooperación al Desarrollo
 Comité de ONG sobre la Cuestión Palestina
 Commission of the Churches on International Affairs of the World Council of Churches
 Comunidad Bahá'í de España
 Confederación Mundial del Trabajo (CMT)
 Confederación Sindical de Comisiones Obreras
 Cooperación con el África Austral
 Cruz Roja Española
 European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (ECCP)
 Europeos Solidarios
 Federación de Asociaciones de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos
 Fundación Aragonés
 Fundación Internacional Olof Palme
 Fundación Promoción Social de la Cultura
 Helsinki España
 Instituto de Estudios Políticos para América Latina y África
 International Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (ICCP)
 ISCOD
 Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions
 Justicia y Paz
 Liga Pro Derechos Humanos
 Madhok Foundation
 Médecins du Monde-International
 Movimiento por la Paz, el Desarme y la Libertad
 Mundo sin Guerras y sin Violencia
 Organización de Solidaridad de los Pueblos de África, Asia y América Latina (OSPAAAL)
 Palestine Red Crescent Society
 Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) - Brighton and Hove Branch
 Palestinian Council for Justice and Peace (PCJP)
 Palestinian Democratic Union "FIDA"
 Palestinian Federation of Women's Action
 Paz y Cooperación
 Plateforme des ONG françaises pour la Palestine
 Solidaridad con el Tercer Mundo (Sotermun)
 Solidaridad Internacional
 Solidarios para el Desarrollo
 Unión Sindical Obrera (USO)
 Universidad Complutense de Madrid
 Universidad de Murcia
 World YWCA