

THIRTEENTH UNITED NATIONS SEMINAR ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

Theme: "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people"

Istanbul, 7 - 11 April 1986

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Thirteenth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, entitled "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people", was held at the Büyük Sürmeli Hotel, Istanbul, Turkey, from 7 to 11 April 1986, in accordance with the terms of General Assembly resolution 40/96 B of 12 December 1985. Eight meetings were held and 16 panelists presented papers on selected aspects of the question of Palestine.

2. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation consisting of Mr. George Agius (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee, Head of the delegation; Mr. Guennadi I. Oudovenko (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic); Mr. Alberto Velázco San José (Cuba), Mr. Mehmet Ali İremçelik (Turkey), Mr. Zehdi L. Terzi (Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)). Mr. Agius was Chairman and Mr. İremçelik was Rapporteur of the Seminar.

I. OPENING STATEMENTS

3. The Seminar received a message from Mr. Turgut Özal, Prime Minister of Turkey, which was read out by the Chairman of the Seminar at the opening meeting (see annex I to the present report).

4. Mr. Vahit Halefoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, addressed the opening meeting of the Seminar. In his statement he stressed that the Seminar was taking place at a time when the Middle East region was undergoing many important developments. Turkey's historical ties and good relations with the Arab and Islamic countries provided it with a unique position to understand the problems of the region better and to explain the just cause of the Palestinians to its friends in the West.

5. Turkey had opposed the United Nations partition plan in 1947 and had defended the legitimate cause of the Palestinians on all occasions and at all international forums, first and foremost at the United Nations. As a member of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Turkey actively participated in its work.

6. Turkey's relations with the Palestinians were not confined to the international arena. On a bilateral basis as well, it enjoyed relations of friendship and solidarity with the Palestinian people, as with the Arab countries, based on common spiritual and cultural values. Those relations had expanded and been consolidated in a satisfactory way since they had been

officially established and the PLO had opened its office in Ankara in 1979.

7. A just and lasting peace in the region could only be found by the recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians, including their right to self-determination, and by the withdrawal of Israel from Arab territories occupied since 1967. Turkey believed that in order for peace to be lasting, all countries in the region must live within secure boundaries. It would continue to support all peace efforts to that end in which the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians, was entitled to participate with the other parties concerned. Turkey wished to see the establishment of peace and stability as soon as possible so that the peoples of the region could devote their energies to the reconstruction of their countries and to a more fruitful co-operation amongst them.

8. At the same meeting, the Chairman of the Seminar gave a brief account of the Committee's work to date. He stressed the particular importance that the Committee attached to the seminars in the various regions. He indicated the Committee's conviction that objective information on the question of Palestine would help to ensure more comprehensive coverage of developments in the region and promote public support in favour of an equitable and peaceful solution. Once all the facts surrounding the question of Palestine were known, the resultant better understanding of the question would help to convince even those who so far had been somewhat indifferent to the just cause of the Palestinian people.

9. The Committee was convinced that the European countries were in a position to play an active role in the search for a solution. European public opinion had to be mobilized, along with that of all the other regions, to make the voice of reason, the voice of peace and respect for people's rights in world affairs, better heard. It had to be mobilized to exert a more significant influence in the formulation of policies calculated to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights to self-determination and independence, rights that they had been unjustly denied for so long.

10. The struggle of the Palestinian people for the exercise of its rights had not only led to conflict in the region but constituted a permanent danger for international peace and security. Because of that danger, the international community felt concerned and was becoming more and more aware of the difficult and complex question of Palestine and the repercussions of its non-solution. Indeed, the basic elements of the question were so closely interwoven that any partial or unbalanced settlement and, in particular, any attempt not to take fully into account the just and legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people could only place greater obstacles in the way of a solution.

11. The widely attended International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva in 1983, had formulated a number of basic principles necessary for a solution, including the right of all States in the region to exist within secure and recognized boundaries and justice and security for all the people, including a future Palestinian State. That Conference had also recommended the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation on an equal footing of all the parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the PLO - as the representative of the people directly concerned - together with the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

12. Since its thirty-eighth session, the General Assembly had endorsed the idea of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East. It had also invited the Security Council and the Secretary-General to undertake all preparatory measures to convene the Conference. By resolution 40/96 D, the Assembly had stressed the urgent need for additional constructive efforts by all Governments in order to convene the Conference without further delay and for the achievement of its peaceful objectives. It had also called upon the Governments of Israel and the United States to reconsider their positions towards the attainment of peace in the Middle East through the convening of the Conference.

13. Strongly supported by the majority of the States Members of the United Nations, the Committee fully endorsed the importance of such a Peace Conference and, as a matter of priority, continued to exert all efforts to promote its early convening. The views of several parliamentarians and policy makers participating in the Seminar would be of great value in assessing at still needed to be done.

14. Mr. Ribhi Hijazi, Ambassador of the PLO to Turkey, conveyed a message from His Excellency Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO and Commander-in-Chief of the Forces of the Palestine Revolution (see annex II to the present report).

15. The Seminar decided to send a message to Mr. Arafat, thanking him for his message (see annex III to the present report).

16. Mr. Nihat Akyol (Turkey), speaking on behalf of the United Nations Council for Namibia, reaffirmed the Council's support for the General Assembly resolutions relating to the question of Palestine and stressed its solidarity with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in the task of securing the practical attainment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The Council was of the view that the problem of the Middle East was inextricably linked to a just solution of the question of Palestine, the absence of which aggravated tensions and conflicts in this region, thereby endangering international peace and security. The question of Palestine, as the situation in Namibia, continued to lie heavily on the conscience of the international community. As in South Africa, the situation in the Middle East was particularly critical and explosive and violence was spreading throughout the region. Only by collective efforts through the application of pertinent decisions of the invited Nations could those injustices be rectified.

17. Mr. Guennadi I. Oudovenko (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), speaking on behalf of the Special Committee against Apartheid, noted with deep regret that the Palestinian people were still being denied its inalienable right to self-determination and that tensions in the Middle East had escalated further. The questions of Palestine and of apartheid were of the greatest concern to the international community. Both problems emanated from the denial of the rights of self-determination to the peoples concerned. All attempts to bring about a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, as well as to bring about the end of apartheid, had failed due to the obstructive policies of the United States.

18. Each year the Special Committee submitted a special report to the General Assembly and the Security Council on developments concerning relations between Israel and South Africa. Those reports pointed out clearly the nature of the alliance between the two régimes. The concern of the Special Committee in that regard stemmed from the fact that an alliance was detrimental to the interests of African and Arab peoples. The Special Committee reaffirmed its support for the Palestinian people and their heroic struggle to regain its inalienable rights under the leadership of their sole legitimate representative, the PLO.

19. Mr. Velez-San José (Cuba), speaking on behalf of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, acknowledged with appreciation the important work carried out by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

20. The tenet that governed the work of the Special Committee - the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples - adopted by an overwhelming majority of the members of the General Assembly 25 years ago, proclaimed that the subjection of peoples to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation constituted a denial of fundamental human rights, was contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and was an impediment to the promotion of world peace and co-operation. Within the context of the principles embodied in that Declaration, the Special Committee viewed the plight of the Palestinians with most serious concern. The fact that the Palestine question was regarded as a most complex, difficult and dangerous issue should not discourage the international community in, nor should it serve as a pretext to prevent it from, its intensified search for a just solution to the problem. Israel must be made to realize that it could no longer systematically ignore world public opinion on the question of Palestine.

21. Mr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, representing the Organization of the Islamic Conference, read out a message from

Mr. Sharifuddin Pirzada, Secretary-General of that organization.

22. He emphasized that the theme of the Seminar - the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people - was of vital importance to the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security. The growing recognition on the part of the world public opinion and the interest shown by the United Nations and the overwhelming majority of peace-loving nations towards those rights was of great significance.

23. The Organization of the Islamic Conference had been engaged in efforts to create world-wide awareness of the essential importance of the restitution of Palestinian rights as the fundamental prerequisite of a solution of the Palestine and the Middle East questions. The usurpation of Palestine and the denial of the Palestinian people's rights constituted the core of the Middle East conflict. The sixteenth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers held at Fez in January 1986 had reiterated its call for the earliest convening of the International Peace Conference recommended by the General Assembly.

24. On 7 April 1986, the delegation of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was officially received by Mr. Vahit Halefoglu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey.

25. At the closing meeting, 11 April 1986, statements were made by Mr. Tahir Sentürk, Head of the delegation of Turkey, Mr. Ribhi Hijazi, Ambassador of the PLO to Turkey and Mr. George Agius, Chairman of the Seminar.

26. The Seminar adopted a motion of thanks expressing its appreciation to the Government and people of the Republic of Turkey for hosting the Seminar (see annex IV to the present report).

II. PANEL DISCUSSION

27. Four panels were established to consider different aspects of the question of Palestine. These panels and their panelists were as follows:

(a) Panel I

"The International Peace Conference on the Middle East (United Nations General Assembly resolution 38/58 C), the need for such a Conference, efforts and prospects to promote a successful outcome and benefits thereof":

Mr. Türkkaya Ataöv (Turkey), Mr. Lasse Budtz (Denmark), Mr. Marcel Dinu (Romania), Mr. Faik Dizdarevic (Yugoslavia), Mr. Istvan Fodor (Hungary), Mr. Vafa M. Goulizade (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), Mr. Ingo Schoenfelder (German Democratic Republic), Mr. Pasa Sarioglu (Turkey);

(b) Panel II:

"The role of the Palestine Liberation Organization":

Mr. Sami Musallam (PLO);

(c) Panel III:

"The question of Palestine and European public opinion":

Mr. Bülent Akarcali (Turkey), Mr. Constantine Galanopoulos (Greece), Mr. Per Gharton (Sweden), Mr. Albrecht Konecny (Austria), Mr. Michael Lanigan (Ireland), Mr. Mümtaz Soysal (Turkey);

(d) Panel IV:

"The United Nations and the question of Palestine":

Mr. Guennadi I. Oudovenko (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic).

28. The expert members of the various panels agreed on summaries of the presentations and discussions on each of the topics, which the Seminar decided to include in the report, as set out below.

Panel I: "The International Peace Conference on the Middle East (United Nations General Assembly resolution 38/58 C) , the need for such a Conference, efforts and prospects to promote a successful outcome and benefits thereof"

29. It was agreed that the international community needed peace now more than ever so that it could devote itself to solving the present economic and development problems facing it and to halting the arms race in order to avoid the danger of another world conflagration which would have catastrophic effects. The tense situation in the Middle East continued to pose a great danger to peace and security in the area, in the Mediterranean and all over the world. The current circumstances in international affairs required intensified political and diplomatic efforts, so that the real process for peace negotiations could start as soon as possible. It was therefore necessary that all actions should focus on a comprehensive, just and durable settlement. The more so as in the Middle East the inseparable connection between peace and national self-determination was of such a great importance.

30. The very nature of the Middle East conflict, the close relationship between different aspects of the Middle East problem and intertwining interests of many parties and States made it imperative to settle it through collective efforts. Mutually acceptable solutions to outstanding issues that took into account the rights and interests of all the parties could be found only at the conference table.

31. Although almost 40 years had passed since the United Nations General Assembly had adopted resolution 181 (II), which recommended the creation of two States, an Arab State and a Jewish State, it had been implemented so far only to the extent of the creation of the State of Israel. One of the foremost commitments of the international community was to ensure the rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to return, to self-determination and to the creation of its own State in Palestine. The United Nations had inherited the question of Palestine as an international problem and could not ignore its responsibilities. Only a comprehensive solution involving, on an equal footing and with equal rights, the concerned parties, including the PLO, could create the basis for a just and lasting peace. The principle of a peaceful settlement of the Middle East conflict could be traced in all efforts exerted within the United Nations framework in that direction, based on the principles of the Charter and all relevant United Nations resolutions, including all relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

32. An analysis of the ramifications of the question of Palestine led to the conclusion that the best way to establish a just and lasting peace in the region was by convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of all parties concerned. The basis for such a Conference had been laid down in the relevant United Nations resolutions, which embodied the principles of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, of ensuring the legitimate, inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, sovereignty and independence, and of the protection of the right of all the States and peoples of the region to free and independent existence and development within recognized boundaries.

33. In that connection it was strongly reaffirmed that the question of Palestine was at the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, which itself was a multi-faceted problem. Over the years, an international consensus had emerged on the necessity of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the problem. That consensus had been defined in the Geneva Declaration on Palestine adopted by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine in 1983, and affirmed in General Assembly resolution

38/58 C of 13 December 1983 and subsequent ones resolutions calling for the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East. Since the International Conference, the concerted judgement of the United Nations was that the path to the settlement of the Middle East conflict was through the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

34. In accordance with the Geneva Declaration, all parties to the conflict, including the PLO, as well as the United States, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and other concerned States should participate in the International Peace Conference on the Middle East on an equal footing and should take as its guidelines the various principles consistent with the principles of international law.

35. It was stressed that the PLO should be an equal participant in the Conference as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. It was also stressed that the Palestinian problem could not be solved without the participation of the PLO. The view was also expressed that the permanent members of the Security Council and other countries that had shown an active participation in the efforts aimed at finding a peaceful solution to the conflict might also be considered for participation. The Conference should be convened without any preconditions. General agreement on the list of countries and parties was an objective necessity and should not be viewed as a precondition. It was important that the proceedings of the Conference should be conducted in a constructive spirit and that all participants should be motivated by the political will to find a solution conducive to the establishment of peace in that part of the world.

36. The Seminar regarded the fact that the majority of States in the as well as several major intergovernmental organizations had expressed their strong support for the holding of the Conference as a significant factor and testimony to the vital importance of such a conference. The idea of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East reflected the political will of the international community. The Conference had been supported from the very beginning by the PLO, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Socialist countries and other important forces in international life. The convening of such a conference necessitated a change in the current positions of the United States and Israel.

37. The non-aligned countries had concentrated their efforts on convening the Conference within the framework of the United Nations for several reasons, among them being the special responsibility that the United Nations bore in the Middle East, and for the Palestinian question in particular. There was also the fact that every effort to find a solution outside the United Nations had failed.

38. The interest of the Union of Soviet Socialist republics in the early convening of the Conference emanated from its principled stand of supporting collective efforts for a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement of the Middle East conflict. The Soviet proposal for a Middle East settlement made on 29 July 1984 focused on the International Peace Conference and provided concrete proposals on how its work could be conducted. It proposed a full withdrawal of Israeli troops from the Arab territories occupied since 1967, a just solution to the key problem of the Middle East settlement - the Palestinian problem - on the basis of the implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people including, *inter alia*, the rights to self-determination and to the creation of their own independent State. The stand of the Soviet Union in favour of vitalizing collective efforts for ways of defusing the conflict situation in the Middle East had recently been confirmed at the highest level. The Seminar appreciated the consistency and continuity of the policy of the Soviet Union towards the Middle East settlement, as reiterated in its latest statements at the highest level.

39. The Seminar also appreciated the positive position taken by all the other countries in Europe and from other continents, which, over the years, had strongly supported the achievement of a peaceful settlement of the Middle East conflict.

40. Some participants expressed the view that, as far as the small number of States that were indifferent to or rejected the convening of the Peace Conference was concerned, there were in fact two groupings. One group, among them the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, France and other countries of the European Community, had expressed a general interest in a Middle East Conference, which they considered, however, to be only the final point aimed at sanctioning the "peace process", while emphasizing that the conditions for a successful course of the Conference did not exist at present. But the absence of consent of the second group, the United States and Israel, was the main obstacle to the convening of the Conference. They considered direct negotiations excluding a principal party, the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, rather than a multilateral international conference to be the only way to a peaceful solution in the Middle East. Doubts were expressed that a solution might be reached through direct and bilateral negotiations with Israel, aided by one of the great Powers.

41. The Seminar took note of the arguments of those States that were blocking the convening of the Conference. Israel and the United States advocated direct negotiations among Israel and Arab States, excluding the PLO, exclusively based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973. The Seminar considered that approach as an expression of the lack of political will for convening the Conference.

42. The United Nations should not allow Israel to reap the fruits of its policy of invasion and occupation. It should, instead, act as a peace-maker and guarantee the results of the Conference. Any comprehensive peace initiative needed to be covered with a guarantee of its implementation. There could be no compliance without international guarantees and no justice and peace without such compliance.

43. The idea of convening the Conference for the attainment of a comprehensive peace enjoyed wide international support. It was noted that the Prime Minister of Israel had mentioned recently the possibility of accepting negotiations under the aegis of an "international forum". There was of course a difference between the concept of an international peace conference aimed at the attainment of a comprehensive, peaceful settlement including participation by the PLO and the concept of an "international forum", which excluded the PLO, a principal party to the conflict, and was therefore unacceptable. It was important, therefore, to continue to intensify efforts in order to arrive at a general agreement on convening the Conference, by overcoming existing difficulties, so that States and parties concerned might clearly voice their political will with respect to that idea.

44. The Seminar viewed with appreciation the positive role played by the PLO and its active contribution in all endeavours and efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement within the framework of the United Nations and particularly its support for the Conference. The PLO had advanced ideas, suggestions and proposals to promote the process for a peaceful settlement which had culminated in the three proposals (see annex V to the present report) submitted recently by Mr. Arafat to the Government of the United States via many channels.

45. Nobody gained from the fact that the Middle East conflict remained unresolved. An awareness of that truth by all who were responsible for decision-making in Middle East affairs would undoubtedly be a tangible factor and a major prerequisite in moving towards a political settlement in the region.

46. The view was expressed that it would be difficult to convene the Conference without the support of the United States and the Soviet Union. The resumption and quasi-institutionalization of the dialogue between the United States and the Soviet Union, an important and encouraging factor, suggested wide possibilities relating, *inter alia*, to the situation in the Middle East and the question of Palestine. Efforts must be made to ensure that that dialogue promoted initiatives made at transcending the crisis so as to facilitate the convening of the Conference under the auspices of the United Nations as proposed in the Geneva Declaration. It was stressed in that context that, unlike the United States, the Soviet Union supported the convening of the Conference. With respect to the United States, it was hoped that it would amend its present attitude towards the Conference. All must act in such a way as to induce it to do so. Western States, the allies and friends of the United States, could do more than they were now doing to influence the United States attitude towards the convening of the Conference.

47. The worsening of the Middle East crisis appeared to have sharpened differences over the crisis between certain Arab States. That was a factor that hardly facilitated the efforts to convene the Conference. Everyone should support the endeavours of the Arab States to settle their differences and encourage them to that end.

48. It might be worth considering the possibility of having the Secretary-General of the United Nations become further involved in the efforts aimed at solving the problems in the region and breaking the present deadlock with respect to the convening of the Conference.
48. It was emphasized that the Conference, as an instrument of reason, dialogue and democratization of international relations, could not be removed from the international agenda, since its declared objectives served the very interests of all peoples and States of the Middle East and the entire world.
49. The view was expressed that the Conference could accomplish the following:
- a. Justice would be done and the principles of the Charter would be resoundingly affirmed, greatly strengthening the role of the United Nations;
 - b. A hotbed of tension that could spark a world conflagration would be cooled off and eliminated. Peace and security would be restored in the region, with beneficial effects for the whole world, and particularly for the neighbouring regions of the Mediterranean and the Gulf;
 - c. An end of the Middle East crisis would eliminate the pretexts for interference and intervention in the region and for the build-up of armaments. That would expand the zone of independence and the opportunities for all the peoples of the region to make a free choice with respect to their own future. It would also create propitious conditions for the rebuilding of vast areas that had been devastated;
 - d. The Conference could constitute the best instrument for the establishment of normal relations and peaceful coexistence among all the countries and peoples of the region, making possible, *inter alia*, the gradual normalization of relations between Israel and its neighbours, including the independent Palestinian State. The parties to the conflict should commit themselves to honour each other's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, and to resolve by peaceful means, through talks, the disputes that had arisen;
 - e. Israel would no doubt be one of the major beneficiaries of such a development. In fact, it offered the only way for Israel to attain the security for which it clamoured while resorting to the force of arms. Furthermore, Israel would have an opportunity to become a truly integral part of the region in which it was situated, to maintain its existence through peaceful ways and means and solve its seemingly insurmountable economic problems.
- Panel II: The role of the Palestine Liberation Organization
- The Seminar heard a detailed analysis of the structure of the PLO and its role.
52. Before the establishment of the PLO in 1964, the Palestinian people had been deprived of all signs of national expression or of any independent organized economic, cultural, social, educational and national activity. The terms "Palestinian nationalism" and "independent Palestinian expression" were for all practical purposes non-existent.
53. As far back as 1950 even the item "the Question of Palestine" had been dropped from the agenda of the United Nations and replaced by the item "The Middle East Question" under heavy United States pressure.
54. During a much-publicized tour of Western European countries in January 1986, Mr. Shimon Peres, Prime Minister of Israel, had proposed to the Palestinian people the choice of either going to the peace talks without the PLO or exclusion from such talks altogether. He had said that the Palestinian people "have to make a choice and to choose the easiest of two things: The Palestine Liberation Organization without a resolution or the resolution without the Palestine Liberation Organization."
55. These two developments summarized the achievements of the PLO and indicated very clearly the development of the organization from a position of weakness to its current position of strength.
56. Despite great odds, the PLO had over the past 22 years been able to establish itself as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. It enjoyed that status because it had been able to provide the framework wherein every Palestinian could find a haven to return to and where he or she, young or old, could seek protection and obtain it. That was of the utmost significance since more than half of the Palestinian people, i.e., those under Israeli occupation, did not enjoy any other protection at any level.
57. Thus, the PLO had been transformed into an organization that, *par excellence*, represented the Palestinian people, defended them, protected their interests, cared for their daily short-term and long-term needs and above all represented their political will and national aspirations. It had become for the Palestinian people the organization that embodied the idea or the dream of the long awaited homeland, Palestine.
58. For those who were under occupation, the PLO had become the alternative to occupation. It represented liberation, freedom, sovereignty and national dignity. It had become in the Palestinian mind the State, the Government, the homeland and the refuge of the Palestinian people.
59. The PLO could not have achieved that position had its institutional and constitutional make-up been formed in a manner other than that which the founding fathers had opted for.
60. In the process of that structural development, many important changes had taken place, resulting in a State-structure like any other established State or society based on democracy, freedom of expression and thought, pluralism, discussion and deliberation.
61. The PLO as a State-structure, like all other established States and societies, had the following three main structures:
- a. The legislative branch, which included the Palestine National Council and the Central Council. Whereas the founding fathers had created the Palestine National Council at the same time they conceived and charted the PLO, the Central Council had been introduced in the early 1970s and incorporated in the PLO by a decision of the Palestine National Council,
 - b. The executive branch included the Executive Committee of the PLO (the Cabinet in other countries), which is usually composed on a coalition basis, and under it the various departments (the ministries in other States), including the Palestine National Fund and the Palestine Liberation Army,
 - c. The judicial and legal branch, which was developed and institutionalized during the process of building the various structures of the PLO. At the time of the birth of the PLO, the founding fathers had not conceived the incorporation of that branch into the structure of the PLO for two main reasons: the Palestinian people living in the host countries had been and still were subject to the jurisdiction applied in those countries and the PLO did not at that time have the mass following or representativity with which it could claim that responsibility.
62. The policies of the PLO on questions of social, cultural, educational and economic matters had therefore been set on the principles of social welfare and security for the Palestinian society and of mixed economy between the public sector and the private sector. On the cultural and educational levels the PLO subsidized a wide-ranging network of cultural and educational institutions from which a large sector of the Palestinian community benefited free of charge. Briefly, the PLO had conceived a Palestinian society to be organized on the basis of a welfare-society State.
63. Some of the institutions had already been in existence in 1964, others had been developed during the process of maturation and according to needs.
64. The main feature of the PLO system was that it was based on the checks and balances that accrued from having an independent legislative branch, an effective executive branch and a free judicial system.
65. The process was still to be completed since there was currently no State and no territory for the Palestinian people. Nevertheless, the present structure reflected, in one way or another, the dreams and hopes of the Palestinian people, and of how they perceived their future State. It was in the interest of international peace and of the international community to assist the Palestinian people to regain its inalienable national rights as approved by the United Nations.

66. The Palestinian people had made their contribution to peace. The PLO, their sole and legitimate representative, had put forward a number of proposals to that effect. The words of Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO, at the General Assembly in November 1974, where he referred to the choice between the gun and the olive branch, were as valid today as when he made the statement. It was hoped that those who had the responsibility to achieve and maintain international peace would opt for the olive branch.

Panel III: The question of Palestine and European public opinion

67. In considering the role of European public opinion and the question of Palestine, it was noted that public opinion was an important and fundamental element that could contribute to and be utilized in the search for peace in the Middle East based on a just solution of the problem of Palestine. That element, therefore, should be mobilized to inject the voice of reason into world affairs and should be enhanced by a deeper understanding and awareness of all the aspects of the problem of Palestine.

68. Public opinion formation should be the area of prime concern for those who were deeply involved in matters relating to the Middle East and who were, in particular, deeply concerned for the future of the Palestinians and who were involved in the struggle to see that the right of the Palestinian to self-determination in their own land should come about in the near future. The Palestinian cause had, in general, been ill-served by all sections of the mass media.

69. Public opinion on a problem, to the understanding of which neither one's personal experience nor the various moral, cultural, social and political codes could contribute very much, was primarily forged by the mass media. Nevertheless, information circulated by civic groups to their members, and the example given by political leaders through their support for the Palestinian cause, could correct the mass media to a large degree.

70. It was stated that the media in Western Europe, although giving coverage to events in the Middle East, generally tended to convey a bias in their reporting on the Middle East conflict and the question of Palestine. It was stated that Israeli influence in the media was well known. Israel had managed to convince many people that it was stronger and more important from a geo-political point of view, and more righteous in its national pursuits than it really was. It had also managed to justify its actions against the Palestinians, or the Lebanese, to a degree that would be unthinkable if it had been for another nation. Western European public opinion was more influenced by the pro-Israel camp than by the advocates of the Palestinian cause.

71. That was combined with such general factors as Western bias towards under-developed, non-Western countries and conversely a fundamental respect for Israeli technology and modernity; ignorance of the Arab and Israeli realities; and ethnocentric Judeo-Christian religious tradition, which accorded special respect to Jewish definitions; the inability of the Arab world to communicate with the West and to understand the nature of Western public opinion formulation; and restrictions imposed on Western journalists. It was suspected that even those Western European nations that were more sympathetic to the plight of the Palestinians and were normally prepared to support them, nevertheless felt reluctant to isolate the position of the United States.

72. Western European attitudes on the question of Palestine were very much influenced, at least in some countries, by a certain guilt complex stemming, to say the least, from memories of anti-Judaism in the past. For the public opinion of Western European countries, which had not undergone a typical anti-colonial liberation war and whose memory was only tinted by the completely different nature of Second World War, the full understanding of a struggle by an oppressed people was a difficult, if not impossible, task. This was even more so for the public opinion of ex-colonial Powers, where the nostalgia of a past grandeur was still vivid in the minds of the masses and a cause such as the Palestinian one was only espoused by limited numbers of the liberal intelligentsia and those in academic circles or fragments of the press. To be on the side of the weak was perhaps a universal inclination and that point of social psychology had been skillfully exploited by the Zionist movement from the very beginning. Victimization might be a decisive factor in winning a cause but there were limits beyond which nothing was won.

73. The major control of mass communication technology, especially in television and films, was in the hands of some four or five large Western agencies, which offered material about the non-Western world in a distorted manner or in a manner that substantially ignored stories from the developing world. The legend of the "heroic" Israelis had been printed but very little coverage was given by the "popular" media to the very real courage of the Palestinians who were legitimately struggling by all means for the attainment of their rights and against the repressive and "iron fist" policies and acts of terrorism by the Israeli forces of occupation. The coverage given by the "popular" media was not adequate in its reporting on the shocking conditions in the Palestinian refugee camps. Informative journalism had its limits, both in the commercial field and in the habits of the audience. The quality media was not attracting the audience it needed and all types of journalism were changing from the old ideas of good research and balance to a more racy, colourful and sensationalist type of coverage by the popular press.

74. In the early years after the dispersal, the major media attention had focused on the plight of the Jews who had been planted in Palestine and for a further period there had been the situation where there had been saturation coverage, by a biased media, of the great struggle of the Jews to build up kibbutzim and of the great numbers of highly motivated people who were "returning" to their spiritual homeland. There was an almost universal neglect of the situation of the Palestinians. The 1980s, so far, had been an era of changing attitudes toward the Palestinians and there had been an ebb and flow of change in public opinion. That development, away from one-sided pro-Israelism and towards a more balanced opinion and even understanding and sympathy for the Palestinian cause, had been promoted and reinforced by the steady flow of news regarding the occupied territories, the 1973 war, the Camp David peace talks, the rise to power of the Likud parties, the 1982 invasion of Lebanon and the consolidation of the PLO as a responsible political representative of the Palestinians.

75. The Palestinian cause was a just one, and, once heard, its conviction was irrefutable. The misinformation, or even "conspiracy of silence" was now being challenged in many Western European countries, within the influential ranks of church organizations, trade unions and academic and parliamentary institutions. The gradual positive evolution in favour of even-handedness and more objective reporting of the real nature of the question of Palestine was noted with appreciation and the Seminar felt that the trend should be encouraged and strengthened by all available means. In particular, stress was laid on the evolution in the attitude of Western European countries towards positive recognition of the inalienable legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination with all that it entailed. The importance was pointed out of noting the increasing interest and concern shown in Western European political circles of the question of Palestine over the past decade. That positive evolution was certainly due to a better perception in Western European circles of the consequences of the Middle East conflict on the security of Europe, giving rise to the necessity of a concrete development in Euro-Arab dialogue.

76. The point was also made that particular attention should henceforth be directed towards countries still not sufficiently supportive of the just cause of the Palestinian people, so as to correct the misperception and distortion of the question of Palestine and the PLO conveyed by Israel. It was also stressed that, in the contemporary world, it was highly anomalous that the Palestinian people should be denied the exercise of its inalienable rights to self-determination, which were enjoyed by other peoples. The fault for that situation lay with Israel.

77. Regarding public opinion in Western Europe, it was pointed out that there were certain ambiguities in its attitude towards the Middle East. The basic facts, which could influence attitudes in favour of the Arabs, were often not known in Western Europe.

78. The Seminar noted that public opinion in Eastern Europe had always given firm support to the Palestinian people's just struggle and to their sole legitimate representative, the PLO. Public opinion in Eastern Europe stood for a just and permanent settlement of the Middle East issue and had expressed support for the Arab countries and the PLO in all their efforts, including peaceful negotiations and political solutions. It firmly denounced Israel's policies of aggression and expansion and its annexation of the Arab sector of Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. It called upon world opinion to denounce any Israeli action that

might change the legal status and the geographic and demographic nature of the Arab territories, including Jerusalem, since 1967. Moreover, it criticized the United States for supporting Israeli aggression and for establishing a strategic relationship with Israel.

79. It was explained and recalled, that among European members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, there had been support for the struggle of the Palestinian people from the earliest stages and that specific attention had been paid to the question of Palestine and to solidarity with the Palestinian people. That support had been based on the fundamental and universal principles of peace, freedom, independence, justice and human rights upheld by the Movement.

80. In the case of Austrian public opinion, where, as in many other West European countries, there existed a pro-Israeli bias, former Chancellor Bruno Kreisky had used all the credibility he had earned as a trustworthy, successful and honest politician to convince the public that it was in the best interests of the country and that it was a necessary result of the Austrian's devotion to social justice and peace to support the cause of the Palestinians. To convince the public had not been an easy task, and to say that the battle has been won would be too much. Nevertheless, the strong and often expressed opinion of the Chancellor, for whom the people had a strong feeling of love, made it impossible for the Austrian media to attack pro-Palestinian policy.

81. Turkish public opinion was basically on the side of the Palestinian cause, with some nuances, which gave the Turkish behaviour on the question of Palestine a distinct colouring emanating from the Islamic character of its society and the secular nature of its State. In Turkey, memories of a distant past had been superseded by the recent history of a national war of independence against the dominant Western Powers. That had created an unusually strong moral tie between the people of Turkey and the liberation movements of the oppressed peoples. Turkish society was proud of its record of racial and religious tolerance and was not easily misled by pro-Israeli propaganda.

82. European public opinion was not fully aware of the secular nature of the solution proposed by the PLO. Mowing the religious character of the Israeli State, Europeans were erroneously inclined to think that the aims and objectives of the PLO were equally religious.

83. The view was expressed that it was totally understandable to most people who studied the plight of the Palestinians that there would continue to be violent incidents along the road to self-determination and that those incidents would be used by the enemies of Palestine in every possible way to defame their noble and just cause. Terrorism was as easy to blame as it was sometimes difficult to define in all its forms. In any case, attacks at random on innocent people in situations that had no connection with the Palestinian struggle for self-determination and actions by States violating international law could not be condoned. Nevertheless, the Palestinians could not be deprived of their right to resort, in the occupied territories, to all means, including military ones, to attain their independence. The PLO had made that clear in its Cairo Declaration of 7 November 1985.

84. Without a favourable public opinion, then, it was doubtful whether the Governments concerned would be prepared to take positive action. The problems of communication and perception of the Palestinian cause created by the majority of the Western-oriented media could be overcome. The Palestinians had not always been blameless in their presentation of their own very just cause. Gaining and retaining credibility was a slow, difficult process, which must be continued with the help of all those who support the just cause of the Palestinian people.

Panel IV: "The United Nations and the question of Palestine"

85. The Seminar recognized that the United Nations had played an essential role in the origin of the problem of Palestine and, in consequence, the question of Palestine represented a continuous responsibility of the Organization and, therefore, of all its Member States. That was why the role of the United Nations was irreplaceable in the search for a solution to that problem.

86. The United Nations now provided a proper framework in which all parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict could participate in negotiations. Over the years, the United Nations had drawn up the basic and widely supported principles on which a comprehensive, just and lasting solution should be based. The most important of those principles – the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the sovereignty of the Palestinian people in Palestine – had been repeatedly and unequivocally recognized in resolutions of the General Assembly and other United Nations bodies. Peace and security for all peoples and States in the region could be ensured only if those basic principles were unanimously and unreservedly observed in practice.

87. The General Assembly had established the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, which had drawn up, by consensus, a set of recommendations solidly based on international law and United Nations resolutions. 2/

88. With regard to the right of return, the Committee had proposed a two-stage plan for the return of all Palestinian refugees to their homes and property. In stage one, applicable to those Palestinians displaced as a result of the 1967 war, the Committee had proposed the immediate implementation of Security Council resolution 237 (1967) of 14 June 1967 which should be carried out with the assistance of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and/or the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Stage two, dealing with Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967, the implementation of General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, relating to the rights of the 1948 refugees, was to be carried out by the United Nations in co-operation with the States directly involved and the PLO as the interim representative of the Palestinian entity. Those not wishing to return should be paid a just and equitable compensation. With regard to the right to establish an independent Palestinian State, the Committee had recommended the following.

a. The Security Council should establish a timetable for the complete withdrawal of Israel from the areas occupied in 1967 and should provide temporary peace-keeping forces in order to facilitate the process of Israeli withdrawal;

b. The United Nations, with the co-operation of the League of Arab States (LAS), should take over all evacuated territories and subsequently hand them over to the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people,

c. Upon the establishment of an independent Palestinian entity, the United Nations, with the co-operation of all the States directly involved and the Palestinian entity, and taking into account General Assembly resolution 3375 (XXX) of 10 November 1975 (which had invited the PLO, the representative of the Palestinian people, to participate in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East that were held under the auspices of the United Nations, on an equal footing with other parties, and requested the Secretary-General to inform the Co-Chairmen of the Peace Conference on the Middle East of the present resolution and to take all steps to secure the invitation of the PLO to participate in the work of the Conference, as well as in all other efforts for peace), should make further arrangements for the full implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

89. The fact that those recommendations provided a solid basis for the solution to the problem had been confirmed by the inclusion of the main elements of those recommendations in all the most acceptable proposals put forward in recent years.

90. The Seminar was in full agreement that those recommendations, regularly endorsed, with increasing support, by the General Assembly since 1976, undoubtedly retained their validity. The participants in the Seminar expressed their regret that lack of unanimity still prevented the Security Council from taking the necessary action to implement them. It was emphasized that that obstacle should be overcome.

91. By resolution 36/120 C of 10 December 1981, the General Assembly, convinced that the inability to resolve the question posed a grave threat to international peace and security, had decided to convene under the auspices of the United Nations an International Conference on the Question of Palestine. The Conference, held at Geneva from 29 August to 7 September 1983, had adopted, by acclamation, a Declaration on Palestine and also approved a Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights. The Declaration, emphasizing the importance of the time factor in achieving a just solution to the problem of Palestine, had called, *inter alia*, for the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of

the United Nations, with the participation on an equal footing of all parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the PLO, and on the basis of specific guidelines. At its thirty-eighth session, by resolution 38/58 C, the Assembly had endorsed the Geneva Declaration on Palestine and welcomed the call for the International Peace Conference.

92. In pursuance of General Assembly resolution 38/58 C and following consultations with the Security Council, the Secretary-General had, on 9 March 1984, addressed a letter to its 15 members and to the Governments directly involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict, namely Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and the Syrian Arab Republic, and to the PLO, to ascertain their views on all issues relevant to the convening of the Conference. The Secretary-General had noted in his report (A/39/130-S/16409 and Add.1) that the Governments of Israel and the United States were not prepared to participate in the proposed Conference.

93. At its thirty-ninth and fortieth sessions, the General Assembly had reaffirmed its endorsement of the call for convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and had reiterated its conviction that such means would constitute a major contribution by the United Nations towards the achievement of a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict through the collective efforts of all the parties concerned.

94. The Seminar welcomed and expressed its appreciation for the activities of the Committee, which had in its decade of existence carried out a valuable task in order to reach greater and more positive international awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine.

95. The Seminar commended the positions of those Member States, especially from among the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Socialist countries and some Western countries, that consistently supported the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the just settlement of the problem. While regretting the negative positions of the United States and Israel, it appealed to them and to all other Member States to reconsider their positions towards the solution of the conflict.

96. The economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people of the occupied territories was one of the manifold activities of United Nations. That assistance was based on numerous resolutions adopted by the Economic and Social Council and by the specialized agencies of the United Nations system. United Nations resolutions on the matter emphasized the necessity for the different United Nations organs to intensify their efforts to promote the economic and social development of the occupied territories and to identify the areas where that development was most needed. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), UNRWA, the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other organizations were executing technical assistance projects. UNIDO, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (HABITAT), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) had undertaken studies to identify potential projects.

97. ESCWA accorded particular attention to the occupied territories in its work programme. The PLO, as a member of ESCWA, participated fully in its work. Resolution 139 (XII), adopted by the Commission at its twelfth session in April 1985, had requested the Executive Secretary to integrate the occupied territories in the Commission's plan of activities and to undertake, in co-operation with relevant Arab and international organizations, studies on the economic and social conditions of the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

98. The Seminar agreed on the following conclusions and recommendations.

99. The Seminar, concerned over the dangerous situation in the Middle East, was profoundly convinced that the vital interests of the peoples of that region, as well as interests of international security as a whole, urgently dictated the need for the speediest attainment of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Middle East conflict.

100. It affirmed that the problem of the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people remained the core of the conflict in the Middle East and that no comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region could be achieved without the full exercise of those rights, including the right to self-determination and to create their own independent State, and without the complete withdrawal of Israel from Arab territories occupied since 1967. It further reaffirmed that the PLO was the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The settlement of this problem remained a continuous responsibility of the United Nations.

101. Those States Members of the United Nations who did not support the attainment by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, especially the United States and Israel, should reconsider their positions towards the solution to the problem. The best way to establish a just and lasting peace in the Middle East was by convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of all parties concerned, including the PLO.

102. The Conference should be convened without preconditions and its proceedings should be conducted in a constructive spirit. The aim of the Conference should be a comprehensive settlement and the signing of a treaty or treaties guaranteeing its implementation.

103. The participation of the United States and the Soviet Union in the Conference was essential. All States should endeavour to persuade the United States to reconsider its current position towards the convening of the Conference. An appeal should be made to the United States to join other nations in convening the Conference.

104. The Conference should be held under the auspices of the United Nations. The organization of that Conference might be entrusted to the Security Council where States could express their views at every step leading to the solution of the Middle East problem. As suggested by the Secretary-General, "other avenues of the United Nations could also be explored to provide the possibilities that the search for a lasting peace would require". 3/

105. The Secretary-General should be more actively involved in the efforts to solve the problem and to break the deadlock with respect to the convening of the Conference.

106. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People had an important role to play in promoting the idea of convening the Conference. In that context, the Seminar recommended that the Committee establish contacts particularly with the Governments of those countries that had so far hesitated to adopt a positive approach towards the Conference. In general, the Seminar recommended the intensification of the political and diplomatic efforts by all concerned for reaching a comprehensive, just and durable settlement of the conflict in the Middle East.

107. Every effort should be made to influence public opinion throughout the world through the use of the media.

108. In that connection, the United Nations should make additional efforts to disseminate factual and up-to-date information on the question of Palestine, especially having noted the lack of support of the Western European media and States.

109. The Arab States and the PLO should also increase their efforts to publicize the facts and developments relating to the question of Palestine.

110. The Seminar took note with appreciation of the PLO Declaration made at Cairo on 7 November 1985, wherein it rejected and denounced terrorism.

111. The information provided by Palestinian sources had to become more informative. The message of Palestine could be told in a simple and concise manner using all means of communications more effectively.

112. It was important that the public media should play a more responsive role in providing a more balanced reporting on the Middle East and, in particular, on the plight of the Palestinians in and outside the occupied territories as a dispossessed and harassed people. Institutions such as universities, colleges, research institutes, churches and other religious establishments, as well as national and international non-governmental organizations, had a crucial role to play in the formation of public opinion. Those institutions should be urged to give wider coverage and more balanced treatment to the question of Palestine.

113. Every effort should be made to step up the widespread dissemination of information, as one of the major contributions to the achievement of a just solution to the problem of Palestine on the basis of the attainment by the Palestinian

people in Palestine of its inalienable rights. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat had an important role in such dissemination of information. Furthermore, the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat should make every effort to ensure that accurate information on the question of Palestine received the widest possible dissemination.

Notes

- 1/ Report of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine Geneva, 29 August - 7 September 1983 (United Nations publication, Sales M. E.83.I.21), chap. I, sect. A.
- 2/ See Official Records of the General Assembly, fortieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/40/35), annex I.
- 3/ A/40/779, para. 39.

Annex I

LETTER DATED 7 APRIL 1986 FROM THE PRIME MINISTER OF TURKEY TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SEMINAR

It is a source of great pleasure for the Turkish Government and myself to host the first Regional Seminar on the Question of Palestine to be held in Istanbul, Turkey, from 7 to 11 April 1986, within the context of the work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

I am sure that this Seminar in Istanbul will also contribute to the widest possible recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians, which this Committee has spared no effort to promote since its inception. Turkey supports these efforts and believes that a just and lasting solution to the Middle East question cannot be found unless the legitimate rights of the Palestinians are recognized.

I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to convey to you, W. Chairman, and through you, to all the participants of the Seminar, my best wishes for the successful conclusion of your work as well as for a pleasant and fruitful stay in our country.

(Signed) Turgut ÖZAL
Prime Minister of the
Republic of Turkey

Annex II

LETTER DATED 5 APRIL 1986 FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE

It is my pleasure to extend to you and to all the participants in the Seminar on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in the name of our Arab Palestinian people, in the name of my brothers, members of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and in my own personal name our best wishes for the success of the works of your Seminar.

I avail myself of this opportunity to extend my sincere greetings to our brothers in the host country, Turkey, the President, the Government and the brotherly Turkish people our high appreciation for their stand of support at the side of our just cause for the regaining of the national inalienable rights of our Palestinian people, including their right to return, to self-determination and to the establishment of their independent Palestinian State.

You are convening your Seminar at a time when our just Palestinian cause is being confronted by repeated conspiracies, attacks and increasing hostile policies from the Zionist enemy and American imperialism.

In our occupied homeland, our Arab Palestinian people are being confronted by all the forms of repression, oppression, tyranny and organized terrorism directed and implemented by the Government of the Zionist enemy who encourages, finances and arms the Zionist settler gangs.

Our people are confronting with relentless determination the arbitrary measures that aim at the Judaization of the Palestinian occupied territories in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip as a prelude to their final annexation to the State of the Zionist enemy. Thus, the enemy's Government confiscates the Palestinian lands and water resources and establishes Jewish settlements on them and finances the terrorist gangs to perpetrate criminal actions against the innocent Palestinian population and against the Islamic and Christian holy places, with the aim of spreading fear and terror among our people and forcing their exile from their homeland. This terrorist campaign is accompanied by arrests and detention, storming and destruction of houses and the imposition of curfews in the various villages, towns and cities of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The number of the Palestinian detainees in the Zionist torture camps from 1967 up to this day has reached 175,000 as admitted by the enemy himself, and this is equivalent to one fifth of the Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza.

In addition to this are the arbitrary measures imposed on the Palestinian universities that aim at the destruction of these educational institutions in order to impose ignorance and backwardness on our people, in addition to the imposition of poverty against our people, banning them from work opportunities by striking against the Palestinian economic institutions in order to force our people to leave their homeland.

Outside our occupied Palestinian homeland, the enemy's Government continues its policy of arrogance of power and intensifies its open official terrorism, such as the treacherous air raid against the headquarters of the PLO in Tunis, which caused the death of tens of innocent Palestinian and Tunisian civilians and brags about open threats against all the Arab countries.

It has become clear to all that Israel, with its own potential, is incapable of perpetrating such crimes inside and outside the occupied territories just as it would not threaten with such arrogance the Arab countries without the continuous flow of support granted to Israel by the United States on all the political, diplomatic, economic, financial and scientific levels.

In spite of these aggressions and in spite of the fierce Zionist-imperialist attack against our Arab Palestinian people our people carry their noble historical and humanitarian responsibilities towards their just cause and far the future of the region. They are attached to their legitimate right to resist occupation by all ways and means, just as they have repeatedly proved and reaffirmed their total adherence to the PLO, their sole legitimate representative, and have supported with determination the militant option of the PLO for the achievement of a just peace based on international legality and on the United Nations resolutions, which affirm their national inalienable rights, including their right to return, to self-determination and to the establishment of their independent Palestinian state in their national homeland.

The Palestinian people have rejected the Zionist and American manoeuvres which aim at discrediting the credibility of the

representativity of the PLO to the Arab Palestinian people.

The bitter and arduous years since 1948 have proved that it is not possible to achieve peace, security and stability in the Middle East region without the fulfilment of the national inalienable Palestinian rights as approved by the international community through the tangible reality of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State.

It has also been repeatedly proved that the continuation of American support to the aggressive Israeli policies and the continued denial by the United States of the national rights of the Arab Palestinian people is directly and fully responsible for the pursuance of the state of instability and war in the Middle East region.

We wish to underline also that the European countries, among which is Britain, hold a historical responsibility towards the ordeal of our Arab Palestinian people. Their stand bears a particular importance regarding support to the Palestinian and Arab peace efforts for the convening of an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations, in order to find a just solution and achieve peace.

Similarly, we wish to express our high appreciation for the stand of support of the Soviet Union and of the Socialist Community at the side of the struggle of our Arab Palestinian people and at the side of their national inalienable rights. We also express our high appreciation to the Islamic, and non-aligned countries for their stands of support at the side of our just Palestinian cause.

I express to you, in the name of our Arab Palestinian people, in the name of my brothers, members of the Executive Committee of the PLO, and in my own personal name our profound appreciation for the important role that is played by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (under the Chairmanship of Ambassador Massamba Sarré) in support of the struggle of our Arab Palestinian people for the regaining of its inalienable rights, for making them known and for gaining international support for them and for the fulfilment of these rights into tangible reality in the Palestinian homeland within an independent Palestinian State, under the leadership of the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of our Palestinian people.

I express to you my gratitude and I extend to you my sincerest wishes for the success of the works of your seminar. Thank you.

(Signed) Yasser ARAFAT
Chairman of the Executive Committee of the
Palestine Liberation Organization
Commander in Chief of the Forces
of the Palestinian Revolution

Annex III

MESSAGE FROM THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE SEMINAR TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION

The Thirteenth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine being held from 7 to 11 April at Istanbul, Turkey, whose people and Government have consistently supported the just cause of the Palestinian people, acknowledge your message addressed to the Seminar, in your capacity as the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and leader of their struggle to attain its inalienable rights, as well as a just solution of the Palestinian problem and a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

We are gathered here to consider how best we can serve the purpose of peace in the Middle East and in the world through a comprehensive and just settlement of the conflict, the core of which is the Palestinian question, that is, the inalienable rights, fate and future of the Palestinian people.

We wish to convey to the Palestinian Arabs, those under Israeli occupation and those in dispersion, our solidarity and support to their struggle for the recognition, attainment and free exercise of its inalienable rights in Palestine.

We call for an urgent convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, as decided by the United Nations General Assembly.

Annex IV

MOTION OF THANKS FROM THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE SEMINAR TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF TURKEY

The Thirteenth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine meeting at Istanbul, Turkey, from 7 to 11 April 1986, wishes to convey its profound thanks to the people and Government of Turkey for hosting the Seminar and for the excellent arrangements it made, which greatly contributed to the Seminar's success. It also expresses its sincere thanks for the generous hospitality extended to the participants in the Seminar. The Seminar wishes to express its particular appreciation to H.E. Mr. Turgut Özal, Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey, for his personal concern and guidance. It also thanks H.E. Mr. Vahit Halefoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, for his contribution to the Seminar. The Seminar also expresses its appreciation to the people and Government of Turkey for their consistent support of the struggle of the Palestinian people under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, their sole legitimate representative, for the exercise of its inalienable rights in Palestine.

Annex V

PROPOSALS FOR A LEGAL FORMULA TO CONVENE THE INTERNATIONAL PEACE CONFERENCE ON THE MIDDLE EAST SUBMITTED BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

First Proposal

If an invitation is extended to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to attend an international conference with effective powers to find a peaceful solution to the Palestinian question and to resolve the Middle East conflict in which the permanent members of the Security Council participate and which is attended by the concerned Arab parties, the PLO accepts to participate on an equal footing in this conference within a joint Jordanian Palestinian delegation on the basis of ensuring the right to self-determination through a confederation with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan as stated in the Jordanian-Palestinian Accord signed in February 1985 and on the basis of the United Nations and Security Council resolutions relevant to the Palestinian question, including resolution 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

In this context, the PLO reaffirms its denunciation and rejection of terrorism, which it had confirmed in the Cairo Declaration.

Steps

- A. To be handed to His Majesty the King.
- B. The PLO requests His Majesty to get a written commitment from the United States addressed to him in support of the right of self-determination as stated in the Jordanian-Palestinian Accord.
- C. The declaration by the PLO of its conditional acceptance of Security Council 242 (1967) is to be simultaneous with the declaration of the United States Government of its acceptance of the right to self-determination.

Second proposal

The PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, holds the strong belief that the peace process should lead to a just comprehensive and durable peace in the Middle East and should secure the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people including their right to self-determination within the context of a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation.

On the basis of the Jordan-PLO accord of 11 February 1985 and in view of our genuine desire for peace, we are ready to negotiate within the context of an international conference with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and the participation of all concerned Arab parties and the Israeli Government, a peaceful settlement of the Palestinian problem on the basis of the pertinent United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

The PLO declares its rejection and denunciation of terrorism, which was assured in the Cairo Declaration of 7 November 1985.

Third proposal

The invitation to convene an international conference to resolve the conflict in the Middle East and to solve the Palestinian question should be under the aegis of the United Nations because it is the international organization that was established after Second World War to put an end to the sufferings of the peoples, prevent aggression and maintain justice and respect for Human rights. The preamble of the Charter of the United Nations adopted in 1945, calls for the realization of international co-operation, the resolution of international problems, the realization of basic human rights and the rights of the peoples to self-determination. Since the Palestinian question is the quintessence of the Middle East problem the call to convene an international conference to resolve the conflict should be to ensure the execution of resolutions and measures and should include the participation in the conference of the permanent members of the Security Council and be attended by all the concerned Arab parties including the PLO, on an equal footing within a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation.

In accordance with the United Nations Charter, which reaffirms and confirms the respect for basic human rights and the right of peoples to self-determination, and on the basis of United Nations resolutions relevant to the Palestinian question and the Arab region, including Security Council resolution 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), the PLO will participate in the international peace conference in its capacity as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people which is recognized on the Arab and international levels and has had an observer status at the United Nations since 1974.

The participation of PLO in the international conference will be on the basis of safeguarding the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination through a confederation with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, as stated in the Jordanian-Palestinian Accord signed in February 1985.

In this context, the PLO reaffirms its denunciation and rejection of terrorism, which it confirmed in the Cairo Declaration.

Steps

- A. To be handed to His Majesty the King.
- B. The PLO requests His Majesty to get a written commitment from the United States addressed to him in support of the right of self-determination as stated in the Jordanian-Palestinian Accord.
- C. The Declaration by the PLO of its conditional acceptance of Security Council 242 (1967) is to be simultaneous with the Declaration of the United States Government of its acceptance of the right to self-determination.

Annex VI

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AND OBSERVERS

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Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations,
Rapporteur of the Committee

Mr. Guennadi I. OUDOVENKO
Permanent Representative of the Ukrainian SSR to the United Nations

Mr. Alberto VELASCO-SAN JOSE
Deputy Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations

Mr. Mehmet Ali IRTEMÇELIK
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Mr. Lasse BUDTZ (Denmark)

Mr. Marcel DINU (Romania)
Mr. Faik DIZDAREVIC (Yugoslavia)
Mr. Istvan FODOR (Hungary)
Mr. Constantine GALANOPOULOS (Greece)
Mr. Per GHARTON (Sweden)
Dr. Vafa M. GOULIZADE (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)
Mr. Albrecht KONECNY (Austria)
Senator Michael LANIGAN (Ireland)
Dr. Sami MUSALLAM (Palestine Liberation Organization)
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Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Baghdad

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Baghdad

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Mr. Valeri Ruchinski
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Union of Soviet Socialist Republic
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Uzbekistan Soviet Socialist Republic

Mr. Andrei Vdovine
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Moscow

United Nations organs

Special Committee against Apartheid
Mr. Guennadi Oudovenko (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic)

Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples
Mr. Alberto Velázco-San José (Cuba)

United Nations Council for Namibia
Mr. Nihat Akyol (Turkey)
Mr. Wang Xuexian (China)

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Economic and Social Commission for West Asia
Mr. Antoine Mansour

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Intergovernmental organizations

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Mr. Gamic Mattar
Director of Palestinian Affairs

Organization of the Islamic Conference
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Mrs. Nilgun Hijazi

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Full report:

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