

## THE NINTH UNITED NATIONS SEMINAR ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

Theme: "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people"

TUNIS, TUNISIA  
14-17 August 1984

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### Report of the ninth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine

1. With the kind consent and assistance of the Government of Tunisia and in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 B, the ninth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine was held in the Palais du Congrès, Tunis, Tunisia, from 14 to 17 August 1984.
2. The "Inalienable rights of the Palestinian people" was the Seminar's central theme.
3. Eight meetings were held at which 19 panellists presented papers on various aspects of the question of Palestine. The frank and open discussion which followed the presentations of the papers afforded participants an opportunity to engage in a wide-ranging examination of important aspects of the question and to focus particular attention on means for the attainment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.
4. The large attendance at the meetings reflected both the importance attached to the problem and the widespread interest in finding a just and lasting solution for the unacceptable plight of the Palestinian people.
5. The United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented at the Seminar by a delegation consisting of Mr. Massamba Sarré (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee and leader of the delegation, Mr. Victor J. Gauci (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee; Mr. Vladimir F. Skofenko (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic); Mr. Mohamed Lessir (Tunisia); Mr. Cheikh Sylla (Senegal) and Mr. Zehdi L. Terzi (Palestine Liberation Organization). Mr. Victor J. Gauci acted as Rapporteur of the Seminar.
6. Mr. Massamba Sarré, Chairman of the Committee, in his opening remarks, referred to the long-standing importance devoted to the question of Palestine by the United Nations and to the impressive support for the recommendations made by the Committee which was established in 1976. He also drew attention to the Committee's encouraging success in its persistent efforts to provide objective information on the subject and its conviction that, when the facts were known and understood, the way to a just solution would be facilitated.
7. Stressing the Committee's concern about the time factor, he pointed out that events on the spot had proved time and time again that delay only made the search for a solution more difficult. It was therefore all the more regrettable that progress towards the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East was being obstructed, since a conference could prove to be a major breakthrough in the situation. The Secretary-General of the United Nations was to be commended for his efforts in that direction and it behoved all States to extend every support to him. The Seminar could be a spur to such efforts.
8. In that connection he also referred to the discernible positive evolution of Western European thought on the question of Palestine and the necessity to devote particular attention to Europe in an attempt to promote among Western European Governments a better appreciation of the Committee's recommendations. For that reason, an attempt had been made to have at the Seminar as many European policy-makers and parliamentarians as possible, while maintaining an equitable geographic distribution.
9. The Committee considered that the best forum in which to work for a solution remains the United Nations, particularly the Security Council. Unfortunately, Israel's attitude in rejecting United Nations resolutions and its policy towards the Palestinians and its Arab neighbours, as well as its actions in Jerusalem and concerning the establishment of settlements in the occupied territories, had greatly exacerbated tensions and placed formidable obstacles to a peaceful solution of the question.
10. Addressing the opening meeting, Mr. Mahmoud Mestiri, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia, stated that Tunisia had always stood for international legality and remained convinced that the United Nations provided the natural framework for the solution of the Palestinian question. Its decisions and recommendations offered the elements necessary to achieve a durable solution.
11. In contrast to Israel's adamant refusal to respond positively to any proposal for peace, the Arab States and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) had amply demonstrated their desire for peace by their ready acceptance of any peace initiative based on justice and law.
12. Tunisia considered that the Fez Plan, based as it was on international legality as borne out by United Nations resolutions, particularly United Nations General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 27 November 1947, coincided with President Bourguiba's ideas and included the essential principles for a just and durable solution to the problem.
13. The opening session was addressed by Mr. Adnan Omrane, Under-Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Mr. Seydou Traore, on behalf of the United Nations Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, Mr. Mamadou Kante, Executive Secretary of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), Mr. Alfred Jassnowski on behalf of the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid, Mr. Yin Dexin, Chargé d'affaires of China, Mr. Boris L. Kolokolov, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), Mr. Hussein Mecharrafa, Ambassador in charge of Egyptian interests in Tunisia.
14. At the same meeting, Mr. Chafiq Al-Hout, member of the Central Committee of the Palestine National Council and leader of the delegation of PLO, outlined the current situation of the Palestinian people and conveyed to the United Nations and the Seminar the thanks of his organization for the efforts being made on behalf of the Palestinian people.
15. Messages addressed to the Seminar were received from the Foreign Minister of India and the Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka.
16. The Seminar also received a message from the Chairman of the Executive Committee of PLO, Mr. Yasser Arafat, conveyed by Mr. Chafiq Al-Hout, leader of the delegation of PLO. The text of the message is attached to the report (see section VII below).
17. Five panels were established to consider different aspects of the central theme "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people". These panels and their panellists were as follows:
  - I. The role of the United Nations and other forums and organizations in the search for peace in the Middle East:

Panellists: Mr. Jozsef BIRO (Hungary), former Minister and Member of Parliament; Mr. Mohammed Hassan EL-ZAYYAT (Egypt), Member of Parliament, former Minister for Foreign Affairs; Mr. Alex KOROMA (Sierra Leone), Member of Parliament; Mr. Albrecht KONECNY (Austria), Member of Parliament; Mr. Emie ROSS (United Kingdom), Member of Parliament; Mr. Abdoulaye SACKO (Mali), Member of Parliament; Mr. Ibra Mamadou WANE (Senegal), Member of the National Assembly, former Minister of Education.
  - II. The International Peace Conference on the Middle East (General Assembly resolution 38/58 C), the need for such a Conference; efforts and prospects to promote a successful outcome and benefits thereof:

Panellists: Mr. Klaas de VRIES (Netherlands), Member of Parliament; Mr. Jean-Claude RAHAGA (Madagascar), Member of Parliament; Mr. Azouz REBAI (Tunisia), Member of Parliament; Mr. Ingo SCHOENFELDER (German Democratic Republic), Lecturer, Karl Marx University; Mr. Vasily G. SOLODOVNIKOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), Chairman of the Russian Palestinian Society; Mr. Redzo TERZIC (Yugoslavia), Member of Parliament.
  - III. African and European co-operation in seeking effective measures to enable the Palestinian people to attain and exercise its inalienable rights:

Panellists: Mr. Lasse BUDTZ (Denmark), Member of Parliament; Mr. Claude DEJARDIN (Belgium), Member of Parliament.
  - IV. The role of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the social, cultural, economic and political development of the Palestinian people and in the attainment of its political objectives:

Panellists: Mr. Khaled EL-HASSAN (Palestinian), Chairman, Foreign Affairs Committee of the Palestine National Council.
  - V. The status of the Holy City of Jerusalem:

Panellists: Mr. Bulent AKARCALI (Turkey), Member of Parliament; Mr. Abdelwahab BOUHDIBA (Tunisia), Professor, University of Tunis; Mr. Jerry PIOTROWSKI (Poland), Member, Polish Institute of International Affairs.
18. The Seminar decided that, in view of the depth of analysis contained in the papers presented at the Seminar and in accordance with previous practice, the papers presented by the panellists should be published in full by the United Nations, together with the report of the Seminar. It was felt that that would be another valuable contribution towards a more objective appraisal of the question of Palestine.
19. On the day preceding the opening of the Seminar, the Chairman of the Executive Committee of PLO, Mr. Yasser Arafat, received the

Committee delegation and the panellists and engaged in a frank and cordial discussion. In the course of the discussion, the Chairman of PLO reaffirmed his faith in, and support of, the efforts of the United Nations in promoting a peaceful solution, and again reiterated his support of all United Nations resolutions on the question of Palestine. He also confirmed the solidarity of the Palestinians in the occupied territories behind PLO in their struggle for genuine self-determination. That had been confirmed in two successive public opinion polls held in the occupied territories in October and December 1983, when 93 per cent and 95 per cent of the Palestinians polled had declared unequivocal support for PLO.

20. The Chairman also explained in detail the repression and taxation without representation to which the Palestinian people were being subjected in the occupied territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, as well as the efforts being deployed by Israel to deny the Palestinian people financial aid channelled through international institutions.

21. The Seminar was in full agreement that the overdue necessity of finding a just solution to the question of Palestine was the main issue deserving priority consideration in the actual complex situation. Indifference to that fundamental aspect had kept the Middle East in turmoil for many decades but it had now reached the forefront of international concern.

22. History demonstrated that controversial international problems could not be solved by force. Israel's belligerent policy of illegal occupation of lands, its attacks on refugee camps, its many-faceted usurpation of the rights of the Palestinian people, its inflexible attempts to intimidate Palestinian resistance, to suppress development of Palestinian indigenous economic and cultural resources and its blatant attempts to consolidate and perpetuate its occupation by establishing illegal settlements and imposing its legislation on the occupied territories in a manner designed to change the sociological and demographic nature of the territories were therefore doomed to prolong conflict and insecurity in a sensitive region.

23. The role of the United Nations was irreplaceable in the search for a solution to that problem. The success of the Organization depended on its Member States. If they did not respect their commitments and did not act in conformity with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, the effectiveness of the Organization would necessarily be limited.

24. The United Nations had inherited the problem of Palestine as soon as it was established. It now provided a forum 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. 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.

25. The United Nations had also 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, United Nations resolutions and on the principles of justice, morality and equity. Their impartiality and objectivity could not be questioned. The fact that they provided a solid basis for the solution of the problem was confirmed by the inclusion of the main features of those recommendations in all the most acceptable proposals put forward in recent years.

26. Those recommendations, therefore, repeatedly endorsed by ever increasing majorities in the General Assembly, undoubtedly retained their validity. It was unfortunate 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.

27. Israel's continued illegal occupation of Arab territories, its total disregard for the rights of the Palestinian people, as well as its refusal to recognize PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people, were major obstacles to a peaceful solution to the problem.

28. At the widely attended International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held in August and September 1983, in which for the first time in history over 100 non-governmental organizations had also participated, a proposal had been adopted that an international peace conference on the Middle East should be convened, under the auspices of the United Nations, in which all parties to the conflict, including PLO, as well as the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, would participate. That proposal had subsequently been endorsed by the General Assembly and consultations had been undertaken by the Secretary-General with a view to implementing it.

29. The majority of the international community regarded the convening of such an international peace conference on the Middle East as an urgent necessity. That had been reflected not only in the United Nations but in the decisions of many other intergovernmental organizations such as the League of Arab States and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. However, the opposition of Israel and the United States to the convening of the conference, and their consistent attempts to hold separate talks outside the framework of the United Nations, had so far proved an impediment to the holding of the conference. Israel preferred to seek "negotiating partners" which would not act in the interests of the Palestinian people but would enable Israel to maintain and to consolidate its hold on territories it had already occupied illegally by the use of force.

30. Among the many proposals advanced to eliminate the stalemate, the most recent was the new initiative of the Soviet Union which, it was pointed out, had the support of the community of Eastern European countries. The Soviet objective in putting forward proposals for a Middle East settlement was aimed at ending the deadlock, while conforming with the views of the United Nations and taking into account the fundamental interests of all the parties involved in the conflict.

31. The Seminar recognized that the proposed international conference, as envisaged by the United Nations, would be an important step forward and that Western Europe's special ties with the United States placed it in a specially favourable position to exert persuasive efforts to that end, both at the governmental level and through the creation of public opinion everywhere and, particularly, in the United States and Israel. Encouraging signs in this direction could already be detected.

32. Some avenues for further action were identified. In particular, stress was laid on the evident 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.

33. The importance was pointed out of noting the increasing interest and concern shown in Western European political evolution on the question of Palestine over the last decade, particularly as reflected in the Socialist International, the Council of Europe, the European Assembly, the Western European Union, as well as in the Inter-Parliamentary Union and in the British Commonwealth of Nations.

34. 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. That dialogue remained, however, prejudiced by the absence of a policy for a just and durable peace in the Middle East.

35. A community of interests, particularly on reciprocal security, prejudiced by the Middle East conflict, demanded the practical application of planned Euro-African co-operation, notably through inter-parliamentary efforts.

36. Mediterranean non-aligned countries were increasingly aware of the repercussions on their security posed by the unresolved Palestine question within the Middle East conflict. For the first time, they were due to meet at ministerial level in order to concert views and identify common efforts to bring out a lessening of tension and wider co-operation in attempting to resolve regional problems, of which the Palestine question was among the most important.

37. All those convergent efforts required persistence, factual information and mutual support. The United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People kept track of all those efforts and was able to provide all necessary information and co-ordination. It was suggested that the legal, economic and political implications of the agreement between the European Economic Community and Israel in relation to products from the occupied territories could be investigated.

38. The overall objectives of the proposed international conference should be to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the conflict: comprehensive, in terms of recognizing the question of Palestine as the core of the Middle East conflict; just, by ensuring respect for the rights and security of all parties to the conflict as prescribed by international law, and lasting, by eliminating the main causes of tension.

39. The view was expressed that the conference should culminate in the signing of a treaty or number of treaties embracing the following organically interrelated components: the withdrawal of the Israeli troops from all Arab territories, including Jerusalem, occupied since 1967; implementation of a programme for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, including its right to the creation of its own State; establishing a state of peace and ensuring the security and independent development of all States in the region. Simultaneously, international guarantees for the observance of the terms of such a settlement should be drawn up and adopted.

40. It was logical that the conference should be held within the framework of the United Nations, or under its auspices, since that Organization was entrusted with ensuring collective security and promoting international co-operation, and because its Charter provided the guidelines for the rule of law in international relations.

41. Moreover, it had a specific responsibility. Moreover, it had a specific responsibility vis-à-vis the Middle East conflict and the question of Palestine, since the emergence of the State of Israel, as well as the legitimacy of the Palestinian people's demands for the establishment of its own independent State,

could be traced back to General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947. In addition, the United Nations had defined and reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and accorded PLO observer status.

42. In order to introduce peace and stability in the region and to resolve the question of Palestine and thereby end the Arab-Israeli conflict, all States Members of the United Nations and leaders of world public opinion should intensify their efforts to promote the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East. The positive attitude towards peace efforts shown by PLO was considered by the Seminar to be a timely and encouraging sign.

43. In so far as the African States were concerned, they had consistently supported the cause of the Palestinian people and the Arab resistance to Israel's aggression. There was a close similarity with the situation in southern Africa. Like South Africa, Israel constituted a danger to Africa as much as to the Arab world in view of its close economic and military ties with South Africa. An inter-parliamentary commission could also be established to investigate the collaboration between Israel and South Africa.

44. The Seminar regarded the question of Jerusalem as an important aspect on the agenda of the United Nations. Al-Quds al-Sharif was a unique city sacred to three monotheistic religions, and its status was specifically provided for in United Nations resolutions.

45. Since 1967, Israel had not only proceeded with the transformation of the city's demographic composition, physical features, institutional structure and historic character by establishing settlements, by annexation and enlargement of the municipal boundaries of the city, but also by taking other measures in violation of the city's legal status. In addition to excavation around the Haram Al-Sharif of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock, Israel had perpetrated various acts of desecration and sacrilege against those and other holy places. Those unfortunate developments had provoked universal indignation.

46. Israel's adoption of the Basic Law which declared Jerusalem as its eternal capital in July 1980 had caused great abhorrence and revulsion throughout the world and resulted in international condemnation of Israeli policies. That was reflected in the decision of the Security Council, which censured Israel in the strongest terms and affirmed that the enactment of the Basic Law constituted a violation of international law and was null and void and must be rescinded forthwith.

47. Unfortunately, in further defiance of international law and United Nations resolutions, Israel still persisted in pursuing its policy of occupation, aggression, expansion and the establishment of illegal settlements in Jerusalem. Furthermore, it was a matter of concern that, in spite of Security Council resolution 478 (1980), two countries had transferred their embassies from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Such action condoned Israel's annexation and seriously eroded the international community's commitment to the special status of Jerusalem. It was stressed that the matter should be considered within the general context of the question of Palestine as an international issue in its own right.

48. The Seminar emphasized the need for objective reporting of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and called upon the mass media in all regions of the world to play their part actively and continuously in promoting the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and to its own independent State, as a step towards an early, just and lasting settlement of the Middle East conflict.

49. The Seminar also emphasized the need for greater unity and a consistent effort to reach consensus to promote conviction through dialogue, and for action by individual countries to conform to their public declarations in defending inalienable human rights and in upholding the principle of the self-determination of all peoples, not least the Palestinian people, who had been struggling valiantly for the attainment of their recognized rights for decades.

50. The Seminar heard a summary of the impressive organizational structure and of the activities of PLO, its role in the economic, social and political life of the Palestinian people and its efforts to defend its rights.

51. The establishment of PLO had marked the first step towards the recovery by the Palestinian people of their identity through their common resolve to defend their rights. It embodied a Palestinian entity representing the people and constituting a parliament and Government in exile.

52. PLO instilled in the masses of its people an awareness of their national rights and of the need to recover the rights with a view to the achievement of peace based on justice. The development of democratic modes of conduct in all relations within PLO constituted a progressive achievement which ensured that an independent Palestinian State would be a true example of democracy, and would have no difficulty in exercising executive functions.

53. PLO also had to deal with the economic and social problems of the Palestinian people in exile and under occupation. In spite of the dispersion of its people, the restrictions imposed on their economic, social and political activity and other limitations imposed by financial considerations, PLO provided comprehensive guidance and, as far as possible, the necessary infrastructure for its people. An example of its success in that regard was the fact that the Palestinian people enjoyed the highest educational standards in the third world and indeed rivalled the educational levels of many developed countries.

54. It could be said that PLO had faced up to the complex situation arising from its obligations towards its people by combining social, economic and political development within the framework of its struggle to recover the national rights of the people of Palestine.

55. The Seminar was of the opinion that the real role and structure of PLO should be given the widest possible publicity, in order to dispel the misconceptions about PLO often erroneously propagated by the news media.

56. Having taken note of the difficulties experienced by PLO in the realization of its economic and social objectives, the Seminar launched an appeal to all the countries of the world to strengthen the bilateral and international co-operation with PLO so as to ameliorate the economic, social, health, educational and other conditions of Palestinians living in the occupied territories.

57. In addition, the Seminar also launched an appeal to all parliamentarians throughout the world to intensify their national actions so as to enable people to better understand the realities of the question of Palestine.

58. The Seminar took note with appreciation of the statement released to the press by members of the Executive Committee of the Parliamentary Association for Euro-Arab Co-operation who participated in the Seminar as panellists. It agreed unanimously that the text of the statement should be annexed to the report.

59. At the closing session, Mr. Farouk Qaddoumi thanked the participants for the concern shown and solidarity expressed for the plight of the Palestinian people and the valuable contribution they had made to advance further the search for a solution of the problem.

60. The Seminar concluded its work with the expressions of appreciation to the Government of Tunisia for the gracious welcome and hospitality extended to the participants and for the facilities provided, which had contributed to the success of the Seminar.

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#### Ambassador Massamba Sarre

On behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, it is a pleasure and an agreeable duty to welcome you to this Ninth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine. The choice of Tunis for hosting this Seminar is not fortuitous. In selecting the Tunisian capital as the venue for these meetings, the Committee wished to play tribute to the constant and sustained action of the supreme warrior, His Excellency Habib Bourguiba of Tunisia, on the one hand, and on the other, of his leaders and his people in the just cause of the Palestinian people. The rich history of this country testifies, moreover, to the universal determination of peoples to assume the exercise of their fundamental rights to political independence and national sovereignty.

Your presence among us constitutes an additional affirmation of the importance which Tunisia attaches to the Palestinian question. For that we are extremely grateful. The tragic conflict which for more than 40 years has been tearing apart the Middle East, is once again the reason for our meeting again, this time at Tunis, to evaluate together the possible contribution of Euro-African opinion to its solution.

A tragic conflict, if ever there was one, for on a problem which originally was a question of self-determination and national sovereignty has been superimposed a regional crisis which has already cost us several wars and whose very existence constitutes a permanent danger for international peace and security.

Because of this danger, all the nations of the world today feel concerned by the implications of the Palestinian question whose nature, it must be said, is particularly difficult and complex.

Indeed, the basic elements are so closely interwoven that any partial or unbalanced settlement could only make its solution still more difficult.

Consequently, after a quarter of a century during which this issue has been constantly debated in the United Nations, the latter arrived at the conviction that a just and lasting solution to the conflict could be based only on the adoption of a comprehensive and balanced approach, taking due account of the interests of all the parties concerned and, principally, the Palestinian party.

It gradually realized that the obstacle to such solution was the predominance of partial, unilateral and arbitrarily selective approaches. Thus the argument that the Middle East conflict consisted essentially of a confrontation between Israel and the Arab States originating in the latter's refusal to recognize the existence of the

Hebrew State, long prevailed in the United Nations. Its main consequence was the denial of the very existence of the Palestinian people and hence of its national rights to the land of Palestine. An obvious consequence of this aspect of the question was to obscure one of the main elements of the conflict. In recognizing, nine years ago, that the Palestinian question was at the core of the Middle East conflict and that the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in accordance with the objectives and principles of the Charter of the United Nations was an essential condition for the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region, the United Nations ended up by restoring this problem to its true context. Furthermore, it expressed its conviction that the participation of the Palestinian people was essential in all efforts to bring about a just settlement of the Middle East conflict. The taking into account of the Palestinian reality and above all of its capital importance in the Middle East problem lay behind the establishment, in 1975, of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, whose presidency was entrusted to my country, Senegal. As its name implies, the Committee was given the mandate of studying and recommending to the United Nations General Assembly a programme of action to enable the Palestinian people to, exercise their rights, previously defined by the General Assembly itself as:

- a. The right to self-determination without external interference;
- b. The right to independence and national sovereignty;
- c. The right of Palestinians to return to their homeland.

A programme of action, drawn up since 1976, was immediately confirmed by the General Assembly which has reaffirmed its validity and relevance at each of its subsequent sessions. However, the implementation of this programme has so far come up against the intransigent opposition of the State of Israel, which persists in denying the Palestinians their national inalienable rights, encouraged in that, it must be said, by the attitude of the Security Council, the organ charged with maintaining international peace and security which, owing to the veto of one of its permanent members, has still not approved the Committee's recommendations. Those recommendations nevertheless retain all their validity, as is shown, moreover, by the support given them each year by the overwhelming majority of the United Nations Member States. Faced with the impasse thus created by the attitude of the Security Council, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People felt bound to add a new dimension to its action. Henceforth, it was a question of conducting an information and concertation campaign to alert public opinion to the Palestinian question and to the urgency of finding a just and lasting solution in the interests of international peace and security. Thereby, the Committee aims at achieving an essential objective: to arouse a current of opinion capable of influencing the governments concerned so as to create a political climate favourable to the quest for the only possible solution, that is to say, one which will take account of the broad international consensus which now obtains on the different elements of a comprehensive settlement. The seminars which the Committee has been organizing for some time now, and of which the present one is the ninth of its kind, form part of this framework defined by resolution 34/65 D of 12 December 1979. Through these seminars, the Committee plans to invite parliamentarians, journalists and academics from the four corners of the earth to a wider dialogue on all aspects of the Palestinian question, so as to help in formulating policies calculated to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights to self-determination and independence. Over and above this dialogue, the Committee also seeks to secure the widest possible dissemination of the objective information on the Palestinian question for, in its view, the more international public opinion is informed of the reality of the living drama of the Palestinian people, the greater the chances of ensuring the triumph of justice and peace in this bruised and battered Middle East. This ninth seminar will also be the first we have organized since the International Conference on the Question of Palestine held nearly one year ago. It should be recalled that that Conference, initiated by our Committee, represented a new objective and realistic approach to the settlement of the Palestinian question. I should like, on this occasion, to draw the attention of participants to one of the essential aspects of the conclusions reached by that Conference. Last year at Geneva, and for the first time, a forum of 137 countries met outside the traditional meeting place of the General Assembly to consider the Palestinian problem. Going further than the General Assembly, the Conference formulated a number of basic principles including the right of all States in the region to existence within secure and internationally recognized boundaries, with justice and security for all the people and including, of course, the future Palestinian State. It went on to recommend 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 PLO, the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The Conference considered that, in the present state of affairs, the best way out of the impasse was to bring the parties concerned together around the same table and that the United Nations was the most appropriate instrument for that purpose. Needless to say, our Committee, like the overwhelming majority of Member States which approved that recommendation, accords priority to efforts aimed at giving effect to this important initiative. I have no doubt that this Seminar will give every attention to this important aspect of our common preoccupations and thus contribute to the formulation of ideas likely to bring us nearer to the holding of that conference. Today, more than ever, the international community has accepted the idea that there can be no peace in the Middle East so long as the Palestinian question remains unsolved. It has also defined the principles which must guide the search for such a solution. It remains for it to convince those who today still believe it must be reached through the hegemony of one people over another that peace cannot rest on force, but only on justice. May this Seminar, through your participation, help towards a better understanding of this essential fact.

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Mahmoud Mestiri

I have the honour to open, on behalf of the Tunisian Government, the Ninth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, which will discuss the "Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People."

I have pleasure in beginning my statement by welcoming you to Arab Tunisia, the land of encounter, dialogue and openness to the world, hoping that its atmosphere, as well as its equable climate, will help to provide the means of ensuring the success of this important meeting of yours, which is convened, by happy coincidence, one week after the Conference of Arab Solidarity with the Struggle for Liberation of the Peoples of Southern Africa, which stressed at the conclusion of its work the similarity in methods and goals between the racist Pretoria régime and Israeli settler colonialism.

Allow me to address a special greeting and expression of esteem to the Chairman of the United Nations Committee, His Excellency our esteemed friend Ambassador Massamba Sarré, and to commend his notable and indefatigable efforts and also the efforts of his colleagues and assistants in the Committee to present a true picture of the Palestinian question and to counteract, resolutely and persistently, the attempts of obliteration and distortion.

The work of the Committee is actually but the fruit of the awareness on the part of the overwhelming majority of the international community of the legitimacy of Palestinian rights and an embodiment of the persistent efforts of the United Nations to achieve a reconsideration of the Palestinian question and to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights on an equal footing with other nations and peoples.

Accordingly, I wish, on this occasion, to express the esteem of Tunisia, whose President was one of the first to proclaim openly the truth about the Palestinian question and expose its colonial character to international public opinion - I wish to express the esteem of Tunisia and its leaders for the line being followed by the United Nations in dealing with the Palestinian question, namely, presenting it as it should be presented and placing it in the forefront of the concerns of the international community, so that international public opinion has come to comprehend its true nature and to realize, consequently, that the establishment of the State of "Israel" was not, as was bruited about extensively by the mouthpieces of propaganda "the process of a State's becoming independent" but actually, as subsequent developments have proved, a typical process of colonization aimed at evicting and expelling a whole people in order to make it easy to occupy its land,

usurp its property and put another people in its place.

For these reasons, your ongoing work to make the Palestinian question better known assumes an importance comparable only to the importance of establishing a just peace in the region which has not experienced peace for close to four decades. That is because, indisputably, the Palestinian question constitutes the core and essence of the Arab-Israeli struggle and there can be no settlement of the conflict in the Middle East without a just and lasting solution.

But this truth, patent as it is, still, unfortunately, comes up against the disregard of some, the obstinacy of others and efforts to obfuscate and distort. Such efforts are, in our view, doomed to failure, because they go against the current of history.

While we regret that some parties are hindering the role and efforts of the United Nations, we remain certain that the United Nations constitutes the natural and sound framework for dealing with the Palestinian question and the problems and crises deriving therefrom and that the Organization's many resolutions and decisions furnish the elements of a just and lasting solution to the conflict in the Middle East.

The responsibility of the United Nations in this regard derives not only from the role of this Organization at the time of the determination of Palestine's fate after the Second World War but also from the fact that the question is firmly linked to the fate of international peace, for which the Organization was created.

We all know the stages through which the question of the Palestinian people has passed since the United Nations assumed responsibility for it, and there is no need for me to recall all the resolutions which it has adopted, from resolution 181 (II) up to the present day. Israel has rejected all the resolutions of the United Nations. It has even rejected the instrument establishing it and has instead pursued a policy of expansion, force and fait accompli. What has resulted from that? Successive wars, which have threatened not only the peace and security of the Arab States but also security and stability throughout the world. Let no one expect that this cycle of violence and unrest will cease as long as the root of the conflict is disregarded and as long as the intention is to attempt to disregard the truth of the Palestinian question.

The problem is, in brief, that the key to peace in the region is the accordance to the Palestinian people of its legitimate and inalienable rights. Without that, there is no hope of any durable solution (on the contrary, the region will experience more unrest and conflagration. It would be easy for the area of conflict to extend to any other region in the world and even to threaten the peace of all mankind.

Nevertheless, the Arab States and the Palestine Liberation Organization have unceasingly reiterated their sincere desire for peace and their receptiveness to any initiative based on right and justice. The Arab world has never, at any time, refused to discuss any peace initiative from any quarter.

I mention, in particular, the 1982 initiative of United States President Reagan and the Soviet peace plan. Indeed, the Arabs have put forward their own peace plan, namely the Fez plan of 1982.

However, we have never at any time heard of an Israeli peace plan. We have heard nothing from Israel except categorical rejection of every peace initiative or move. It has slammed the door in the face of any effort or endeavour in this direction, and it has fabricated difficulties and crises to divert attention from the essence of the question, keeping the region in a state oscillating between tension and eruption. Are not the events in fraternal Lebanon a patent example of that?

In spite of the historic wrong done to the Palestinian people and in spite of the erosion and lack of effectiveness which has befallen the United Nations and its resolutions, we the Tunisians, adhering to international law and international legality, believe that the Fez plan, although it does not totally coincide with President Bourguiba's view which he has been expressing for some 20 years, accords with the spirit of President Bourguiba's thinking, since it rests on international legality as represented in United Nations resolutions, starting with General Assembly resolution 181 (II), adopted on 27 November 1947, and incorporates two principles: firstly, the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including the right to establish its independent State, and secondly, the guaranteeing of the security of all States of the region in order that they may live in security and peace. We are certain that this plan could ensure a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the chronic conflict in the Middle East.

We cannot but feel satisfaction today when the Palestinian question has, in fact, become the concern of the whole world. This gathering is the best proof of that. Moreover, the sons of the fighting Palestinian people are in their blessed liberation struggle under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, which has been able, through its wise leadership and the struggle of its people, to impose the issue on the conscience of the whole world. It affirms from this podium its full support for the just struggle of the Palestinian people and its resolve to stand by that people through thick and thin until its national goals are attained and it establishes its free and independent State on the land of its fathers and forefathers in Palestine.

Tunisia, which does not recognize the policy of the fait accompli, wishes to draw the attention of the international community to the exposure of the Holy City of Jerusalem to Judaization and the desecration of its religious monuments.

In conclusion, I welcome you once again to Tunisia, which opens its arms to all those who work for peace and which will always remain, as has been the wish of His Excellency President Habib Bourguiba, a place of encounter, dialogue and endeavour for peace and co-operation.

May God grant you success in your work. May His peace and mercy be upon you.

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#### Adnan Omran

It is a source of pleasure and pride to me, deputizing for the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, who has been prevented by force of circumstances from attending, and speaking on behalf of the League of Arab States, to convey to you and to this important international seminar the highest sentiments of appreciation, together with best wishes for the success of your efforts and of the deliberations you are about to conduct with a view to achieving an exalted and noble goal, namely peace based on justice in the Middle East.

This distinguished academic and political seminar, whether by virtue of the framework within which it is taking place or by virtue of the presence of panellists and participants who represent a select group of both Arab and non-Arab intellectuals and scholars, is a forum of far-reaching importance for the promotion of study and research and the development of concepts and ideas in the service of a just cause, that of the Palestinian people and its inalienable and imprescriptible rights.

Permit me to address the United Nations Secretariat and its Secretary-General, Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar, in terms of appreciation for the fervour shown by the Organization for the implementation of its resolutions to the fullest extent possible within the limits of its ability pending a time when international defiance of United Nations resolutions will diminish. The United Nations, by virtue of the principles contained in its Charter, will then become a refuge for the peoples of the world yearning for such a peace as will preserve dignity and give true meaning to freedom and sovereignty, the very goals for whose attainment the United Nations must aim if our world is to benefit from the lessons learned in two ruinous world wars. The United Nations is and will remain the legitimate framework for the solution of international conflicts and, in particular, the question of Palestine. I should also like to place on record deep gratitude and appreciation to Tunisia, the seat of the League of Arab States, to the country, its President, its Government and its people, for the effective and unceasing manner in which it contributes to all efforts made in defence of those principles for which the Arab people of Tunisia have made sacrifices and suffered casualties. The hospitality provided by the Tunisian Government and the facilities it makes available to forums and seminars, and to any gathering whose objective is to defend human freedom and human rights, are an expression of Tunisia's devotion to its heritage and to acting in conformity with its principles.

It is natural that the United Nations should concern itself with the cause of the Palestinian people since the Organization, and through it the international community, bears full responsibility for all the ills which have afflicted that people. It also bears responsibility for that people's future and for its yearning and aspirations to regain its legitimate rights. The United Nations has adopted all possible solutions to support and endorse the rights of the Palestinian people. Not one of those resolutions, however, has found its way into practical implementation, and such is not to be expected. The time has come for the international community to find new means to ensure that United Nations resolutions are respected. The time has come to save the United Nations from the dangers that encompass it and threaten its prestige.

There are important facts that will no doubt be the subject of study and examination at the present United Nations seminar. The first such fact is that the Palestinian Arab people is a people possessed of all the defining attributes and characteristics of a State and is imbued with the strength of its right to the land of which it has been robbed. Israel's insistence on denying the existence of this people is, in one respect, an indication of the insanity of Israeli extremism, as it is also an indication of the fear manifested by the racist sectarian society in Israel for the principles and values in which the Palestinian people believes and which it proclaims. These principles are based upon the full equality of all subjects of the Palestinian State, without discrimination on grounds of race, colour or religion.

Israel had supposed that it would be able to liquidate the Palestinian people by rendering it homeless in a Nazi-style occupation and by dispersing it to camps and detention centres. The result, however, was that all measures of compulsion, oppression and aggression succeeded only in further strengthening the distinctive

nature of the Palestinian character and deepening the faith of this people in its existence, its freedom and its land with a view to establishing a democratic, independent and non-racist State.

The second such fact is reflected in the Arab consensus, reached at the Fez summit, endorsing a peace plan based on principle and international legitimacy that will put an end to the tragedies in the Middle East. The Zionist entity has rejected this plan, both as a whole and in detail. The Arabs have responded to all efforts and initiatives based on international legitimacy and on United Nations resolutions, whereas Israel has rejected all such attempts. It has persisted in implementing a policy of expansion, swallowing up all the demilitarized zones in the 1950s, as shown by United Nations documents and Security Council resolutions, and moving on to expansionist aggression in partnership with two European States in 1956 and then, in the 1960s, to the aggression of 1967 which achieved Israel's goal of occupying the West Bank, including Arab Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip and Arab territories in the Golan and Sinai. This led, in the 1970s and 1980s, to aggression against Lebanon and the occupation of Lebanese territory on two occasions.

The programmes of expansionist Israeli aggression were all implemented as planned. They are the programmes of which Israeli leaders spoke with complete frankness, including Ben-Gurion, Sasson, Eshkol, Golda Meir, Dayan, Begin and Sharon. The names have changed and multiplied, but the theory and its application have remained the same.

The third fact is that the Israeli rejection of peace is a natural and direct consequence, on the one hand, of the racist Zionist mentality and, on the other, of unconditional American support for Israel in political, military, economic, information and all other fields. Such support has reached the extent of endorsing everything that Israel does. It is this sad fact that lies behind the continuance of Israeli aggression in the Middle East. The United States of America has subsequently condoned such aggression by concluding a strategic military and political alliance with Israel by virtue of which Israel has been transformed into a major military Power directly linked, for purposes of the supply of arms and equipment, with the military factories and arsenals. The established fact remains that it is the question of Palestine which is basic and that there can be no peace in the region, no matter how much time may elapse, without full recognition of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to exercise self-determination by establishing an independent State in its homeland, Palestine, with its capital in Arab Jerusalem, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, these people's sole representative.

The position of the United States has at all times been characterized by partiality, in complete disregard of the exalted principles proclaimed by its founding fathers and in contempt of the great intellectual and philosophical heritage bestowed on the world by the American Revolution. All such principles and values have become transformed in the marketplace of American elections and have been dissipated and lost in a world where votes go to the highest bidder and where Zionist fanaticism exercises arbitrary control over the mentality of those competing against each other. This has reached such an extent that the United States foreign policy in the Middle East has become totally in thrall to the interests of Israel.

In asserting these facts, we do so not because we wish to damage Arab-American relations but, on the contrary, because we hope to defeat the logic of partiality inherent in United States policy with a view to establishing relations of friendship and co-operation based on the principles by which the American heritage sets great store. We also hope for non-partiality towards Israel and for genuine action to put a halt to Israeli aggression and establish a just peace in the Middle East based on United Nations resolutions.

The fourth fact is that the Arab movement towards peace inevitably had to provoke certain disagreements, whether in Palestinian ranks or in Arab ranks in general. These disagreements positively did not, however, concern the essence of the issues at stake or the strategy for a just peace. Such disagreements are a familiar and natural phenomenon in any State or within any group of States. What must be realized, in spite of biased assertions that try to use the non-existence of a unified Arab position as an excuse, is that the Arab position with regard to the achievement of a just peace is today more unified than at any time in the past, as is clear from the Arab consensus position on the resolutions of the Fez summit.

In referring to differences in the Arab position, we must, to help us understand the dimensions of the problem, address the subject of the Camp David accords and their effect, both direct and indirect, on the main question that you will be discussing. This is necessary in view of the fact that many Western commentators disregard the established facts of the conflict when they assess those accords as a dramatic turning point in the efforts made for the achievement of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East, particularly when they came directly after the almost successful efforts to convene an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations in order to resolve the conflict.

Israel, after ensuring its security in the south, was able to move on to another stage of its expansionist strategy with its aggression against southern Lebanon and its occupation of Lebanese territory on two occasions during the short life of the Camp David accords.

Given the declarations successively made by responsible officials of our sister country, Egypt, in particular that made by its Minister for Foreign Affairs to the effect that Egypt has no preconditions for returning to the fold of its sister countries and that it, in turn, would accept no such conditions, we should like to state, on the basis of a national perspective which understands the situation of Egypt and of the Egyptian people as a part of the Arab nation, that all the Arab States look forward to the day when the esteemed Arab country of Egypt will return to its place and resume its national role. I should also like to say that it is a more serious matter than talk of the existence or non-existence of conditions. It is one that concerns the principle of a return to national commitment and the extent to which Egypt is capable of fulfilling its commitments as an Arab State *vis-à-vis* the Charter of the League of Arab States, inter-Arab agreements and the ties and sentiments that bind the Arabs together. Egypt must, accordingly, tackle the problem of the Camp David accords and replace commitments under the terms of a capitulatory agreement by national commitments. All the Arab States will stand by Egypt in helping to ensure the success of any step aimed at reuniting brothers. We believe that this is inevitable and that it will soon come to pass.

I must, in conclusion, reaffirm the desire of the Arab nation for the attainment of a just peace. We look forward to an intensification of international efforts for peace, for an end to the life of misery and displacement of the Palestinian Arab people, for the establishment of the independent Palestinian State with its capital in Jerusalem, and for a halt to Israeli aggression against Arab territories in order to end the occupation of southern Lebanon, the Golan and the remainder of Sinai. We look forward to an intensification of all Arab and international efforts for the attainment of these goals. We hope for an immediate end to the war going on in the Gulf between two sister countries. There must be responsible and effective international action to halt this war, particularly since the Arab party involved in it has responded to all international initiatives. The continuance of this war is not only a tragedy for the parties directly involved, but also constitutes a grave threat to international peace and security and a waste of energies needed by the Arab nation in its just struggle against Zionist aggression.

Mr. Chairman, I should like to reiterate our appreciation to you for your own personal efforts for the success of this important international gathering. We should also like to express sincere appreciation to all panellists and participants in the discussion who will, in their conscientious deliberations, present new visions which may help to light the long dark road ahead. The light of the candle, as a great thinker once said, shall not be extinguished by the darkness of the whole world. We look forward to greater efforts being made in the intellectual field and in the study and analysis of the questions involved in order to bring closer the day of peace in the Middle East, reduce international tension and turn our troubled world towards change, development and prosperity and away from aggression, ruin and destruction. May God grant you success in all the work you are about to undertake.

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Mamadou Boubakar Kante

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

Peter U. Onu, Acting Secretary-General of OAU, is unable to attend because of other duties, and he therefore asked me to represent him at the Seminar on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people which brings us together today.

I am deeply honoured and privileged by his request.

He asked me to assure you of the regard and support of the Organization of African Unity.

I should like, with your permission, on behalf of the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, to hail the sponsors of this great international demonstration of support for the heroic Palestinian people and to thank them most sincerely for their kind invitation and for the efforts they have made in organizing this Seminar.

Yesterday, Tunis hosted the first Conference of Arab Solidarity with the Struggle for Liberation in Southern Africa. Today it welcomes the Ninth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine.

Africa cannot but be happy at the choice of Tunisia, the prestigious seat of Afro-Arab nationalism, for these historic meetings dedicated to the struggle for freedom. This is a just tribute by our continent and the international community to a giant of the anti-colonial struggle, which has written with its valiant people the most

glorious pages of the history of the liberation of colonial peoples. In this connection, I wish to mention His Excellency Mr. Habib Bourguiba, the founding father of modern Tunisia and the doyen of African and Arab Heads of State.

We must emphasize, in this regard, the eminent services which Bourguiba's Tunisia has rendered to the cause of colonial peoples.

It should also be recalled that in the thorny debate on the Middle East crisis that has been going on for nearly 40 years, His Excellency Mr. Habib Bourguiba was the first statesman to advocate a return to international legality, in other words, to the initial decisions of the United Nations on the question.

One cannot discuss the liberation struggle of the Palestinian people without mentioning the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization, the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories and the commission to investigate the policy of establishing settlements in the occupied Arab territories, all of which have contributed actively to advancing the Palestinian cause throughout the world.

The delegation of the secretariat of OAU offers its warmest congratulations to those bodies and their eminent Chairmen for the role they have assumed in the campaign of sensitizing international public opinion to the question of Palestine.

In this regard, His Excellency Ambassador Massamba Sarré deserves special mention. We thank him and commend him for his action as Chairman of the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

The delegation of the secretariat of OAU wishes to thank His Excellency Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar for the special attention he has given to the physical organization of the Ninth Seminar on Palestine.

The theme chosen by the Ninth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, namely, "the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people", is one of the fundamental elements of the Middle East crisis. The United Nations General Assembly has affirmed since 1970 that "respect for the rights of the Palestinians is an indispensable element in the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East". That August body went even further in 1975 by recognizing in one of its relevant resolutions that the question of Palestine is at the heart of the Middle East problem.

Indeed, the forced creation on Palestinian territory of a theocratic Jewish State provoked the crisis which has been tearing apart the Middle East for 40 years.

The martyrdom of the Palestinian people began on 2 November 1917 with the Declaration of Lord Balfour, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, which viewed with favour the establishment in Palestine of a Jewish national home.

And it is clearly the frustration of the Palestinian people that is responsible for the Israeli-Arab confrontation which continues to inflame the Near East.

In short, the usurpation of Palestine by international Zionism is at the heart of the middle East crisis.

Any settlement of this crisis must necessarily take into account this fundamental fact, because the national rights of the Palestinian people rest on historic foundations, sociological realities and international legality.

Looking at history, we see that apart from the reign of the Crusaders and that of the Turks, Palestine has been ruled for more than 13 centuries by the Arabs.

The population of the country consisted of Arabs, Semites, Muslims and Christians.

From the standpoint of international legality, the Palestinian people was accorded national rights by the historic United Nations resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960 on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples.

Furthermore, the United Nations has affirmed in relevant resolutions the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, independence and the establishment of a sovereign State.

The Palestinian people also derives its national rights from the Covenant of the League of Nations, which recognized, with respect to Palestine and all Arab countries then under colonial domination, their existence as nations to which the Mandatory Powers should render "administrative advice and assistance" until their independence.

Lastly, the Palestinian people has national rights because of the legitimacy of the struggle it has waged for 40 years with such heroism and perseverance against international Zionism and the supporters of international Zionism, in order to gain its independence. That legitimacy was recognized by the United Nations in its resolution 6 December 1971.

The theocratic Jewish State was created on Palestinian soil as a result of sordid bargaining, odious manipulations and dramatic betrayals, and yet, despite the mass immigration of Jews escaping pogroms and persecution in Europe, the Palestinians represented two thirds of the population and owned 95 per cent of the land.

In order to defend their homeland against the usurpers, the Palestinian people had to face at the same time the armed forces of the administering Power and the Haganah, Irgun and Stern paramilitary and terrorist groups ;t up by the Zionists to facilitate the unrestricted immigration of Jews from Europe.

The plot was hatched by the World Zionist Organization with, of course, the complicity of the administering Power.

The case of Palestine is the classic example of bungled decolonization. The colonial Powers of those times bear the full responsibility for it.

In other words, Israel is an act of colonialism, and the motivation of international Zionism, which initially had in mind nothing more than the establishment of a "spiritual sanctuary" in the United States, Africa or Latin America, are imperialistic.

Listen, in this connection, to Theodor Herzl, the founder of Zionism:

"If Palestine becomes the future Jewish State for Europe, we (the Zionists) shall constitute over there (that is, in the Middle East) a stretch of rampart against Asia, we shall be the advance guard of civilization against barbarism."

Was it not in the name of the same civilization and the same Western values that, 50 years later, south of the Limpopo in South Africa, the infamous Dr. Malan elevated odious apartheid to a system of government?

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#### A. The role of the United Nations and other forums and organizations in the search for peace in the Middle East.

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##### J. Biro

The Middle East region, owing to its extremely important strategic situation and rich natural resources, has for a long time been the scene of serious clashes of interests. During the latest decades history has often witnessed a series of seemingly illogical unions, united fronts, conflicts and confrontations in this region. World imperialism, seeking domination over the region, has always been detectable behind these events.

For nearly 40 years the United Nations has been dealing with the Middle East issue, including its key element, the question of Palestine. It is frequently asserted that the lack of a solution to this problem is clear proof of the inefficiency of the United Nations. Moreover, there are those who firmly declare that General Assembly resolution 181 (II) on the question of Palestine is the source of the Palestinian problem itself.

To be faithful to the historical truth, it has to be stated that the question of Palestine, the central element of the Middle East issue, is of a much earlier date than the resolution of the United Nations adopted in 1947 and it is not the United Nations resolution that produced the problem) rather it tried to find a solution to it.

The development of the situation in Palestine after the Second World War formed part of the process of abolition of the colonial system. According to a resolution of the League of Nations since 1922 Palestine was under a British mandate.

After the Second World War the Government of the mandatory State got into a contradictory situation: it had significant interests in the Arab world which more and more vigorously protested against the Jewish immigration and land purchases in Palestine, while on the other hand it was bound by the Balfour declaration relating to the establishment of a Jewish homeland. After having rejected several unrealizable plans of intermediate solution, the United Kingdom in 1947 handed over this serious problem to the United Nations and requested it to convene a special session of the General Assembly to discuss the question of Palestine. In the United Nations, which was just established, the question of Palestine was put on the agenda this way and became later a central element of the Middle East issue, a key question unsolved up to the present day.

At present the situation in Palestine is rather far from the condition laid down in the Balfour declaration) especially from its second part, according to which the

interest of the non-Jewish population of Palestine cannot be violated because of the Jewish immigration.

Since then Israel has occupied large territories. In 1948 the territory occupied by Israel was twice as large as it was determined in General Assembly resolution 181 (II). Among the latest and most striking manifestations of expansionist policy pursued by Israel for many years, let me mention only the annexation of Jerusalem and its declaration as capital, the bombing of nuclear installations in Iraq, the annexation of the Golan Heights and the invasion of Lebanon.

The Middle East question, and its different aspects, is one of the subjects followed with great attention in the United Nations since the establishment of the Organization.

The United Nations resolutions and statements reflect the sense of responsibility, the readiness to help of the great majority of Member States and their sympathy with the peoples of the region. This is proved by the stationing of United Nations forces and the presence of United Nations observers in the region, the efforts of United Nations Secretaries-General and their mediators, to solve the problem, the invitation of PLO to the United Nations, the establishment of UNRWA and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People as well as the organization of seminars and conferences on these themes.

As a consequence of the standpoint of the permanent members, first of all of the United States, the Security Council adopted only one substantive resolution on this question, namely the frequently mentioned resolution 242 after the war in 1967. Apart from the fact that the interpretation of the resolution by Israel on essential points - question of frontiers, seizure of lands - is equal to the rejection of the resolution, an undoubted shortcoming of resolution 242 (1967) lies in the fact that the question of Palestine is interpreted as a question of refugees. It was later on corrected by numerous resolutions of great importance adopted by the General Assembly and the world Organization has taken a stand in favour of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

By now an international consensus has been reached concerning the just solution of the question of Palestine; however, efforts to solve this problem are impeded only by Israel and its supporter.

The resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly have taken a clear and consistent stand on the question relating to the Middle East. The resolutions state that the question of Palestine is the core of the Middle East crisis, the solution of which can only take place within the framework of a comprehensive settlement and through collective efforts. All resolutions adopted in recent years point out that the preconditions of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement are the following: the Israeli withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied since 1967; the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and to establish a State of its own; and respect for the right of all States in the region to a secure existence. The resolutions adopted in the past nearly 10 years have taken a stand according to which PLO, the representative of the Palestinian people, should attend all negotiations dealing with the problems of the region.

The resolutions of the General Assembly condemn Israel's aggressive and expansionist policy and consequently state that Israel is not considered to be a peace-loving State. They criticize the support rendered to Israel and urge that it be stopped.

In addition, they strongly condemn Israel's activity in the occupied Arab territories, which is aimed at altering the geographical character, demographic composition and legal status of these territories. These resolutions annul the annexation of the Golan Heights and Jerusalem. Resolution 38/180 adopted at the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly for the first time qualified the violation by Israel of the Geneva conventions of 1949 relating to the activity in the occupied territories, as a war crime and an outrageous disregard of humanity.

During the years of continuous crisis in the Middle East some aspects of the question have often come into prominence at United Nations fora in consequence of current events, repeated fights and hostilities. It happened so last year too when, after Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the question of Lebanon received great emphasis at the General Assembly. The invasion has worsened to a large extent the situation in the Middle East. It cost many lives, caused vast material damages and started a new flow of refugees. The General Assembly justly condemned Israel's recent aggressive steps and efforts to destabilize Lebanon, to tear it away from the front of the Arab State and to force it to sign a separate deal. It is quite normal that such a policy could not lead to a result expected by Israel and ended in failure.

These partial questions of the main question coming into the limelight from time to time reaffirm that the crisis can be solved only within the framework of a comprehensive settlement. For this purpose an appeal was adopted and worded in a resolution by the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Geneva Conference on Palestine in 1983 to convene an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations in the interest of the Middle East settlement. It is regrettable that several countries interested in the question refused in advance to participate in these efforts, since it is doubtless that time is ripe for the convocation of the Conference. We look forward with interest to those conceptions, including that of the United Nations Secretary-General, relating to the organization of the Conference.

The resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly concerning the Middle East question are well founded and really reflect the will of the great majority of Member States. It is well known why it is impossible to implement these resolutions and initiatives, why Israel has been able to oppose for many decades the will of world public opinion and to continue its expansionist and aggressive policy. Israel found the United States as its supporter and ally, which sought to use Israel as an instrument to attain its strategic interests in the Middle East. It is a regrettable fact that Israel, risking the interests of its own people, has accepted this role.

The United States of America, a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, which bears special responsibility to maintain international peace and security according to the Charter, has lent consistent support to Israel practically since its establishment. The United States has established strategic co-operation with Israel, it urges and assists the conclusion of separate agreements not resulting in a lasting solution in the region, ignoring the interests of the Palestinian people. In the present tense international situation the differences in the Middle East, if we can say, are even sharper, and it is more urgent to achieve a quick solution.

The public opinion and the Government of the Hungarian People's Republic have always supported the efforts aimed at the solution of the Middle East crisis and of the question of Palestine. This is expressed in the stands of our legislature as well. Thus we greeted the assertion of political principles included in the peace plan adopted at the Fez Conference of Heads of Arab States and Governments to reach a comprehensive, just and durable solution of the situation in the Middle East, and we have considered the four-point peace plan of the Soviet Union as of great importance, too. The Soviet plan was followed by another Soviet proposal relating to the principles of settlement and the methods of solution. In Hungary this proposal was received with great interest and considered prospective, being in harmony with the provisions of resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly on the Middle East and on the Palestinian question. We share the view formulated in the Soviet proposal that the only right and efficient way to a comprehensive solution of the Middle East situation is joining efforts made by all parties concerned, i.e. the talks conducted within the framework of an international conference. It is regrettable that both Israel and the United States have rejected this constructive Soviet proposal.

As regards the Middle East situation, the Hungarian People's Republic has taken a resolute stand that the settlement should be reached through collective efforts on the following basis:

- a. The complete and unconditional withdrawal of Israel troops from all Arab territories, including Jerusalem, occupied since 1967;
- b. The solution of the question of Palestine, the central element of the Middle East problem, through the recognition and guarantee of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to establish an independent State;
- c. The establishment of peace and security for all States, including Israel, in the region within internationally recognized frontiers.

Hungarian public opinion has always held the deep conviction that the United Nations should play a role in the search for the solution. We believe that the work started by the United Nations Secretary-General, on the basis of resolution 38/58 adopted at the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly to convene an international peace conference on the Middle East should be continued, despite the negative stand and difference of opinion on questions of detail of some countries. In order to achieve peace in the Middle East collective efforts are needed and in this endeavour the United Nations can be a good forum even in view of the unsuccessful attempts and minor results achieved first of all in the economic and humanitarian fields. We can expect a comprehensive solution and durable settlement only in case of consent and agreement of all parties concerned. The different stands of the interested parties do not encourage the hope of solving the Middle East problem within a short time, but only this can be the way of the solution. Partial solutions and separate agreements only continue to complicate the situation, sharpen the differences and divide the countries. In these circumstances strengthening unity among the Arab countries as well as the Palestinian movement is of great importance.

Once more I wish to emphasize that the success of the activities of the United Nations depends on the Member States. In an international situation, when there are States which do not respect their commitments and do not act in conformity with principles and purposes formulated in the Charter of the United Nations, the possibilities of the world Organization are limited. Regrettably the present international situation is unfavourable to reach an understanding among States even in the cases of crises, and in fact the incitement of international tension and continuation of arms race delay this possibility.

There I am convinced that the Governments and peoples of all countries as well as world public opinion should seek to force back and change the dangerous processes prevailing in our days in world politics. They should come out for the relaxation of international tension, for peaceful co-existence, security and mutually advantageous and fruitful co-operation among States and peoples. Only in a balanced and secure international situation can we hope for the establishment of

understanding among States and for the implementation of the United Nations resolutions.

The efforts for peace and relaxation of international tension as well as for disarmament have also an indirect influence towards the elimination of crises, including the problems of the Middle East. The United Nations resolutions on the Middle East settlement, expressing the will of the majority, can be implemented in an eased international situation.

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Mohammed Hassan El-Zayyat

Last Monday, 13 August, as we were preparing here at Tunis to convene this ninth Seminar, organized by the United Nations on Palestine, another United Nations gathering was reaching its conclusion in the capital of Mexico.

On that day, there was submitted to the United Nations International Conference on Population, held at Mexico City, a draft resolution which met with the quasi-unanimous approval of the participants and obtained 82 votes out of a total of 84. The draft resolution condemned any attempt on the part of any State occupying the territory of another State to establish settlements thereon.

The world's representatives approved the draft resolution, as I have said, almost unanimously, and Israel rejected it, because it saw in it a clear condemnation of what it had done and is doing daily in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. The second vote, and the only one which joined in Israel's rejection of the text, was, unfortunately, the vote of the United States of America.

This was the most recent occasion - and it was certainly not the only one - on which Israel has shown itself unconcerned about standing alone in opposition to 82 States of the world or any number of States greater or less than that, provided that it is confident and sure that one of the major States of the world will stand by its side, not only at these international conferences but also militarily, supplying it with superior weapons, and politically, protecting it against any measure which might be taken against it by the international community when Israel defies it, including the measures laid down in the United Nations Charter to be taken in order to ensure compliance with its provisions on the part of Member States.

This then is the position of Israel vis-à-vis the United Nations. It is being demonstrated once again in Mexico this very week when we are convening this Seminar in Tunis.

So does this repeated demonstrated position put an end to discussion of the topic of this meeting, which is "The Role of the United Nations and Other Forums and Organizations in the Search for Peace in the Middle East"?

Before we arrive either at acceptance of this conclusion and admission of such incapacity or at rejection of this conclusion and insistence that the United Nations and other international organizations have an effective role to play, we must take a quick look at the course which has been followed by the Zionist movement, with the help of the United States, and which has resulted in the tragedy which this Seminar seeks a way to remedy.

Theodor Herzl, the author of the book Der Judenstaat, which many hold in esteem, the founder of the modern Zionist movement, says in his memoirs that he took the Britisher Cecil Rhodes - the founder of the State of Rhodesia - as an ideal and studied the steps taken by Rhodes until he succeeded in establishing his State. Rhodes' choice fell on a territory populated by peace-loving inhabitants possessing no weapons to avail them for the purpose of self-defence and no wealth wherewith to resist an incursion by wealthy men, and his second step was to collect the necessary funds from the imperial treasuries.

His third step was to induce a number of his fellow countrymen and white Europeans to emigrate to the territory which he had decided to plunder and repopulate by force.

His fourth step was to endeavour to obtain a document conferring on him ostensible legitimacy in carrying out these acts. This document was the Charter which he managed to obtain from the British Government to act on its behalf in the region of Africa which he had decided to take over, after he had gained assurance that that British Government would back him and would not abandon him in the endeavour on which he was bent, namely, the establishment of a white racist State in African territory.

Cecil Rhodes and his assistants succeeded in driving out the majority of the Shona people from their territory, and on that people's land he set up a State to which he gave his name, the State of Rhodesia, and a capital to which he gave the name of a Minister of State who had lent him support, Salisbury.

The founder of the Zionist movement pondered the success of Cecil Rhodes and the steps whereby he had arrived at success and sought out territory on which to establish his State. Finally, he focused on the land of Palestine, which he knew was a region inhabited by peace-loving inhabitants who could probably be easily overcome by superior weapons and driven from their land so that a group of foreigners to the land and to the region as a whole might be established in their stead. Herzl set about establishing a bank to finance the colonization of Palestine, which he named "the Imperial Bank". Then he began to search for someone to give him the charter which would confer on him a kind of legitimacy in his endeavour to establish a Jewish State on the land whose people he wanted to drive out.

Theodor Herzl's movement expended various efforts in order to arrive at its goal.

It tried to get this Charter from the Ottoman Sultan - as we have heard from our Turkish colleague at this Seminar - and it tried to obtain it from the German Bismarck and the Russian Czar. Then it turned to the British Government but was unable to obtain from it a manifest and outright charter. The Zionist movement had to wait for the end of the Second World War and the establishment of the United Nations to obtain through it the charter which it had been seeking in order to achieve ostensible legitimacy. This charter was, in reality, General Assembly resolution 181 (II), which has so often been mentioned at this Seminar.

When the Zionist movement obtained this charter in the form of this resolution and when it was able subsequently to obtain membership in the international Organization itself, its need for the United Nations ceased, and it was satisfied to rely on the powerful State from which it had decided to seek protection.

Just as Cecil Rhodes' movement exploited in the worst possible manner the Charter conferred on it, driving out large segments of the Shona people and allowing others to remain to work the land, so the movement of Herzl's successors has done, and continues to do, in Palestine. Just as Cecil Rhodes' movement remained dependent on the support of the British State and defied neighbouring African States and world public opinion with the help of that support, so Herzl's movement did and continues to do in Palestine. Just as Cecil Rhodes' movement found a dependable ally in the white racist Government imposed on South Africa, so Herzl's movement did and continues to do in Palestine. It now denies that the people of Palestine has rights, whether alienable or inalienable. With this denial, it defies all peoples of the world and their organizations, including the Organization which gave it the Charter which enabled it, in 1947, to establish a State. No impartial observer or either of the two movements can fail to note that they are actually two of the movements of European colonialism in which the colonizer justifies his aggression against his victims by the fact that they belong to a race of mankind that is inferior to and of less worth than his own and that by his colonization of them he is only trying to bring them progress and confer on them the benefit of civilization.

By adopting resolution 181 (II), our international Organization assumed an additional responsibility toward the people of Palestine, in addition to its responsibility to respect the provisions of its Charter, which was signed by all Member States voluntarily and by choice, and in addition to its responsibility to implement the successive resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, the Security Council and the specialized agencies year after year.

The Government of Israel, in defying all these resolutions, realizes that the international Organization possesses no means of military coercion. The world has unfortunately been unable to achieve what the Charter would call for in this regard. The Government of Israel realizes also that the veto will protect it from any economic or other diplomatic penalty with which it might be confronted by the Security Council.

Israel's defiance of the international Organization is not confined to its rejection of the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. It also refuses to permit any activity by United Nations specialized agencies in the territories which it occupies, to help the people under occupation and defend its cultural heritage and its economic and social life; it refuses to receive missions sent to the occupied territories by these agencies and refuses to co-operate with them in any way. Hence our stand in Mexico City this week. That stand will not be the last nor will it be the most significant.

Is the United Nations, then, shaking off its responsibility towards the Palestinian people, and are the Palestinian people and its representatives, the Palestine Liberation Organization and its leader, Abu Ammar Mr. Yasser Arafat, despairing of the United Nations?

The close relationship between Rhodesia and Great Britain was not long in weakening and terminating when Great Britain perceived the harm which this unhealthy relationship caused it in its dealings with the independent States of Africa and in its international situation generally and when British public opinion itself awoke, after it realized the truth about conditions in Rhodesia.

The racist Government of Rhodesia fell after a struggle in which blood flowed, civilization was rent asunder and the course of development and construction was set back. In spite of the strong and stubborn resistance of the occupying authorities, sovereignty and power reverted to the people of the country. They rid themselves of the imposed colonial name of Rhodesia and brought back the old name of their country, Zimbabwe. They rid themselves of the British Minister's name which had

been imposed on their capital, Salisbury, and gave it its current national name of Harare.

The people of Zimbabwe, being a just people, was gracious and, being a wise people, was realistic. They treated the white inhabitants as fellow citizens and went from fighting for independence to striving for reconstruction at home and the best and truest form of co-operation abroad with the other African States, the non-aligned States and the United Nations.

The Palestinian people is confident that its ordeal, which transcends that of Zimbabwe, shall, without a doubt, have the same outcome. It is prepared, under the leadership of its liberation movement, to make all the sacrifices necessary to attain that goal. It is prepared to stand up to force, to withstand it and, ultimately, to defeat it after the heavy sacrifices borne by the present generation and perhaps by those to come.

The people of Palestine has taken that road and the most recent of its battles in Lebanon will endure as acts of heroism which history will not forget in the face of a barbarism which it will not forgive. This road cannot, however, be the only one and there is also the road the international community must take in order to end this conflict.

Having adopted the partition resolution, the United Nations bears towards the people of Palestine a responsibility unlike that which it had towards the people of Zimbabwe to which, on the contrary, it provided all necessary assistance in obtaining its independence.

The United Nations arose in order to protect justice from the violence done to it and so that claimants might have access to it and avoid the need for continue bloodshed and the sacrifice of one generation after another.

It is the duty of the United Nations, and of each one of its Members, not to allow Israel to continue to defy the international will.

It is the duty of the United Nations and its specialized agencies not to permit the Government of occupation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to continue defying them, preventing their missions from entering those territories and seizing their property.

It seems to me self-evident that these organizations should be able to treat the occupying State in a like manner. For if Israel does not permit them to operate in the occupied territories, then I believe that they must refrain from operating in Israel itself and for Israel's benefit. The United Nations must wash its hands of the' Palestinian problem, thereby admitting impotence, and the people of Palestine must not despair of the United Nations.

I believe that this seminar was pleased with what I heard the representative of PLO say in this connection. That statement, concerning the new and determined efforts that must be made by the United Nations, was a rational statement, one we must welcome and one for compliance with which we must all strive.

His demand that deeds be matched by words was a logical and reasonable demand. Our discussion at this Seminar of an international conference to be convened in order to try to reach a just and acceptable solution is one that, as it seems to me, receives the support of all participants in this Seminar, as it should receive the support of all those who desire the establishment of a full and comprehensive peace in the Middle East region based on recognition of the right and justice of the people of Palestine.

We shall, after leaving this beautiful city, follow up the efforts to be made for the holding of this conference in the effective manner that is necessary.

It is also possible that the Security Council, meeting with all the parties to the conflict, might consider the question of Palestine in all its essentials. It is hoped that it might, on the basis of its own previous decisions, reach resolutions capable of bringing peace to the region based on the provisions of the Charter and that it might exempt the present generation of Palestinians from the need to continue its sacrifices for the good of future generations, those sacrifices that it now suffers in the heroic, undespising struggle.

We have heard here that the Palestinian people is the one people on earth most in need of peace and most desirous of achieving it.

The Palestinian people realizes that peace can only be established and can only endure on a basis of justice, and of justice for all.

The leadership of the Palestinian people has agreed to initiatives calling for the right of all States of the region - first of all, naturally, the Palestinian State - to live in security and peace within recognized border.

It has agreed with all United Nations resolutions on the question of Palestine, with the resolutions of the Fez Summit Conference, and with the Franco-Egyptian initiative. It has welcomed the Venice statement and has responded positively to the idea of an international conference and has agreed to participate in it. It has agreed with the Geneva Declaration and has, by virtue of that agreement, made sacrifices of which the representative of PLO has spoken to us at this Seminar.

It is sometimes instructive to compare the approach and the demands of the Zionists in 1947 with their approach and their demands in 1984 and, likewise, to compare those of the Palestinians in 1947 and 1984.

It will be clearly apparent to us, as a result of such a comparison, which party it is that truly strives for peace and which it is that is reluctant to make progress toward peace.

The United Nations has no existence apart from that of its Member States and has no will other than the will of those Members.

If, as we hope, the will of Member States is subject to the will of democratic peoples in Western and Eastern Europe, in Asia and in Africa, in Latin America and also in the north of the American continent, then whoever strives for a just and lasting solution which will assure the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights must reveal the truth to the peoples of the world, on whose behalf the United Nations Charter was issued by making full use of all the information media and of all means of persuasion.

The principle of prohibiting the acquisition of the territory of others by force and the principle of the equality of peoples with respect to rights, including the right to self-determination, are not merely aspirations to the sublime but are also the protective armour with which the international community shields itself against the rule of violence and the erosion of security and peace.

This Seminar brings together colleagues who are European and African parliamentarians. The countries of Europe and Africa have made efforts, which must be recorded here, promoting justice, human rights and the provisions of the Charter. Europe, however, requires greater efforts, and shall make greater efforts, and it pleases us to hear from European speakers here that they agree to the need for such efforts.

If the United Nations has a role to play in putting an end to the Palestinian tragedy and in the maintenance of international peace and security - and I believe that it has such a role - then it (and its peoples) must make a greater effort to remove the causes of the continuance of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

It must make a greater effort in the field of information so that peoples will know the facts on the basis of which they will be able to turn their Governments in the right direction.

The United Nations must make greater efforts to enable its specialized agencies to serve the Palestinian people in the occupied territories and in the places of its dispersion.

All States Members of the United Nations must make a greater effort to achieve that consensus through which alone it will be possible for the Security Council and the General Assembly to formulate a way of reaching a just and acceptable political solution.

The United Nations General Assembly tried to do that in 1947, and clearly its attempts at that time and subsequently have not met with success.

This very failure must, after 37 years, be an incentive to the United Nations and its people to make a last gigantic effort to achieve success.

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#### Alex M. Koroma

Our world has been saddled by current trends in global disharmony. Year after year problems mount, and nations face protracted confrontation with their neighbours. In place of food and better living conditions for mankind, we see soaring military expenditure. While we watch and sometimes aid new conflicts in exotic parts of the world, old ones remain unsettled. We have consequently created for ourselves and for our children a climate of insecurity and distrust.

The United Nations was founded on the ashes of global destruction which made man - all Members of the Organization - resolve that force would never again be used except in the collective defence of our common good. We regret to note that over the years we have strayed from the goals and ideals that inspired the efforts culminating in the founding of the United Nations. This fact has contributed in no little way to the increasing and heightening of global tension and insecurity on an unprecedented scale, and we have failed to establish the scheme for collective security planned by the founding fathers of our Organization.

Today we see a recrudescence of resort to unilateral force by States. This is in total disregard of the Charter scheme and the provisions of the United Nations. Consequently, the world today faces a massive betrayal of faith, whether it be in the problems of divided nations, the situation in South-East Asia, Namibia's accession to independence, or recognition and affirmation of the inalienable right to self-determination of the Palestinian people. States and or groups of States increasingly resort to special arrangements in total disregard of the collective pledge we made some 39 years ago:

"to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our life time has brought untold sorrow to mankind".

This phenomenon manifests itself today in an unprecedented global arms race wherein nations large and small pursue the elusive goal of national security in the strength of accumulated arms.

A review of the political landscape of our world infuses the observer with nothing but deep gloom and foreboding, accentuating the extent to which we have strayed from the path we charted for ourselves some 39 years ago. Persistent violations of the basic principles of international relations have led to foreign aggression and occupation, domination and interference in the internal affairs of States. Indeed never before in recorded history has the incidence of violence and the readiness to resort to violence been so high as it is in our time. We are witnesses to ugly scenes of political rivalry, needless violence, social injustice and a steady, inexorable degradation of human values.

The state of affairs in the Middle East is a classic manifestation of that betrayal of faith I referred to earlier and a further demonstration of the extent to which we have strayed from the goals we set ourselves sometimes. In 1947, most of us may recall, the United Nations adopted resolution 181 (II), positing the partitioning of Palestine into both a Jewish entity and a Palestinian entity. That measure was seen as a usurpation of rights by the Arabs and the Africans alike while the world, through the United Nations, saw it as a visionary and humanitarian act. Under the shadow of the gruesome spectacle of Treblinka and Dachau, it became a moral international commitment to provide a homeland for an ancient, and much maligned people. Thus was the State of Israel created with the sympathy and blessing of the international community. Today what do we see? Arrogance, self-righteous defiance, even a denial of faith and the human strivings of the emotions that made Israel itself possible.

Any activity, by way of proposals, to find a solution to the Middle East problem, will be enriched, be more acceptable and prove enduring, if we can be particularly faithful to the spirit of resolution 181 (II), adopted in 1947, namely, the need to have in Palestine, both an Israeli State and a State for the Palestinians, both together, with other States in the area, living in peace and security.

What seemed to have provided a satisfactory solution to the Middle East controversy was the Security Council resolution of 22 November 1967. I find it a little difficult to see how there can be any satisfactory settlement in the Middle East issue without adopting the principles laid down by the said resolution. The preamble of the resolution states three fundamental principles.

The first is "the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war". This provision goes beyond that of "no fruits of aggression". It provides that there shall be no territorial fruits from war.

This principle is well established and recognized by the Charter of the United Nations. It is inherent in the rules of customary international law defining "military occupation" and permitting acquisition of occupied territory only by annexation following generally recognized "completed conquest" or cession by the former sovereign. The title over Palestine lies in its original inhabitants, in whom sovereignty was vested upon detachment of the country from Turkey.

The second principle advanced in the preamble of the 22 November 1967 Security Council resolution is the "need to work for a just and lasting peace in which every State in the area can live in security". This principle demonstrates the basic purpose of the United Nations as set in Article 1 of the United Nations Charter and endorsed by the principles stated in Article 2 of that instrument which requires Member States to settle all international disputes by peaceful means, that Members should refrain from the use of threat of force in international relations to assist the United Nations in maintaining these principles and not to intervene in matters essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State.

The situation in the Middle East imposes a positive responsibility upon the United Nations, especially on the Security Council and its permanent Members. By the provisions of Article 24, the Security Council has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. With the current state of the world and with the executive power to veto, the Security Council cannot live up to its responsibility, unless the super-Powers, especially the United States, support the cause of the Security Council and show concern for the fate of a divided world. Any agreement by Washington to end, as a matter of urgency, arms sale and or shipments to Israel, would help to end the arms race, relax tensions and contribute greatly to a peaceful settlement of the Middle East problem.

The third principle stipulates that "all Member States, in their acceptance of the Charter... have undertaken a commitment to act in accordance with Article 2 of the Charter". It therefore becomes the obligation of all Members to refrain in their international relations, from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity of the political independence of any State, in agreement with the aim and purpose of the United Nations. The only permissible uses of force endorsed by the principles of the resolution is individual or collective self-defence against armed attack and assistance to the United Nations in collective security action. Economic and military assistance to a foreign Government to maintain internal order can be permissible, according to the resolution, only if requested by a Government that is generally recognized and which is not so saddled by civil strife to render its ability to represent the State in doubt.

The first and third of the principles laid down by the Security Council resolution of 22 November 1967 must be observed if the "just and lasting peace" called for by the second is to be achieved.

Paragraph 1 of the 22 November 1967 Security Council resolution is a balanced application of these principles to the Middle East problem. Israel must withdraw its armed forces from the occupied territories and the Arab States must renounce the claim of a state of war. The Arabs must also recognize Israel as a sovereign State and agree to respect the territorial integrity and political independence of that State within secure and recognized boundaries.

For any peace move in the Middle East to be effective, the above mutual renunciations must be simultaneous. The possibility that Israel will withdraw from the occupied territories without the assurance that the Arab States will respect its rights as a sovereign State under international law is remote. On the other hand Arab States are not likely to give such assurance or accept a procedure for establishing permanent boundaries until Israel has withdrawn its occupation.

Israel has been denounced by the international community for having rejected the resolutions and pleas of the United Nations. This act has been viewed by many as a defiance of international authority. As a response to this allegation, Israel has often maintained that its action has been provoked by insecurity. Perhaps this obstacle might be overcome by providing that the occupied territories, or those deemed critical by Israel, should not be reoccupied by the Arab States immediately after Israeli withdrawal, but by the United Nations.

The Middle East situation is increasingly becoming not only a conflict between Jews and Arabs in the region, but a dangerous disagreement between the super-Powers, especially Moscow and Washington. This is where other forms of international organizations whose major role is to strengthen the delicate fabric of peace and security come in. These organizations should be upright in letting Washington know that apart from its violations of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the various resolutions of the Security Council, it is endorsing an act to set the stage for a dangerous global crisis.

Any lasting peace negotiations in the Middle East should embrace the sustained efforts and commitment of all Arabs. While we suggest that Washington and Moscow should take the lead in ensuring peace and security in the region, we also believe that the Arabs, conservatives, moderates and liberals, must unite in their effort to aid the process.

There is no magic formula for a solution to the Middle East problem; and a solution is not so impossible to achieve. All that is required is vision, courage and flexibility on the part of Israel, for Israel cannot claim the right to live and deny that right to the Palestinians.

We realize that Israel was the brain-child of the United Nations. We also agree that the United Nations can no longer contain the defiant conduct of Israel. We have realized also that, based on the many resolutions so far adopted by the Security Council of the United Nations which have in each case proved fruitless, it will no longer be in the security interest of all nations to let the United Nations handle Israel alone. For Israel has seemingly rendered the United Nations impotent. All nations of the world have to co-operate to meet Israel's challenge.

The process may not be as easy as it seems. But to save the fate of a world that is constantly threatened by new and dangerous devices, we have a commitment to try.

The United Nations in concert with governmental and other international organizations should arrange meetings to involve and educate the international community about the conduct of Israel and the fate of the Palestinian people. It can be admitted that relatively much has not been done or accomplished in letting the world, especially Europe know the true cause of the Middle East problem, and the implications involved. The United Nations therefore should formulate means of informing nations of the world through effective media campaigns. Contacts should be made to invite PLO officials to address European Governments and organizations.

Over the years PLO has been seen and portrayed by the Western and American media as a terrorist gang determined to destabilize the Middle East and the rest of the world.

The case, identity, aims and achievements of PLO should be communicated to the rest of the world. Governments and international organizations should pressure the United States to change its policies towards the Middle East in general and PLO in particular.

The world is losing faith in the effectiveness of the United Nations. By its very act of failing to implement policies and resolutions, the United Nations will now hardly enjoy the confidence and trust that have sustained it over the years. An assessment and re-evaluation of the United Nations may help to infuse sanity into the task of international co-operation.

Any instant solution to the Palestinian problem cannot be predicted. While we express a renewed determination to share the sufferings of the Palestinians, we must

by ourselves, our organizations, our countries and Governments, through the United Nations, make viable financial and other contributions to a common course. Time is running out for the implementation of the various resolutions of the Security Council. But while we believe that the Palestinians are losing courage, hope and patience, they must be assured, not only by words, but by actions, that the international community shares their feelings and endorses their aspirations. This the United Nations can do by channelling aid to the depressed people of Palestine.

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#### Albrecht K. Konecny

The necessity to find a just solution for the Middle East problem is considered by the Powers involved in very different ways. While PLO and the Arab countries have expressed their willingness to negotiate a settlement if the rights of the Palestinian people can be secured by such a settlement and while the Soviet Union backs this position, the United States of America and Israel have rejected any idea of getting involved in direct negotiations which would include PLO. When one believes in the possibility of a peaceful settlement, one has to engage in a process of bringing Israel and the United States to a position that makes such direct negotiations thinkable for them. This process must also - this has to be mentioned - include the permanent rejection of all efforts from the Israeli side to find "negotiation-partners", who would not act in the interest of the Palestinian people. Bringing the United States and Israel to the negotiation table would mean changing the geopolitical situation in a way that this step would be logical without any fundamental change in these countries' policy. Such a possibility cannot be seen at the moment. The other possibility is to exert every source of influence both to change the attitude of the respective Governments and even more that of public opinion in these countries. The different activities of the United Nations and of other international forums include the fact that representatives of Israel and the United States are confronted with delegations backing the Palestinian cause. This confrontation should be used not only for implementing resolutions against Israel and the United States, but also for any action possible to influence those representatives of public life. In this respect it might be more fruitful not to go to the utmost position in drafting resolutions or making speeches. When one considers a change in the position of Israel and the United States necessary to move things in the Middle East, it might be the better investment to avoid offence and maintain a level of common discussion. The present Governments of Israel and the United States seem to be not easily changed in their attitude. But these Governments are not the only political forces in these countries. There are promising political personalities and movements in both the United States and Israel. Whenever possible international forums should give these personalities a platform to speak out their dissent with the present policy. Especially representatives from smaller countries, not involved in big Power policy might have a good chance to exert influence on some American and Israeli groups. This is also true for trade union, professional and other international organizations, in which bodies the climate of common interest and common understanding might create the necessary base for fruitful discussions. One should not forget about the importance of the media. The international organizations' own media should give the question of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people broad coverage, as should the media in Israel and the United States themselves. International forums should try their best to step up their media work in Israel and the United States in order to contribute to a more truthful and fair reporting on Middle East problems. All these combined efforts - influencing leading figures, backing groups dissenting with the Government on Middle East affairs and trying to change the attitude of the public opinion towards this problem - could contribute to the creation of a situation which makes it difficult for the Governments in Israel and the United States to follow the same line of politics as in the past and present.

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#### Emie Ross

The June war in Lebanon and the massacre of Palestinian refugees in Sabra and Shatila marked a new stage in the modern history of the Palestinian people, a struggle that began long before the siege of Beirut. In 1948 the entire Palestinian nation was uprooted and dispersed from its homeland by the military actions of the newly created "State of Israel". As a result of this dispersal and exile, refugee camps for the Palestinians were set up all over the Middle East. Attempts were made on every conceivable level to make the world forget that the Palestinian people ever existed. From that time on the Palestinian people pleaded for a hearing from world opinion. But many of the efforts were in vain for they faced an enemy with enormous influence over international decision-making bodies and also over the Western media. Thirty-six years after the setting up of the State of Israel, the Palestinians are further away from receiving their national and human rights than they would have believed possible, even in 1948. Despite the condemnation of the United Nations, Palestinian land is still being expropriated for the building of illegal settlements on the West Bank and Gaza. Six hundred thousand Palestinians with Israeli citizenship suffer daily discrimination, 1 ½ million Palestinians in the occupied territories are suffering the brutal consequences of military occupation, and a further 2 million Palestinians wait anxiously in exile, often in situations of great danger such as that facing the Palestinian communities in southern Lebanon, for a just settlement. World Governments can be held to account not just for creating the plight of the Palestinians, but for perpetuating it. The United States is an obvious candidate for criticism with its long history of aiding and abetting Israeli crimes committed against Palestinian human rights as some sinister and subversive plot to threaten the "free world". However, perhaps more reprehensible are those Governments, such as the present United Kingdom Government, which make commitments and statements of intention and then retreat from them. The signing of the Venice Declaration by the United Kingdom in May 1980, a declaration which called for the invitation of PLO to the negotiating table and recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians, has brought forth no initiatives from the United Kingdom Government, and worse, found the United Kingdom refusing to receive an Arab League delegation because it included a member of PLO. The Venice Declaration came at a time when Western European Governments considered the principal existing forum for peace negotiations outside the United Nations. The Camp David dialogue between the United States, Egypt and Israel had succeeded with respect to relations between Egypt and Israel but had come virtually to a halt over the issue of Palestinian autonomy. The European Economic Community leaders had identified the West Bank as the crucial problem to be solved and concentrated their diplomatic efforts on this rather than the related issues of Jerusalem, Lebanon and the Golan Heights. In doing so they placed the main emphasis of the Venice Declaration on the need for a reciprocal acknowledgement by Israel and the Palestinians of each other's right to exist. The Venice Declaration takes as its starting point resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) of the United Nations Security Council and in part echoes their wording. At the same time the Venice Declaration implies a significant modification to resolution 242 when it states that "A just solution must finally be found to the Palestinian problem, which is not simply one of refugees". Taken together with the references in the Declaration to the "legitimate rights of the Palestinian people" and its "right to self-determination" and the assertion that the problem "is not simply one of refugees" implies an endorsement of the Palestinians' claim to some recognized homeland, though not necessarily in the form of an independent State. The Venice Declaration does not mention the Camp David agreements, however the United Kingdom's Prime Minister Mrs. Thatcher in a statement to the House of Commons on 16 June 1980 explained that "the diplomatic activity that the Nine will undertake over the next few months is intended to be complementary to the Camp David process". In the final paragraph of the Venice Declaration, the States Members of EEC expressed their intention to "make necessary contacts with all the parties concerned" in

order to test the reaction to the Venice principles and determine how the initiative should proceed.

After an encouraging start to "the necessary contacts" called for in the Venice Declaration, Gaston Thorn and Christopher Van Der Klaavw in their role as President of the European Council both met with PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat. But the initiative stuttered to a halt in July 1981 when Lord Carrington assumed the role of President of the European Council. Indeed Prime Minister Thatcher on 1 July 1981 in the House of Commons stated that the "Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom has never had the intention of meeting the leader of PLO... He may have to continue the practice of meeting the leader of PLO, but only in his capacity as President of the European Economic Community".

Hardly an auspicious start and indeed true to their word, no United Kingdom Government Minister has ever met with the Chairman of PLO.

The Venice Declaration has had little role to play in the Middle East process since 1981. However, the Geneva Declaration on Palestine, agreed at the International Conference on the Question of Palestine which met in Geneva in August 1983, could provide Western European organizations with a platform to act. In paragraph 9 the Declaration called on "parliamentarians, political parties, trade unions, organizations for solidarity and intellectuals, particularly in Western Europe and North America, to join their counterparts in other parts of the world in giving their support, where it has not been done, to an initiative which would express the desire of the international community to see the Palestinian people at last living in their own independent homeland in peace, freedom and dignity".

Western European opinion-formers could use this call to start dialogue within their communities to revive and improve the Venice Declaration. As a first step we could begin the dialogue around the unpublished and confidential position papers drawn up by specialist officials for the EEC foreign ministers and heads of Government meeting which took place in Luxembourg on 1 and 2 December 1980.

According to well informed press reports the four main papers covered options for Palestinian self-determination; security guarantees; a timetable for Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza; and the status of Jerusalem. The Manchester Guardian of 25 February 1981 went as far as identifying the abhor of this paper on Palestinian self-determination as the United Kingdom Foreign Office.

Western Europe could at the same time accept responsibility to promote dialogue around the two themes developed by Crown Prince Hassan of Jordan in his David Davies Memorial Lecture of 29 May 1984 in London.

The Crown Prince identifies the possible loss of identity of the West Bank and Gaza as Palestinian by further occupation measures leading to de facto annexation.

The Crown Prince suggests that, as the municipalities are deliberately denied financial assistance from sources such as the Jordan-PLO Joint Committee in Amman, the European Community could provide financial donations to the municipalities, as Israel would find it difficult to embargo funds from a valued trading partner.

The second theme suggested for Europe is in the "crystallisation of proposals for a permanent and just peace. The European States have had a long history of wars and their settlement. They have acquired special expertise of crisis-management".

Western European organizations and parliamentarians could question more closely our respective Governments and our new European Assembly representatives, why it is, that the Chairman of PLO, Yasser Arafat, has never been invited to address their Assembly.

The Venice Declaration in paragraph II says "The Nine have decided to make the necessary contacts with all the parties concerned" and paragraph 7 clearly states "These principles are binding on all the parties-concerned, and thus the Palestinian people, and on PLO, which will have to be associated with the negotiations".

Given the breakdown of high-level contacts between the signatories to the Venice Declaration and PLO as set out in paragraph II, which started under the presidency of Lord Carrington, yet within the same time-scale the European Community has experienced no difficulty in extending invitations to Begin-Shamir-Peres to address its Assembly, the time is now appropriate to revive and remind Western European public opinion and Governments of their commitments.

Prospects for peace in the Middle East are deadlocked for months at the advent of a United States presidential election, for years owing to the collective paralysis of the European States in their inability effectively to distance themselves from American policy, and for decades because of United Nations powerlessness in the face of Israeli intransigence.

Indeed, the situation is more than deadlocked - with every passing month more and more Palestinian land is stolen and the desperation of the long-suffering Palestinian people is bound to rise. Israel already controls some 60 per cent of the land in the occupied West Bank and Gaza.

Israeli repression of the population in the West Bank and Gaza has now reached intolerable levels. The West Bank's principal institutions of higher education have been closed down forcibly by the occupation authorities on numerous occasions. On 18 March 1982 the Israeli military Government dismissed the elected mayor and municipal council of the West Bank town of El Bireh as a prelude to dismissing all those democratically elected mayors and municipal councils who have refused to collaborate with the occupation forces.

Such action against public officials is specifically prohibited by the 1949 Geneva Conventions for the Protection of Civilian Persons in time of war. Article 54 of the Fourth Geneva Convention states: "The occupying Power may not alter the status of public officials or judges in the occupied territories, or in any way apply sanctions to or take any measures of coercion or discrimination against them, should they abstain from fulfilling their functions for reasons of conscience".

Equally serious has been the vicious Israeli response to the people's demonstrations in protest against the closure of universities and the dismissal of municipal councils. Israeli troops and settlers have fired point blank into the unarmed demonstrators, killing some and wounding dozens. Many more have been injured by tear gas, batons and rifle butts.

The thirty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly in the autumn of 1982 saw a campaign by Arab Member States to expel Israel from the world body, in response to Israel's persistent violations of United Nations resolutions and the principles of the world body's Charter.

Israel's contempt for the United Nations has been clear ever since the Zionist State's admission to the world body, and it was highlighted once more during the invasion of Lebanon in June 1982.

On 5 June, the United Nations Security Council unanimously approved resolution 508 (1982) calling on "all parties to the conflict to cease immediately and simultaneously all military activities within Lebanon and across the Lebanese-Israeli border."

Despite the fact that United Nations Security Council resolutions are mandatory on all United Nations Member States, Israel completely disregarded the resolution and the following day Israel launched its air and ground forces into Lebanon.

The Security Council then approved resolution 509 (1982) demanding that "Israel withdraws all its military forces forth-with and unconditionally to the internationally recognized boundaries of Lebanon". The United Nations call met with outright rejection from Israel.

On 19 June the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 512 (1982) condemning Israel for its ferocious treatment of Palestinian prisoners and its premeditated destruction of relief supplies to the devastated areas of Lebanon. The resolution was completely ignored by Israel.

When the Arab Group at the United Nations attempted to exclude Israel in retaliation for its excesses and persistent violations of United Nations resolutions, they based their case firmly on the provisions of the United Nations Charter.

Chapter I of the Charter sets out the purposes and principles of the world body, and Article 2, paragraph 3, states: "All Members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered". It adds: "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any other State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations".

Article 4 of Chapter II is equally clear and unambiguous: "Membership of the United Nations is open to all peace-loving States which accept the obligations contained in the present Charter and, in the judgement of the Organization, are able and willing to carry out these obligations".

The procedure for dealing with United Nations Members that violate the Charter is set out in the same Chapter: "A Member of the United Nations which has persistently violated the Principles contained in the present Charter may be expelled from the Organization by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council".

It was evident to the Arab Group at the United Nations that, with the United States entrenched with a veto in the Security Council, the latter would never pass a resolution urging Israel's expulsion.

Accordingly they decided to pursue another route, which they hoped would by-pass the veto. Every year the General Assembly must review the credentials of its Members, and in 1982 the Arab Group had intended to challenge the right of the Israeli delegation to attend General Assembly meetings. It was by this procedure in the General Assembly, where no country has a veto, that South Africa was effectively barred from the United Nations 10 years ago.

Predictably, though, the United States indicated that it would rather see the dissolution of the United Nations than the expulsion of its client State.

On 18 October Secretary of State George Shultz announced that if Israel's credentials were challenged, the United States would pull out of the United Nations and cease paying its annual contribution of \$180 million, accounting for one quarter of the world body's income.

Faced with this United States ultimatum, the Arab Group decided to defer moves to oust Israel, declaring on 22 October 1982 that, if Israel persisted in defying United Nations resolutions, then the campaign would be revived.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the whole episode is that even the United States could find no moral or legal grounds on which to argue Israel's case;

Washington had resort only to blackmail.

The remark of the United Nations Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar that "36 years after the United Nations first addressed this problem, I regret to say that we are no nearer a solution than we were then" sounds a cautionary note. However, the growing international understanding and sympathy for the Palestinian cause over the past 15 years or so does partly reflect the educational activity of the United Nations and other bodies, but I would suggest that other factors, including the behaviour of the Israeli Government have been more influential on world opinion.

The persistent and continuing violations of United Nations resolutions and the principles of the world body's Charter by Israel need to be elucidated on a much wider and more regular basis by European organizations.

The means by which international organizations can put effective pressure on the parties to a Middle East peace are limited. Attempts to pillory Israel in bodies like UNESCO or the International Telecommunication Union, or to exclude it altogether have been controversial and some have doubted their usefulness.

However, the savage tactics of the Israelis during the invasion of Lebanon, their total disregard for the lives of civilians and the nightly film of carnage from Beirut, accompanied by Begin's insistence of Israel's "respect for human life" has prompted a sea-change in Western perceptions of Israel. Just as important as the official condemnation of the invasion from Governments was the reaction of the public, notably in the West where Israel continued to command considerable sympathy before the aggression.

It is this dramatic change in Western public perception of Israel that requires encouragement. In the United Kingdom, the drastic situation in Lebanon as a result of the Israeli invasion of June 1982 brought together the Palestinian support organizations, the Arab-British friendship groups and main-stream United Kingdom political groups in an impressive display of unity.

By sticking to basic humanitarian demands, the committee was able to put together a list of sponsoring organizations as diverse as the Conservative Middle East Council, the Communist Party, members of both Houses of Parliament, Church leaders, civic heads and the United Nations Association, who were prepared, for the first time ever, to work together in support of objectives, the most important of which was respect for the decisions of the United Nations and its legitimate agencies. The uniqueness of this group and the potential threat their continued co-operation posed to Israel's long term aims was immediately recognized and responded to by Israel. British-Israeli organizations had new life and finance breathed into them, invitations to visit Israel began to pile up on the desks of Government ministers.

The demand for an early election in Israel and the return of a Labour Government was now widely proclaimed as the answer to Begin's excesses. It was claimed that it was absolutely essential that Israel's friends in Western Europe, and in the United Kingdom particularly, continue to support the ideals and principles of the State's founding fathers if there was to be any prospect for peace in the Middle East.

The Israeli election last month, contrary to all opinion poll predictions, has provided a cliff-hanger of a result whose significance must not be missed by all those involved in the search for peace in the Middle East.

Labour, the nominal winner of the contest, has been invited to seek to lead a "National Unity Government" in coalition with Likud. If it fails to reach agreement with Likud, then Labour will attempt to form a narrow coalition with the support of the small parties.

The contradictions are plain; a Labour Government based on a wafer-thin majority of centre-left parties which would have to include the pro-PLO "Progressive list" is clearly beyond Peres. A Labour alignment-Likud coalition, if it could resolve just who was to be the Prime Minister, would then be involved on an issue-by-issue, day-by-day basis, cat-and-mouse game, with Likud just waiting its time to force new elections.

The likelihood of new elections in Israel early in 1985 provides Western European public opinion-formers with the opportunity to ask some searching questions of those who seek to attract non-Jews to support the Israeli founding fathers' ideals of socialism, justice and community.

What are we to make, we must ask, of a State where in last month's elections 150,000 Israeli citizens decided that the party of Begin, Shamir and Sharon did not go far enough for them?

They gave their votes to a new extreme right-wing phenomena of the Tehiya Front and the New York Rabbi Meir Kahane. Eitan, the leader of the Tehiya Front, was dismissed as Chief of Staff by Begin for failing to prevent the massacres of Sabra and Shatila; during the election campaign he described the Arab citizens of Israel as like "drugged cockroaches in a bottle".

Kahane's political platform talked of compulsory deporting the 2 million Palestinians living within what he understood was Israel's borders and the blowing up of the Dome of the Rock just for starters.

We must ask, what are we to make, what kind of a support should we give to a State Which owes its coming into being to a decision of a world body, of which it is now a Member, and sees no contradiction in consistently ignoring and flouting that world body's purpose, principles and obligations of membership.

That there will be a renewed campaign by Israel's supporters we must be in no doubts the Reagan Administration sent clear and unmistakable signals that they hoped for, and expected a Labour alignment victory; or the report in the 27 July Jewish Chronicle, printed in London "On the conservative backbenches (in the British House of Commons) there was widespread regret at Labour's failure to gain a clear majority", Labour in Israel I would stress.

The mobilization of Israel's friends has already begun, with a well organized well financed lobby in Western Europe. Israel has ensured that the struggle over Palestinian rights has spilled over outside the Middle East and finds an echo in Western Europe.

A campaign is urgently required throughout Western Europe directed towards peoples, with comprehensive and unambiguous documentation of the acceptance or otherwise by the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel of, for example, the Geneva Declaration of 1983; the letter by the Secretary-General of the United Nations of 5 January 1984 to the President of the Security Council; the statement of the Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization on United Nations General Assembly resolutions appertaining to Palestine; the principle, purposes and obligations of United Nations membership.

We should not be confused as to the nature of the struggle that is likely to take place over the defence of Palestinian human rights and aspirations, now should we be dissuaded from accepting the responsibility that we in Western Europe especially have to assume in their attainment.

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#### Abdoulaye Sacko

It is a great honour for me to reply on behalf of the Party and the Government of Mali to the United Nations invitation and to offer my modest contribution to this Seminar, in the hope that it will be an occasion for taking specific and effective decisions to ensure joint action on behalf of peace in the Middle East.

The world is undergoing a bitter crisis, and this is very alarming; but we are alarmed not only because of the crisis. In a world in the throes of change, crises are inevitable. If we are deeply alarmed it is mainly because of our inability to solve such fundamental problems as those of peace and development. However, the framework and practical means for finding appropriate solutions in the Middle East conflict are clearly set forth in the United Nations Charter and in the resolutions we adopt every year. The right people are not lacking. What is lacking is a real will to adopt decisions that our minds can perfectly well formulate, a political will calling for moral courage. In practical politics, egoism often takes precedence over generosity and ultimately little effort is made to prevent or take action against the innumerable violations of human rights and the rights of peoples.

How is it that for more than 36 years we have been unable to bring peace to the Middle East.

Israel's arrogance, its persistence in flouting international opinion (especially the resolutions of the United Nations and other organizations), its racist policy of repression in the occupied territories and of unremitting aggression against the peoples of Palestine and the Middle East, its collusion with South Africa and the similarity between zionism and apartheid, are all challenges to the international community.

In the following exposition, we shall see how these challenges have been met by international organizations, particularly the United Nations, OAU and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

#### The Zionist policy of repression and aggression

The Balfour Declaration of 2 November 1917 was the first illegal act in a series of senseless and cynical political acts through which the peoples of the Middle East were deprived of their right to live in peace and harmony. It led Israel to arrogate unto itself the right to pursue a colonialist and imperialist policy resulting in the crisis which stings our conscience today. The problem of the Middle East, particularly the question of Palestine, is a major challenge to the world's conscience.

International imperialism and zionism have created in the Middle East a tragic situation which has already resulted in four wars. The fascist methods to exterminate Jews perfected by Hitler and his clique have been practiced by the Jews against the Arabs for more than 36 years.

The cruelty of zionism today has never been equalled, except by Nazism, and the entire world it now the horrified and practically helpless, witness of a new holocaust.

The attempt to achieve a final, but impossible, victory over the courageous people of Palestine and the Arab nation led Israel and its allies in 1948 to drive the

majority of the Palestinian people from its homeland, to occupy Arab territories in 1967, to annex the Syrian Golan Heights in 1981, to bomb the nuclear plant at Tamuz in Iraq in 1982 and to invade Lebanon where two years ago they perpetrated the infamous massacres of Sabra and Shatila. There Zionism unveiled its fascist countenance and caused the Palestine question to weigh more heavily than ever on the world's conscience. Now the whole world knows who are the victims and who are the executioners.

At the same time the Palestinian people, by its heroic resistance, has compelled the world's admiration and respect. It has destroyed the myth of the invincibility of the Israeli army and has shown that no force can destroy a fighting people that wants to live in peace and enjoy its inalienable and imprescriptible rights.

The question of Palestine, in addition to being highly political, is the result of an injustice perpetrated against a people which has been driven from its native soil and deprived of its country and most elementary rights; a people frustrated, humiliated and reduced to the condition of wandering, landless, homeless refugees, tormented under the occupation of its Zionist executioners, unwanted elsewhere in defiance of humanitarian rules and international law.

In this context, the source of the Middle East crisis would appear to be the question of Palestine, a question which emerges in sharp focus on the international scene and to which no lasting solution can be contemplated that does not fully take into account the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

A reading of all the resolutions adopted on the question of Palestine might create the impression that the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people had been recognized by everyone once and for all. However, faced with this broad consensus, Israel, the unavoidable interlocutor of the Palestinian people, remains adamant in its refusal, which is the supreme insult to all mankind. It takes refuge in a policy of rejecting whatever seems likely to promote peace in the Middle East. The resolutions of the United Nations, the Arab League and OAU, the declarations of EEC and other international bodies, the right of self-determination, the existence of PLO, even though recognized by 117 States, are seen by Israel as nothing more than an undifferentiated succession of secondary problems.

Palestinian reality, a burden on the world's conscience, is ignored by Israel, which, with complete impunity, starts increasingly violent wars against its neighbours.

Israel has always resisted the tide of world peace. Its unbending refusal to submit to reason, its insolent rejection of all peace proposals, including those of its friends, far exceed the requirements of Israel's survival. They are in fact a mask for expansionist ambitions. On the other hand, the heroic resistance of the Palestinian people, which opposes these ambitions under the banner of PLO, extends beyond the narrow limits of Palestine. This alignment of forces is sowing the seeds for a world conflagration with fatal consequences.

#### Collusion between Israel and South Africa

A close look of what is going on in the Middle East compels us to note similarities with the situation in southern Africa. How could it be otherwise? The very historical foundations of Israel and South Africa, and their common ideology based on racism, explain their collusion against the Arab and African peoples. Professor Richard Stevens rightly stated in Cairo in 1971 that among the decisions taken by the Western world which had endangered the life and future of the peoples of the third world, none revealed with such clarity the very essence of Western ethnocentrism and none showed more conclusively its ability to disguise, express and legitimate its hunger for power under the cloak of international law and morality, as the two decisions taken in London in 1909 and 1917, the first known as the South Africa Act of 1909, and the other as the Balfour Declaration.

On behalf of the British liberalism, he went on to say, the peoples of Palestine and South Africa had lost not only their homes, their lands and their most fundamental and most natural rights, but they had also been stripped of their very identity and subjected to the diktat of those who had forced themselves upon them and they had been taxed and administered, he concluded, under a plan designed to ensure the survival of the colonizers.

Like South Africa, Israel was a danger to Africa as well as to the Arab world. The one already controlled southern Africa and the other held the key to the penetration of the continent by the North. The implications for the African continent were fatal.

It is undeniable that the objective of Israeli-South African collusion is the conquest of Africa, all of Africa. This idea was clearly expressed in November 1970 in Jewish Affairs, the official organ of the Jewish members of Parliament in South Africa:

"... for South Africa even more than for Israel, access to Africa is a vital and decisive factor for the future. Although the degree of penetration by the two countries is different, they will have to advance on African soil .... There is not and has never been any rivalry between them, but rather a complementary relationship..."

The economic links, in spite of the increase in trade in recent years, do not cause the greatest concern. The most fundamental understanding between Israel and South Africa is at the military level. It should be recalled that Israel participates actively in carrying out South Africa's nuclear programme. Trade in conventional weapons is profitable and Israeli UZI sub-machine guns are manufactured under license in South Africa, while South African tanks are tested out by the Zionist army against the Palestinian and Lebanese populations. Since 1967 South African Jews have been authorized to serve the Zionist cause in the military and para-military fields.

In spite of the differences of position which the racist and Zionist leaders sometimes ascribe to certain aspects of their régimes, a fundamental fact remains: there are very close economic, social, cultural, political and military relations between Israel and South Africa. These ties demonstrate the similarity between Zionism and apartheid as manifestations of the same phenomenon: racism. What is the difference really between the attitude of Zionists in Israel toward the Arabs and that of the white racists in South Africa towards blacks? The Israelis rely on the Bible in order to conjure up a "promised land"; the Afrikaners do the same in speaking of the "chosen people". The Israelis and the white South Africans have the same superiority complex which is devoid of any scientific basis.

The iniquitous methods used to impose their diktat are identical under the two régimes: the expropriation of land, the uprooting of people, deportation, massacres which border on genocide, attempts at cultural genocide, the impoverishment of Arabs and Africans, the creation of reservations and bantustans in South Africa, and refugee camps in occupied Palestine, psychological warfare, etc.

The profoundly racist nature of Israel requires no further proof. It is recognized by the Israelis themselves.

"It is my considered opinion", said Mr. Israel Shahak, President of the Israeli Human Rights League, "that the State Israel is a racist State in the rule sense or the word, a State where people are the victims of permanent and legal discrimination in the basic areas of life, solely because of their origin". 1/ This view has been confirmed by Maxim Ghilan who stated that "Israel has progressively become an increasing racist State. Whoever is not a Jew in Israel is at best a second-class citizen". 2/

In view of this state of affairs, it is the task of the Palestinian and South African peoples in their struggle for emancipation to thwart the colonialist, Zionist and racist manoeuvres and establish a new system based on social justice and progress in Palestine and South Africa.

Zionism and apartheid, however, represent a very serious problem for all of mankind because they are an affront to human dignity and threaten international peace and security. In this regard, it is the task not only of the peoples of Palestine and South Africa, but also of the progressive forces of the world rallied together within the international organizations, particularly the United Nations, to eliminate them.

#### The role of the United Nations in the search for peace in the Middle East

After the Second World War, major events occurred in the Middle East which convulsed the region. Among them was the partition of Palestine on the basis of General Assembly resolution 181 (II). The collusion of all the great Powers, particularly the Western Powers, in imposing this unjust situation unleashed a tide of indignation and caused a deep sense of frustration among the Arab populations which increased the solidarity of the Arab nation. In this regard, it could be said that the evolution of the question of Palestine has shaped the Arab state of mind in the post-war period more than anything else.

The responsibility of the United Nations was involved from the very outset. After the Israeli-Arab war of June 1967, the question of the Middle East became an acute international political problem. On 22 November 1967 the Security Council adopted resolution 242 (1967), which called for inter alia, the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Arab territories, but made no specific reference to the question of Palestine. The Palestinians were regarded only as "refugees".

In 1969 the General Assembly considered the question from a different angle and recognized in resolution 2535 B (XXIV) that "the problem of the Palestine Arab refugees has arisen from the denial of their inalienable rights under the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."

General Assembly resolution 2672 C (XXV) of 1970 recognized for the first time that the Palestinian people must exercise their inalienable rights and stressed that respect for these rights was an indispensable element in the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

General Assembly resolution 3089 (XXVIII) of 1973 upheld the right of the Palestinian people to return and recover their property in their homeland.

The General Assembly, however, took the most important step with regard to the rights of the Palestinian people in 1974, when it recognized the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. It invited the PLO to participate, in the capacity of observer, in the work of the General Assembly and of all international conferences convened under the auspices of the United Nations. Furthermore, since 1967 the Security Council has regularly invited the representative of the PLO to its debates on the situation in the Middle East, the question of Palestine and related problems.

In 1975 at the same time as it established the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the General Assembly invited the PLO to participate on an equal footing with other parties in all deliberations on the Middle East which were held under the auspices of the United Nations.

The United Nations, therefore, has never shirked its responsibility and it is apparent even from what has been stated above that the world Organization has on

several occasions endeavoured to reconcile the parties to the conflict. In the search for a just and lasting peace, it has sent several mediation missions to the Middle East, including the mission of Dr. Jarring in 1971. The recent trip by Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, clearly fits into the framework of consultations aimed at restoring peace in the region.

Of course, the United Nations has the duty to ensure the implementation of the provisions of its Charter in order to bring about a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, but the non-binding nature of its resolutions and the obstructions in the Security Council are no doubt a legal handicap which should be removed.

For the rest, the formulation of the precise terms of a settlement of the conflict in the Middle East can be accomplished only by the parties directly concerned and only through negotiation. The immediate task is to approach the belligerents and to assist them in preparing agreements promoting, on the one hand, the establishment of a practical balance between the security and recognition sought by Israel and, on the other hand, an equitable solution of the territorial and Palestinian questions sought by the Arabs. It is only through such a balance and within the framework of an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations that peace will be re-established. To that end, it is essential to set aside selfishness and hatred, which are the source of the conflict, and to show political courage.

In view of the similarity between zionism and apartheid, the search for peace in the Middle East and the restoration of the rights of the Palestinian people do not rest only with the United Nations; other international organizations have a role to play. Accordingly, EEC, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the League of Arab States and OAU have adopted many resolutions and proposed their mediation or peace plans which could in many respects be of inspiration to us.

#### The role of EEC, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Arab League

##### The Position of EEC

Of course, the European States, perhaps because of their responsibility for the origin of the question of Palestine, have always been cautious in their proposals for peace in the Middle East. The European Economic Community has only very gradually adopted a position aimed at recognizing the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. In the Venice declaration in June 1980, the Heads of State of the members of EEC affirmed, for the first time, that "the Palestinian people, which is conscious of existing as such, must be placed in a position, by an appropriate process defined within the framework of the comprehensive peace settlement, to exercise fully its right to self-determination".

World opinion expected that the Venice summit would officially recognize PLO and even adopt a resolution requesting the United Nations Security Council to amend resolution 242 (1967) in favour of recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. It did nothing of the sort. The summit did not go beyond the stage of general statements. We hope that EEC will study the Palestinian problem further and take effective action with regard to Israel in order to persuade it to co-operate with the international community.

##### The commitment of the non-aligned countries

The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries has, from the beginning, given strong and broad support to the Arab and Palestinian peoples in their struggle against zionism.

The most decisive turning-point in the commitment of the Movement was taken at Algiers in September 1973. In the resolution on the Middle East, 80 countries, including 41 members of OAU, expressed their support for the peoples of the Middle East. In particular, they called for the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the withdrawal by Israel from the occupied Arab territories and called upon the United States of America to desist from assisting Israel. On the same occasion, the Heads of State or Government of the Movement recognized PLO as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and invited the international community to boycott Israel at all levels: political, economic, cultural and military.

In August 1976, at Colombo, the Fifth Conference of Non-Aligned Countries stated that the international community was more than ever convinced that the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East required an overall settlement based on withdrawal by Israel from all occupied territories and the exercise by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights.

In March 1983, at New Delhi, the Movement in its entirety undertook to provide active support to the Palestinian people for the liberation of their homeland and the restoration of their fundamental national rights. It reaffirmed its condemnation of zionism and paid a ringing tribute to the Palestinian people for the courage they had demonstrated in the face of the 1982 Zionist aggression from which they emerged stronger and more resolute to fight until they have achieved their imprescriptible rights.

##### The Fez Peace Plan

There is no need to emphasize the commitment of the League of Arab States. The Arabs are the first victims of the conflict in the Middle East and the first to be concerned about peace. Desirous of making a decisive and constructive contribution to the search for peace in the Middle East, the League of Arab States adopted at Fez (Morocco) on 9 September 1982, an eight-point plan commonly called the "Fez Plan". This plan proposes:

1. The withdrawal of Israel from all the Arab territories occupied by it, including Arab Al-Quds (Jerusalem).
2. The dismantling of all settlements established by Israel in the occupied Arab territories since 1967.
3. The guaranteeing of freedom of worship and performance of religious rites for all religions in the Holy Places.
4. The reaffirmation of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the exercise of their inalienable and imprescriptible national rights, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, their sole legitimate representative, and the indemnification of those who do not desire to return.
5. The placing of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip under the supervision of the United Nations for a transitional period not exceeding a few months.
6. The establishment of an independent Palestinian State with Al-Quds (Jerusalem) as its capital.
7. The establishment by the Security Council of guarantees of peace between all States of the region, including the independent Palestinian State.
8. The guaranteeing by the Security Council of the implementation of these principles.

This Plan which is aimed at the establishment of a just and a lasting peace in the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations has been favourably received by Western Europe and, to a lesser extent by the United States of America.

The search for peace in the Middle East, because it is a moral duty of the international community, is one of the major concerns of African opinion, particularly the Organization of African Unity.

##### The role of OAU

Africa's commitment to the search for peace in the Middle East stems first of all from the fact that it is a question of human solidarity in the face of a tragedy which for more than 36 years has been tearing apart the social fabric of the Middle East and weighs heavily on our universal conscience like a sword of Damocles.

From a geo-strategic point of view, what is at stake in the problem of the Middle East is peace. The responsibility of OAU is therefore paramount and, in that connection, it has a clear conscience. Even more, the African peoples are fully aware of the question of Palestine because it concerns a legitimate struggle of a people for the full enjoyment of their fundamental national rights. In that connection, OAU's commitment is in accordance with the principles of its Charter and is directly inherited as part of the great and noble Arab-African tradition. Africa has never ceased to demonstrate this solidarity in all international forums.

Since its creation, OAU has been seized of the problem of the Middle East as the source of a situation which disturbs international peace and security. For more than 10 years, it has included the Palestinian question regularly in the agenda of all sessions of its Council of Ministers and Assembly of African Heads of State and Government.

Resolutions on the subject have been adopted by OAU calling for peace in the Middle East and the restoration to the Palestinian people of its inalienable national rights. The Palestine Liberation Organization is recognized by OAU as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Since 1974, it has had observer status with the pan-African organization.

In 1967, all of Africa expressed its sympathy and solidarity with the courageous people of Egypt, the victim of Zionist aggression on 6 June. In 1968, OAU, in resolution 53 (V) of 16 September, affirmed its support for the United Arab Republic and called for the withdrawal of foreign troops from all Arab territories occupied since 6 June 1967, in accordance with resolution 242 of the United Nations Security Council. It also appealed to all Member States to use their influence to ensure strict implementation of that resolution.

In 1969, the African Heads of State and Government at their regular session at Addis Ababa held from 6 to 10 September condemned all aggression directed against the United Arab Republic and reaffirmed their solidarity with "this sister country". OAU realized even then that any attack on the territorial integrity of Egypt was

also an attack against Africa and a violation of the Charter of the Organization of African Unity. The same year, Africa brought all its influence to bear in the United Nations for the adoption of resolution 2535 B (XXIV) which, for the first time, referred to the inalienable rights of the "people of Palestine" and not the "Palestinian refugees".

In 1970, OAU expressed concern at the threat to peace presented by the occupation of a "part of the territory of an African State", referring to Egypt. Aware of this threat, the African Heads of State and Government reaffirmed, in resolution 62 (VII), adopted on 2 September 1970 at Addis Ababa, their support for the United Arab Republic, condemned Israel once again and called for a withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied since 1967.

In 1971, OAU adopted resolution 66 (VIII), which called for the immediate withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from all occupied Arab territories and expressed full support for the mediation efforts of Dr. Jarring, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General to the Middle East. It reaffirmed its full solidarity with Egypt and requested the current Chairman to consult with the Heads of State and Government so that they might use their influence to ensure the full implementation of Security Council resolution 242. There was already a closing of ranks within OAU with a view to united joint action; the same year, OAU undertook its first initiative for peace in the Middle East. The eighth OAU summit (held at Addis Ababa in July 1971) decided on African mediation between Jews and Arabs, which would strengthen the United Nations mission conducted by Dr. Jarring. A 10-member commission was established and, on 31 October 1971, at Dakar, it drafted a memorandum addressed to Israel and Egypt.

Egypt accepted the memorandum without reservation. Israel opposed it. The oral reply from Mrs. Golda Meir, then Prime Minister of Israel, was a vague promise with many conditions attached not to annex any more Arab territories, but she categorically rejected the African request to withdraw from the territories occupied in 1967. This failure, which showed that the Israeli leaders scorned African opinion, had a considerable impact on the continent. Led by Uganda, in March 1972, the whole of Africa replied by severing, one country after another, diplomatic relations with Israel.

What could be more natural? By choosing South Africa as its natural ally, Israel formed a bond with the most dangerous enemy of the African peoples. Any State which supports the country of apartheid in any way whatsoever becomes objectively the enemy of the African peoples. The African leaders, in breaking with the leaders of Israel, recognized the danger for their peoples presented by the other form of racism that is called zionism.

Since 1972, the conflict in the Middle East and the question of Palestine have been regularly included in the agenda of OAU sessions.

In 1974, Africa formed a common front at the United Nations so that the item entitled "The question of Palestine" might be included in the agenda for the first time since 1952.

Finally, in 1975, to mention one final example, the African Heads of State and Government, meeting at Kampala (Uganda) from 28 July to 1 August, recognizing the "common destiny of the Arab and African peoples, as well as their continuous struggle for their rights, freedom, peace and independence" and Israel's policy of aggression and refusal to abide by United Nations and OAU resolutions, reaffirmed (AHG/Res.76 (XII)) that "just and permanent peace in Palestine and the Middle East can only be attained on the basis of complete Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories and the exercise by the Palestinians of their full national rights to sovereignty, national independence and self-determination". Considering the situation in the Middle East to be explosive, they adopted adequate and practical measures to confront the Zionist enemy's continued aggression and violation of international law and called on the States members of OAU to extend all possible potentialities in the African world to the Arab confrontation Powers so as to reinforce their struggle against the Zionist aggression. At the same time, OAU considered zionism to be a danger to world peace and decided to organize an information campaign in which all African information media would participate to unmask the racist aggressive nature of the Zionist entity in a continuous and planned manner, and to confront and refute all misleading Zionist propaganda campaigns aimed at arousing hostility against both the Arab and African worlds.

The African Heads of State and Government concluded that it was imperative for the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable national rights:

    Their right to return to their homeland, Palestine, and to recover their property,

    Their right to self-determination without any foreign intervention,

    Their right to sovereignty over their territory,

    Their right to establish their independent national authority.

OAU thus endorsed the Palestinian cause and called upon all its members to work in all domains to concretize recognition of these rights and ensure respect for them. It invited the PLO and the OAU Liberation Committee to co-ordinate their actions within the League of Arab States and OAU.

These OAU resolutions reveal a consistency of views as Africa has come to realize that the question of Palestine is a major issue of national liberation, an issue which calls for an Arab-African solidarity based on the experience of struggle jointly and making common cause against colonial domination.

In sum, Africa is the only continent the overwhelming majority of which forms a united front in OAU, the United Nations and other international forums for the definition of the rights of people and for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its fundamental national rights. The proof can be seen in the failure of the policy of enticement of Israel, which has been trying for some years to renew its links with African States. Even the visit of the Head of State of Israel to Africa produced no positive result. The fact remains that the Arab-African front is threatened by international zionism's efforts to undermine African unity, which must, however, remain steadfast.

Bearing in mind the unanimous attitude of the African and Arab social forces in condemning zionism and apartheid, it would be appropriate to:

- a. Renew Arab-African political relations at the summit, reactivate economic co-operation and encourage the establishment of a solidarity and aid fund for the liberation of Palestine, Namibia and South Africa;
  - b. Strengthen the diplomatic and economic isolation of Israel and South Africa. Relaxation, even tactical, of such isolation would weaken Arab-African solidarity and constitute a partial victory for the arrogant Zionist régime of Israel. In Israel and in South Africa, declarations of intent which in reality serve only the stick and carrot policy, should not blind us to the profoundly hateful and repressive nature of zionism and apartheid;
  - c. Intervene effectively with the Powers which support Israel in order that they may persuade the leaders of Tel Aviv to abandon their position of defiance and make them see reason;
  - d. Co-ordinate action for African solidarity by unifying national committees or associations of support to the Palestinian and South African peoples;
  - e. Increasingly mobilize, instruct and alert African public opinion to the political, economic, cultural and geo-strategic implications of what is at stake in the Middle East;
  - f. Give practical support to the work of PLO by the collection of medical supplies, the establishment of blood banks, support motions, etc.
- African action should be co-ordinated and conducted within OAU in agreement with PLO and the United Nations. The international community should exert all pressure that may be necessary to persuade Israel to comply with United Nations decisions and recommendations.

A collective and sincere approach to a comprehensive, just and realistic settlement must be substituted for the impasse to which partial agreements are likely to lead. The call for an international conference on the Middle East made by President Yasser Arafat among others must be heard.

In the context of that conference, Mali, through me, proposes the establishment of a United Nations committee which would be responsible for co-ordinating peace initiatives and proposals formulated by all international organizations (United Nations, OAU, Non-aligned Movement, League of Arab States, Organization of the Islamic Conference, EEC, etc.) and distilling their essence, which would serve as a universal plan for peace in the Middle East.

Even now we welcome with satisfaction the pertinent conclusions and Programme of Action of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine held at Geneva in August-September 1983. No one, even among the most radical enemies of peace, can claim that that Conference did not result in responsible, constructive and realistic conclusions. And, in any case, the way is open for a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict. It suffices to have the courage and will to embark on it.

The Charter of the United Nations imposes on us the obligation to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. It therefore places us under an obligation to make the Israeli leaders see reason and respect the freedom and dignity of the peoples of the Middle East, particularly the Palestinian people. But to evoke the lofty principles of the United Nations before the Zionist leaders may appear derisory. However, to doubt the usefulness of condemnation, which very often has no effect, cannot lead us to admit the inadmissible. The peace of mind with which Israel denies the Palestinian people and its Arab neighbours their inalienable national rights is as surprising as it is revolting. We must redouble our efforts to impose the just, durable and comprehensive solution which will enable the peoples of the Middle East to live in peace and harmony. This solution does not lie in the strategy of accomplished military acts, violence, barbarousness and impertinence of the State of Israel. It lies in the field of politics. The only admissible voice of peace is that which calls for dialogue and negotiation.

The most appropriate setting for this is the United Nations. It is for that reason that we welcome the holding of this Seminar and the pertinent final statements which

marked the conclusion of previous seminars on the question of Palestine. This type of forum is unquestionably 'an appropriate framework to shape world opinion and fix attention on the extremely delicate and important question of the Middle East. Despite deadlocks, we are convinced that the United Nations has an essential role to play in the settlement of the Middle East conflict. It is not too much to ask of it. It has the competence, the means and the duty to do so.

Allow me in conclusion, to renew the warm congratulations of my country, the Republic of Mali, to the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its devotion to a cause as just and lofty as the Palestinian cause. Our congratulations and thanks go also to the Tunisian authorities for the fraternal reception they extended to us and the remarkable organization of this Seminar.

Since we must make headway, let us make a pledge that together we shall win the battle of peace in the Middle East.

Since in the end truth always emerges and since in the end a just cause always triumphs, we can hope that reason will prevail over incomprehension and hatred, that the Palestinian people will tomorrow recover its plundered country and its shattered dignity and that the Middle East will regain the peace it now lacks.

#### Notes

1/ Israel Shahak, "The Racist Nature of Zionism", Pi-Ha'aton, student weekly of the University of Jerusalem, 5 November 1975.

2/ Maxim Ghilan, "Sionisme et racisme", EURABIA, special issue, Paris, 1976.

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#### Ibra Mamadou Wane

Allow me, first of all, before speaking about the role of the United Nations in the Middle East crisis, which is the subject of this paper, to say how deeply I am honoured and how much pleasure it gives me to address this forum of such eminent personages who are so well informed on the major problems of the world, particularly those which are the responsibility of the United Nations. -But my task will be made all the more easier by the fact that, as a Parliamentarian, I represent a people which is deeply attached to the ideals of peace and justice.

The Seminar which brings us together at the present time in this beautiful Tunisian capital, with its rich tradition of hospitality and tolerance, rightly forms part of the multiple and tireless efforts made by the world Organization through, in particular, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to alert international opinion to the urgent need for restoring peace and justice in connection with an issue of fundamental importance for the stability and security of mankind.

Of the major problems of the contemporary world, the Middle East crisis is doubtless the one whose origins go back furthest in history. But for all that, it is not the one which is least likely to produce a world conflagration.

The Jewish dream of returning to Palestine, having a homeland and their own nationality has given rise to a situation of injustice and intolerance. Today, several decades after the adoption by the United Nations of the Plan for dividing Palestine, and the unilateral proclamation of the independence of Israel, the over-all situation in the Middle East has become more complex and more explosive. It is characterized, essentially, by Israel's blind pursuit of a policy for settling the problem, more particularly that of Palestine, according to its own ideas and in its own interests only. The recent evolution of the Middle East crisis exposes the objective pursued by Tel Aviv, which is none other than to create an extended Israel, comprising not only Jerusalem, but also the Syrian Golan Heights and the other occupied Arab territories.

Faced with this obvious contempt for international morality and law, the United Nations, right from the outset of the crisis, pledged its responsibility in the search for a just and lasting solution to the Middle East problem. Its efforts, deriving from the Charter of San Francisco, have been directed towards:

1. Determining the following conditions which could be adopted as essential elements for a just and lasting settlement of the problem:
  - a. The over all Middle East problem, and the Palestinian question which is an essential aspect of it, constitute an indivisible whole in the search for a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict;
  - b. Peace in the region can be established only on the basis of the total and unconditional withdrawal of Israel from all the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories; the restoration of all the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people., i.e. of self-determination, return to Palestine, a homeland, and to the establishment of an independent State in Palestine;
  - c. The city of Jerusalem, Al Quds, like the Syrian Golan Heights and all the other occupied Arab and Palestinian territories may not in any way or under any pretext be included in Israeli territory;
  - d. All the measures taken by Israel in the Palestinian and Arab territories since their occupation (building laws, changes aimed at transforming the cultural character, etc.) are null and void;
  - e. No State has the right to take measures or actions which could affect the future of the Palestinian people, who must be represented at all negotiations concerning them by PLO alone, as their sole legitimate representative;
  - f. The Lebanese State has the right to exercise in full sovereignty its authority over the whole of the territory, up to the recognized international frontiers, with a view to safeguarding its territorial integrity.
2. The maintenance of several peace-keeping forces which have had to be established in Sinai and Lebanon
3. The establishment of bodies dealing exclusively with the Palestinian question e.g. the Committee on the Exercise of the

Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, whose activities are well known and appreciated throughout the world.

Nevertheless, despite all these efforts, Israel still insists on settling the Middle East problem according to its own interests, even going so far as to trample under foot the elementary rules governing the civilized world.

This intransigence on the part of Israel, which is the main obstacle to the settlement of the conflict, is due, in large measure, to the support which the Tel Aviv authorities receive from a number of Powers, which are preventing the Security Council from assuming its responsibilities under the United Nations Charter.

The internationalization of the conflict, with the interference of foreign Powers and all that that implies in the way of economic, political and strategic interests, is not calculated to facilitate the task of the world Organization.

However, far from discouraging, the obstacles of all kinds raised by Israel have served rather to make the international community even more aware of the need to put a brake once and for all on the demands of the Hebrew State. In resisting the right of the Palestinian and Arab peoples to self-determination and their right to exercise full sovereignty in their territories, on the false pretext that its security would be endangered, Israel appears to have forgotten that the political history of the world has many a time shown that peoples struggling for their independence and dignity have invariably ended by attaining them, whatever the obstacles or reluctance encountered on the road to independence.

The struggle for liberation waged by the Palestinian people under the banner of their sole legitimate representative, PLO, will be no exception to this historic trend.

In the light of the recent evolution of the burning problem of Palestine, as well as of the other aspects of the Middle East crisis, it is more than ever imperative that our Palestinian brothers and other Arab peoples should be accorded support which, going beyond mere words and resolutions, should take the form of concrete and firm actions likely to produce the elements of a comprehensive and lasting solution, in accordance with justice and human dignity.

As part of the measures aimed at the further isolation of Israel, an appeal must be made to the people of countries whose Governments have a certain influence with the Tel Aviv authorities, to help the international community and the United Nations to restore peace and justice in this troubled region.

This task of alerting concerns, moreover, the entire world - officials, individually or collectively, citizens belonging to political parties, non-governmental organizations, trade union or other associations, and parliaments, whose reactions, views or suggestions may lead Governments to adopt decisions conducive to the realization of the ideals of peace, justice and liberty, with the primary emphasis on ensuring the application of such decisions.

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

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Klaas De Vries

It is a great honour for me to speak during this Seminar and like many of my predecessors here, I would first of all like to extend my congratulations to the Committee that has stimulated, in the past, a discussion on the problems of the Palestinians, the restoration of Palestinian rights around the globe and done a marvelous job in trying to inspire others to work on this problem and be constructive instead of destructive in addressing these problems. So, congratulations to the Committee, and I hope that this Seminar and the conference which will be held next week in Geneva will contribute to further advances on the road to a peaceful solution of the problems we are discussing today.

In preparing my statement for this Seminar, I was reminded of a story that my grandfather used to tell me. Maybe it is a story that is being told in all countries and only the subject, animals, is different. In my case, it was sheep. My grandfather told me about a farmer in the village where we lived who had 50 sheep. They started dying and he went to the wise man, the counsellor of the village, and said, tell me, what shall I do with my sheep, because they are all dying. And the counsellor said, what do you feed them? And he said hay, and the counsellor said, well, that is totally wrong, give them grass. And the farmer went home and gave the sheep grass and they still kept dying. And he went back to the counsellor and the counsellor said, stop the grass and give them flowers. So he started feeding flowers to the sheep and they still kept dying. And he went back to the counsellor and the counsellor said well, of course, you should give them something else, give them weeds. And he gave weeds to the sheep and they all died. And he came to the counsellor and said all my sheep are dead, what should I do now? And the counsellor said, oh, that is very sad, because I still have so much good advice for you.

Now one of the specific developments in our age seems to be that wise men like this counsellor in the story of my grandfather do not seem to exist any more but that conferences to some extent tend to take their place. If there is a problem, we have a tendency to rush to a conference, and see if the conference itself can offer some perspective on the solution.

However, I think the situation is different in the case of an international conference on the question of Palestine, because such a conference and the restoration of the rights of the Palestinians would be part of the solution and not just a possibility to investigate how a solution could be found. So I think that when we advocate a conference, and I support the idea very strongly, we have to realize that at the same time, we are addressing substance. We are not trying to create a forum in which we can have an exchange of opinions in which all relevant parties can give their views on the problem and suggest what kind of solution would be possible. The convening of a conference will only take place if there is a perspective of a solution, so maybe more important than the fact that the conference should be held is that we ought to urge the politicians to concentrate on the dynamics which might lead to the conference.

It is quite clear that there are two elements in the conference which at this moment create the greatest problems. First of all there is the element of participation. As we all know, the Israeli Government refuses to talk to the representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization, which is, of course, part of the problem. And we have to convince the Israelis by encouraging them to appreciate the role of the Palestine Liberation Organization in a totally different light than they have been able to do so far. Everybody knows that this will not be easy. Secondly, organizing a conference means that compromise must be accepted from the very beginning. A conference that would only do justice to one side is impossible. And of course we all realize that at this moment the Israelis are not very willing to compromise and that they are hardened in their position by the Administration in Washington.

So I think that we ought to realize that the idea of a conference which, in itself, seems to be a very good one, can only be the combination of a process of preparing for that conference and an attempt to influence our Governments and other Governments to take a different course. Now we have to be creative in this process. We all know that international meetings, negotiations about peace, weapons and development aids are all very difficult if people do not come to the conference with the desire to achieve something and with some idea of what can be accomplished.

From listening to my Soviet colleague, I think what stands out is that having a good position on the international conference itself is not good enough if we are not capable of disentangling the idea of such a conference from the overall spectrum of the deplorable state of East-West relations at this very moment. I think we would be fooling ourselves if we thought that the idea put forward by one party, be it a wonderful idea, would be accepted by the other party without trying, through diplomatic channels, to make it a common approach. It seems to me that we have to make a great effort, all of us who are represented here, especially the Europeans and the Africans, to try to encourage our own Governments and not to get bogged down in the stalemate of the present deterioration of East-West relations between Washington and Moscow. I do not want to blame anyone today for that, but we see it as a fact, and we should make sure that underneath the overall umbrella, which looks very bad at this moment, we create activity that stimulates the search for new ways and new roads that could lead to a new consensus.

Now I think that we all have to ask ourselves what can we do. Going home from this Seminar and knowing that we have advocated the right position is of course, in itself, reason for great satisfaction. But what we should do is try to convince others who may have different perspectives that a solution has to be found. And indeed, I think this should be the dominating thought of the international conference. I think the international community, which is to a large extent responsible for the situation that has been created in the Middle East, has overriding reasons to commit itself to activity, dynamics, movements, consultations and diplomatic activity in order to attempt to change the policies that have so far resulted in hardened positions and made it impossible for people to begin to address the problem. We can all, in our own countries, do an awful lot. We can use our relations with our friends, and I am extremely pleased to see representatives of African and European countries around this table because I think we have neglected the possibility of listening to those parties who take a more distant look and are not immediately involved in the problem. We have underestimated their ability to contribute positively to a solution.

As I have said, a conference in itself will not be a panacea, it will not solve all the problems. We have to prepare for it very carefully and I would suggest that we address a few elements that need attention and ask ourselves if we can really say that we are doing all we can. And let me be very frank, I think that the Palestinians themselves, in many meetings and in many official declarations, have made it clear to me, as a friend, that they want to negotiate and that they are willing to seek an honourable compromise with the State of Israel. But what is good enough for a friend is not good enough for a skeptic and certainly not good enough for those whose attitudes are hostile. I think the Palestine Liberation Organization still has a lot of work to do to convince the outside world that to them if a conference would also mean willingness to compromise and accept realities that others will not abandon. I think if one discusses with the neighbours, friends and brothers of the Palestinians, then the Arabs too must wonder whether the positions they take, which are very clear, are always supported by a comprehensive policy. I seem to remember meetings in which Arab friends pointed out that Europeans should do more to seek a solution, an honourable solution, a correct solution to the Palestinian problem. And I have pointed out, in answer, that rulings and declarations are not enough. There has to be a comprehensive policy involving everyone and giving them an interest in trying to find a solution. Now the strange fact that we face today is that whereas the Arab world, in general, condemns the United States policy on the Middle East, those Arab countries which are abundantly rich prefer the United States as the place to deposit or invest their money. Now I would call on your understanding of the liberal system that the West enjoys. Those who know that the money is coming to them, especially in the United States, know that very little else really matters. So I think there has to be more consistency on the part of the Arab world in trying to stimulate the world community. Countries that may be able to play a positive role in solving the problem also know that there is a real interest, not just a verbal one in redirecting economic and social policies. Now I think that Europeans themselves, and my colleague from the USSR pointed out this fact, have made some progress over the past years. Nevertheless, one cannot but be disappointed by the follow-up of some initiatives which seemed to be promising. And I think that our Arab friends are in a position to encourage Europeans to take a keener interest in trying to solve the problem. So, in the end, it is impossible to move because every position one takes is blocked.

I think that a clear understanding of how history makes progress shows that working together on the substance of very practical matters will help eventually also to bring about better understanding and co-operation on a political level. And it is not always the other way around that one has to find total agreement on the political level before there is a reward in terms of co-operation and substance. So I would urge those Arab countries that were together in the Arab League, and also others, like Egypt, to co-operate with western European countries and try to develop the understanding and communication which will eventually, I am quite sure, lead to

possible agreement on the political level. Now as far as the European attitude vis-à-vis the State of Israel is concerned, I think that most European Governments are genuinely concerned with the fate of the Palestinians. It does not lead to anything, because, at the same time, they do not see at present, the possibility of making real progress. And again, I think that in the dialogue between Arab countries and European Governments, one should try to see where a compromise on the conference could lead.

My predecessor on this rostrum has made some remarks about the strategic situation in the world which is extremely relevant to this problem. I think we all have to realize that not only United States missiles are pointing at almost every corner of this world but that there are other Powers - and I name one, the Soviet Union - which are capable of reaching out with nuclear weapons to all corners of the world, and that is nothing new. The world situation makes it absolutely mandatory for us to move forward very quickly, because the reason behind a conference cannot only be that we are concerned about the Palestinians. All of us are. The reason that we should encourage the convening of this conference is that, first of all, there is a clear violation of international law. Secondly, it is a violation of international law that threatens world peace, and we must understand that, in these days, there are so many weapons capable of destroying the world and that only one match is needed to light the candle. Certainly in a time where irresponsible jokes are being made about destroying each other and using these weapons, I think we fail ourselves if we do not go home and communicate with our Governments, and I call on the diplomats represented here to urge them to move and to do something and not be self-contented with the idea. I think an initiative from the smaller States represented here, from the States which are not immediately, or even indirectly, parties to the conflict would help tremendously.

I would like to add one thing. I think that, in his splendid presentation, Khaled El-Hassan has made it quite clear again to this audience that there is a total misrepresentation in many quarters of the world of what the Palestine Liberation Organization is and what it stands for. And I am very pleased with the initiative of my East German colleague, who said let us add the statement of Khalid El-Hassan to the report of this Seminar because it will help to explain the real essence of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

This conference, I hope, will be covered in the press not only in Tunisia but also in other countries. I hope that the coming conference of the Palestine National Council will be covered widely. The message coming from conferences like ours today should be that not only the world community is meeting to try to establish peace, but also that the Palestinian people, who are working on all levels of activity - professional, social and educational - are prepared in a very responsible way to take up the responsibilities of statehood. That message has to come out.

It has been said that time is running out. It may be for me, at this moment, but in general I think such statements do not help us very much, because at a time in which weapons are accumulated that can bring indescribable destruction to mankind, time is a factor that can be manipulated. And nobody is able to predict the course of history any more because history can be changed by the tools that humanity has invented to destroy itself. So let us not play for time but try to address the immediate needs of those who suffer and who are denied their rights. I do not think we could be patient and, as politicians responsible to those who call us to office say "Well, eventually, time will run out for us all". We have to act now, we have to look at the problems as they are in the occupied territories, we have to redress the violations of human rights that constantly take place and we cannot satisfy our souls by saying okay, time will solve the problem. Nobody knows whether time will solve the problem, and some problems that time has solved also were destructive for those who were waiting for a solution. So let us be clear, let us try to be very explicit about what we want. On the other hand let us have an open mind and let us be active in communicating to others what we can do. I mentioned the special responsibility of the super-Powers; if a conference is convened, it has to have the blessing of the United States and the Soviet Union, there is no doubt about that. At the same time I think we should call on those countries not to let the effort needed to bring a solution to the Middle Eastern problems be jeopardized by other controversies. It is frightening to note that Powers which possess the best equipment for communication do not seem to be able to talk to each other anymore.

As I said, a conference is needed; I hope that our Governments and Western European Governments, I assume Western European parliamentarians, will become more favourable to the idea of a conference and not reject it offhand, and that we will start working to see how such a conference can prepare those who have to take part in it for the issues. I hope that we can still encourage our Governments to take this positive attitude. I think that should be accompanied by an effort by many other countries, and that those who respond to African parliaments or African Governments should urge their Governments at the next United Nations meeting to speak out on this issue and try to have an open mind in order to overcome difficulties, not just to notice them and say okay, obviously there is a block and we cannot overcome it. Difficulties have to be overcome because no solutions will evolve automatically. I think if we can do this, if we can return home from this conference - and for politicians going home also means going to the people - we can communicate the message that there may be a hope in an international conference because no one else is offering another road to peace. If there were many more splendid ideas about how peace could be achieved, honourable peace doing justice to the Palestinians, then the international conference would only be one of the ideas. But I have not heard any better ones. Let us go home and try to encourage public opinion to support this idea and let us not be blinded by the idea of time. There will always be elections in the United States, there will always be elections in Israel and there will always be meetings of the Palestine National Council coming up and we can wait forever. But in the mean time the situation is deteriorating and we are abandoning our responsibility to those who suffer.

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#### Jean-Claude Raga

The Palestinian problem born of the disappearance of juridical support for the Palestinian nation first defined in 1925 has become a never-ending source of bloodshed, sufferings and injustices. Against their will, the Palestinian people have been placed outside the international community because the Zionist attitude adopted towards them was one of force, which took precedence over the law.

The entire Middle East is plunged in an atmosphere of insecurity, owing to the violation of frontiers, acts of aggression and threats of armed occupation of territories, even actual occupation by force, because so far the Palestinian people have still not been able to exercise the most elementary rights they have been recognized by the international community through the United Nations.

The Hebrew State, supported by certain countries and a certain tendentious press, wishes to stifle the expression of those rights by the Palestine Liberation Organization, by labelling the latter a terrorist organization, even though the vast majority of States Members of the United Nations, and numerous governmental and non-governmental organizations throughout the world recognize PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people.

It is neither excessive nor abnormal for PLO to demand the right of that same people to self-determination and to national sovereignty, with the system of government of its choice, without any foreign interference; and the right of exiles and refugees to return to their ancestral homelands, from which they have been evicted in many cases by the force of bayonets. It is inconceivable that a people with such roots, such a history and such a culture as the Palestinian people should become the unloved people of the Middle East region, through having been forced into a gypsy way of life.

We must not be satisfied, in an attempt, as it were, to salve our consciences, with the action - praiseworthy it is true - carried out by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) on behalf of Palestinian refugees. Steps must be taken to ensure the immediate organization of the international peace conference on the Middle East in order to put an end to the distress and suffering of the populations of the region.

The United Nations must play the leading role in this conference, as it has made itself responsible for the Palestinian question right from the beginning.

International opinion must be alerted still more, here and now, to the need to hold this peace conference.

The beginning of a settlement of the Lebanese conflict is a very hopeful sign, but nothing is completely certain, as new conflicts of incalculable dimensions are liable to arise - it is disturbing to note the recent deployment of naval forces of every origin in the Suez Canal sector and in the Red Sea zone, while Israeli bombardments continued in north Lebanon.

Special and still greater efforts must be made by the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People: information campaign directed above all at the populations of Member States and not at government organizations, through permanent exhibitions of photographs, productions and broadcasts of film or television documentaries, public lectures and round-table radio broadcasts.

One initiative to be welcomed is the forthcoming seminar for journalists to be held at Nairobi on the Palestinian question.

"Persuasion missions" should be sent to the two super-Powers, the United States and the USSR, and to all the countries directly affected by the conflict. They could include leaders of public opinion, such as well known writers and artists, jurists, parliamentarians, journalists and churchmen who, in order to persuade the responsible higher-ups, would tend to employ the language of the heart and reason rather than that of politics.

The objective conditions for the success of the Middle East peace conference are practically met. The burden of war and the international economic crisis are becoming increasingly intolerable for all the States of the region. Because of their sufferings which have lasted too long, the Middle Eastern peoples are beginning to

force their leaders to have recourse to greater concertation, and to be less radical. The Arab countries' efforts to achieve cohesion are beginning to become a reality. The trend towards unity is prevailing over the attempt at division in PLO. In Israel, the people are weary of galloping inflation. The recent concrete proposals of the Soviet Union for the organization of the Middle East peace conference give reasons for optimism. It is to be hoped that once the United States<sup>P</sup> residential elections are over, the United States will do likewise. A United States statesman once said that harmonious and peaceful development is only possible if the security of each is guaranteed. Let us apply that statement to the general problem of the Middle East and affirm that nothing will be achieved there in the way of peace unless the Palestinian people are guaranteed the geopolitical elements of their security - elements which have always been affirmed and upheld by the United Nations.

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Azouz Rebai

Allow me, at first, to extend my thanks to the President of the Tunisian House of Representatives, to the fraternal members of the House, also to you, and especially to the Committee which has prepared this meeting.

Allow me, equally, to address myself to the brothers, the comrades, the colleagues, who compose this meeting. Let me salute their courage, patience, dignity, high spirit and lofty humanitarian noble feelings. They are responding to the invitation of the Palestinian people and they came to this meeting and to other meetings, primarily and undoubtedly, to defend one of the most noble principles of fraternity, right and justice in the world. We need, dear brethren, from time to time, while struggling for the restoration of right to its owners, we certainly need to be assured, to believe, that we are on the right path and that we are working for a sacred cause and for an objective which will be crowned by victory, by success, by the expected reward.

For this reason, I begin my speech by saluting you and telling you that you are here, as was the case in the past, with brothers who have supported revolutions of the people, struggles of the people in North Africa and in other countries where they were a minority and weak, but today they raise high their heads when they visit us here in North Africa and when they visit the peoples whom they have supported in the past. They visit us feeling proud because they are visiting friendly peoples and because these peoples consider them as part of them, to whom goes the merit of victory, in the same way as it went to their own members who have been struggling for the independence of peoples.

Allow me to speak in this meeting taking into consideration what has been said before today, especially the effect on me of the speech delivered by the first speaker, in the name of the Soviet delegation. It was fortunate that the other speakers who followed him continued with the same trend, that of responsibility and full quest of reaching a result and not speaking for the sake of speaking, but to be heard by people who would applaud. We have listened this morning to speeches by people who think deeply and precisely, in order to reach the goal with reasoning, with research, with ponderation.

Where are we now, on our way to the cause of the struggle of the Palestinian people, to the liberation of its land? Time is passing, circumstances have changed, attitudes also have changed and the Palestinian issue is no more in the hands of a minority. The majority of States and of peoples no longer understand as little of the Palestinian issue as they used to do in the beginning. Attitudes have changed, supporters are no more the same, friends have increased in number, the ranks have become stronger and especially resolutions have increased. I do not despise resolutions. Perhaps someone may say that these have increased in number and piled up on the desk of the United Nations and world seminars. Yes, resolutions have increased and the result has been slow to come. But there still was a result. The world is now with this issue and peoples are now with it, and this constitutes a strengthening force for the self-determination of the Palestinian people, because we believe that victory will only come primarily through the struggle of the Palestinian people.

What is our attitude now towards this progress, after this evolution in the struggle of the Palestinian people and in the support the world has given to this people. Where do we stand now? There is one thing clear - and no one who hears me saying that can accuse me of being against such State or a supporter of such another State - I am saying this in recognition of facts and to express the truth. Where do we stand now in the Palestinian issue? We believe that almost the whole world is with us, except Israel and the guarantor of the survival of Israel, that is the United States of America, the Government of the United States of America, because it is the guarantor now, according to declarations, agreements, supplies and military, economic, financial, social and spiritual attitudes. Everything now points to the fact that, on one side, justice, right and the struggle for justice and right and on the other side, Israel which has deafened its ears and blinded its eyes and which understands nothing. This is what we believe in now and behind Israel there is that entity which holds major responsibility for this situation: i.e. the Government of the United States.

What should we do then? What we have to do is very simple, I think, if we arm ourselves with faith in this issue as we did previously for other issues. For this reason, I come back to the subject of our meeting, that is the convening of this world conference for the sake of the Palestinian cause. I would even ask why this world conference is being held. Do we need to convince States, peoples? These States and these peoples are convinced and are with us. And they have never ceased to declare that they were convinced and they voted on our side. One party only has two heads: Israel and the United States of America. In my view, the situation can be divided into two: going either in the direction of Israel, where I believe now that our dialogue with United States is like that of somebody who wants to give a course in philosophy, a lesson in philosophy, to a drunk person who is almost dead under the effect of alcohol or drugs. In speaking with Israel, we are like someone who is speaking to somebody in a deep coma. The reason for that? Well, it is because Israel believes that the super-Power or one of the two super-Powers is with it, whatever the circumstances may be. My point of view, therefore, according to simple experience, is that we have to contact the party with which we still have some hope, the party that has the strongest influence, which is the United States of America. I was enthralled this morning when I heard the Soviet comrade saying that it is our duty to offer advice to the friends of Israel. We heard these lenient words being said by one of the two super-Powers - and I do not say the super-Power because I do not have the scale of forces to judge which is stronger than the other. But in all events, I heard one of the two super-Powers, the speaker of the Soviet delegation, saying: "We advise the friends of Israel".

Confronted with this, one may say what is the relation of these words to this meeting, to this world peace conference? For myself, I do not despair about the American people. I do not lose hope about the people of the United States of America. If the Government of the United States of America weighs its decisions according to political interest, or military interest or any other interest, I do not lose hope at the people of the United States of America, because this people lives in a democratic State like the United States of America and is capable of adopting an attitude through which it can give a lesson to the United States Government. I do not let myself be influenced by false allegations, by writings and by press campaigns that say that the Government of the United States and the people of the United States are in the hands of Zionism which dominates the press, the banks and the economic power. I do not believe in all this because I believe in the strength of peoples and the word of the people and, deep in myself, I am convinced that the whole situation depends on our capability of convincing the people of the United States, that is, the masses of the people in the United States, of the fact that the interest of the United States lies and is concentrated in its co-operation with the cause of justice, the cause of right. There is another example for that. We have all lived through the mentality and the psychological condition which were prevailing among the American people towards the war in Viet Nam. We know that, when the United States of America abandoned Viet Nam and went out of that war, in spite of the shame and the weakness this meant before the struggling people of Viet Nam, the United States did not withdraw from the war in Viet Nam because it had exhausted all means of force to eliminate the Vietnamese. Never. The cause of this withdrawal was that the people of the United States stood up like one man in spite of military, diplomatic and financial interests. It went in the streets, in the cities, and manifested and shouted and called for peace in Viet Nam; and then reason prevailed again among some United States politicians and thinkers - and I do not lose hope about the American thinkers and some United States politicians - but I do believe that this keen conscious, rational, righteous minority is certainly influenced by the masses of the people in any country. Here, we have another example. Do not forget that, in the struggle of North Africa, French colonialism tried, with all its might, to convince the United States that its fate depended on its remaining in North Africa. But we have not lost hope and we turned to the American people - the wisemen in the American people - and they abandoned - and the American Government did the same thereafter - French colonialism and this helped us to overcome it. Therefore, peoples have a word to say in such situations, and even in France itself it was the same. Who convinced France to withdraw from Viet Nam and abandon it? Some may say that it was the battle of Dien Bien Phu or the heroic attitude of Ho Chi Minh or of the heroes of the Viet Min Revolution. But I would say it was not sufficient. What helped France to adopt the attitude it took towards the war in Viet Nam was the strong overwhelming current that ran among the French people which complained and suffered from the war. I am one of those who had the honour to be at the first Peace Conference in Paris in 1948 which concentrated on demanding peace in Viet Nam. Yes, it took a long time, from 1948 to 1954; but when the battle of Dien Bien Phu took place, the French people opted for six years of the peace movement in France. The road was paved for reducing the time

necessary for achieving peace.

From the bottom of my heart, I address myself to you so that we may all exert every possible effort with a view to organizing conferences and meetings in the United States itself. I am convinced that the world peace conference for Palestine, if it were organized in the United States after having been prepared by campaigns as some colleagues suggested, that conference - which must be attended by prominent artists, outstanding sportsmen, thinkers, economists and politicians, would be more effective. We must convince the American people that conditions do not remain the same for ever and that, if they are real friends of Israel, they must help it to find a permanent solution, a peaceful solution which would not depend on force and on the stockpiling of infernal means, but on finding a permanent solution assuring peace to that State they love, for which they spend huge amounts of money and for whose sake they gamble with world peace. For this reason, Americans must be convinced - especially the wise persons and the thinkers from among them - that conditions cannot remain unchanged and that they are gambling with the lives of their friends, who are few, among a people of tens of millions, and that the world situation may change.

Let me ask you if any of you, except a small minority, thought, before the Second World War, that the situation in the world would be turned upside down and that all subjugated peoples would be liberated, especially after the defeat and destruction of the element which caused the war, i.e., nazism. Nazism was destroyed and eliminated but, as a result of the war, peoples became liberated and felt their strength and their impact in the war. For this reason, friends of Israel, advise it that the ocean does not remain always calm. I do not believe in war. But I am one of those who are convinced that war is surely coming. I do not believe in that and do not expect it. But I say: beware, friends of Israel! By persisting in this attitude towards Israel, you are tightening every day the dangerous circle around it. So, if you are real friends of Israel, awaken it from its drunkenness; drive it away from this deluge of money and arms, even in your own interest. The bridge head in Israel is certainly a frail one and would be of no help to you, because the Arab people believe in their cause and unfortunately for Israel its cause is now before a strong believing Arab people who want to emerge and are determined to do so. Some may say, as we were told in Baghdad at the Arab-European Co-operation Conference, that there are many problems among Arabs and that real Arab unity could hardly be imagined. To those who say so I would reply: These are transient problems; generations are evolving, Governments change, mentalities also change, and any calculation based on the weakness of the Arabs among themselves would prove erroneous. We believe in this cause, not because it is an ethnic one or a religious one, but because it is a cause of justice. As President Bourguiba said, we are facing a colonialist problem. We are resisting Israeli colonialism in the occupied territories as we have resisted colonialism everywhere else. Let the Israelis and their friends be convinced that the colonies they are building now in a land which is not theirs will not subsist and resist longer than the settlements established in Algeria over a period of more than 100 years. Because of this, I say and repeat, as an advice that Israel's friends should advise it to modify its attitude and should also advise themselves to change their policy. I join my voice to the comrades who suggested that seminars, conferences, meetings and exhibitions be organized in the United States as the speaker of the Egyptian delegation said who has also suggested that parliamentary organs be set up to defend this cause. I am convinced that such movements exist and that moreover there is a rapprochement between Arabs, Europeans, Africans and the third world in supporting the Palestinian cause. But we demand still another step, another degree, the important one, like in a play the plot is solved at the end. I am convinced that we are getting to the end. We must address ourselves to American thinkers, to intelligent Americans and tell them what the Soviet colleague said when he advised the United States friends that it is in the interest of Israel to think about a solution to this problem, based on the restoration of rights to its owners. For this reason I join my voice to the voices of my other comrades so that we may work seriously in this field and explain to the American people and to every hesitant person that the Arabs are not as the protagonists of Zionism describe them to the world. These Arabs welcomed the Jews when Europe used to burn them in the Middle Ages and prepared special districts for them in their cities. We in Tunisia are entitled to speak about this subject because in the first Government after independence, there was a Jewish minister, and there were Jews members of the parliament. The Jews who left Tunisia for France still return every year they retain their property and their homes here in Tunisia in complete security and declare that they left the country after the independence only for cultural and economic reasons. They retained their Tunisian citizenship and we are proud of this and we say that we may proclaim to the world that the Arabs have lofty principles. For this reason, let us all co-operate together and let us have courage as we always did, and progress forward, always hand in hand, as in the first peace conference in Paris. Let us act and co-operate to beat the real enemies of Israel, those who are leading it to its annihilation, in spite of the willingness of the Arabs to come to an agreement with Israel. They are proceeding step by step towards losing hope. As long as they are here, the Palestine Liberation Organization's people have the political and moral possibilities and assets that allow them to proceed in the right path and towards reasonable solutions. Let us all co-operate before it is too late and lift up heads, Governments and peoples, individuals, thinkers and politicians, for the sake of the action we are undertaking, for the sake of humanity. Let us meet after victory to be proud of our present attitudes.

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#### Ingo Schoenfelder

The history of the Middle East conflict that has persisted for over 35 years now is not only a history of wars. Numerous settlement initiatives have been introduced in parallel with any new escalation of the conflict. This is evidenced by proposals submitted by parties directly involved and by interested third parties, by recommendations of the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council resolutions just as by Count Bernadotte's mediation efforts in 1948, the 1971 mission of Ambassador Jarring, the work of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, the 1949 and 1951 peace conferences of Lausanne and Paris, respectively, as well as the 1973 Geneva Conference. However, those efforts produced only partial successes. Many initiatives could not be brought to fruition or even remained just paper work, whereas the dimension of the conflict has grown owing to breaches of peace and acts of aggression.

In the awareness of that situation and mindful of the Geneva Declaration on Palestine of 7 September 1983, the United Nations General Assembly called for convening an International Peace Conference on the Middle East. <sup>1/</sup> A new offer was put on the negotiating table, an offer to settle the conflict peacefully and remedy its consequences.

#### 1. Purpose of the peace conference

The full title of the conference already underlines its main purpose, namely to establish peace, terminate a de facto state of war in the Arab-Israeli conflict, forestall new aggression and, finally, secure peace and harmony between the parties to the conflict. This comprehensive undertaking, not least, has to identify the root-causes of the peace-endangering situation. It must be the objective of the conference to evaluate these causes and to remove them if it is to live up to its mandate - to create peace. In other words, the conference would not attain its purpose if in addressing the subject-matter it did not take into account the real causes responsible for the present situation. Also, clarity about the subject-matter is of fundamental importance since it would largely determine the character and scope of the decisions the conference would be expected to adopt.

A major reason for the permanent threat to peace resides in the fact that Arab territories have been occupied and partly annexed by Israel since 1967. Therefore, the safeguarding of peace in the Middle East cannot rest exclusively on the exclusion of military action in the relations between the parties to the conflict, as prescribed by international law. One of the peculiarities lies precisely in the need for a change of the territorial status quo, i.e. the withdrawal of the aggressor's troops from the unlawfully occupied territories. The Israeli violation of the ban on the use of force under Article 2, paragraph 4, of the United Nations Charter and disregard for the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of foreign territories by force are characteristic of an international crime rather than of a dispute in the context of the Middle East conflict. In this respect, the agenda of the peace conference should not provide for the settlement of legal disputes, but for the enforcement of existing law.

Since the old "jus ad bellum" is banished from international law through the commitment to maintain peace, acts of aggression entitle the victim or the victims to resort to individual or collective self-defence and to call for international sanctions against the aggressor. However, when the victims of the Israeli aggressions agreed to the calling of an international peace conference on the Middle East after the matter had been taken up by the Security Council and after military confrontation was stopped, then they obviously were doing it in exercise of their right of free choice of ways and means to combat aggression. Agreement to that specific type of negotiation is not only to be regarded as one such means under Chapter VI of the Charter, but also constitutes consent to a generally acknowledged diplomatic procedure in the frame of Chapter VII of the Charter employed in the search for peace.

Another aspect pertaining to the subject-matter of the proposed peace conference is the unsolved question of Palestine. The Palestinian people is not merely one among several victims of Israeli acts of aggression. Singular for it is the fact that Israel in 1967 deprived the Palestinians of their whole homeland and drove away the majority of them to places in exile.

The aggressor keeps refusing to withdraw its troops and to recognize the Palestinian people as subject of international law as well as accept PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, as negotiating partner. The use of force to maintain the occupation régime goes hand in hand with a general negation of the

peoples' right to self-determination. It is one of the specific traits of this offence that it involves internationally unlawful acts against a people still without a State of its own, acts whose declared purpose is to prevent that people from winning statehood.

If it is true that under Article 1, paragraph 2, of the United Nations Charter and under the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples 2/ all peoples and nations enjoy the right to self-determination, and it is correct for the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations expressly to point out "that the subjection of peoples to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation constitutes a major obstacle to the promotion of international peace and security ...", 3/ then no just and lasting solution to the Middle East problem could be achieved if at the peace conference the national question of the Palestinian people was left unconsidered in the context of the Middle East conflict. Moreover, the question of Palestine must be regarded as a key to any genuine solution of the entire crisis situation.

In fact, the Arab-Israeli conflict cannot mechanically be categorized into relations between Israel and individual Arab States, on the one hand, and relations between Israel and the Palestinian people and PLO, on the other. Separate deals, as the Camp David agreements show, are only generating new aggressions and lead to the occupation of further Arab territories.

In the political, territorial and legal contexts, the close intertwining of the Middle East conflict and the question of Palestine, of the obligation to maintain peace and the right to self-determination presupposes a comprehensive approach. What is more, the Palestinian people's statutory right to self-determination and its status as a victim of Israeli aggression cogently substantiate the entitlement of PLO, that people's political representative, to equal participation in the proposed conference. The occupation of alien territory and the Palestinian people's right to determine its political and economic status, including the establishment of its own State, represent problems pertaining to the implementation of basic principles of international law bearing a ius cogens character, and thus are not disputed legal problems which the conference would have to clarify. However, the conflict in the Middle East involves also a number of issues the solution of which would fall under the principle of a peaceful settlement of disputes. This holds true for the indemnity claims against the aggressor, the repatriation of exiled Palestinians, the delimitation and demarcation of borders, etc.

For this purpose, the parties to the conflict may draw on a wide array of peaceful means established in their entirety by agreement. 4/ It is up to the parties involved to select the concrete means in order to devise a proper legal framework to govern mutual relations, of course on condition that the use of force or coercion be excluded. With regard to the latter aspects of a solution, it should be the mandate of the peace conference to establish the requisite political conditions for a peaceful settlement. In that quest all parties to the conflict should display a good measure of conciliation and adopt a flexible approach so that positive results could be expected at the conference.

The establishment of a pertinent conference agenda would, at the same time, help to concretize the conference's over all objective, namely to bring about a comprehensive, just and lasting solution the conflict: comprehensive in terms of interlinking the Middle East conflict with the question of Palestine; just through ensuring respect for the rights of all parties to the conflict as prescribed under international law and lasting in terms of eliminating the main causes of the prevailing peace-endangering situation. If agreements to that effect could be reached, the conference would assume the character of preliminary treaty-negotiations towards a future peace.

## 2. Scope of the peace agenda

The purpose of the conference would be best served if a proper framework was adopted to match the agenda. Here, three aspects should be accentuated.

First, in calling the conference "international", the General Assembly evidently wished to emphasize that the peace conference has to respond to the trans-regional character of the conflict. On the one hand, a breach of the peace and violation of the right to self-determination concern all peoples and States. Israel's international responsibility on account of its aggression falls not only under a bilateral, but also a universal legal context. Victims of such acts, and even those who are not directly affected individually as well as collectively are entitled to restoration of the peace. The Middle East conflict has international dimensions that go beyond the purely regional scale. All States have the right, and indeed are called upon, to participate in settlement efforts. On the other hand, there have been historically-grown problems between the direct parties to the conflict as far as their mutual recognition is concerned: Israel has always disparaged PLO as terror organization; Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and Jordan have no diplomatic relations with Israel. However, owing to its international character the suggested peace conference could facilitate negotiations among them.

Second, the conference should be held within the framework of the United Nations or under its auspices. Being the most universal international organization, the United Nations is not only entrusted with ensuring collective security and promoting international co-operation, but is also vested with the most comprehensive competences. At the same time, it has a specific responsibility to bear vis-à-vis the Middle East conflict and the question of Palestine. The emergence of the Israeli State as well as the legitimacy of the Palestinian people's demand for the establishment of its own independent State can be traced back to General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947. Israel, as a member of the United Nations, has most grossly transgressed on fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter whose observance by all members has to be ensured through the world Organization. In addition, the United Nations lent particular emphasis to its recognition of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination when affording PLO observer status. And finally, the Organization's Charter provides the guidelines for the rule of law in international relations and thus is the supreme instrument of reference when it comes to clarifying the contents of existing or future norms of international law. Accordingly, such a framework would facilitate the translation of pertinent results of the conference into proper contractual regulations as well as the granting of guarantees by the Security Council.

Third, agreement on the composition of participants is both an important and dispute problem with a direct bearing on the success of the conference. Concepts of conference composition range from keeping the number of participants limited to the direct parties to the conflict plus the permanent members of the Security Council, 5/ down to the integration of all interested States. 6/

In his letter to the President of the Security Council of 5 January 1984, the United Nations Secretary-General suggested participation by all the 15 Council members plus Israel, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic, as direct parties to the conflict and non-members of the Security Council, and PLO which was referred to as an "authority". 7/ This proposal reflects the appraisal of the conflict as a crisis situation necessitating United Nations action under Chapter VII of its Charter. At the same time it becomes clear that bilateral problems between Israel and its Arab neighbours as well as the question of Palestine and its complexities should be put on the agenda. The proposal of inviting PLO to attend reflects this comprehensive approach. It also goes to underline that relations of States with the Palestinian people, which is fighting for self-determination, are relations under international law and that the conference could not achieve its objectives in the absence of PLO.

The replies to the Secretary-General's proposal also show that the issue of the composition of participants, a matter where most Governments advocate flexibility, will only then come to a head when consensus is reached over the essential substantive aspects of the conference.

## 3. Prospects of a peace conference

The call of the General Assembly for such a conference has drawn a world-wide echo. It is a challenge to a position on a new joint initiative that could open the road to a settlement of the conflict. Acceptance or rejection of that proposal is indicative of the respective Government's commitment to peace and of its Middle East policy as well as of its general approach to the United Nations.

Incoming replies were, by and large, positive. Fifteen of the 20 addressees of Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar's letter went along with the proposal. Among them were all Arab parties to the conflict, including PLO, and the other developing countries and the Socialist countries represented on the Security Council. The United Kingdom, France and the Netherlands rejected the idea of convening the conference for an alleged absence of the required prerequisites at the present time. The United States and Israel were the only ones to discard the idea categorically.

I may respond to two of their major arguments used to justify this affront to the overwhelming majority of States and the United Nations itself.

The Israeli position suggested "that the only path to a peaceful settlement in the Middle East is that of direct negotiations". 8/ The United States reply struck a similar tone. What is here portrayed as the only way to peace is directly relating to the fact that the majority of the parties to the conflict have not recognized each other de jure and, therefore, officially have avoided direct negotiations. This situation, however, is a specific feature given the nature of the conflict: Now there are schemes where in awareness of that historical peculiarity a certain aspect of the over all conflict is singled out in order to be solved in the run-up to the conference. But this issue cannot be divorced from the general context of the conflict and therefore can be eventually solved only if conference proceedings take a favourable course.

In addition, the call for direct negotiations, from the Israeli point of view, as a matter of principle would mean exclusion of PLO from the process, giving that demand a clearly demagogic character. Therefore, the issue of direct negotiations and of mutual recognition should be put on the conference agenda instead of being employed to block its realization.

With regard to the second argument, the United States declares "that the only path to peace in the Middle East lies in a process of negotiations among the parties based on Security Council resolutions 242 and 338". 9/ In other words, direct negotiations on the basis of selected Security Council resolution. This approach is objectionable not because it refers to these two resolutions, but because it is an attempt to present them as the exclusive basis for a negotiated settlement. Security

Council resolution 242 (1967) was the first immediate reaction to the Israeli aggression of 1967 and will retain that specific character. But this very resolution does not outline a concept for the settlement of the question of Palestine, and this is precisely the crux of the matter. There are intentions to leave out of consideration resolutions of the General Assembly concerning the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people, e.g. General Assembly resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 3236 (XXIX), 3237 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974 and ES-7/2 of 29 July 1980, as well as the pertinent Security Council decisions on the occupied territories and the city of Jerusalem. <sup>10/</sup>

The Camp David accords which purportedly are based on resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) reveal through their disregard for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and the subsequent attack on Lebanon and PLO that such an approach is bound only to exacerbate the conflict. The American-Israeli concept of coupling, under the pretext of building peace, direct negotiations with confinement to a number of carefully selected resolutions of the United Nations have proved futile in practice. Continued efforts to put that concept in the way of convening an international peace conference on the Middle East are only apt to continue the confrontationist course of the past and nurture the still unsolved question of Palestine as conflict potential.

Hence those arguments turn out to be rather transparent. Non-participation in collective endeavours towards a settlement to the Middle East conflict cannot be explained by alleging a lack of convincing arguments, but as absence of political will. This posture is dictated by the interests of destabilization policies and not the quest for achieving a comprehensive and lasting solution to the problem.

A more constructive approach is evinced by the recent detailed proposals put forward by the Soviet Union on 29 July this year, addressing the basic issues of the conflict. Together with the pertinent United Nations resolutions and decisions, the recommendations of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the Arab peace programme coming forth from the Fez summit conference and the decisions adopted at the sixteenth session of the Palestinian National Council, they provide a solid basis for negotiations and the attainment of positive results at the conference which would be acceptable to all participants if the principles of reciprocity and undiminished security of all are observed. In that pursuit, the International Peace Conference on the Middle East could not only be instrumental in preventing the conflict from loitering into new crises and wars, but also help to reintroduce calculability and stability in international relations.

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#### Notes

<sup>1/</sup> General Assembly resolution 38/58 C of 13 December 1983.

<sup>2/</sup> General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960 declares in paragraph 2: "All peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development."

<sup>3/</sup> General Assembly resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970. .

<sup>4/</sup> The Charter of the United Nations, Article 33, provides explicitly for "negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements or other peaceful means of their own choice."

<sup>5/</sup> The Permanent Representative of Malta stated in his letter dated 2 May 1984 to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General: "Malta believes participation in the actual conference should initially be limited, for practical reasons, to those directly concerned, including all the permanent members of the Security Council. The outcome of the conference should however, subsequently be endorsed unanimously by the international community."

<sup>6/</sup> See the letters of Egypt, Nicaragua, Pakistan and Peru to the Secretary-General.

<sup>7/</sup> A/39/130-S/16409 of 13 March 1984, annex, p. 3.

<sup>8/</sup> A/39/214-S/16507 of 27 April 1984, p. 2.

<sup>9/</sup> A/39/130-S/16409 of 13 March 1984, p. 8.

<sup>10/</sup> With regard to the occupied territories, see Security Council resolutions 237 of 14 June 1967; 269 of 27 September 1968; 446 of 22 March 1979; 452 of 20 July 1979; 465 of 1 March 1980. With regard to Jerusalem, see Security Council resolutions 252 of 21 May 1968; 267 of 3 July 1969; 271 of 15 September 1969; 298 of 25 September 1971; 446 of 22 March 1979; 478 of 20 August 1980.

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#### Vasily G. Solodovnikov

First of all allow me to express gratitude to the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and to the United Nations Secretariat for having appointed me as a speaker on the question of convening an international peace conference on the Middle East. Speaking at such an authoritative Seminar is a great honour and great responsibility for me.

The attitude to the convocation of an international conference on the Middle East and to a settlement of the Middle East problem in general has divided all the countries and peoples of the world, political parties and public organizations into two camps - the friends and defenders of the righteous cause of the Palestinian people and the Arab countries, on the one hand, and others who support and encourage the Israeli aggression, on the other.

The Middle East conflict and the task of settling it constitute a most important international problem of our days. The stand of the countries and politicians on such important problems of the present day as the problem of war and peace, aggression, international law, the United Nations Charter and human rights manifests itself in the approach to these questions.

Only the United States of America and some of its Western allies support Israel and encourage it to take aggressive actions against the Arab peoples and countries and demonstrate the ambitions of the imperialist States, aimed at gaining world domination and at subordinating the third-world countries to their influence.

Washington and its imperialist allies in NATO bank ever more on military force and aggression in their international policy. And Israel is their shock force against the Arab national liberation movement, against the Arab countries and peoples.

Our Seminar on the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people is being held in an Arab country, in the city of Tunis, where the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Arab League are now headquartered.

I think that it is a very suitable place for such an undertaking as our Seminar.

The problem of Middle East settlement holds a central place in the foreign policy of Tunisia. Considering the Palestinian problem to be the key one in a just and stable settlement in the Middle East, the leadership of the country supports the struggle of the Palestinian people and its inalienable right to create an independent State of its own, recognizes the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the sole legitimate representative of the Arab people of Palestine, and comes out for liberation of all the occupied Arab territories, including the Arab part of Jerusalem.

So, the stand of the Government of Tunisia on the Middle East conflict is an important contribution for achieving an all-embracing, just and stable peace in the Middle East and for countering the aggressive ambitions of Israel and its imperialist patrons.

Now permit me to pass to the question of convening an international peace conference on the Middle East under the aegis of the United Nations.

Today there is broad-based international accord on the earliest convocation of an international peace conference on the Middle East and on its ultimate aims and guiding principles. This international accord, expressed in United Nations resolutions, concerns such principles as the fact that the settlement of the conflict must be of an all-embracing character; recognition of the Palestinian Arab people's inalienable right to self-determination and to creation of an independent State of their own; inadmissibility of seizure of others' lands through aggression, which means that Israel must return to the Arabs all the territories occupied by it since 1967 - the Golan Heights, the West Bank of the Jordan and the Gaza Strip, the Lebanese lands and the eastern part of Jerusalem as an inalienable part of the Jordan's West Bank; guarantees of the right of all States in the region to secure and independent existence; establishment of international guarantees for a settlement; drafting and signing a treaty or treaties providing for stopping the state of war in the Middle East and for establishing a state of peace between all the participants in the conflict.

The international consensus on these principles is reflected in many resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly, specifically in resolution 38/58 C, the contents of which can be viewed as a result of the collective struggle of the peace-loving countries for a peaceful all-embracing and just solution of the Middle East problem and for the earliest convocation of a peace conference on the Middle East. Only four delegations - the United States, Israel, Australia and Canada - voted against this resolution.

The broad-based agreement with these principles is reflected in the resolutions and the Declaration of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held under the aegis of the United Nations at Geneva in August-September 1983, in the Fez programme adopted at the twelfth inter-Arab summit conference of the heads of the Arab States, in the Political Declaration adopted at the Seventh Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries held in New Delhi in March 1983, in the political statements by the democratic and Socialist countries and in the statements and resolutions of many international and national organizations.

The broad-based international accord on convening a peace conference and on the guiding principles opens the door and prospects to a just and peaceful settlement of the Middle East conflict.

As before, the obstructionist stand of the United States and Israel which bank on making the Arabs capitulate through the use of military force remains the main obstacle to a peaceful, just and comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict. The Governments of these countries do not want to recognize the right of the Arab people of Palestine to self-determination, to say nothing about their right to create an independent State of their own. This is the root cause of the aggravation and deepening of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Israel's aggression in Lebanon, which began in June 1982, was fresh evidence of the aggressiveness of the policy of the United States and Israel in the Middle East. The attempts of the United States and Israel to impose, by means of military force, economic pressure and blackmail, a separate settlement upon the Arab States cannot lead to stability and peace in the Middle East. The Camp David agreements as a means for settling the Middle East conflict have been rejected by the Palestinian people, the Arab States and the world public. The separate agreement, forced upon Lebanon by means of guns, was cancelled by the Government of Lebanon on 15 March 1984.

The proposals on settling the Arab-Israeli conflict on a separate basis, advanced by United States President Ronald Reagan on 1 September 1982, by-pass the core of the conflict - the Palestinian problem - and for this reason cannot serve as a basis for a just Middle East settlement.

No formulas and concepts of a Middle East settlement without taking into account the right of the Arab people of Palestine to establish an independent State of their own can be viable.

The course of the Governments of the United States and Israel, aimed at the continuation of the aggressive policy in the Middle East, and the renunciation of a peaceful just settlement of the conflict are fraught with great dangers not only to the peoples of the Middle East, but also to the whole world, including Europe and Africa.

This course has already resulted in five wars in the Middle East, have caused heavy losses of human life and huge material losses on both sides.

Israel's aggression, which is supported by the United States, has caused the greatest human tragedy of our days: it has deprived the 4-million-strong people of Palestine, with its ancient history and rich culture, of its mother-land, and has turned it into an exiled people.

Israel has seized and retains the others' territories by force and perpetrates arbitrariness and unlawful actions against them. It creates a very dangerous precedent for violation of a sacred principle of international law - the inadmissibility of seizure of the others' territories by the use of force.

The military confrontation in the area results in the spending of huge sums on armaments to the detriment of the implementation of the economic and social development programmes of the Middle East countries.

As it is recognized by many, the fact that the Arab-Israeli conflict remains unsettled is a nutrient medium for the emergence of new conflicts in the region. Illustrative of this is the war between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq which has still more aggravated the situation in the Middle East. It damages Arab unity. This leads to the weakening of the Arab resistance to the Israeli aggression.

The war unleashed by Israel against Lebanon in June 1982 bared a very dangerous tendency to direct military involvement of the United States and its NATO allies in the Arab-Israeli conflict. As is known, apart from the Israeli troops, military units of the United States and its NATO confederates - the United Kingdom, France and Italy - were stationed in Lebanon. The interference of these interventionist forces in the home affairs of Lebanon even more heightened the international contradictions in that country and caused the loss of human lives.

It is highly symptomatic that before the adventure - the Israeli aggression in Lebanon - military contingents of the United States and other NATO member countries were stationed in the Sinai under the pretext of guaranteeing the Camp David agreements between Israel and Egypt.

All this shows that a new dangerous element - the direct military presence of NATO member countries - is being introduced in the Middle East.

And this is not all. It is certainly necessary to draw the attention of the participants in our Seminar to the fact that the range of the deadly American missiles Pershing-2 and Cruise missiles, deployed by the United States in Sicily (Italy), reaches regions of the Middle East, including Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Egypt, Iraq and other countries. It is beyond doubt that this factor makes the continuation of the military confrontation in the Middle East even more dangerous because the existence of the American nuclear-missile "umbrella" in the Middle East can provoke Israel to take even wider and more dangerous actions against the Arab countries.

There is information that Israel possesses nuclear devices that it can use, which can cause a world tragedy. Attention was drawn to this in United Nations General Assembly resolutions 33/71 of 14 December 1978 and 37/82 of 9 December 1982, as well as in the Political Declaration of the Seventh Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held in New Delhi in 1983.

All these and other adverse effects, caused by the aggressive policy of Israel and the United States in the Middle East, demand that all peoples of the world and first of all the peoples of the countries involved in the conflict should take all urgent measures for the earliest convocation of a peace conference in order to ease the situation in the Middle East, to eliminate the consequences of the Israeli aggression and to prevent an outbreak of a new war in this area, a war which can cause a catastrophe the effects of which are difficult to calculate and to predict.

So, on the basis of facts, it is safe to say that a sweeping majority of States, except the United States and Israel, and broad circles of the world public come out for an all-embracing just settlement in the Middle East through convocation of an international peace conference on the Middle East with the participation of all parties concerned, as it is laid down in the United Nations resolutions.

All the arguments of Israel and the United States against an all-embracing peaceful settlement, such as, for instance, the claim that Israel tries to strengthen its security through the capture of Arab territories or that the USSR allegedly threatens the Middle East's security, etc., do not bear scrutiny. They are clearly far-fetched and stand in contrast to reality. Life itself disproves these false arguments.

To put an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict and to introduce peace and stability in this region the peace-loving United Nations member countries and the world public must intensify the struggle to convene an international peace conference on the Middle East.

In the existing situation it is necessary to keep exposing, within the framework of the United Nations and other international organizations, within the framework of national government and public bodies and organizations, the aggressive essence of the policy of Israel and the United States, which is dangerous to the cause of peace and which contradicts the United Nations Charter and the Declaration of Human Rights. It is a duty of all peace forces to display even more energetic solidarity with and resolute support for the righteous cause of the Palestinian people and of those Arab countries which struggle for liberation of the Israeli-occupied lands in order to achieve the earliest settlement of the Middle East conflict.

In our view, it is expedient for our Seminar to call upon the world community, first of all the Arab countries and peoples and their Governments and public organizations to put powerful pressure, through joint efforts, on the Governments of the United States and Israel with a view to making them abandon their dangerous policy on Middle East affairs.

The Arab League set up a committee of seven consisting of a number of heads of State and Government for ascertaining the attitude of the interested countries, among them the Permanent Members of the United Nations Security Council, to the Fez Programme for a peaceful settlement of the Middle East conflict. It was certainly an important step for accelerating a settlement of the Middle East conflict. But it is regrettable that the committee has not yet published its report and conclusions on the results of its activity.

There is no doubt that the Arab countries have possibilities and real levers for pressuring the United States to make it reckon with the will of the people and abandon the unilateral support of the claims of Israel to its domination over the Middle East peoples.

The Seminar should also work to make the Governments of the European countries, first of all the United States' allies in NATO display a realistic approach to the Middle East affairs and realize the whole danger of the policy, which their ally - the United States - pursues in the Middle East, to their own peoples. There is an impression that under United States pressure the Western European countries have even stepped away from the statement which they adopted at the EEC session in Venice in 1980 and in which they recognized the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and demanded that an end be put to the Israeli occupation of the Arab lands seized in 1967.

I think that if the European countries members of EEC cling firmly to this statement the process of Middle East settlement, including the convocation of an international peace conference on the Middle East could receive a fresh important impulse.

The dual stand of the Western European States on this question, and sometimes also their direct participation in the implementation of the United States-Israeli plans in the Middle East not only hamper convocation of an international conference on the Middle East but also leads to an aggravation of the situation in this area. This breeds the danger of a spread of the conflict. The Soviet Union calls upon all States to help to implement the plans to achieve a just and stable settlement in the Middle East.

We presume that the African countries which consistently support the righteous cause of the Palestinian people and Arab countries struggling against Israeli aggression can make an important contribution to such a settlement. The severance by African countries of their relations with the aggressor boosted its isolation in the international arena. It served to strengthen the front of the struggle against the Israeli aggression against the Arab countries and peoples.

The international isolation of the aggressor is an important factor for pressuring it within the framework of the collective efforts aimed at a just settlement of the Middle East conflict. It is necessary to say here that in the context of the continuing aggression by Israel and of the implementation by it of the obstructionist policy in Middle East affairs restoration of diplomatic relations with Israel looks like support for the aggressor, as an anti-Arab move.

As far as the community of Socialist countries is concerned, the whole of it firmly and consistently comes out for peaceful settlement of the Middle East crisis approved by the corresponding resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly, through the convocation of an international peace conference, as proposed by the Soviet Union. They stand for full recognition of the inalienable rights of the Arab people of Palestine to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent State of their own, and hold the view that PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

On 29 July 1984 the Soviet Union advance an important new initiative on a Middle East settlement. The Soviet Union's proposals on a Middle East settlement have submitted a comprehensive and detailed plan for an all-embracing, just and stable settlement of the Middle East conflict. The USSR stands for a collective way to settle the conflict with the participation of all parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization. No separate settlement can undo the complex knot of the Middle East contradictions. It seems that all, except the United States and Israel, now agree with this conclusion.

The Soviet proposals have formulated principles of a Middle East settlement which, as is known, have found broad-based international support in the United Nations and other international organizations, in the Arab League, in the Non-aligned Movement, and so on.

In the section entitled "Ways towards reaching a settlement" the main aims of the conference on the Middle East have been formulated in no uncertain terms. In the Soviet Union's opinion, the conference on the Middle East should end in the signing of a treaty or a number of treaties embracing the following organically interconnected components of settlement: withdrawal of Israeli troops from all the Arab territories occupied since 1967; implementation of the legitimate national rights of the Arab people of Palestine, including its right to the creation of its own State; establishing the state of peace and ensuring the security and independent development of all the States parties to the conflict. Simultaneously, international guarantees for the observance of the terms of such a settlement should be drawn up and adopted. All the agreements reached at the conference should make an integral whole approved by all of its participants.

The Soviet Union holds the view that all the Arab States having a common border with Israel, i.e. the Syrian Arab Republic, Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon and Israel itself should have the right to participate in the conference. The Palestine Liberation Organization should be an equal participant in the conference as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. This is a question of principled significance, as Middle East settlement is unattainable without the resolution of the Palestinian problem, and it cannot be resolved without the participation of PLO.

The USSR and United States, which play an important role in the Middle East affairs and which were co-chairmen of the preceding conference on the Middle East, must also participate in the conference. With general consent some other States of the Middle East and of the regions adjoining it could also be included in the list of the participants in the conference.

The fact that important practical questions of the organization of the work of the conference are detailed in the Soviet proposals testifies to the seriousness of the Soviet Union's approach to a Middle East settlement and to the convocation of a peace conference on this problem.

The Soviet Union, guided by the interests of establishing a just and stable peace in the Middle East and eliminating the explosive situation in this area, calls for dealing with all disputable questions in the conflict, proceeding from sober account of each other's legitimate rights and interests, and calls upon all other States to contribute to the search for such settlement.

The principled significance of the Soviet proposals for settling the Middle East conflict lies above all in the fact that they take into consideration the fundamental interests of all countries and peoples involved in this conflict, and proceed from the desire to ensure stable peace and security for the peoples in the region as soon as possible. The Soviet proposals take into account some new elements in the Middle East situation, which are connected with the efforts of many countries and international organizations, aimed at resolving this problem: United Nations resolutions and as well as the Arab States' common position expressed in the decisions of the Fez conference.

The implementation of the Soviet proposals can lead to a peaceful settlement in the Middle East out of the deadlock caused by the United States and Israel. To this end, the pressure put on them by all peace forces, by all States - big and small - should be intensified.

The Soviet proposals have been welcomed with interest and approval all over the world. They have found the support of PLO and the Arab countries which are directly involved in the conflict. For instance, the Chairman of the National Council of Palestine, Salim al-Fahum, has stated that the new initiative advanced by the Soviet Union is the sole correct way to resolve the Middle East problems. Prime Minister Karame of Lebanon and Jordan's Minister for Foreign Affairs Masri have stated their support for the Soviet initiative. A positive estimate is given to the Soviet proposals by many other leaders of the Arab countries.

Regrettably, the United States and Israel have rejected point-blank the Soviet proposal to hold an international conference on a peaceful settlement of the Middle East conflict on a just basis.

Such a negativist stand of Washington is fully in line with the adventurist policy of the United States Administration and of the course aimed at destabilizing the international situation which creates the gravest threat to peace and security the world over.

The stand taken by Israel is unreasonable and dangerous because it breeds danger to that country and to its people. It is clear to all that Israel with its limited human and material resources cannot keep for a long time the tempo of the arms race and military confrontation with the Arab countries, which it has adopted. This policy, aimed at militarizing the country, has resulted in the huge foreign debt of Israel which has reached 30 billion dollars, in the very high inflation rate, in the deterioration of the living standards of the common people and in the growth of the anti-war sentiments in the country.

Israel should now take advantage of the opportunity to strengthen its borders and security by means of international guarantees and by normalizing its relations with the neighbouring Arab countries, including the Palestinian State which must be established in conformity with United Nations resolutions, because historic perspective is on the side of the Arab peoples, and the sooner Israel comes to understand the complete historic futility of the state on crude force and thoughtless expansion into the others' lands the better for Israel itself. The present rulers of Israel should be aware that by their practical deeds and by their policy in the Middle East they push the people of Israel and its future generation to a tragic end when they have to live in an atmosphere of continuous hostility with the neighbouring peoples.

The ruling quarters of Israel should contemplate the fact that in the United States strategic policy in the Middle East, Israel has been assigned the unenviable role of pulling burning chestnuts out of the fire for the United States. It is our deep conviction that Israel's national interests require a more sober and realistic approach to the situation in the Middle East and to the Soviet Union's proposal because of many cases when the "strategic ally" abandoned its friends are known in the history of our days.

The Seminar should call upon the mass media of the whole world to come out more actively and continually for the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and to independent existence and development, for the earliest settlement of the Middle East conflict.

It is expedient to launch in all countries a broad-based campaign for the earliest convocation of an international peace conference on the Middle East with a view to achieving a just settlement in the Middle East and resolution of the Palestinian problem.

The convocation of such a conference is now, more than ever before, a pressing task facing the peoples of the whole world.

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#### Redzo Terzic

The Palestinian question and the necessity of finding a just solution to it is a priority in the difficult and complex situation which has kept the Middle East in turmoil for decades now. After more than 35 years since the United Nations undertook the responsibility for resolving the Middle East crisis and the Palestinian question, not only has the free and safe development of the peoples of this region has been secured, but the situation deteriorated further, seriously threatening world peace.

The Arab territories are still occupied, with Israel practising various forms of oppression against the Palestinian people, from the direct use of force to forced resettlement.

However, history has corroborated the fact that controversial international problems cannot be solved by force, and the process of emancipation of countries and peoples cannot be stopped by force. Therefore, the policy of the Israeli Government of ensuring peace for the Israeli people and security for its State by permanent aggression and usurpation of the rights of the Arab people is doomed to failure.

Such a policy not only inflicts suffering on the Palestinian people but perpetuates the process of mistrust, instability and conflicts in the Middle East and beyond. For this reason the international community, and particularly those having the greatest influence in that part of the world, have the responsibility of standing up to the aggressor and forcing him to withdraw from all the occupied territories. It is only in such a framework that a just and comprehensive, and therefore lasting solution to the crisis can be sought.

The United Nations and the international community have clearly defined the foundations on which it is possible to find just and lasting solution to the Middle East crisis. It can only be based on a comprehensive approach in line with the decisions of the Security Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations, with the equitable participation of PLO.

The point of departure and only realistic basis of any platform for a peaceful solution is the fact that the Palestinian question is the core of the crisis and that, unless it is solved, there can be no peace in the Middle East.

A just and lasting solution implies the withdrawal of Israel from all the Palestinian and Arab territories occupied in 1967 and afterwards and the recognition of the inalienable legitimate right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of their independent State on their national soil. It is only in this way that peace and the free development of all the peoples and States of the region, including Israel, can be ensured.

However, Israel still refuses such a basis for solving the crisis; it continues the occupation of Arab territories which it wants to annex, denies the Palestinian people their right to self-determination, to return to their homeland and to establish a State of their own; it also refuses to recognize PLO and to negotiate with this organization, which has been internationally recognized as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

The United Nations plays an irreplaceable role in the process of seeking a solution to the Middle East crisis and, within that context, to the Palestinian issue. The United Nations platform for solving this crucial problem enjoys the broadest support of a vast majority of the international community, which has expressed its solidarity with the Palestinian people and with their struggle for the assertion of the right to self-determination, and resolutely condemns the aggressive and expansionist policy of Israel.

Developments in the Middle East over the past few decades have shown that one-sided solutions and separate wags are not conducive to the elimination of this focal point of crisis, which is perhaps the most dangerous one threatening world peace. There is an ever greater need to convene an international conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations, as it would be the right framework and path for finding a solution to this dangerous crisis.

The idea of convening an international conference is not a new one. However, it has recently been asserted and it has brought together a large number of countries in favour of it. It is very important that there is consensus among the Arab countries on this question, and that most factors concerned and involved in the Middle East crisis are prepared to participate in it or support it. The only obstacle is the hard-line stand that Israel still takes and the opposition of the United States to the convening of this conference, which is actually in keeping with their strategy of solving this crisis separately, through direct negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbours. The aim of such a strategy is to impose solutions which would suit Israel's policy and its aspirations at the expense of the legitimate rights and interests of the Palestinian people and other Arab countries; experience to date has shown that in this way a lasting solution to the crisis and peace in the region cannot be secured.

Last year's Geneva Conference on the Palestinian issue and the session of the United Nations General Assembly gave a new impetus to the convening of an international conference on the Middle East. It should constitute yet another test of the international community's readiness to grapple resolutely with one of the crucial problems of our times, which has been awaiting a solution for so long. The dramatic situation in which the Palestinian people are and the gravity of the crisis which is afflicting the Middle East, because the Palestinian issue is not being solved, make the international community feel that it is necessary to have the conference held as soon as possible.

Yugoslavia supports the convening of such an international conference because it deems it the most convenient framework for and best way of finding a peaceful solution to the Middle East crisis and the Palestinian issue. The conference would considerably accelerate the process of finding a solution based on well known and broadly recognized international postulates.

Yugoslavia shall continue to exert all-round and active efforts within the United Nations, the Movement of Non-aligned Countries and through bilateral contacts in favour of the right of the Arab people of Palestine. These rights are inalienable, just like the rights of other peoples in the world, based on the United Nations Charter and reaffirmed in numerous resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council of the United Nations, as well as at the summit meetings and other gatherings of non-aligned countries. Together with other non-aligned countries Yugoslavia has always given full support to the efforts made by the United Nations and the international community to find a lasting and just solution to the Middle East crisis and the Palestinian issue.

On the occasion of the Seminar on Palestine we wish to reiterate Yugoslavia's solidarity with and full support to the struggle of the Palestinian people, led by the Palestine Liberation Organization, for the attainment of their national rights.

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C. African and European co-operation in seeking effective measures to enable the Palestinian people to attain and exercise its inalienable rights

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Lasse Budtz

I would like first of all to thank you - whoever the responsible people are - for the kind invitation to participate in this Seminar.

You have been so kind as to stress that I am invited as an expert. I think that is too much to say, but on the other hand it is correct that I have had the opportunity to deal with Middle East problems and that of the Palestinians for quite some years in the capacity first as journalist and later as member of the Danish Social Democratic Party in the Danish Parliament, where I am the spokesman on foreign affairs for my party.

I have participated in one of your seminars once before, a couple of years ago in Dakar, Senegal, where I was asked to go by Willy Brandt as a representative of the Socialist International's Special Commission on the Middle East, a body still existing. I expect the Commission under the leadership of H.E. The Prime Minister of Portugal, Mario Soares, to go to the Middle East on a new mission sometime in September.

Denmark is - as you know - a very small country. But it is not without influence. First of all it is very highly developed with a high standard of living and a still very good welfare system which costs us a lot of money, but Denmark is also very actively participating in many international organizations' work. When you are small you only have one chance to gain influence: work with other countries and preferably with other small countries. This we have done. We have been working very closely with other Nordic and Scandinavian countries, but being a member of nearly everything, Denmark has influence possibilities also via NATO and EEC. We try to nourish these possibilities by keeping a rather strict Danish independence which is not, you can imagine, always very easy. But we try anyway.

I stress this because when we discuss the Danish Middle East policy it is of course influenced by the fact that we are a small Western European country which cannot do it alone and therefore must co-operate with other countries to safeguard our economy and security interests. We do not see any security policy alternative to our membership of NATO, and we would not be able to have a relatively stable (but at the moment not very good) economy without the membership of EEC.

When you are judging Danish and Scandinavian Middle East policy you should keep this in mind and the fact that we always had very good relations with the State

of Israel, and as one of the countries members of the United Nations right from the beginning, we are one of the countries responsible for the very creation of the State. The story of the Jews during the Second World War has not been without some influence on our policy in the Middle East after the big war. We helped the Jews out of our country before the Gestapo was able to arrest and deport them, and we succeeded, I am happy to say. You will understand, I hope, that this became a kind of a moral background for a close and very good relation not only between many Danish and Jewish or Israeli families but also became the fundament for the co-operation between the two States.

None the less slowly, very slowly, the situation has changed. Do not make any mistakes - the population of the Danish State is still absolutely sure or certain that the State of Israel has the right to exist or that the rights should be safeguarded by the international community so that the Israeli State can develop further behind safe and secured borders, the existing borders that is. But now - I think it is fair to say - after eight years of Begin and Shamir - the average Dane and certainly the majority in the Danish Parliament are of that opinion that the Middle East will never get peace if you do not internationally give the rights of self-determination to the Palestinian people. We are more and more in my country asking the question: Why should the Palestinians not have exactly the same rights as the Israelis? Is it not also their land, their blood, their opportunities, their families who are suffering? Or you could even ask the last question in a much stronger way: Are the Palestinians today not the people in the Middle East suffering most?

I have personally no problems by answering this question with a yes.

I think that all parties in the Danish Parliament share the views of the Ten's now famous Venice Declaration. You will without doubt remember paragraph 4 in which it is said:

"The time has come to promote the recognition and implementation of the two principles universally accepted by the international community: the right to existence and to security of all States in the region, including Israel, and justice for all peoples, which implies the recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people."

In paragraph 5 it is said:

"All the countries in the area are entitled to live in peace with secure, recognized and guaranteed borders."

Paragraph 6 stresses that a just solution must finally be found to the Palestinian problem, which is not simply one of refugees. The Palestinian people, which is conscious of existing as such, must be placed in a position, by an appropriated process defined within the framework of the comprehensive peace settlement, to exercise fully its right to self-determination.

In the seventh paragraph, the Ten are stressing that the achievement of these objectives requires the involvement and support of all parties concerned in the peace settlement which the Nine (now the Ten) are endeavouring to promote in keeping with the principles formulated in the declaration referred to. These principles must be respected by all the parties concerned, and thus by the Palestinian people and by PLO which will have to be associated with negotiations.

I have been quoting at great length from the declaration of the EEC countries, because this was, and not only in my opinion, a cornerstone in the countries' concerned Middle East policy. It is after all also a very sound policy, which was established in the year 1980 and I can assure you, that it was not all the member countries in the EEC organization that were happy about these quoted sentences.

But what do we do now? What can we do together? I am told that the panel where I am supposed to participate is going to deal with the problem formulated as "African and European co-operation in seeking effective measures to enable the Palestinian people to attain and exercise its inalienable rights". First I must admit, that I am not aware of any real co-operation between African and European States on this very important problem. But I may be wrong and I am certainly very ready to be advised about initiatives that I do not know about.

Secondly I would like to know whether the very formulation of the question what we Africans and Europeans can do together - is at least indirectly admission of the lack of international initiatives right now - maybe even an admission of the fact that the United Nations has not been able to play a role of any importance in the last many years - which is a very sad fact.

I would like immediately to stress another fact, which is of very much importance to me. I regard the United Nations very highly. I think we all should admit that if we did not have an Organization like the United Nations we would be forced to invent one right now. International society can in my opinion not live without the United Nations any longer. The United Nations is a must, also because here you have an Organization where we can all so to speak say whatever we want to each other and get away with it. That is very important for international relations and I certainly hope you share my views on this point.

I am unfortunately not sure that you share all the views I am going to present to you in the rest of my limited intervention.

Let me try to describe the situation we are in right now; it is not a very good or promising one.

Firstly, we should not expect too much from the Israelis. Personally I hoped that the Labour Party would have won the needed amount of seats to establish a Government of its own. Nothing of the kind happened. Besides the Labour Party and the Likud a certain and depressing amount of small parties became represented, thereby nearly blocking the way to democratic procedures in the Israeli Parliament. It was good to see that the new party, where Arabs and Israelis are trying to co-operate in order to create a kind of co-existence was able to be represented in Parliament. But it was sad to learn that the fascist party of so-called Rabbi Kahane also became represented with the so-called Rabbi himself in the Knesset. Let me be absolutely honest and say that you cannot expect very much of any importance from this new Parliament. I know quite a few of you did not expect anything from it anyway. Also I have heard a good Palestinian friend say that the choice between Likud and the Labour alignment was as to choose between Coca Cola and Pepsi Cola. I understand the view though I do not share it.

But the fact is that we cannot expect very much from Israel with such a confused situation.

That should not lead us to change our views of course. The settlements also according to my country's Government and the opposition are illegal and can never be accepted if they are not covered by an agreement signed by the Parties involved. But the Israeli situation and the confused Parliament will not be able to take new initiatives which could lead to new negotiations. Nobody would dare.

What about the Arabs then? I am sorry to say - and it is necessary to say it - I do not expect very much constructive from their side either. I have been wondering about it through many years, but you should probably be a non-Arab to understand how harmful it is to the situation in the Middle East that the Arab nations cannot combine their forces, cannot agree on a common stand. Is anything new to be expected from the Arab nations in the near future? Unfortunately it is not very likely - but I would certainly want to be corrected.

What about PLO? Well, there is a new deal signed by some of the most important forces in this very important organization, but even Chairman Arafat, whom I respect very much and whom I have had the honour to meet quite a few times also here in Tunis, will admit, PLO has not been strengthened. That is of course not going to change the role PLO should play also in the future, and in the meantime I certainly hope PLO will be very much strengthened. Then what about America? I hope you do not expect anything from Washington on this side of the elections, because nothing will happen. I shall not hide the fact that I am not very happy about Mr. Reagan's policy. He is not social in his views. He is a hawk when it comes to security policy. If nothing is going to be changed he will still be in favour of a confrontation policy and not a policy of detente, disarmament and negotiations. It is not the policy of either myself or my party. But I tend to believe that in the situation of the Middle East I do prefer the Republican Party's position and not the Democratic Party's. But Mr. Reagan will still be very careful in his Middle East policy, because he as well as all of us here are very much aware of the strength of the Jewish lobby in the States. I still do not understand why the big amount of Arabs and among them Palestinians in the United States are not able to get themselves organized and establish another pressure group, another lobby. I am afraid this is due to the old lack of co-operation between the Arab countries.

The Soviet Russia once again just a couple of weeks ago or maybe less presented the proposal on the re-establishment of the Geneva Conference, which of course immediately was attacked by the United States. And we all know that Israel will not accept the idea, which is not so stupid after all. His Majesty the King of Jordan, Hussein, a couple of times backed the same idea in my presence.

There are two ways of proceeding in the Middle East - the step-by-step method, which is preferred by Israel and the United States and after all most of the Western world and certainly presented by Mr. Kissinger a number of times. And then you have the over all comprehensive solution, where you are trying to deal with all the problems at the same time. I honestly think we should consider whether the time has not come to try again the second possibility. I certainly know that it is not going to be easy but what else can we do.

But such a conference, which after all gave some hope to many peoples involved last time it was tried should - I suppose - be arranged by the United Nations. Is that possible? Probably not, because the very conference can be blocked in the Security Council by a veto from for instance the United States.

I would like to cite a quotation, here I quote:

"It is most regrettable that the United Nations has until now been unable to implement the just resolution adopted by the overwhelming consensus of the international community for the purpose of eliminating the widespread injustice and oppression that continues to be meted out by the Zionist entity against the

Palestinian people. Such implementation would take the form of granting the Palestinian people the most basic right enjoyed by all other peoples of the world, namely the right to live in an independent State of the homeland. The fundamental features of that homeland are now calculatingly being obliterated by the Zionist entity in favour of an ugly new phase through confiscation of the historic land of the Palestinians and the establishment of settlements for Jewish immigrants brought to Israel from all corners of the world to replace the original owners of the land."

The person who expressed these true words was His Majesty King Fahd of Saudi Arabia. Some may not agree with his policy but what he said here is the truth. I cannot help anybody to deny facts. And we are of course also all of us aware of the fact that if something is not done, the Israeli people representing the thinking of Likud and so-called Rabbi Kahane will include the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in Israel during the coming years.

It is a fantastic situation. We may be very critical at each other's policy in the Middle East, but another fact seems to be, as far as I can judge, that there are only two countries in the world who do not recognize the right of self-determination for the Palestinian people. Well, there might be a few small Latin American countries officially sharing the views of Israel, but all the other countries in the world, an enormous majority, all agree that of course there must be self-determination for the Palestinian people as well as for the Israeli. What is it that we cannot get through the demands for self-determination for the Palestinian people?

Is it because the United States is so powerful? Is it because so many of us depend so much on co-operation with the United States? I shall certainly not hide the fact that a small country like Denmark is very much dependent on a co-operation with the United States, and if you study the problem a little more closely it is not very surprising that we do need to co-operate with the United States. After all we have very much in common, but certainly not everything the United States says in the field of foreign policy can be accepted by us.

Anyway, what is it that the majority of the nations cannot get through what they think is justified? Is it the distribution of power? Is it therefore security policy? The basic element behind the policy of the two super-Powers is without any doubt security policy. If we could imagine a situation where the two super-Powers were not afraid of each other's influence in the area, then the situation would change completely. No doubt about it. If we are trying to measure so to speak the influence of the two super-Powers today, we must also agree that the United States could change the situation overnight. If Israel should lose first of all the American economic backing and therefore also its military backing Israel would be in very serious trouble. It is, of course, today a very strong military Power, by far the strongest in the area, but it would not be able to do it very long alone. And time is on the Arab side. The United States has therefore the key to the situation as it has developed today.

I am unfortunately not able to suggest very surprising new things, but if we want a peaceful solution and I think we all must want a peaceful solution because any Middle East crisis influence developments in all other corners of the world, and we should try to find out how we can get the two main and principal parties to recognize each other. I talk of course about Israel and up possibilities which later could lead to contacts which again could lead to new initiatives. I am, as you can hear, trying to describe it in a very diplomatic way because I do not want to harm anybody.

It is also my personal opinion that the Palestinians must have their own State, and if they can live on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip alone why should we then object? But the outlook for the establishment for such a State is not very bright at this moment, and the results of the Israeli elections will naturally make the process even more difficult. The lack of initiatives in the United States and of new ideas in the Soviet Union makes the whole procedure more complicated.

Maybe it would be a good idea once more to consider whether a fresh start could be taken on the basis of the original plan in the United Nations, the division of Palestine into an Arab and a Jewish State. Both parties have at various stages been against this division but maybe exactly because of this it might be an idea to start with the old division plan.

But who should take the new initiatives? Europeans and Africans together? I would have nothing against it if it was likely that such an initiative would have a chance. But why should it? I do agree that any initiative should be taken in an international way, but then it would maybe be better if small countries from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe did it together. But without a certain acceptance not only by the super-Powers but also by the parties involved, it would not get very far.

Many Arab States said over the years that Europe, first of all Western Europe, should play a much more active role and at least Europe could put pressure on the United States in order to try to force it to show more flexibility. Until this very moment the Western European countries probably have relied too much on the United States to be able to get away with their own initiative. But that is something which is going to be changed in my opinion.

Western Europe will be forced by political events to play a more active role in the field of foreign affairs - maybe not tomorrow, but probably in some year's time. I am not advocating we should stop the co-operation with the United States or anything of that kind but I am saying that more European independence will be needed in the long run. It may have a positive influence on the possibilities in the Middle East. Israel was for many years very much against all ideas of a special European role, but that has started to change over the last few years.

But of course, there is one thing which nearly overnight could change the position of Israel and get most of the countries in the world to rally against the Israeli Government if it did not answer in a positive way, and that is Arab recognition of the State of Israel. It could also be done by PLO alone. I know it is difficult for many of you to imagine the changes such a recognition would bring about. But an Israeli Government not willing to co-operate about peace and regional co-operation and settlement of thousands of Palestinians without a home in a situation where the Governments of Arab States or PLO had showed the brave ability to grant recognition would very quickly lost the sympathy of the world. It is worthwhile to think it over.

It is not a new Sadat plan because what I am discussing is only a formal recognition of the fact that Israel exists also diplomatically and that it is impossible to get it removed from the map in our own and our children's lifetime.

The other theoretical way out as far as I can see it is to persuade the United States to understand that the only sound and fair policy is to stop backing Israel. And do you recognize that as a possibility? I do not. A third possibility is of course to accept a kind of a federation for the West Bank and Gaza in some co-operation with Jordan. But we all know that and we have all discussed that possibility so many times. One thing is sure: there will never be peace if the Palestinian rights are not recognized and granted.

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#### Claude DeJardin

##### 1. Introduction

The desire of the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to associate parliamentarians as experts with this Ninth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine is worthy of note. It shows an intention to make peoples conscious of the anguish of the Palestinian people directly through their legitimate representatives, bypassing Governments and diplomacy.

It is true that, for the past 10 years, an increasing number of "elected representatives of the people" in Western Europe have become aware that the European States must share a large part of the blame for the present situation in the Middle East and that the crisis which has poisoned this region of the world for too long has a special impact on Europe's security and economic future.

As is well known, numerous debates have been held on the question both in the European Parliament and in the Parliamentary Assemblies of the Council of Europe and the Western European Union, as well as in the different national parliaments. The work undertaken by the Parliamentary Association for Euro-Arab Co-operation since its establishment in 1974 should also be emphasized.

Since 1980, there has been a standing Sub-Committee on the Middle East in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (the Europe of the Twenty-one) which has submitted resolutions for adoption by the Assembly in April 1980, July and October 1982 and September 1983. In the main, these resolutions reaffirm the need to uphold the resolutions of the United Nations, to recognize the legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. They also denounce the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, as well as the Israeli settlements policy in the occupied territories and the confiscation of land belonging to Arab farmers.

It is also well known that this Parliamentary Assembly publicly welcomed the conclusions of the important Arab summit of Fez in October 1982, as well as its unceasing appeals for an increase in European contributions to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

The attitude of political circles towards the question of Palestine has greatly changed in Europe. This is probably due to the coming to power of a new generation more immune to the syndrome of the Nazi persecution of Jews and to the criminal adventurism of the last Israeli Government, which was responsible for the war and massacres in Lebanon, as well as the increase in Zionist terrorism in the occupied territories and elsewhere.

Lastly, this change of attitude is also due to the realistic policy intelligently pursued by the leaders of the PLO under Yasser Arafat and the effective development of the activities of the offices of the League of Arab States in the European capitals.

## 2. Europe and the Question of Palestine

Immediately after the Second World War, Europe, feeling guilty because of Nazi anti-semitism and persecutions, identified itself with the creation and survival of the State of Israel, while at the same time the intensification of the process of national liberation of the former colonies increased its concern with respect to security of its economic and commercial interests.

Moreover, it saw in Israel, as in a mirror, a reflection of its own conception of democracy and its institutions. This attitude, so far, has enabled the State of Israel to claim to be the only multi-party democracy in the region.

It is in fact the progressive renunciation of "external" terrorism by the PLO and the more politicized statements of Yasser Arafat on the one hand and the behaviour of the Israeli authorities towards the populations of the occupied territories and the Palestinian peoples, on the other, which have caused a certain change of opinion in Western Europe.

Israel's implication in the Lebanese tragedy was a decisive step, because of the historical, political, commercial and religious links between Lebanon and our countries (especially France) and the still vivid memory of the atrocities of the war.

The major evidence of this change of attitude is incontestably the Venice Declaration of 13 June 1980. This joint text refers to the Palestinian problem as not being only a problem of refugees, to the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, the need to associate the PLO with negotiations, the illegality of Zionist settlements in the occupied territories, etc.

For the first time, there is an outline of an independent policy on the part of democratic Europe and a reason to hope for a "European initiative".

That was a first encouraging step.

A draft plan had even been approved at a meeting of the nine Ministers for Foreign Affairs in Luxembourg, providing for the evacuation of the territories occupied by Israel over a period of two years and the organization of a referendum among all Palestinians, outside and inside the country, to determine their future in an independent State, a federation with Jordan or a confederation with Israel. Nothing more has been heard of it.

The worsening of the crisis within the European community may not be unconnected with this, nor the global strategy of President Reagan's administration which includes the Near East in the security zone for American interests and which implies his veto on any European initiative in the region.

The current stalemate, complicated by the abominable and absurd conflict between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq, is arousing increasing concern in Western Europe and might even partially encourage aspirations to independence with respect to the United States.

It must also be admitted that the weakness of the follow-up on the Venice declaration and subsequent declarations in the Arab countries and in Africa have not encouraged a European initiative. On the contrary, it has strengthened the hostile trends. The fierce opposition of Israel and the Zionist lobbies in Europe and in the United States should on the other hand have done more to alert the attention of the champions of the interests of the Palestinian people.

The present inter-Arab disputes and the internal conflicts in the PLO are likely to make even the most inspired protagonists embarrassed and hesitant.

If Western Europe is having great difficulties in uniting and speaking with a single voice, what can be said of the Arab and African worlds? Even with respect to the fate of the Palestinian people, what positive element is there beyond academic statements and professions of faith at the various summits. Who came to the help of the Palestinians, first at Beirut and then at Tripoli? No one, apart from the intervention of the multinational force sent by France, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States.

As a politician and not a diplomat, I intend to say what I really think, even if I am wrong. I am very much afraid that the Palestinian people has in fact to a great extent been abandoned and that for some people, its cause is only a convenient alibi and the sole element of a negative and illusory unity against the Jewish State of Israel. How should Europe act? The recent announcement of an agreement between the PLO and King Hussein of Jordan on the principle of the creation of a Palestine-Jordanian confederation is a major element in the choice of future attitudes.

It is essential unceasingly to proclaim the PLO's status as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and its sovereign right to determine their destiny. Today it is urgent to act jointly and effectively, in order that the objective should be clearly defined, even if this does not serve individual national strategic interests. The time has come to keep one's word.

The Europe of human rights should assume its responsibilities in this respect and more into action. Is it still necessary to find out when, how and with whom?

The establishment of another Government in Israel and, it is to be hoped, of another administration in Washington, like the awakening of European identity with respect to European security and détente should be the determining factors in this matter.

## 3. The Role of Europe

Three themes dominate the problem of Europe's role in a solution of the Palestinian question: European security, the dialogue between Europe and the Arabs and the special relations between Western Europe and the United States.

First the Lebanese war, then that of the Gulf and the Afghan crisis have clearly shown the impact of the destabilization of this region of the world on European security and East-West relations. This is all the more true because, as part of its global strategy, the Middle East represents for the United States only one of many theatres of operations, which involves NATO member countries in choices which do not *a priori* correspond to European interests.

With regard to the European-Arab dialogue, the grave failure experienced at Athens in December 1983 requires new efforts on both sides. Need we repeatedly reaffirm the community of interests uniting democratic Europe and the Arab countries? In the cultural sphere, there are the many shared origins of our knowledge and our civilization. In the economic sphere, there are the opening of commercial markets, the flow of capital and the exchanges of technology. In the social sphere, there is the presence of many Muslim students and workers in the industrialized countries.

All these factors have political implications which cannot be left to the strategic choices imposed by the confrontation of the super-Powers.

While certain European countries can be reproached for having subjugated their policy to that of the United States, the same reproach may unfortunately be applied to the behaviour of many Arab or African countries *vis-à-vis* one or the other super-Power.

It is hardly necessary to recall that the super-Powers, like dictators, derive their authority and their power by dividing and subjugating smaller countries. Any country that subjugates itself can make no claim to freedom, or even to dignity or the respect of others.

The time has come to examine lucidly the motivations and objectives of the various participants and to define their implications for peace and, thus, for the happiness and freedom of mankind. This process will not necessarily require a shift in alliances as a prerequisite for a European-Arab *rapprochement*.

The era of the decolonization of the Arab world has ended, and we are now in the era of European-Arab co-operation, which will continue to be jeopardized so long as the question of Palestine remains unresolved and so long as the question of Palestine remains unsettled.

The key to the problem is to be found in Washington, and not in Brussels, Paris or Strasbourg, and no solution will be found until direct talks are opened between the United States and PLO, prior to convening of an international conference such as the one called for at Geneva on 7 September 1983, by the United Nations Conference.

The privileged relations which the United States and the various Western European countries maintain in various international fora and institutions, such as NATO, OECD, IMF and the like, should be exploited, so that it will finally be acknowledged that the cause of peace, liberty and democracy cannot countenance Israeli tyranny over the occupied territories of the West Bank, Gaza, the Golan Heights or southern Lebanon. Nor will that cause be served by hiding the suffering and hardship of the Palestinian people behind a screen verbiage in order to protect European modesty.

Every people, everywhere on earth, has the right to live in peace and freedom in respect for its identity and dignity and its right to self-determination.

## 4. What should be done

There can be no doubt today that the so-called "step-by-step" policy introduced by President Carter has misfired. The failure of the Camp David agreement, which may be attributed essentially to the violation of the clauses on the future of the occupied territories and to the invasion of Lebanon, has served to fan animosities among Arab countries, at a time when Arab unity is essential to achieving a balanced settlement of the question of Palestine.

Moreover, as the recommendation adopted on 13 June by the Assembly of the Western European Union rightly states, the infernal cycle of terrorism and repression and the establishment of populated settlements in the territories occupied by Israel are obstacles to the establishment of a lasting peace in the Near-East, an objective which on the contrary requires mutual recognition by Israel and the PLO and recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to its own homeland.

European politicians should have two priority objectives:

- (a) An international conference should be convened under United Nations auspices and all the States involved should be invited, including the United States and the USSR, and PLO as well; the conference should determine what entities are empowered to speak legitimately on behalf of the Palestinian people and it would thus initiate the process of global negotiations;
- (b) A European mediation effort should be launched in the Arab world, abandoning any fears alienating Israel and the Zionist pressure groups in Europe or of

breaking the current lamentable alignment with United States policy.

The democratic system prevailing in Western Europe is based on the ability to convince through dialogue. The time has come to start convincing. If this is to be accomplished, those involved must meet, get to know each other and come to respect one another.

Meetings such as the European-Arab parliamentary summit held at Baghdad last November, and this seminar in Tunis, provide special opportunities to achieve this goal. They are not enough, however, and the African and Arab embassies, as well as local offices of the League of Arab States and of PLO in Europe, can play a very effective role.

Given the methods employed by Zionist circles, it is not enough merely to send our various reports and publications once in a while. The power of eloquence must be exploited.

Any action taken nevertheless will remain dependent on the credibility of its source, and we must all ensure that our acts correspond to what we say. For example, in the eyes of European public opinion, a denunciation of apartheid and racism rings hollow if the accuser maintains close ties with South Africa. Similarly, a condemnation of the violation of human rights by Israel means little if it emanates from a country that allows those rights to be flouted within its own borders.

The task ahead is all the greater since we must combat centuries of prejudice and scorn. In the minds of too many Europeans, the spirit of the Crusades has not yet died.

The plight of the Palestinian people, the Sabra-Shatila massacres, the extortion to which the Palestinian universities, have been subjected, the terrorist plots of Israeli extremists, the tragedies experienced by PLO at Beirut and Tripoli, and the divisive activities pursued by certain Arab countries, have sparked the interest and concern at Europeans.

As it has turned out, the Palestinian people and its legitimate representative, PLO, headed by Yasser Arafat, emerged the stronger for all this in Europe. It is now time for all justice-loving and peace-loving people to take action so that the sacrifices will not have been in vain, and any desperate recourse to suicidal terrorism must be avoided.

We members of parliaments are on the front lines in this political struggle, side by side with the Palestinian people and, to be objective, with the people of the State of Israel as well, for they, too, have the right to live in peace.

The declarations we make and the commitments we enter into at international gatherings such as this one will have little meaning unless we tirelessly press our efforts in our national parliaments, in international parliamentary fora, and among our electorates.

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D. The role of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the  
social, cultural, economic and political development  
of the Palestinian people and in the attainment of  
its political objectives

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Khaled El-Hassan

In all sincerity, I must express the general feeling of satisfaction with regard to the activities undertaken by the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People which, since its establishment, has unquestionably done a splendid job. In fact, its past and present activities are a reflection of the conscience of the international community which American policy and Zionist philosophy are endeavouring to stifle in an attempt to prevent it from engaging in a real quest for the justice advocated in the Charter of the United Nations. In my view, the results of the studies undertaken by this Committee in the course of its own work or through conferences such as this should be given the widest possible publicity since such publicity would obviously render a considerable service to the cause of Palestine and the struggle of the Palestinian people through its effect on the standard-bearers of international public opinion. This is not only because the United Nations, albeit theoretically, represents international legitimacy in our present age and, consequently, is taken seriously and listened to with respect, but also because the United Nations, which constituted the framework through which the tragedy of the people of Palestine took place, is now playing a role in helping the people of Palestine to recover at least the minimum of their national rights.

Any person acquainted with international law, the Charter of the United Nations or any other form of law will realize, as we do, that what happened through the United Nations in 1948, apart from being an infringement

of the principles and purposes set forth in its Charter, was also inconsistent with the nature of the task of the United Nations which, although extensive, does not include the right to exercise sovereignty over, or to dispose of, the national territory of peoples.

In all fairness to the United Nations, which we respect as a concept on the basis of our belief in the letter and spirit of its Charter, reference should be made to the fact that it was the role played by the major Powers which led the United Nations to act in a manner inconsistent with its principles and purposes in the case of Palestine.

All aspects relating to this matter are abnormal, unnatural and without historical precedent to such an extent that international agreement has not even been reached on the most appropriate terminology with which to describe it; it is variously referred to as the question of Palestine, the case of Palestine, the Palestinian problem, the Palestinian tragedy, the Middle Eastern problem... etc. Regardless of the terminology used, however, the underlying fact is that what befell the people of Palestine represented not only the greatest tragedy of the twentieth century but also the greatest tragedy to befall human civilization at any time in its history.

It was the policy of the major Powers which nurtured and promoted the Zionist movement and which was responsible for the transfer of thousands of Jewish migrants of various nationalities and cultures to Palestine. It was also that policy which effectively decided to expel the people of Palestine from their homeland in order to give it to persons who had no right thereto by any methods of logical or legal reasoning except that of the law of conquest and "might is right" which the international community decided to abolish after the end of the First World War.

However, at the end of 1948, the people of Palestine were uprooted and displaced from their national territory to become stateless persons dependent upon the communities among which they were living, without rights or duties, in the places of their diaspora.

Such a situation is incompatible not only with the right of peoples but also with individual and human rights. Consequently, unless this tragedy is brought to an end through the recovery by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights, there will be no real peace either in Palestine or in the Middle East and, as a result of Zionist ideology and the Palestinian tragedy, the Middle East will remain a focal point of international conflict in a region which is of the greatest significance for international peace and security.

The establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization marked the first step towards the recovery by the Palestinian people of their identity and unity through their common resolve to defend their rights. Notwithstanding the loss of their social unity, the struggle of the people of Palestine, under the leadership of PLO, was a practical manifestation of the fact that this people belonged to a specific homeland and culture and that the struggle, in all its aspects, would continue until this sense of belonging achieved through resistance is transformed into the actual fact of full national and social belonging on Palestinian territory over which Palestinian national sovereignty is exercised.

In addition to the burdens that are being borne by the Palestine Liberation Organization in its struggle against Zionist and American schemes in the Middle East, in its capacity as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people it also has to deal with the economic and social problems encountered by the people of Palestine in the places in which they are living in exile or under occupation. Although the Palestinian Family Foundation was the sole institution remaining to the people of Palestine, who clung to it both before and after the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization in view of its almost legendary assumption of educational and economic responsibilities, this institution based on innovative co-operation succeeded in making the educational standard of the Palestinian people the highest in the third world and a close rival to that achieved in a number of developed countries, notwithstanding the dire poverty in which the people of Palestine had been

living since their displacement in 1948. The same can be said of the economic sphere in which, by virtue of the dynamic spirit which the tragedy instilled into the minds and hearts of the Palestinians, the Foundation was able to achieve an excellent standard. Obviously, this does not, and could not, apply to the entire people of Palestine.

However, this Foundation was in need of comprehensive and organized central guidance which the Palestine Liberation Organization has endeavoured to provide as far as possible.

In view of the conditions under which our people are living and the position of the Palestine Liberation Organization with regard to its relations with the Arab States hosting Palestinians, the Palestine Liberation Organization has not been able to fully discharge the task assigned to it. Within the context of the economic, social and political development of its people, PLO has encountered three basic problems: (a) the dispersion of its people; (b) the restrictions imposed on economic, social and political activity by the Palestinian people in the Arab world and occupied Palestine; and (c) provision of the financial resources needed for the fulfilment of its duties.

This is attributable, in particular, to the fact that the Palestine Liberation Organization became really able to effectively assume its responsibilities and free itself, to a certain extent, from external hegemony only after the war of aggression in 1967 and, to an extent, after 1969 when, having assimilated all of the political and popular Palestinian organizations, it was transformed into a Palestinian entity representing the people and constituting a Parliament and Government-in-exile.

Since its establishment, however, PLO has been well aware of the responsibilities and difficulties facing it and has organized its departments in a manner consistent with those responsibilities. The Executive Committee, which is equivalent to a Palestinian Government-in-exile, has established the following departments: the National Fund Department (Finances), the Information Department, the Cultural Department, the Economic Department, the Department of Popular Federations, the Political Department, the Military Department and the Department for Occupied Homeland Affairs. Other institutions were subsequently established, such as the Institution for the Welfare of the Families of Martyrs, the Palestinian Red Crescent, the SAMED Economic Institution, the Youth and Sports Institution with its subsidiary sports and artistic institutions, and the Social Solidarity Institution.

Within the context of these activities, particular attention has been paid to the organization of the Palestinian people in 12 professional and trade federations (women, workers, students, teachers, jurists, doctors, pharmacists, engineers, writers, journalists, artists and farmers), in addition to the attention paid to economic and social affairs within the occupied homeland.

The reason for the establishment of these federations was not only political since they also have two further fundamental objectives: (a) proper trade union preparation for society in the future Palestinian State; and (b) protection of the interests of members of socio-economic federations. For example, the Teachers' Federation looks after the interests of more than 75,000 Palestinian teachers working in the Arab world; the Engineers' Federation looks after the interests of more than 25,000 engineers; and the Doctors' Federation looks after the interests of more than 13,000 doctors. Apart from improving the salary conditions of their members, the task of these federations includes the provision of employment for their members wherever possible through the conclusion of clearly formulated agreements with certain Arab States such as Algeria and Mauritania, with various African States, or indirectly with other countries. These federations are financed through the subscriptions paid by their members and also through funds allocated by the Palestine Liberation Organization and through the agreements concluded with friendly countries under which, particularly in the case of workers and women, simple production equipment is provided for small-scale production centres in several Arab countries.

The Socialist countries have provided a considerable amount of aid in the form of sewing and agricultural machines which have been installed at production centres, particularly in Lebanon before the Israeli invasion during which they were destroyed.

With regard to the occupied homeland, the tragedy is beyond description owing to the economic, cultural and health constraints imposed by the occupation authorities on Palestinian institutions and individuals. Prior to the Arab Summit Conference at Baghdad in 1979, PLO had been endeavouring to obtain contributions from every possible source in order to support economic, health and educational activities in the West Bank and Gaza. At the Baghdad Summit Conference, PLO was able to secure the adoption of a resolution providing for the allocation of SUS 150 million for our people living under occupation.

Although some of the Arab States have not fulfilled their obligations, the amounts received have been used to support the initiatives and endeavours of our people living under occupation. Four universities have been established and funds have been made available to help in the establishment and operation of a number of health and educational institutions, in addition to the support provided for agricultural production and municipalities on a co-operative and collective basis. It should be noted, however, that considerable difficulties have recently been encountered in the implementation of those projects partly as a result of the shortage of financial resources but also owing to the obstructive actions undertaken by the occupation authorities in this respect.

Outside the occupied homeland, PLO has established a university city at Damascus in which it is planned to provide facilities ranging from kindergartens to polytechnic colleges. Numerous schools have also been established for the children of martyrs, such as the Souq Al Gharb School in Lebanon and the School for the Children of Martyrs at Amman.

Agreements have also been concluded with various countries offering to provide university and technical training scholarships.

Within the context of the Palestinian Red Crescent and the Social Insurance Organization, PLO has established a health insurance scheme under which it bears a large part of the cost of free treatment for Palestinians living in the camps. PLO has also established numerous hospitals which provide free treatment under a joint co-operative system which is financed partly through contributions from Palestinian families and partly from external donations and funds provided by PLO.

These institutions have succeeded in concluding agreements with a number of countries, particularly Socialist countries, for the provision of treatment and the performance of complicated surgical operations which our hospitals are unable to undertake.

Since the artistic activity of any people is the real expression of their culture, their attachment to their heritage and their link with the future, the Palestine Liberation Organization has patronized the various arts. Special concern has been shown for writers and journalists, the establishment of sports clubs and folklore troops has been encouraged and considerable attention has also been paid to the fine arts as a medium through which the Palestinian people can portray various aspects of their struggle. In fact, several international prizes have been awarded to short films and other forms of artistic production by Palestinians.

PLO takes special care of the families of the victims of Zionist aggression. Instead of treating them merely as widows and orphans receiving monthly financial assistance, it has given them an opportunity to engage in productive work on farms and in workshops established by PLO and the independent institutions and federations to which reference has already been made. Priority with regard to employment in these farms and workshops is given to the families of martyrs in order to give them a sense of dignity and continuity of production in accordance with the principles of collective co-operation.

PLO has conducted a unique experiment at one of its farms in Jordan which operates on the principle of allocating surplus production to the freedom-fighters.

In the post-Beirut stage, PLO has been able to deal with many of the social problems resulting from the Israeli aggression in Lebanon through the application of the concept of the productive freedom-fighter. Many of its military camps have turned to agricultural production in which the soldier engages in addition to his military training and preparation.

On the basis of this extremely brief summary of the activities of the Palestine Liberation Organization, it can be said that PLO has faced up to the complex situation arising from its obligations towards its people in an appropriate manner by combining social, economic and political development within the framework of its struggle to recover the national rights of the people of Palestine.

With regard to the political aspect of PLO publications and educational curricula at PLO schools, any visitor to these schools can observe that the political mentality exhibited by Palestinian children and young persons is consistent with the political concepts advocated by PLO, under which the enemy of the Palestinian people is regarded as Zionism rather than the Jewish religion, and American Middle Eastern policy rather than the American people. This contrasts with the educational programme pursued by the Zionists in Israel where, from the kindergarten onwards, the minds of Jewish children are conditioned to murder, destruction and hatred of all Palestinians and Arabs.

This is well illustrated in a magazine report on the results of a survey conducted among 100 Israeli students between 8 and 11 years of age who were asked to reply to the following question: What would you do if faced with an Arab village? Eighty-two students replied that they would follow Joshua's example by killing its inhabitants and destroying it.

Following the publication of this survey, PLO conducted a similar survey among 100 Palestinian students of the same age group in Kuwait. This survey, conducted under the supervision of Mrs. Salwa Abu Khadra, headmistress of the Al Hanan School for Palestinians, produced the following reply: I would fight the Zionist and forgive the non-Zionist Jew. None of these students used the word "kill".

It must also be said with pride that, since its establishment and particularly since 1968, the Palestine Liberation Organization, in its leading role as the exponent of the wishes and aspirations of the Palestinian people, has adopted the concept of democracy as the basis for relations between the various political organizations and popular federations in their co-operative action as a broad national front and also in their dealings with the Palestinian people.

The PLO realized that, for it, democracy was not merely a philosophical concept in which it believed and which it practised out of intellectual conviction in keeping

with the developments in humanitarian thinking throughout history. On the contrary, PLO realized that democracy was the only way to conduct political relations under the current circumstances and in all communal relations in the future Palestinian State.

The reason for the adoption of this democratic approach is attributable to two main factors:

a. The high cultural and educational standard of the Palestinian people makes democracy the inevitable and only way to achieve a dialogue of minds and a majority approach in a democratic fashion, without exposing the minority to intellectual persecution;

b. The Palestinians currently lack not only a State but also real institutions, such as educational institutions, that are normally provided within the framework of the State. Young Palestinians are scattered among universities throughout the world. In fact, there are very few universities which do not contain Palestinian students. (Two per cent of the Palestinian people are studying at universities.)

In practice, this geographical diversity of educational establishments gives rise to a wide variety of schools of thought reflecting all the cultures of the world.

Although this diversity is a source of cultural enrichment which enables the Palestinian people to keep abreast of the latest trends of thought, it also poses a problem with regard to the methods and criteria by which issues are understood and evaluated and, consequently, with regard to the manner in which social problems should be solved. Accordingly, this diversity makes democracy the inevitable and only way to transform cultural diversity into uniform achievement. The only other way would be through absolute dictatorship preventing any independent thought, which would be impossible in the case of a people possessing a standard of education as high as that of the Palestinian people.

Accordingly, the Palestinian leadership realized the importance of democracy for the people of Palestine. This helps us to understand the significance of the provision contained in the Palestinian National Charter which defines the Palestine Liberation Organization as a broad national front.

As a result of this realization, the National Council now comprises representatives of all the Palestinian political and popular organizations, federations and groupings throughout the diaspora. About one month ago, half a million Palestinians in Latin America elected their representatives in the National Council.

As a further result of this realization, the Statutes of the National Council describe the process of democratic action as the most advanced type of parliamentary system.

It is no exaggeration to say that the development of democratic modes of thought and conduct in all relations within PLO, and between PLO and the Palestinian people throughout the world, constitutes a progressive achievement of which we are justly proud. It is to be hoped that, following the establishment of our independent State, we will be able to offer the world a true example of democracy.

The Palestine Liberation Organization instils in the general masses of its people an awareness of their national rights and of the need to recover those rights with a view to the achievement of peace based on justice.

PLO has frequently expressed its policy of seeking peace with justice through positive struggle rather than negative capitulation, as can clearly be seen from the manner in which the resolutions of the Palestine National Council are formulated.

The political approach of PLO in relation to the Palestinian people whom it represents is characterized by the profoundly humanitarian nature of the Arab culture to which the Palestinian people belong, and also by an awareness of the circumstances prevailing at this particular stage in the history of the world. Like all other peoples throughout the world, the people of Palestine do not regard anyone else as having any right to its homeland. The people of Palestine also believe that a homeland can not be disposed of through sale or lease since it is not the property of a single generation. On the contrary, it belongs to the previous generations who are buried therein and to the future generations who will live on its soil. There is no law under which any people is obliged to renounce or sell all or part of its homeland in favour of another people or group of persons.

Consequently, the rejection by the Palestinian people of the partition resolution in 1948 was a very natural reaction since no people can be expected to give up half of their homeland on the basis of a resolution adopted by an external authority. However, inspired by the profoundly humanitarian nature of their culture, their historic humanitarian mission to the world and their awareness of the real factors and processes underlying international attitudes and conflicts, the Palestinian people, acting through their legitimate and democratic institutions such as, in particular, the Palestine National Council, agreed to the declaration promulgated on 1 January 1968 and which called for the establishment of a single democratic Palestinian State in Palestine in which Jews, Christians and Muslims would live as citizens enjoying equality before the law. In other words, the Palestinians agreed that those who had massacred their people should be allowed to remain among them as respected citizens. This spirit of noble generosity and extreme humanitarian magnanimity on the part of our people is without precedent at any time in human history.

For the same reasons, the Palestine National Council agreed in 1974 to the establishment of an independent Palestinian State on any part of Palestine that would be liberated from Zionism, as stated by Abu Ammar, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, during his historic address before the United Nations in 1974. When he also spoke of "our great dream of a democratic Palestinian State", Abu Ammar was not merely expressing the national commitment of his people since his address truly reflected the way in which the Palestinian people viewed their humanitarian responsibilities and their commitment to the Arab culture to which they belong. Leaving aside the situation of international conflict under which the State of Israel and its aggressive racism had been established, nurtured and protected, he was taking into account the historic course of human life in order to give the aggressors hope of peace and a life of equality as soon as the Jews had freed themselves from Zionism and come to realize that aggressive military were variable historical factors and that, for the Jews, real peace could be achieved only through observance of the principles based on fraternity, equality and justice expounded by Yasser Arafat in his historic address.

The adoption of this political approach by the Palestinian people indicates the profundity of the political development that they have achieved, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, on a humanitarian and national basis in keeping with our culture and in full awareness of the course of historical events which must eventually further the interests of peoples.

We find it most regrettable, however, that all of these concepts of peace based on justice are persistently rejected by America and, of course, by the Zionist movement, which thereby ensure that this region will remain locked in a conflict that serves only the interests of arms dealers and those who live by the philosophy of international hegemony and domination.

If the Committee which is organizing this Seminar represents the conscience of the international community, and we believe this to be the case, the United Nations should be called upon to make every endeavour to assume its responsibilities with regard to the tragedy of the Palestinian people in order to correct, albeit partially, the unprecedented historic error that it committed in 1948 as a result of conflicts between the major Powers, the colonial and racist objectives of United States Middle Eastern policy and the policy and expansionist aims of Zionism.

The people of Palestine are opening their arms and hearts to a peace based on justice and resolutely reject capitulation and submission to Zionist and United States Middle Eastern policy. Accordingly, we reiterate our belief that a just political solution can be reached only at an international conference held under the auspices of the United Nations. In this connection, it must be said that the most concise, meaningful and pertinent remark was made by Yasser Arafat during his address before the United Nations in which he said that the war had begun in Palestine and the peace should also, therefore, begin in Palestine.

In view of the clearly established nature of Palestinian rights, the increasing recognition given to those rights by peoples and States, and the concerted social, economic, cultural and political endeavours that are being made by the Palestine Liberation Organization to safeguard Palestinian rights and prepare our people for the establishment of a modern democratic State, thereby averting the dangers of the transitional stage that have previously been encountered by peoples on the achievement of their independence, there is a need for an intensification of the efforts made by United Nations institutions and organs and, in particular, by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, in order to safeguard the legitimate rights for the achievement of which our Palestinian people are struggling, namely the right of return, self-determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State on any territory liberated from Zionist occupation.

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Bulent Akarcali

Al-Quds al-Sharif is a unique city which is sacred for three monotheistic religions, respectively Judaism, Christianity and Islam. For the almost 1.5 million believers of these three religions, Jerusalem has always been a focus of deepest religious inspiration and attachment.

For Turkey, this attachment stems from a solid historical association and religious ties. Indeed, Muslim rule over this Holy City lasted almost 13 centuries and Turkish rule specifically for eight centuries. Caliph Omar entered Al Quds in 638, Salah-el-Din recaptured the city in 1187 following brief Crusader sovereignty and, in 1517, this Holy City became a part of the Ottoman Empire during the reign of Sultan Yavuz Selim who built the walls surrounding the city which still embellishes Beit-ul Maqdis. And ever since, we have been the custodians of Al-Quds and its Holy Places and have resolutely defended their Arab and Islamic character. This attitude has become an inseparable part of our unfaltering support to the Arab cause.

Being conscious of the importance of Al-Quds for the adherents of other religions, the Muslims and Ottomans, from the very first day, showed great tolerance and bestowed freedom of worship.

Later on, the Ottomans, as a result of the special significance they attributed to Jerusalem and Palestine as a whole, so jealously protected, even at difficult times, the Arab and Muslim character of these Holy Places and so strongly resisted all attempts and pressures to induce it to allow Jewish immigration to these sacred territories that it constitutes a glorious chapter in the annals of the history of the Turkish nation.

Moreover, in 1754 by a firman of the Ottoman Sultan, a special autonomous status was recognized for Jerusalem especially with regard to the Holy Places. This status has since constituted the main basis for the issue of Holy Places. Indeed, the first pertinent United Nations resolution, General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, that recognized for Jerusalem a corpus separatum under an international régime compatible with its historical and religious significance to the world, must have been inspired by the special autonomy the Ottomans had given to Al-Quds al-Sharif.

In our opinion, today the only legal status which Jerusalem possesses is this status that is laid down in resolution 181 (II). Yet, to our dismay, this status is deeply damaged owing to the policies and acts perpetrated by Israel.

Following the occupation of West Jerusalem in 1948 and the eastern part in 1967, Israelis not only proceeded with transformation of the city's demographic composition, physical features, institutional structure and historic character by establishing settlements, annexation and enlargement of the municipal boundaries of the city but as well took other measures in violation of the city's legal status. In addition to excavations held around the Haram al-Sharif of the Al Aqsa Mosque and Kubbet-us Sahra (Dome of the Rock), Israel perpetrated various acts of desecration and criminal sacrilege against these places. These unfortunate developments have provoked enormous indignation and deeply tormented Turkey like the rest of the Islamic world.

We follow with deep concern the assaults on the blessed Al Aqsa Mosque and the other Islamic Holy Places in Al-Quds and the faits accomplis perpetrated by Israel with an aim to altering and effacing the Arab and Muslim character of the Holy City of Jerusalem in disdain for the sentiments of the Islamic world and in defiance of all human values. We consider those acts as flagrant intentions to destroy the Islamic worship sites in Jerusalem.

Furthermore, Israel's adoption of the Basic Law which declared Jerusalem as its eternal capital in July 1980 caused great abhorrence and revulsion in Turkey and, being aware of our historical sense of responsibility for the Holy City, we clearly expressed our protest to the said declaration by demoting the level of our diplomatic relations with Israel.

At the international level also, the Israeli policy was insistently condemned and was regarded as an aggression and a flagrant violation of international law and the United Nations resolutions that provided an international régime for Jerusalem as well.

The most recent examples of such condemnations are the articles provided by the Fez Arab Peace Plan adopted in September 1982 and the Geneva Declaration on Palestine done in Geneva in September 1983 which underlined, "the need to reaffirm as null and void all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, which have altered or purported to alter the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, including the expropriation of land and property situated thereon and in particular the so-called Basic Law on Jerusalem and the proclamation of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

Unfortunately, in utter defiance of international law and United Nations resolutions, Israel still persists in pursuing policies of occupation, aggression, expansion, establishment of illegal settlements in Jerusalem and in the occupied territories as a whole. Moreover, we have been recently witnessing a new trend which would further contribute to the Israeli policy of altering the status of Jerusalem. Again in violation of Security Council resolution 478, adopted in 1980 following the enactment of the Basic Law by Israel, some countries have transferred their embassies from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Such an action would only give sanction to Israeli annexation, would further entrench Israeli presence in the occupied territories and would seriously damage the universal acceptance of the international community and the commitments made by the United Nations to the special status of Jerusalem.

While recognizing the complexity and emotional implications of the issues pertaining to the status of Jerusalem, we believe that this status has to be considered within the general context of the Middle East question, since these Israeli acts perpetrated with an aim to altering the status of Jerusalem constitute, on the other hand, a serious impediment to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. Therefore, in our opinion, a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict must refer, as well, to the legal status of Jerusalem as a special international régime applicable to the corpus separatum of the city as defined in resolution 181 (II), recognizing the unique pluralistic and religious character of Jerusalem, in such a way that the historic character of this city should be restored and that it may again become a stable place of encounter for the adherents of all three religions.

I would like to conclude that, as consistent and active support for Arab causes have become an integral part of the Turkish foreign policy, we will continue to deploy our utmost in joining the efforts designed to dissuade Israel from further attempting to strengthen its presence in Jerusalem and the occupied territories, as well as from changing the internationalized status of the Holy City.

With these considerations, we take this opportunity, to call once again, upon the world community to impel Israel to withdraw from Al-Quds al-Sharif and the Arab territories occupied since 1967 in compliance with the pertinent United Nations resolutions.

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Abdel Waheb Bouhdiba

I am happy first of all to express my deep thanks and my pride to find myself speaking again from this rostrum, which is unique in its kind, about a thorny problem, a problem which, I believe, represents a turning point in the history of our age. I mean the problem of the dispersed and uprooted peoples the Palestinian people, whose essential rights have been exploited. I would enter this problem through a door which is at the same time, narrow and wide - the door of Jerusalem.

I believe that the case for the United Nations and for this blessed Committee is not a matter of conviction. I think that if we have come to this meeting, it is because we are convinced, in one way or another, of the subject. I believe that the problem is absolutely not a problem of analysing the historical basis of the status of Jerusalem. We have spoken about that many times and scrutinized the problem and showed how insidious, unjust and false are Israel's pretensions. I think that the problem is not here. It does not consist in adopting resolutions, reminding people of history or of political or moral legitimacy. But the problem is concentrated, in my views, in a basic action. What are we to do? How can we, after having been convinced and after having analysed, and made a halt to examine, the circumstances of the present situation, what can we, peoples, States and individuals, do to advance one step with this problem? I would like this Committee kindly to examine the results it has achieved during its previous meetings in order to link the past with the present and with what we and the international community are expecting in terms of action. What do we have to do?

First, when we look at the problem, we can see that it rests on various data. On one hand, there are the legal situation, a historical situation and a moral situation of which my colleague from Turkey, who spoke before me, reminded us. Besides this theoretical legal situation, there is the bitter fact which is the exploitation of the situation by Israel, which is absolutely inconsistent with international legitimacy. Nor does it respond to the will of peoples and of humanity. This is so only because it arises from a balance of forces, military forces of course, and also - and perhaps more important - the balance of political forces and economic forces which do not serve, at present, the interests of the Palestinian people and the triumph of right. I feel that we have to ask ourselves about this discrepancy as we were reminded of that by some speakers this morning, this discrepancy between what the situation must be and what it is really about. In my view, consequent to our analysis of this balance or rather this imbalance of forces, some elements may be selected as a basis for action that may transpose the Palestinian issue from the historical deadlock in which it has been stagnating to some preliminaries, let us hope, to attaining some solutions.

The question is therefore how to change the balance of forces; for this balance has to and must change, if not within a year, within two or four or 10. It must change on three levels: first, inside Israel itself, second, at the level of world opinion; and third, within the framework of the thinking and Arab action which have failed to achieve a significant solution in the recent years. Our role in this kind of meetings consists therefore, in my view, in awakening the energies and trying to make aware human conscience, so that we may work according to this fact. I say it briefly: our only weapon here is the weapon of information, the weapon of analysis, the weapon of reaching out to public opinion.

All this may be summarized in different aspects of the Palestinian question. But it appears very clearly when we look at the case of Jerusalem. Israel has absolutely no right to Jerusalem, from the geographical point of view as well as from political, moral and cultural stands. It is not me who says that but the founder of Israel itself. For we can read in the autobiography of Chaim Weizmann, which was published in London in 1940, the following, which I textually quote according to the French text which is before me. The founder of the State of Israel, who is, therefore, a historically and politically essentially responsible person for what he wrote and what he thinks, said:

"There was no holy site in Palestine which is in fact physically claimed by the Jews except perhaps the tomb of Rachel [situated between Jerusalem and Bethlehem] which has never been a subject of controversy. The lamentation wall was not and had never been our property, since the destruction of the Temple."

The founder of the Zionist entity thus says that there were no rights of the Zionist entity from the material point of view, to any inch of Jerusalem. We know that the Wailing Wall itself was a Moslem "waqf" which the Administrator of that time put at the disposal of those abiding by the Jewish faith, for worshipping, grace-asking and for lamenting, etc. So, if that were the situation, how can world public opinion accept, after this explicit recognition, that it be said that this monument, these villages and this old city, Jerusalem, be identified with the Zionist entity?

The only answer to this question is the weakness of Arab information and the strength of Israeli information which has succeeded in making of a groundless issue a right, and in supporting this right by force. Our role, therefore, is to reinforce our information system so that we may understand and make others understand what is, in reality, the factual situation concerning Jerusalem.

Without entering into historical details which we have mentioned in previous meetings and which there is no benefit in reiterating and without repeating what our colleagues said, we may say that the difference is the fact that Jerusalem has no law, has no status from the legal point of view.

Yes, the United Nations, in the resolution about the division of Palestine, recommended establishing a separate entity, a corpus separatum. But this has never been implemented and has remained at the level of a theoretical resolution, which was never applied when there was a transition from the status of British protectorate to the factual division in 1948 and thereafter, with the transition to the spoliation of 1967. The case remains therefore, in itself, standing and we may say that from the legal point of view the status by which Jerusalem was distinguished under the Ottoman Caliphate was the last legal mandatory thing. But the historical fact, naturally, was transcended by events. Therefore, what we must understand is that we have to link the status of Jerusalem to the whole status of Palestine and the whole situation in the Middle East and realize that the particular status of Jerusalem is not a special status that must be resolved from the legal point of view or from the military point of view or the political point of view. It is part and parcel of the Palestinian issue. But this status is a religious and moral one, that is we must not hide behind it or take the pretext of religious status to retrogress or place it into a special framework. From the political and legal points of view, it is part and parcel from the mother issue, the core issue, the Palestinian issue and the case of the Palestinian people. When we speak of special status at the belief level or at the religious level and that of relations among the revealed religions, Jerusalem is an inspiring city for at least one third of humanity. There is no other city, there is no other inch of land on the Earth and in the world which has the importance of Jerusalem for human souls. And it is this perhaps that we must take into consideration in order to place the issue into a new framework, so that we may understand and make others understand that Zionism has nothing to do with Christianity nor Islam nor Judaism itself. Zionism is against the three religions. What we have to exploit in our information action concerning the Palestinian issue, and I believe also in our future action, is to make of the Palestinian issue a goal and to try to change the understanding of world public opinion on the Middle East question. Because we have in Jerusalem the example that expresses in the best way the intentions of Zionism and the behaviour of the Israeli State, because of this, I believe that we have to progress another step forward in our work and perhaps change something in our activities, so that we may address world international public opinion, inside Israel, inside the Western countries, inside the United States and inside all countries of the world, even inside the Arab countries themselves. I believe that history and excavations, as well as the political and cultural analysis of the status of Jerusalem, allow us to penetrate the minds of those who have a deep influence, in my view, on politicians, especially in the countries which enjoy democracy. If we adopt this means, it may give another image of the Palestinian issue, a new image of the question of Jerusalem and I think, if we succeed, through publications and pamphlets exposing adequately the analysis made at a very high level in these meetings which you have yourself supervised, perhaps we may come out from this narrow framework of the experts and enter the framework of souls and of the international world. I personally believe that the return of the Palestinians to their land and the restoration of their rights is not only the responsibility of the Arab peoples. It is a victory which must be shared by all members of mankind because, whether we are Arabs or non-Arabs, we all believe that right prevails and nothing prevails over it and that supporting this right is supporting right in general, supporting the principles of the United Nations and justice and freedom.

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#### Jerzy Piotrowski

##### The status of Jerusalem

Jerusalem is a unique town. An important centre of spiritual culture, it is a place where three world's great religions - Christianity, Islam and Judaism - either originated or flourished, and its numerous places of religious worship make it a truly Holy City.

##### Jerusalem's status after the adoption by the United Nations of a resolution on the division of Palestine

Jerusalem's Christian, Judaic and Moslem traditions were not forgotten in 1947, when the United Nations General Assembly discussed the future of Palestine; on the contrary, they lay behind its decisions. The majority of the members of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) decided, on 31 August 1947, in a draft project on the division of Palestine, to express its support for granting Jerusalem an international status, thereby emphasizing the unique character of the Holy City, freely accessible to the faithful of all religions. 1/

General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 declared inter alia: "The City of Jerusalem shall be established as a corpus separatum under a special international régime and shall be administered by the United Nations. The Trusteeship Council shall be designated to discharge the responsibilities of the Administering Authority of the United Nations." The official languages of the City would be Arabic and Hebrew, however, other "working languages" were not excluded in the resolution. It was also stressed that "free access to the Holy Places and religious buildings or sites and the free exercise of worship shall be secured in conformity with existing rights and subject to requirements of public order and decorum."

The 1948 war rendered impossible the implementation of the resolution on the division of Palestine and prevented the decisions on Jerusalem from being put into effect. Jerusalem's western part (new town) was occupied by Israel, while its eastern part (old town) fell under Jordanian control. Faced with these developments, the General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948 called upon the conflicting parties to turn Jerusalem over to international administration. The call was repeated in resolution 303 (IV) of 9 December 1949.

Despite the United Nations resolutions, the then Israeli Prime Minister declared western Jerusalem the capital of Israel in a statement issued as early as December 1949. Only a few weeks later, on 23 January 1950, the statement adopted by the Knesset said that Jerusalem was, is, and shall for ever remain Israel's capital. Soon afterwards the Israeli Ministry for Foreign Affairs was moved to the city's western part.

The Israeli step was rejected by an overwhelming majority of States including Western capitals, and, significantly, the United States, for which Israel was at the time the chief outpost for its interests in the Middle East.

##### The fall-out of the "six-day" war

The Israeli aggression of June 1967 gave new momentum to the Jerusalem problem. The Israelis occupied the whole of the city and soon the Israeli authorities were making energetic moves to alter the status of the city and make it part of the Israeli State. Israel not only refused to endorse the United Nations decisions but went even further by taking unilateral decisions which threatened grave political, demographic, cultural and economic consequences for the Palestinian inhabitants of Jerusalem. An amendment to a bill of 1948 adopted by the Knesset on 28 June 1967 empowered the authorities to extend Israeli administration rule and jurisdiction to the entire city of Jerusalem. 2/ On 29 June 1967, the Arab Municipal Council was disbanded and its powers taken over by an Israeli council. At the same time the municipal area of Jerusalem was stretched from 38 sq km to 108 sq km, which indicated moves to annex areas surrounding Jerusalem along with the city's eastern part. Moves toward changing the city's legal status were accompanied by measures designed to alter the national composition of its residents, including large-scale

demolition of Arab houses under the pretext of protecting Jewish holy places, or on an excuse of real estate development. The Arab population was being increasingly removed to give room to Israeli settlers.

These actions meant a de facto incorporation of eastern Jerusalem into Israel and the city as a whole came to be treated as Israel's capital in contravention of the United Nations decision on the international status of Jerusalem.

In an attempt to justify its policy of annexation, the Israeli authorities insisted that prior to 1967 Jerusalem had not been under Israeli or any other State's sovereignty, and argued that, in the event, Israel had not annexed territory of any country.

Such a line of reasoning could not be accepted as correct in the light of the existing norms of international law or the principles of State coexistence. The recognition of Israeli conduct would be tantamount to a reward for an aggressor and would mean an acceptance of the occupation, which generally contradicts the United Nations Charter and the Security Council resolution 242 (1967) stating in its preamble the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war. The Israeli annexation of Jerusalem was denounced by an overwhelming majority of States. The fifth emergency special session of the General Assembly in resolution 2253 (ES-V) of 4 July 1967 voiced its deep concern "at the situation prevailing in Jerusalem as a result of the measures taken by Israel to change the status of the City, considered these measures invalid, and called upon Israel to rescind all measures already taken and desist forthwith from taking any action which would alter the status of Jerusalem", while another resolution of 14 July 1967 denounced Israel for its failure to submit to that decision.

It should be added that the Security Council resolution 242 (1967) calling upon Israel to withdraw from the occupied territory also concerned the territory of the City of Jerusalem. But the first after 1967 document of the Security Council on Jerusalem was its resolution 252 of 21 May 1968 which read: "...all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, including expropriation of land and properties thereon which led to change the legal status of Jerusalem are invalid and can not change that status". The United Nations has since repeatedly condemned Israeli moves on Jerusalem.

#### Evolution of the policy of annexation

For several years Israel held that the decisions taken in the wake of the 1967 war established in principle the legal status of Jerusalem as part of the Israeli State. This assumption propelled the process of judaization of Jerusalem which continued undisrupted and in disregard of international protest.

When the Likud took power in Israel in 1977, a new dimension was added to the Jerusalem issue. While Israel's major political forces spoke in one voice about a "united" Jerusalem remaining the State's capital, Likud took a step further toward reinforcing Jerusalem's status with legislative guarantees.

Likud's position was consolidated already during the Camp David talks in 1978 when the Israeli side decided that the Jerusalem question must remain outside any discussion. It was further reaffirmed in a letter of 17 September 1978 from Prime Minister Menachem Begin to United States President Jimmy Carter. <sup>3/</sup> On 20 March 1979, just before the treaty with Egypt was signed, Begin declared in his famous "three times never" that a "united" Jerusalem shall remain for ages the capital of Israel and shall never again be divided. <sup>4/</sup>

Under the Likud rule Israel drew up various plans providing for a fast expansion of Jewish settlement in Jerusalem and a quick judaization of the city. Today Jerusalem has 400,000 residents, including 290,000 Jews and 110,000 Arabs, but Likud plans for the next quarter century envision a population swell of up to 650,000. In order to increase the number of Jewish residents in Jerusalem (today there are 72 per cent Jews as against 28 per cent Arabs), new housing projects for Jewish settlers are under way in every quarter of the town. Seventeen settlements were established within the City's administrative limits, and it is only due to financial obstacles that the development plans are behind schedule.

The policy pursued by the Likud not only encouraged but openly inspired the extreme right and religious groupings in their efforts to step up the annexation on the occupied territories. Riding on the crest of these moods, a representative of the extreme right, Ms. Geulah Cohen motioned that Knesset should formally endorse the annexation of eastern Jerusalem in a law. The Israeli right, which is politically even more conservative than Likud, sought to win legal guarantees that Jerusalem would for ever be Israel's capital as compensation for the return of Sinai. The motion was accepted in a form of a law passed by the Israeli Parliament on 30 July 1980. Its Article 1 declares a united Jerusalem to be in its entirety the capital of Israel. Article 2 states that the city is the seat of the President's office, the Knesset and the Supreme Court.

A question arises in this context how much did the new law alter the status quo? As mentioned above, the decisions made by the Israeli authorities after the war of 1967 meant a de facto annexation of eastern Jerusalem. A government decree issued in July 1967, on the basis of the Knesset law of 28 June 1967, declared Jerusalem an indivisible town and the capital of the State of Israel. <sup>5/</sup>

In answer to this question it can be said that the new law was incorporated into a body of so-called "basic laws" which play the role of constitutional norms. Therefore, it may have important and far-reaching consequences, while the very fact of making it one of the basic laws was intended to give it a character of an irreversible decision. In this way Menachem Begin intended to preserve his achievement and effectively prevent successive Governments from taking a reverse decision or even trying to negotiate the future of the city with Arabs.

#### International repercussions

The Knesset law on Jerusalem touched off a tide of protests all over the world. Among others the decision was firmly opposed by the Islamic Conference's Commission on Jerusalem meeting in Fez from 16-20 September 1980. The "Jerusalem and Palestine summit" which gathered heads of Islamic States in Taif in January 1981 adopted decisions which read as follows:

"The Kings, Emirs and Presidents of Islamic countries agreed to declare jihad to rescue Jerusalem, support the Palestinian people and ensure withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories. The Islamic countries made it clear in their resolutions that the word jihad is used in its Islamic sense, which is not susceptible to interpretation or misunderstanding and that the practical measures for its implementation will be taken in conformity with this and in constant consultation between the Islamic countries." <sup>6/</sup>

The Knesset bill was adopted despite the Security Council's resolution 476 of 30 June 1980 which denied Israel the right to change the status of Jerusalem. Its resolution 478 of 20 August condemned the Israeli decision and declared it null and void.

The Israeli policy of annexation of Jerusalem totally contravenes numerous international decisions including the resolutions of the United Nations especially General Assembly resolutions 2253 (ES-V), 2254 (ES-V), 31/106, 32/5, 32/91, 31/90, 36/120 and 37/88. They clearly demonstrate that the Israeli schemes are against international law, United Nations decisions and international conventions concerning the conduct in the time of war, and as such are unlawful. For example, resolution 36/120 reads:

"bearing in mind the specific status of Jerusalem and, in particular, the need for protection and preservation of the unique spiritual and religious dimension of the Holy Places in the city,

"1. Determines once again that all legislative and administrative actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, which have altered or purport to alter the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, and, in particular, the so-called "basic law" on Jerusalem and the proclamation of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, are null and void and must be rescinded forthwith;

"2. Affirms that such actions constitute a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, and a threat to international peace and security..."

A similar stance was expressed in the decisions of the Security Council including the most important resolutions 252, 267, 271, 298, 446, 452, 465, 476, 478. All of them have determined that the Israeli policy aimed at developing settlements on the occupied territories and a change of the status of Jerusalem was invalid in the light of international law and infringe upon the Geneva Convention on the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of August 1949.

The question of Jerusalem is an important item on the United Nations agenda. United Nations decisions are still binding and it should be added that the status of Jerusalem elicits more unanimity within the United Nations than other aspects of the Middle East conflict. An unquestionable majority of States believe that the unilateral acts of annexation of the Holy City, which infringe upon the rights of Palestinian Arabs, Moslems and Christians alike are invalid and contravening the principles of international law. Giving the annexation of Jerusalem the status of a basic law marks an important step toward subsequent annexation of the Arab territories occupied by Israel. The fate of the Holy City cannot be considered separately from its Middle East and Palestinian context. A unilateral annexation of Jerusalem must be rejected and its future should be made part and parcel of an overall agreement with the Palestinian people whose inalienable rights to self-determination are reaffirmed by the United Nations and the general international provisions of the law of nations and cannot be denied by Tel Aviv. For its part, Israel ought to abide by United Nations decisions all the more so that it had been called into being precisely by that Organization. By doing otherwise Israel questions the legal-international foundations of its very existence. The Israeli decision on the status of Jerusalem raises questions which should be the subject of a more searching discussion. These could include, inter alia:

a. Practical, economic and demographic consequences that the annexation brings to the Palestinian people;

- b. An assessment of the implementation of the Geneva Declaration on Palestine of August 1983;
- c. The annexation of Jerusalem and the preservation of the Moslem places of religious worship;
- d. The damage to the Arab culture;
- e. Attempts at annexation of the occupied territories including Jerusalem as a move toward undermining the Palestinian identity.

#### Notes

- 1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Second Session, UNSCOP report (A/364/ Add. I, maps).
  - 2/ Cf. R.al-Kathib: The Judaization of Jerusalem, Amman, 1979, suppl. 1 and 2.
  - 3/ For the text of the document, see Journal of Palestine Studies, No. 2, 1979.
  - 4/ Le Monde, 22 March 1979.
  - 5/ Journal of Palestine Studies, No. 2, 1979.
- For the text of the document see Journal of Palestine Studies, No. 3, 1981.

#### Yasser Arafat

On the conclusion of the Ninth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, I have pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of our Palestinian Arab people and my fellow members of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), my warmest revolutionary greetings as an expression of our great appreciation for the honourable stand that you have taken and for the diligent endeavours that you have made in preparing the papers, in examining the facts of the question of Palestine and the injustice that has befallen our people and in the serious discussions which have characterized the meetings of this Seminar. Having closely followed the work of the Seminar, it is with great appreciation that we have observed the profundity of the studies submitted, the manifestly earnest manner in which the meetings have been conducted and the evident desire of the distinguished participants to ensure the triumph of truth and to dispel the confusion and misrepresentation surrounding the terrible injustice to which our Palestinian Arab people have been subjected through their expulsion from their homeland in 1948, the loss of their national identity and the denial of their inalienable rights to their national territory. In this connection, we must express our high esteem for the painstaking efforts made by the authors of the papers submitted. We must also emphasize the important role that the European and African parliamentarians participating in this Seminar can, play within their national parliaments in support of the established rights of the Palestinian people to its national territory by encouraging their colleagues and Governments to promote the Palestinian cause by explaining the justice of that cause and by clearly advocating the right of the Palestinian people to return to its land, to the exercise of self-determination and to the establishment of its independent national State. We also wish to reiterate, in this forum, the commitment of PLO to the resolutions of the United Nations and our sincere hope that international legitimacy will play a more effective role in the achievement of a solution to the question of Palestine and in the restoration of peace in the region of the Middle East. We condemn all of the attempts that are being made to obstruct the role of the United Nations and to detract from the prestige and effectiveness of that Organization since we are well aware of the grave dangers that those counter-productive actions entail for peace and security, not only within our region but throughout the world as a whole. Our struggling people are still suffering the disastrous consequences of the successive wars that the Zionist enemy has launched against them and in which use has been made of the most modern devices for mass slaughter and destruction produced by the American military arsenal. Our people are also being subjected to the most odious forms of repression and persecution within occupied Palestine whose Islamic and Christian holy places are being desecrated. Attempts are being made to change the demographic and historical character of the city of Jerusalem and the Government of the enemy is supporting terrorist groups by providing them with funds and weapons, thereby encouraging them to launch attacks against the Palestinian Arab population with a view to driving them from their homes and expropriating their lands and water resources in order to establish Zionist settlements. Furthermore, our people outside occupied Palestine are suffering from the bitter torment experienced by displaced refugees living in camps and other places of exile and from the anguish of being unable to return to their homeland. Notwithstanding these sufferings, however, and also as a result thereof, our people are yearning for the achievement of peace in Palestine, the land of peace, through the establishment of their independent Palestinian State so that they can contribute to the enhancement of human civilization and use their scientific abilities and creative human capacities to play their natural role in promoting the prosperity and happiness of the human race on this planet. These noble aspirations of our people can not be realized, nor can peace and stability be achieved in our region, unless the American Administration and the Government of Israel renounce their policy of aggression and recognize our people's inalienable national rights, including their right of return, their right to self-determination, and their right to the establishment of their independent national State. Consequently, we believe that the convening of an international conference on peace in the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, is the only way to secure the triumph of international legitimacy, to safeguard the established rights of our people and to ensure security, we and stability in our region. We now call upon you, dear friends, to use your high standing and influence with the peoples and Governments of your countries to give increased momentum to the peaceful endeavours and initiatives that are being made in favour of the established national rights of our people. In conclusion, I reiterate my gratitude and appreciation for your noble endeavours in support of the just Palestinian cause and wish you every success.

Revolution until Victory !

#### VIII. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AND OBSERVERS

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

H.E. Mr. Massamba Sarré (Senegal) - Member  
H.E. Mr. Victor J. Gauci (Malta) - Member  
H.E. Mr. Vladimir F. Skofenko (Ukrainian SSR) - Member  
Mr. Mohamed Lessir (Tunisia) - Member  
Mr. Cheikh Sylla (Senegal) - Member  
Mr. Zehdi Labib Terzi (Palestine Liberation Organization) - Observer

##### Experts

Mr. Bulent Akarcali (Turkey)  
Mr. Jozsef Biro (Hungary)  
Mr. Abdelwahab Bouhdiba (Tunisia)  
Mr. Lasse Budtz (Denmark)  
Mr. Claude DeJardin (Belgium)  
Mr. Klaas De Vries (The Netherlands)  
Mr. Khaled El-Hassan (Palestine Liberation Organization)  
Mr. Mohammed El-Zayyat (Egypt)  
Mr. Albrecht Konecny (Austria)  
Mr. Alex Koroma (Sierra Leone)

Mr. Jerzy Piotrowski (Poland)  
Mr. Jean-Claude Rahaga (Madagascar)  
Mr. Azouz Rebai (Tunisia)  
Mr. Ernie Ross (United Kingdom)  
Mr. Abdoulaye Sacko (Mali)  
Dr. Ingo Schoenfelder (German Democratic Republic)  
Mr. Vasily G. Solodovnikov (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)  
Mr. Redzo Terzic (Yugoslavia)  
Mr. Ibra Mamadou Wane (Senegal)

#### Member States

Bahrain  
Bangladesh  
Belgium  
Bulgaria  
China  
Cuba  
Democratic Yemen  
Dominican Republic  
Egypt  
France  
Ghana  
Hungary  
India  
Indonesia  
Iran  
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Nigeria  
Oman  
Poland  
Romania  
Rwanda  
Saudi Arabia  
Somalia  
Spain  
Sudan  
Syrian Arab Republic  
Thailand  
Uganda  
Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic  
Union of Soviet Socialist Republic  
United Kingdom of Great Britain  
Yugoslavia  
Zaire  
Zimbabwe

#### Non-member States

Democratic People's Republic of Korea  
Republic of Korea

#### Regional intergovernmental organizations

League of Arab States  
Alecso  
Organization of African Unity  
Organization of the Islamic Conference

#### Non-governmental organizations

Arab Labour Organization  
Arab Union of Parliamentarians  
Association parlementaire pour la coopération euro-arabe  
Patra

Ligue tunisienne des droits de l'homme

National liberation movements

Pan Africanist Congress of Azania

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