



DIVISION FOR
PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

SEVENTEENTH UNITED NATIONS SEMINAR ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

Theme: "The Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People"

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INTRODUCTION

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4. The opening session of the Seminar, on 22 June 1987, was addressed by Mr. William B. Buffum, Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs and Secretariat Services, on behalf of the Secretary-General. In welcoming the participants, Mr. Buffum stated that the convening of the Seminar was testimony to the importance which the international community attaches to solving the question of Palestine, the extent of the involvement of the General Assembly in the Middle East. The Security Council and various other organs within the United Nations already reflected the importance that the world community attached to that issue.

5. As a result of the continuing involvement and efforts by the United Nations over the years, a wide measure of agreement on the fundamental elements for a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East problem had emerged. Such a settlement had to be based on the three following principles:

 - a) Considerations: withdrawal of Israel forces from Arab territories occupied since 1967; acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within recognized boundaries; and, finally,
 - b) Satisfaction solution of the Palestinian problem based on the recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination.

6. In its search for a solution to the question of Palestine, the International Conference on the Question of Palestine held in 1983 had called for the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East and that call had been endorsed by the General Assembly since its thirty-eighth session, when it had been first submitted.

OPENING STATEMENTS

1. The Sevenenteenth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, entitled "The Inalienable rights of the Palestinian people", was held at United Nations Headquarters, New York, on 22 and 23 June 1987, in accordance with the terms of General Assembly resolution 40/96 B of 12 December 1985.
 2. Mr. Shah Mohammad Dost (Afghanistan), Acting Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, was Chairman of the Committee on the Question of Palestine, which metings were held and seven panelists presented papers on selected aspects of the question of Palestine. In addition, representatives of 42 governments, the UN, three United Nations organizations as well as observers of 20 non-governmental organizations attended the Seminar.

7. In pursuance of General Assembly resolution 41/43 D of 2 December 1986, the Secretary-General had submitted his report (A/42/277-S/18849 of 7 May 1987) on the question of convening an International Peace Conference on the Middle East. He stated therein that all members of the Security Council were concerned about the situation in the Middle East and supported the continuation of his efforts for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. He was encouraged by the indications of greater flexibility on that issue amongst the parties. It was the Secretary-General's intention, in the months to come, to intensify his contacts with the parties, in order to try to find ways of bridging the gaps between them. In that regard, Mr. Marrack I. Goulding, Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Affairs, was at that moment in the Middle East region pursuing the efforts and endeavours of the United Nations.

8. Mr. Shah Mohammad Dost, welcoming the participants, recalled that although the overwhelming majority of the international community wished to see an end to the continuing tragedy of the Palestinian people and the pointless bloodshed in the Middle East, the efforts made to resolve this particularly complex problem had thus far remained unsuccessful, with potentially dangerous consequences for international peace and security.

9. Over the last three years the General Assembly had, by large majorities, requested the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine in 1983 and endorsed by resolution 38/58 C. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People had given highest priority to the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, as it was convinced that only the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, which had been asked to facilitate the organization of the Conference, could provide a legal and political framework acceptable to the great majority of the international community that would make it possible for negotiations to proceed with full respect for internationally recognized principles and on the basis of equality for all parties concerned.

10. The Committee was convinced that in order to arrive at a peaceful solution to the Palestinian question, it was essential to educate the public and to promote action at all levels in support of the struggle of the Palestinian people for the achievement of its inalienable rights, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations. The Committee had been greatly encouraged by the increased awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and by the overwhelming consensus in support of its recommendations and those of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine which had emerged from the various meetings organized under its auspices.

11. The tragic events in the region in recent months showed clearly that it was more urgently necessary than ever that the United Nations discharged its moral and political responsibility towards the Palestinian people and that it increased its efforts to end their suffering and bring about a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region. The Committee believed that, if no tangible progress was made towards such a solution in the near future, the situation would deteriorate even further with unforeseeable consequences for the peoples and countries concerned.

12. Mr. Nasser AL-Kidwa, Alternative Observer of the PLO to the United Nations, conveyed a message from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO. When grave, sensitive and difficult conditions had best the Palestinian people, both inside the occupied homeland and outside, in dispersing and aiming at liquidating its identity and its national rights, effacing and eliminating its sole legitimate representative, the PLO, and imposing capitalization on it.
13. In that message it was stressed that the Seminar was being held at a time when grave, sensitive and difficult conditions had best the Palestinian people, both inside the occupied homeland and outside, in dispersing and aiming at liquidating its identity and its national rights, effacing and eliminating its sole legitimate representative, the PLO, and imposing capitalization on it.
14. In Lebanon, in application of the policy of contemptuousness and arrogance of power and with support from the United States Administration, Israel, through its air, naval and land forces, was launching almost daily raids against Palestinian camps, using the most modern weapons and military raids that had launched a total blockade on the camps, which still continued, and had launched a war of genocide and starvation against them, aimed at Lebanon that had imposed a large backlog and supporting certain forces in materiel. Israel was also backing and supporting certain civilian forces in Lebanon that had imposed a total blockade on the camps, which still continued, and had launched a war of genocide and starvation against them, aimed at the United States law and the other was the mission of the PLO to the Palestinian people.
15. On another level, a new chapter was opened in the aggressive plot against the Palestinian people and its legitimate representative, the PLO. That was reflected in the attempts to close the offices of the PLO in Washington and New York, in spite of the fact that one of these offices operated within United States and the other was the mission of the PLO to the Palestinian people.
16. Through the resolutions adopted by its National Council, convened at Algiers from 20 to 25 April 1987, those resolutions supported the call for peace through the resolutions adopted by its National Council, convened at the convening of an International Peacetime Conference on the Middle East on the basis of an International Assembly resolutions 38/58 C and 41/43 D, i.e. on the bases of international legitimacy resolutions 242 (1967), and on the bases of the Middle East, including Security Council resolution 42 (1967), and on the bases of the right to establish its free and independent State.
17. The opening session was also addressed by Mr. Isaac Mudenge (Zimbabwe), on behalf of the Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries; Mr. Ahmad Farouk Arnouss (Syrian Arab Republic), Rapporteur of the Special Committee on the situation with regard to the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples; Mr. Moussa Bacar Shabrid Khan (India), Rapporteur 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. Arif Ly (Senegal), representing the United Nations Council for Namibia; Mr. Ahmed Barakat of the International Organization for the Decolonization on the

against Apartheid; Mr. Samir Mansouri, Deputy Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations; Mrs. Salimatu T. Timbo, representing the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Organization of African Unity to the United Nations; and Mr. Noureddine Mezni, Deputy Director of the Permanent Observer Mission of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to the United Nations.

18. The Seminar adopted a message to Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO (see annex I to the present document).

II. PANEL DISCUSSION

19. Two panels were established. These panels and their panelists were as follows:

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

Mr. David CARROLL (United States of America)
Mr. Ramsey CLARK (United States of America)
Mr. Konstantin GUEIVANDOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)*
Mr. Atif KUBURSI (Canada)
Mr. Pramathesh RATH (India)

Prof. Atif Kubursi also addressed the impact of the economic and social policies on the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories as well as the role of the PLO.

(b) Panel II: "The question of Palestine and North American public opinion":

Mr. Ibrahim ABU-LUGHOD (Palestinian)
Mr. Francis BOYLE (United States of America)

20. The expert members of the two panels agreed on summaries of the presentations and the discussions on both topics. The Seminar decided to include those summaries in the report.

* The participants in the Seminar regretted that Mr. Gueivandov was not in a position to participate in the Seminar, because a visa was not issued. His paper was made available to all participants.

- Panel I: "The International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, the need for such a conference and efforts and prospects to promote a successful outcome, and its benefits therefore"
21. The year 1987 marked a whole series of commemorative dates of events which had exerted an influence on the genesis and the course of the Middle East conflict. It was the ninetieth anniversary of the birth of Zionism as an East conflict. Since Israel's war in the six-day war in 1967, and five years had elapsed since the Balfour Declaration, twenty ideology; seventy years had gone by since the birth of Zionism as an Israeli state. It was the General Assembly resolution 181 (II) on the partition of Palestine, a just solution of which had progressed in the Middle East continued to deteriorate. The lack of any real progress in the efforts to achieve peace made the situation in the Middle East a potential threat to international security. The solution including its right of return, its right to self-determination without external interference and its right to establish its own independent State in Palestine. The restoration of justice and legality with regard to the Palestinian population and its right to establish its own national rights of that people
22. The critical situation in the Middle East continued to deteriorate. The lack of any real progress in the efforts to achieve peace made the situation in the Middle East a potential threat to international security. The solution including its right of return, its right to self-determination without external interference and its right to establish its own independent State in Palestine. The restoration of justice and legality with regard to the Palestinian population and its right to establish its own national rights of that people
23. At the heart of the problem was the question of Palestine, a just solution of which presupposed the restoration of the national rights of that people
24. Reliance on force as a means of settling the conflict had been totally discarded. New flare-ups would have the most serious consequences both for the peoples of the region and for the world as a whole. For that reason responsible leaders had to make responsible decisions. There was a real opportunity to engage in serious efforts to achieve peace in the Middle East, and the international community should do its best to ensure that that opportunity was not missed.
25. The question of Palestine had been inseparably linked with the activities of the United Nations. On 29 November 1947, resolution 181 (II) had been adopted by the General Assembly, by which the British Mandate was to be a corpus separatum under a special international regime. Jerusalem was to be a two States, one Arab and one Jewish, were to be established. And two States, one Arab and one Jewish, were to be established. That resolution had been implemented only as far as the creation of the State of Israel was concerned.

26. On 10 November 1975, the General Assembly had established the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. In its recommendations, repeatedly approved by the General Assembly since 1976, the Committee had laid down a programme which would give effect to the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. As was known, the position of the United States had prevented the Security Council from following up these recommendations.

27. The International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva from 29 August to 7 September 1983, had adopted a declaration and a programme of action. The Geneva Declaration listed the major guiding principles which should govern any concerted international action for the purpose of resolving the question of Palestine. In order to give effect to those guidelines, it was essential for an International Peace Conference on the Middle East to be convened, with the aim of negotiating and finalizing a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It had been agreed that the International Peace Conference on the Middle East had to be convened under the auspices of the United Nations, with the equal participation of all parties directly involved, including the PLO, as well as the United States, the USSR and other concerned States.

28. The General Assembly, at its thirty-eighth session in resolution 38/58 C, had endorsed the Declaration on Palestine as well as the call for the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East. The Assembly had also requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Security Council, urgently to undertake preparatory measures to convene the Conference. In pursuance of that resolution and following consultations with the Security Council in 1984, the Secretary-General had noted in his initial report that the Governments of Israel and the United States were not prepared to participate in the proposed Conference.

29. In that regard, the Seminar heard an account of the position of the USSR as set out in its proposals of 29 July 1984. The view was expressed that the Soviet proposals were balanced and drawn up in a spirit of justice, taking fully into account all United Nations resolutions on that issue as well as the programme of action adopted at the Arab Summit Conference at Fez in 1982.

30. The successful outcome of such a Conference could be the signing of a treaty or a number of treaties embracing such organically linked components of a settlement as: the withdrawal of Israeli troops from all Arab territories occupied since 1967; the implementation of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to the establishment of its own State; the establishment of a state of peace and ensuring security and independent development of all States parties to the conflict. At the same time international guarantees of compliance with the terms of the treaty or treaties on a Middle East settlement should be drawn up and adopted.

31. The General Assembly, at its thirty-ninth, fortieth and forty-first sessions, had reaffirmed its endorsement of the call for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and reiterated its

37. In accordance with that request, the Secretary-General had presented his report (A/42/277-S/18849) on 7 May 1987. In it he had stated that "in contrast with the experience of recent years, none of the Council members has efforts with a view to convening the Conference and to report thereon.

36. General Assembly resolution 41/43 D had again stressed the urgent need for additional concrete and constructive efforts by all Governmental bodies to convene the Conference without further delay and had endorsed the call for setting up a preparatory committee within the framework of the Security Council, which the permanent members, to take the necessary action to convene the Conference. The Assembly had also requested the Secretary-General to convene the Conference. In consultation with the Security Council, to continue its efforts with a view to convening the Conference and to report thereon.

35. The holding of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East could prove that reason and dialogue and democratic choice could establish peace in the region. The failure of the United Nations to come to grips with that issue, in spite of the overwhelming support for the Conference, reflected poorly on its ability to perform its assigned tasks. The mere profoundly quested its ability to perform its assigned tasks. The mere respect for democracy, for the will of the majority, ought to be sufficient to eliminate the remaining opposition to the convening of the Conference.

34. The eighteenth session of the Palistine National Council held at Algiers from 20 to 25 April 1987 had supported the convening of the International Conference on the Middle East within the framework of the United Nations and under its auspices with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and other parties, including the PLO, on an equal footing with the Conference and the concerned parties, including the Security Council and the Conference on the Middle East and establishing the Security Council, which the Conference had also been noticed by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) dedicated to peace and justice in the Middle East.

33. The majority of States as well as major intergovernmental organizations, including the PLO, Arab States, the USSR and other socialist countries, the Non-Aligned Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Organization of Islamic Conference, the European Community, the Scandinavian countries, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, Committee of Nine on Palestine, the States of the Warsaw Treaty had expressed their strong support for, the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty had expressed their strong support for, the States parties to the holding of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and under its auspices within the framework of the United Nations and the Security Council, which the Conference had also been noticed by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) dedicated to peace and justice in the Middle East.

32. The International Peace Conference on the Middle East could include bilateral, trilateral and multilateral negotiations. All forms of contacts and interaction among the Conference participants were approached, but only within the framework of the Conference, as called for by the United Nations General Assembly, and not as a forum used as an umbrella to conceal attempts to provide for new separate deals.

Conviction that such a step would constitute a major contribution towards the achievement of a just, comprehensive and lasting solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict through the collective efforts of all parties concerned.

opposed in principle the idea of an international conference under the United Nations auspices. It was clear, however, that wide differences still existed regarding the form that a conference should take. It was also generally agreed that the positions of the parties themselves remained far apart on a number of issues of procedure and of substance but that in recent months there had been indications of greater flexibility in attitudes towards the negotiating process and that this should be encouraged." It was the intention of the Secretary-General in the months to come to intensify his contacts with the parties concerned, in order to try to find ways of bridging the gaps between them. He likewise intended to continue his consultations with the members of the Security Council. In this regard the Committee had expressed its determination to pursue its efforts to ensure that the International Peace Conference on the Middle East was convened, for it was convinced that the holding of the Conference would be an important step towards the settlement of the question of Palestine.

38. It was emphasized that the time had come to begin with the preparatory work for the Conference in accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 41/43 D. The permanent members of the Security Council were in a position to take the initiative in that regard.

39. Developments in the region, and particularly those affecting the fate of the Palestinians, had given special urgency to the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations. Vital interests of the peoples of the Middle East, as well as the interests of international peace and security urgently dictated the need for the speediest settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. While the conflict embraced various dimensions, it was the suffering of, and injustice perpetrated against, the Palestinian people that were the core of that conflict. Lasting peace in the area was impossible without a just solution to the question of Palestine.

40. The Seminar was acquainted with the activities of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association. In working for the welfare of the Palestinians and others, the Association as well as the Pontifical Mission for Palestine were trying, through relief and development, to maintain the presence and the vitality of the local Palestinian communities, whether that occurred in the refugee camp, in the town or village, the school or the parish center. They would continue their work until peace with justice was achieved.

41. Cardinal O'Connor, Catholic Near East's President, on his return from Lebanon in June 1986, had echoed the Vatican's call for a homeland for the Palestinians. The position of the Catholic Church was recalled as expressed by Pope John Paul II in his address to the United Nations on 2 October 1979 regarding a solution to the Middle East crisis, a just settlement of the Palestinian question, the situation in Lebanon and the status of the Holy City of Jerusalem. Repeatedly the Holy See's Mission to the United Nations had called for dialogue, representing a necessary condition for peace, as well as for constructive efforts of the international community to restore peace in the Middle East.

45. The precise role that public opinion played in the formation of foreign policy, the constituents it could impose on policy-makers in choosing a particular policy or whether the public could, through the normal political processes, promote the pursuit of a particular policy over which it had reached a consensus were subjects constantly debated. The view was expressed that there was some relationship between public opinion and foreign policy, particularly in a political system that was assumed to be democratic and pluralistic. It was axiomatic that any policy to be accorded a high degree of legitimacy had to be consistent with a public consensus; lacking a national consensus a government's policy - domestic or foreign - would face serious difficulties and might entail serious political costs to the government.

Panel III: "The question of Palestine and North American public opinion"

44. The Palestinians in the occupied territories were encumbered in their efforts to synchronize the man-power and the educational system by their inability to form their own Government and to mobilize and re-locate resources. Without a central Government the chances of reforming education and stemmimg unemployment had been limited. What it took to stimulate the economy and the educational system was clear and modest. The exports needed to be increased substantially and immediately and investment had to flow in immediately and generously. Vocational and technical education had to absorb higher proportions of secondary school students. Arab markets had to be opened to absorb additional outputs of industry and agriculture from the occupied territories.

43. The lack of synchronization between the labour market and the educational system was symptomatic of some fundamental problems. Man-power and educational planning in the occupied territories was aimed at independent economic and political development and promoted economic and political integration. The proposal was made to develop an integrated model which connected manpower requirements, education and national operations, economic development and policy priorities into a coherent and smoothly functioning system.

42. The Seminar was also provided with an account of the economic situation in the occupied Palestinian territories. Israel's economic domination and exploitation of the occupied territories was deliberate, calculated and co-ordinated and synchronized. Water use was controlled with the expressed objective of limiting agricultural production and economic life in the labour had increased substantially. Most of the industries in the occupied territories were concentrated to small household operations with limited capacities and capital. All outside sources of funding had to be declared to the occupying authorities and that practice was used to eliminate practicality and harass the local sources of investment. Research centres were harassed or closed. Universities were often arbitrary closed and faculty and student had been arrested and detained haphazardly.

46. The understanding of the question of Palestine referred to the historic and contemporary conflict between Palestinian Arabs and Israeli Jews essentially over the political destiny of Palestine. While the definition of the question had differed over time, in its contemporary usage it generally referred to the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

47. The United Nations resolutions endorsed the Palestinians' right to return to their historic soil in Palestine and/or compensation, their independence and sovereignty without external interference in Palestine generally delimited to the so-called West Bank and Gaza and their right to be represented by their sole legitimate representative, the PLO. And to achieve the implementation of the right to self-determination, Israel had to terminate its military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and to reach a settlement, particularly with the PLO, that would resolve the issues of compensation/return and the modality of the political relationship to prevail between the independent Palestinian State and Israel. Finally, such a settlement should be arrived at in the context of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East convened by the United Nations that would be attended by all relevant parties to the conflict on an equal footing.

48. It was fair to suggest that the public had promoted or supported whatever the policy of the United States had been at any particular point in time. In view of the fact that American policy on the question of Palestine had been subject to minimal change since 1946, in that it had consistently opposed the Palestinian right to self-determination and correspondingly had supported Israel in its pursuit of policies detrimental to the attainment of that right, it had been assumed that it was either fully or implicitly conscious of the various dimensions of the question of Palestine.

49. The United States Government's consistent policy on the question of Palestine either had public support or, minimally, public acquiescence. The fact that Palestine had not been a "debatable" issue in the American political system at large, despite some attempts to introduce it as an "issue", might suggest that a public consensus did exist or, alternately, that the public at large was sufficiently unconcerned with the fact that a strongly held view on the part of a specified sector of the public provided the anchor for the policy of the Government.

50. The view was held that the media - print or electronic - did not reflect the views of the public; on the contrary, the evidence was conclusive as to the critical role which the media played in forming or critically influencing public opinion. Any discussion of public opinion and the question of Palestine was therefore dependent on two kinds of phenomena: on the one hand there was a constant policy on the issue that dated back to 1946, if not earlier, and, on the other hand, there were periodic results of public opinion polls and analyses. The dearth of serious studies of public opinion on the question of Palestine in North America was a matter of considerable significance.

51. Although the question of Palestine then and now was essentially a foreign policy issue that revolved around the destiny of a foreign land and foreign peoples, in terms of the American political process it had acquired a

various American cities contributed significantly to the dissemination of the emergence of such organizations as well the meshrooming of local groups in the conflict on the basis of the legitimacy of the Palestinian aspirations.

Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation and support for a resolution of the project of the Palestinian right to self-determination, support for the States signed a joint Palestine support groups had emerged whose agenda entailed States signed a joint Palestine support groups had emerged whose agenda entailed

quest for the first time in the recent history of the United States signed a joint Palestine support groups had emerged whose agenda entailed States signed a joint Palestine support groups had emerged whose agenda entailed

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by all legitimate means, including armed struggle", to attain that right.

Palestinian right to self-determination and endorsing the right to "struggle 1969 the General Assembly had adopted its first resolution supporting the

enabled the Arab States to press the later issue in the United Nations. In and the "implementation of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people"

resolute their conflict with Israel on the basis of total Israeli withdrawal peace policy at the Khartoum Summit (1967) that committed the Arab States to

55. The second was the role of the United Nations. The adoption of an Arab peace plan was an issue of concern in the American political process.

projection of the Palestinian dimension of the Middle East conflict so that it became an issue of concern in the American political process.

other activities. Thereby the media had contributed significantly to the projection of the Palestinian dimension of the Middle East conflict so that it

considerable attention to the PLO, to its leadership, to its political and to Israel increasing was identified with the PLO, the media had begun to pay

occupation policies in the West Bank and Gaza. And as Palestinian resistance provided analysis that pertained specifically to the Palestinians or Israel's

- print and electronic. The media had to transmit information and data and consciousness of Palestine and the Palestinians. The first was the mass media

54. Three significant instruments had assisted in reshaping public

Israel which helped in projecting the Palestinian resistance spearheaded by defeat of the Arab States and the occupation of their national territory by

the Government as well, among them Israel's success in the 1967 war and the factors accounted for the altered perception of the public, the pollsters and

had occurred largely in the latter part of the sixties and seventies. Several

53. The change in the consciousness of the Palestinian issue in North America

there was for the "Arabs", the same had not translated for the specific

been higher sympathy and support for Israel in the fifties and sixties than the mid-seventies. It was of some significance to note whereas had

single public opinion poll had referred to Palestinians almost from 1948 to

Arabs was evident in the kind of questions which the polls had asked. Not a

52. Israel's success in projecting the conflict as one between Israel and the Palestine and the majority of such informed supporters had been Jewish.

American public mainly informed on the question tended to support Jewish claims to minority that had been indicated quite clearly informed on the question. But the small

question of Palestine at that time was to be found in the surveys of public opinion. All such surveys indicated clearly that the majority of the

significant domestic salience. Evidence for the sectoral significance of the

information and data on and analysis of the Middle East conflict that brought about greater understanding of the Palestinian issue.

57. Lastly, perhaps the most decisive factor was the changed domestic context of the seventies in the United States. The increasingly critical attitude of the public towards American foreign policy in the Third World, the increasing strength of the peace movement, and the emergence of an alternative system of information helped considerably in situating the question of Palestine in the overall context of the struggle against colonialism and for national liberation.

58. A careful analysis of the polls that had been conducted in the seventies and the eighties revealed the emergence of public opinion on the question of Palestine and the resolution of the conflict that was at variance with a previous "consensus". The polls of the eighties clearly suggested that the "opinion" supported the solution of the question of Palestine by means of establishing an independent Palestinian State or homeland in the West Bank and Gaza, a reality to be brought about largely through a peace-making process that was premised on an International Peace Conference to be attended by the relevant parties. The public, according to the polls, believed that such a peace-making process had to include the PLO.

59. It was evident that a much larger part of the public was more conscious today of the Palestinians as a distinct element in the overall Arab-Israeli conflict. The public was also much more conscious of distinct issues in the confrontation between Israel and the Palestinians and that those issues revolved around specific territorial domains, political modalities of existence, conflicting rights and contending leaderships. Regardless of how the public evaluated the character and performance of the PLO, there was little doubt about its representativeness of the Palestinian people and correspondingly the necessity of involving it in the peace-making process.

60. The public support of the Palestinian quest for self-determination did not necessarily entail diminution of public support for Israel; the polls suggested that it was possible to realize Palestinian self-determination and to support an Israel that did not maintain its security by either military occupation or suppression of the Palestinians.

61. The available evidence supported the contention that there were two consensi in the United States: the official consensus espoused by the Government and its supporters which denied the legitimacy of Palestinian aspirations and claims and contested the Palestinian right to self-determination; on the other hand, an alternative public consensus that accepted the Palestinian right to self-determination.

62. The creation of peace in the Middle East demanded vigorous American leadership acting in strict accordance with the rules of international law and in full co-operation with the relevant international institutions, in particular the United Nations. As a party to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, the United States Government had an affirmative obligation under common article 1 to respect and to ensure respect for their observance in all

67. Israel continued its de facto annexation of the West Bank and Gaza strip, and had already illegally annexed the Golani Heights and East Jerusalem. The internal colony could prevent or at least impede these laws developments in the hope of preserving a situation that was conducive to the conclusion of an ultimate peace settlement.

66. There would be no peace in the Middle East until the Palestinian people were given the opportunity to exercise its internal colonial legal right to self-determination in whatever manner it chose, not in accordance with a limited set of alternatives presented for it by any state.

65. The self-determination of peoples had been a fundamental principle of American Foreign Policy and of international law and politics since President Woodrow Wilson's famous Fourteen Points Address of 8 January 1918. The fundamental international recognition of universal peace among nations and the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples had been adopted by the General Assembly's adoption of resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947.

64. It was suggested that the United States could undertake an important step to open the way to a negotiated peace between Israel and the Palestinians. The United States could sponsor an amendment to United Nations Security Council resolution 242 (1967) along the following lines, first, that amendment would affirm explicitly the internal legal right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including an independent State of their own if it so desired. Second, in regard to ensuring Israel's existence, a revised resolution of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledge of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every state in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force."

63. A long-term solution to the question of Palestine could only be achieved when Israel was willing to recognize the internal legal right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. Both the United Nations General Assembly and the League of Arab States had determined that the PLO was the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. That determination had to be respected by Israel and the United States for the purpose of negotiating an overall settlement of the dispute.

62. Circumstances by other contracting powers. The United States had a duty to employ the leverage over Israel afforded by its relationship with it in order to secure strict obedience to the humanitarian laws of armed conflict by Israel.

68. The treatment of the Namibian issue by the United Nations General Assembly, the Security Council and the International Court of Justice provided a useful example for the implementation of the international legal right to self-determination. The suggestion was made that a similar procedure be followed with respect to the Palestine Mandate, in the expectation that the international community could agree to the proposition that the Palestinian people should have the opportunity to exercise its international legal right to self-determination. The application of the Namibian precedent to the question of Palestine provided a non-violent alternative for all those interested in peace in the Middle East.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

69. Despite intensive efforts by the United Nations a peaceful settlement of the Middle East conflict remained elusive and the situation in the region continued to be unstable. Recent events in the Middle East highlighted the increasing urgency of finding a solution to this most complex problem. Such delays not only prolonged the plight of the Palestinian people but also continued to pose a threat to regional peace. In that age, it was necessary that international relations be restructured so that confrontation was replaced by co-operation, and conflict situations, such as the Arab-Israeli conflict, resolved through peaceful political means, not through military force.

70. The Seminar, concerned over the dangerous situation in the Middle East, was profoundly convinced that the vital interests of the peoples of that region, as well as interests of international peace and security as a whole, urgently dictate the need for the speediest attainment of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, with its core, the question of Palestine. The full exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, including the right of return, the right to self-determination without external interference and the right to create its own independent State in Palestine, as well as the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from all the Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, remained the basis to solve the Palestinian problem.

71. The situation relating to the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people continued to deteriorate. Whilst strenuous attempts had been made to find a solution, the situation in the region was further complicated by Israel's actions in the occupied territories. Israeli policies of illegally establishing and maintaining Jewish settlements and confiscating Arab-owned lands in the occupied Palestinian territories continued. These "iron-fist policies" were accompanied by measures designed to stifle all forms of political, cultural, social and economic expression of the Palestinian people. The Israeli authorities had continued to strengthen control over most aspects of life, with the objective of obstructing the self-generating development of the occupied territories and turning them into a dependent entity, aiming at its final absorption and annexation. Those policies were in direct contravention of United Nations resolutions and international law and led only to the exacerbation of tension in the area, further hindering attempts to find a peaceful solution.

75. The Seminar unanimously concluded that the best way to establish a just framework of the Security Council, with the participation of its permanent members, as called for by General Assembly resolution 41/43 D, as a means to undertake practical steps towards the convening of the Conference. The members, as well as the Middle East under the auspices of the International Conference on the Middle East was by convening the United Nations and lastly with the participation of all parties to the conflict including the PLO, as well as the parties to the establishment of a preparatory committee within the framework of the Security Council, which the Conference will support the establishment of a preparatory committee within the framework of the Security Council should immediately proceed to establish the said preparatory committee.

74. The Seminar considered the question of the status of Jerusalem and must be rescinded forthwith".

and in particular the recent "basic Law" on Jerusalem, are null and void and put forward to alter the character and the status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, which have altered or destroyed the character and the administrative measures of Jerusalem; and determined "that all legislative and administrative measures taken by Israel to expand territories occupied since 1967, including protection of civilian persons in time of war, of 22 August 1949, in the effect the continued application of the Geneva Convention relative to the "basic Law" by Israel constitutes a violation of international law and does not affect the right of return, to self-determination and to create its own independent State in Palestine, and without the complete withdrawal of Israel from Arab territory of return, to achieve without those rights, including the right of self-determination and its organs and agencies to remain under occupation. The Seminar called on Middle East and that no comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region could be achieved without the full exercise of those rights, including the rights of the Palestinian people to determine the core of the conflict in the reiteration of the position of the Security Council as contained in its resolution 478 (1980) of 20 August 1980, by which it affirmed "that the enactment of the basic Law" by Israel is illegal and violates international law.

73. The Seminar affirmed that the problem of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people remained the core of the conflict in the Middle East and that no comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region could be achieved without the full exercise of those rights, including the right of self-determination and its organs and agencies to remain under occupation. The Seminar called on the United Nations and its agencies to render and co-ordinate all forms of social and economic assistance to the Palestinian people in that the PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. It further reaffirmed that the PLO is the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people since 1967, including Jerusalem. It further reaffirmed that the PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

72. The Seminar noted with grave concern the continued Israeli economic subjugation of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories by confisca ting the land, denying them the exploitation of their own water resources, preventing them to engage in trade with the parties of their choice, and treating the people of the occupied territories as a hostage pool of cheap labour, using them as a buffer to cool an overheated Israeli economy and as the first to lose their jobs at the slightest slowdown of the Israeli economy. The Seminar expressed appreciation for the endeavours and efforts of the PLO, the United Nations and its agencies, as well as of the intergovernmental organizations and NGOs in the fields of social and economic development of the Palestinian people under occupation. The Seminar called on the United Nations and its agencies to render and co-ordinate all forms of social and economic assistance to the Palestinian people in that the PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people since 1967, including Jerusalem. It further reaffirmed that the PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

76. The Seminar further recalled the unyielding and firm support by the PLO, Arab States, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the socialist countries, the European Community and other groups of countries for the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East. The Seminar was convinced that partial and piecemeal agreements would ignore the core of the Arab-Israeli problem and were not conducive to a comprehensive peaceful solution. The Seminar was of the view that the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People had a major role to play in promoting the convening of such a Conference and encouraged its effort in that regard.

77. The Conference should be convened without preconditions and its proceedings should be conducted in a constructive spirit. The aim of the Conference should be a comprehensive settlement encompassing all aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Seminar appealed to all members of the Security Council, and in particular to its permanent members, to fulfill their responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security, and to exercise the necessary political will and to undertake vigorous efforts to bring about the convening of the Conference.

78. The Seminar greatly appreciated the efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations with a view to convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. In this regard the Seminar took note of his report (A/42/277-S/18849) and expressed support for his intention to intensify his contacts with the parties in order to try to find ways of bridging the gaps between them.

79. The Seminar viewed the results of the eighteenth session of the Palestine National Council, held in April 1987 at Algiers, as of great importance. It welcomed in particular the unequivocal support of the PLO for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and the establishment of a preparatory committee within the framework of the Security Council, with the participation of its permanent members.

80. The Seminar recalled that the year 1987 marked a number of important anniversaries in the history of the struggle of the Palestinian people, including the seventieth anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of General Assembly resolution 181 (II), the twentieth anniversary of the 1967 war and the fifth anniversary of the Israeli invasion and occupation of Lebanese territory, and the massacre at Sabra and Shatila.

81. Intensified efforts should be made to mobilize public opinion in North America and throughout the world through the use of the media. In that connection, the United Nations should make additional efforts to disseminate more factual and up-to-date information on the question of Palestine, as one of the contributions to the achievement of a just solution to the problem of Palestine on the basis of the attainment by the Palestinian people of its inalienable national rights.

82. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights of the United Nations Secretariat had an important role in the Preparation and dissemination of information. Furthermore, the Department of Public Information of the United Nations in co-operation with the Division for Palestinian Rights should ensure that accurate information on the question of Palestine received the widest possible dissemination.
83. It was important that the media should play a more responsive role in providing more balanced reporting on the Middle East and, in particular, on the plight of the Palestinians in and outside the occupied territories.
84. The Seminar encouraged the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to take a strong position against this proposed legislation.
85. It was important that the media should play a more responsive role in providing more balanced treatment to the question of Palestine.
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Annex I

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

The participants in the Seventeenth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, meeting at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 22 and 23 June 1987, wish to express their sincere appreciation for your kind message conveyed to the Seminar at its opening session. This Seminar considered ways and means to promote the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 38/58 C to achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and its core, the question of Palestine. The Seminar also considered how to mobilize further North American public opinion in support of the exercise of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people to return, to self-determination and to the establishment of its own State in Palestine. The participants viewed the results of the eighteenth session of the Palestine National Council as a significant contribution in achieving a just solution to the question of Palestine and welcomed the unequivocal support of the PLO for the United Nations efforts to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and for the establishment of a preparatory committee within the framework of the Security Council, with the participation of its permanent members.

We convey to you and to the Palestinian people under the leadership of the PLO, its sole and legitimate representative, our greetings of support and solidarity.

		LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AND OBSERVERS
		<u>Palestinians</u>
Mr. Ibrahim ABU-LUGHD (Palestinian)	Mr. Francis BOYLE (United States of America)	Mr. David CARROLL (United States of America)
Mr. Ramesy CLARK (United States of America)	Mr. Konstantin GUEVIANDOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)	Mr. Atif KURBISI (Canada)
Mr. Ibrahim DOSHI	Mr. Mohammad E. ROSHAN-RAWAAN	Mr. Pramathesh RATH (India)
	Ambassador	Ambassador
	Permanent Representative	Minister-Counselor
	- H.E. Mr. Shah Mohammad Doshi	- Mr. Abdallah Baali
		Counselor
Bhutan	- Mr. Ogjen T. Djije	First Secretary
Brazil	- Mr. Anvar Nafes	Second Secretary
China	- Mr. Shihling Yuan,	Mr.
Comoros	- H.E. Mr. Amini Ali Moumien	Permanent Representative
Cyprus	- Mr. James C. Droushiotis	Ambassador
Czechoslovakia	- Mr. Martin Waller	Permanent Representative
Germany Democratic Republic	- Mr. Siegfried Schlicker	First Secretary
		Third Secretary
		First Secretary

Guinea	- Mr. Mamadou Saïdou Dillao Attaché
Guyana	- H.E. Mr. David D. Karran Ambassador Deputy Permanent Representative
Hungary	- Mr. Miklos Endreffy Deputy Permanent Representative
India	- Mr. Pramathesh Rath Counsellor
Indonesia	- Mr. Kria Fahmi Pasaribu Third Secretary
Iraq	- Mr. Abdul Karim Al-Sudani First Secretary
Jordan	- Mr. Klaib El-Fawwaz First Secretary
Lao People's Democratic Republic	- Mr. Theuambounmy Bounkahm Second Secretary
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	- Mr. Rajab A. Azzarouk Minister Plenipotentiary
Mali	- H.E. Mr. Seydou Niare Ambassador Permanent Representative
Malta	- Mr. Saviour F. Borg Acting Permanent Representative - Mr. Joseph Costantino First Secretary
Mexico	- Mr. Teodoro Maus First Secretary
Morocco	- Mr. El Hassane Zahid Counsellor
Nigeria	- Mr. T. O. Aje Third Secretary
Pakistan	- Mrs. Naela Chohan Third Secretary
Panama	- Mr. Luis M. Martínez Counsellor

Romania	- Mr. Stelian Aurel Constantinescu First Secretary	Sao Tome and Principe	- Mr. Adelito Ramos Third Secretary
Senegal	- Mr. Paul Badji Charge d'affaires Counsellor	Saudi Arabi a	- Mr. Soud Mohamed Zedan First Secretary
Sudan	- Mr. Babiker Elamin Abdel-Hameed Second Counsellor	Syrian Arab Republic	- Mr. Abdul Moumen Al-Atassi Deputy Permanent Representative
Togo	- Mr. Latvei Modem Lawson-Betum Second Counsellor	Tunisia	- Mr. Mohamed Salah Tekaya First Secretary
Turkey	- Mr. Mehmet A. Irtemeclik Counsellor	Ukrainian Soviet Socialist	- Mr. Yuri Zybanov Director of Department
USSR	- Mr. Vladimir Y. Blichenko Ministry of Foreign Affairs Head of Section - Mr. A. F. Chistyakov Estonian SSR Minister of Foreign Affairs - H.E. Mr. Arnold K. Green Ministry of Foreign Affairs Head of Section - Mr. A. F. Chistyakov Bulgarian Socialist Ministry of Foreign Affairs Head of Section - Mr. Vladimir Y. Blichenko Ministry of Foreign Affairs Second Secretary	Viet Nam	- Mr. Nguyen Si Xung Third Secretary - Mr. Pham Quang Vinh Attache - Mr. Pham Quang Vinh Ambassador Permanent Representative
Yugoslavia	- Mr. Milisav Basic Counsellor	Zimbabwe	- H.E. Dr. Isaac S. G. Mudenge Ambassador Permanent Representative

Non-member States represented by observers

Democratic People's Republic
of Korea

- Mr. Hong Song O
Counsellor
- Mr. Kim Jae Hon
First Secretary

Holy See

- Archbishop Renato R. Martino
Apostolic Nuncio
Permanent Observer
- Mrs. Edna McCallion
Adviser

Republic of Korea

- Mr. Joo Seok Kim
First Secretary

United Nations organs

Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the
Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Mr. Ahmad Farouk Arnouss (Syrian Arab Republic)

United Nations Council for Namibia

Mr. Moussa Bocar Ly (Senegal)

Special Committee against Apartheid

Mr. Arif Shahid Khan (India)

United Nations specialized agencies

UNESCO

- Mr. Mehan, Director a.i.

UNIDO

- Mr. Hassan H. Bahlouli

WHO

- Mr. Jerry Kilkner

United Nations bodies

UNHCR

- Mr. Antoine Noël
Regional Representative

League of Arab States	- Mr. Samir Mansouri Deputy Permanent Observer	Intergovernmental Organizations
Confidence	- Mrs. Salimatu Khan-Timbo Organizational Unit	Organizations
Organization of the Islamic Conference	- Mr. Noureddine Mezni Permanent Observer Mission	National Liberation Movements
Palestinian Liberation Organization	- Mr. Zebedi L. Terzi Permanent Observer	Palestinian Liberation Organization
South West Africa	- Mr. Riad Mansour Alternatate Permanent Observer	People's Organization
Deputy Permanent Observer	- Mr. Riyaad Mansour Deputy Permanent Observer	South West Africa
Deputy Permanent Observer	- Mr. Pius H. Asheke Deputy Permanent Observer	People's Organization
Non-governmental Organizations	American-Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace	American Middle East
American-Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace	- Mr. Nubar Hovsepian Peace Research Institute	Israeli-Palestinian Peace
Association of Arab-American University Graduates	- Ms. Leila Haddad Baptist World Alliance	Baptist World Alliance
Association of Arab-American University Graduates	- Ms. Eleanore Schnurz Baptist World Alliance	Canadian Arab Federation
Board of Global Ministries	- Ms. Ethel Born United Methodist Church	
Canadian Arab Federation	- Mr. Suleiman Hadj	

- Church Women United
- Ms. Joyce Yu
 - Mr. Alan Goodrow
 - Mr. E. Prenovost
 - Ms. Marjorie Songstad
 - Mr. Peter Young
 - Ms. Marylin Bannon
 - Ms. Sylvia Setz
 - Ms. Florence Horby
 - Ms. Winnie Zaragoza
- Commission of the Churches
on International Affairs
World Council of Churches
- Ms. Gail Lerner
- Finnish-Arab Friendship
Society
- Mr. Mikko Lohikoski
- General Union of Palestinian
Students in the United States
- Mr. Sameh Atiyeh
- International Co-ordinating
Committee for NGO's
- Mr. Jean-Marie Lambert
- Israeli Council for Israeli-
Palestinian Peace
- Mr. Adam Keller
- Middle East Fellowship of
Southern California
- Mr. Fred Brauer
- NAJDA
- Ms. Nadine Ghammache
 - Ms. Audrey Shabbas
- Near East Cultural and
Educational Foundation
- Mr. James Graff
- November 29th Committee for
Palestine
- Ms. Rabab Hadi
- Palestine Arab Fund
- Mr. Abdellatif Rayan
- The Church of Humanism
- Rev. Joseph Ben-David
 - Ms. Elizabeth Barnsley
- United Holy Land Fund
- Mr. Suhail Miari
 - Mr. Anis Barghouti
 - Mr. A. Wajeeh
- World Muslim Congress
- Mr. Vigar Hamdani
 - Mr. Issa Nakhleh
