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QUESTION OF PALESTINE

Letter dated 20 April 1982 from the President of the
General Assembly to the Permanent Representative of
the United States of America

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 19 April 1982 (A/ES-7/16) concerning the propriety of resuming the seventh emergency session of the General Assembly to consider the agenda item entitled "Question of Palestine".

Your letter correctly quotes operative paragraph 14 which is the basis on which I have reconvened this session. It is, to be sure, an unprecedented situation where a President is obliged to reconvene an emergency special session after the passage of a considerable period of time and, indeed, after several sessions of the General Assembly have intervened subsequent to the "temporary" adjournment of the said emergency special session.

However, it is my understanding that the intent of the sponsors of resolution ES-7/2 was precisely to permit such a resumption to take place even though other sessions intervened. The legislative history of the resolution makes this fact very clear. The original draft which was discussed, according to information provided me, authorised "the President of the General Assembly to resume its meetings upon request from Member States". The Assembly President at that time, Foreign Minister Salim, inquired about the probable timing of such a resumption in order to clarify his own responsibilities in that regard. When the sponsors indicated that the duration of the suspension could not be predicted and that the suspension might well extend beyond his tenure of office, the words "of the latest regular session" were inserted in the draft to clarify that, should other sessions intervene, it would be the President of the most recent session who should preside. Conversely, if there had been no expectation that other sessions might intervene, the resolution would, without doubt, have provided that the original President of the seventh emergency special session should reconvene it.

Thus I consider that the present session, which was suspended but never closed, is duly reconvened in accordance with the terms of resolution ES-7/2.

Inasmuch as you requested that your note be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, my reply will also be circulated.

(Signed) Ismat T. KITTANI
