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ENGLISH

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWO THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-NINTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 7 November 1989, at 10.30 a.m.

President: Mr. LI Luye

(China)

Members: Algeria
Brazil
Canada
Colombia
Ethiopia
Finland
France
Malaysia
Nepal
Senegal
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
United Kingdom of Great Britain and
Northern Ireland
United States of America
Yugoslavia

Mr. DJOUDI
Mr. ALENCAR
Mr. FORTIER
Mr. PEÑALOSA
Mr. GOSHU
Mr. TORNUEDD
Mr. BLANC
Mr. RAZALI
Mr. RANA
Mrs. DIALLO
Mr. BELONOGOV

SIR CRISPIN TICKELL
Mr. PICKERING
Mr. KOTEVSKI

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The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

THE SITUATION IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES

LETTER DATED 3 NOVEMBER 1989 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF KUWAIT TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/20942)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): In conformity with decisions taken at the previous meetings on this item, I invite the representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to take the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber. I invite the representative of Palestine to take a place at the Council table.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Kharrazi (Islamic Republic of Iran), Mr. Bein (Israel), Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait) and Mr. Shihabi (Saudi Arabia) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber; Mr. Terzi (Palestine) took a place at the Council table.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): The Security Council will now resume its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/20945/Rev.1, which contains the text of a revised draft resolution submitted by Algeria, Colombia, Ethiopia, Malaysia, Nepal, Senegal and Yugoslavia.

Mr. BELONOGOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): It is with great satisfaction, Sir, that I congratulate you, the representative of a great Power for whose people the Soviet people have sympathy and friendship, on your assumption of the important post of President of the Security Council. I am convinced that your abundant political experience, great diplomatic professionalism and human qualities will ensure that the work of the Council in November will be effective and fruitful.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

I wish to express my deep gratitude to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations, Ambassador Yves Fortier, who, thanks to his great diplomatic qualities and political acumen, accomplished a considerable amount of valuable and important work during October.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

The Security Council has listened to statements by the Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations, who spoke as Chairman of the Group of Arab States; by the Permanent Observer of Palestine; by the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia, who spoke as Chairman of the Group of Islamic States; by the Permanent Representative of Yugoslavia, who spoke as Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries; by the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States, Mr. Clovis Maksoud, and by many others.

Those statements, which reflected the views of the overwhelming majority of the members of the international community, were imbued with an undisguised note of alarm at the situation in the occupied Arab territories. The evidence they give of illegal actions by Israel in the occupied territories is compelling and needs no further comment. Indeed, the news from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is like the news from a battlefield. Israel, which refuses to recognize the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, stubbornly persists in its occupation of the Arab territories it has occupied since 1967 and is attempting to suppress by force the aspirations of the Palestinian people to the exercise of their political and civil rights.

The Palestinians are being subjected to discrimination, to economic and social pressures and to the deprivation of their cultural heritage, and they are even being driven from their ancestral lands. The Soviet Union condemns such repressive and illegal action on the part of the Israeli authorities against the populations of the West Bank and Gaza.

The clearly provocative actions taken by the Israeli authorities have also been directed against religious communities in the occupied territories. Among those have been the blockade of Beit Sahur and the attempt by a group of Zionist extremists to lay the foundation stone for the rebuilding of the Temple of Solomon near one of the Holy Places of the Moslem world, the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

We also condemn the attempts by the Israeli authorities to impede the humanitarian work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). We are seriously concerned at the use of force against the Agency's international staff, which is becoming increasingly frequent and widespread, and at the arrests and detention of staff members and the raids against a number of the Agency's offices in the occupied territories. We note the striking discrepancy between the Israeli Government's assurances that it is striving to achieve a political settlement and the actual policy being pursued by the Israeli authorities with regard to the intifadah, the peaceful, non-violent mass manifestation of the will of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories. In that connection, we firmly support the demand that the Government of Israel observe the Fourth Geneva Convention, of 1949, and other international instruments providing for the protection of the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people.

It is odd to see the continued and stubborn reluctance of Israel's ruling circles to face facts. It is odd because one would think that the country pursuing that aggressive policy would, from its own past experience, understand that reliance on brute force does not really create peaceful prospects for the future. Surely the process of a political settlement of regional disputes and conflicts is eloquent testimony to the trend that is now gaining such momentum in various parts of the world. Such is the logic underlying the development of the contemporary world situation. Political realism and far-sightedness, respect and tolerance of the customs and traditions of one's neighbours, are particularly called for in the Middle East, which is the cradle of ancient cultures that have made invaluable contributions to world civilization.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

As I have said, such methods of repression and diktat provide no prospects for the future. Genuine, guaranteed security cannot be created by maintaining control over territory seized by force or by attempts to win an arms race; it can be created only by eliminating the primary causes of conflict and attempting to achieve a balance of interests among all the parties involved. That is why it is so important that everything possible be done to make the best use of the resources of active diplomacy and to take advantage of the postulates of the new political thinking that are now becoming an established part of international relations.

In an attempt to arrive at a comprehensive political settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict on the basis of a balance of the interests of all the parties concerned and to turn the region from confrontation and instability to dialogue and security, the Soviet Union has put forward a broad proposal aimed at improving the situation in the Middle East. The proposal was set forth in concise form in a statement made in Cairo last February by the Foreign Minister of the USSR, Eduard Shevardnadze. That statement clearly embodied our vision of the ways and means to unblock the conflict situation in the Middle East and suggested the parameters for a peaceful restructuring of the region on the basis of disarmament, the establishment of good-neighbourliness and the development of co-operation. The basic elements of that approach to a settlement are in keeping with United Nations decisions, in particular General Assembly resolution 43/54, which was actively supported by the Soviet Union.

New approaches are beginning to gain support in the Middle East. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the political leader of the Palestinian people, at the session of the Palestine National Council last year, adopted a constructive and realistic platform that recognized Israel's right to a secure existence and stated the readiness of the PLO to negotiate with that country within

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

the framework of an international conference. We actively support that position adopted by the PLO, which was approved by the Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Arab States at Casablanca, and we applaud the general inclination of the Arab States to reach a settlement of the problem through political means. Those new and positive factors are, in our view, of decisive significance. A broad-based consensus has now emerged in favour of convening an international conference on the Middle East.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

It is our belief that the preparatory stages of an international conference on the Middle East should have a multi-option, comprehensive nature and that the United Nations, with its great peace-making potential, should play an important role.

I stress the fact that we believe it to be important to bring into play as actively as possible the potential of the Security Council and to establish multilateral and bilateral dialogue among the parties concerned, and that we stand by our proposals in this connection.

There are various political forces which could well help the cause of a Middle East settlement and they should be united in their common understanding of the need to ensure a balance of the interests, fundamental rights, free development and security of all States and peoples of the area. Recently, a considerable number of ideas and proposals have been put forward for breaking the deadlock and advancing the peace process in the Middle East. The task now is to reduce all these proposals to a common denominator acceptable to all parties.

The Soviet Union is ready to co-operate actively with all parties, the United Nations and the Secretary-General in a constructive search for a peace settlement in the Middle East and in the convening, to this end, of an international conference in keeping with relevant United Nations resolutions.

We shall support the draft resolution on this subject submitted to the Council by the non-aligned countries.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): I thank the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. RAZALI (Malaysia): I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month and to offer the full co-operation of my delegation. We are confident that your vast experience and skills as a diplomat will ensure the smooth functioning of the work of the Council.

I also pay a tribute to my colleague the Permanent Representative of Canada, Ambassador Fortier, for his outstanding work when he managed the affairs of the Council in October.

For almost two years the Israeli authorities have tried to quell the Palestinian uprising - the intifadah. The Israelis have sealed off towns and villages, demolished houses, confiscated property, closed schools, imposed curfews, detained large numbers of Arabs and expelled many from their homeland. They have tried to break the spirit of the Palestinians as they have tried to break the bones in their bodies. This and other mistreatment of the helpless Palestinian people was well documented by the Secretary-General in his definitive report (S/19443) of 21 January 1988. What happened in the town of Beit Sahur was merely the latest of many such onslaughts by the Israeli forces. Many more towns and villages will fall victim to similar harsh treatment in the future unless the international community and the Council, in particular, are able to prevail on Israel to desist from its current policies and practices.

Clearly, the spirit of the Palestinian people is far from broken; their morale is high and their resolve undiminished, even if the international media are beginning to lose interest in their unhappy plight. The Palestinians draw strength and inspiration from memories of their past and aspirations for the future. They are fortified by their belief that, as their cause is just, they will ultimately triumph. They are propelled forward by their struggle and by the bitter experience of their present at the hands of the occupying Power.

(Mr. Razali, Malaysia)

The Council is asked once again to pronounce on the grave situation in the occupied Palestinian territory. The facts about Israeli policies and practices - actually malpractices - have been well documented in the Secretary-General's report referred to earlier. The situation remains very much the same as when Mr. Marrack Goulding visited the area in January 1988. The draconian policies and practices of Israel continue, thereby sustaining the people's hatred of the foreign occupation.

Five months ago the Council tried to pronounce on the same question. There was overwhelming support for the draft resolution initiated by the non-aligned countries represented on the Council, which could have contributed substantially to remedying the plight of the Palestinians. But at that point a permanent member of the Council vetoed the draft resolution on the argument that it was "unbalanced". In the view of the Malaysian delegation the concern for balance was misplaced. Such concern should have been not for the side whose army went on a rampage - and continues to do so - in a land it is occupying, but for the side whose only "crime" was to stand up and fight for its rights. Indeed, talking about balance, there is certainly a lack of balance in the ongoing confrontation between the Israeli occupying forces and Palestinian civilians armed only with their passion for justice, freedom and independence.

It is the hope of the Malaysian Government that, in considering the question of the Palestinian territory this time the matter will be treated with the seriousness and commitment it deserves. We believe that the Council has a responsibility to ensure the protection of the helpless Palestinian civilians. We believe that it is necessary to send a clear message to the Israeli authorities that we deplore their policies and practices in Palestine. The Council should also demand that Israel, as the occupying Power, adhere scrupulously to the provisions of the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons

(Mr. Razali, Malaysia)

in Time of War. The Council can do this through the unanimous adoption of the draft resolution before it.

At the same time, the Council should seriously consider the various proposals outlined in the Secretary-General's report (S/19443) of 21 January 1988. On an earlier occasion I appealed to the Council for active consideration of this report. I wish to repeat that appeal today. In our view the report of the Secretary-General is a commendable one and provides a useful basis for understanding the grievances of the Palestinians living in the occupied territory. It provides not only a clear description of the situation but also concrete ideas and measures that can be adopted by the Council for the protection of the Palestinian civilians. As I have said previously, I can see no justification for any member's standing in the way of consideration and implementation of the various measures mentioned in that report.

As we address the question of the protection of the Palestinian civilians we must perforce address the core issue of the Palestine question, in which the intifadah is only a symptom of the overall problem. The Council has a clear responsibility under the Charter to find a solution to the problem, and it must do so if it is to continue to play its role as the primary organ charged with the maintenance of international peace and security. There is overwhelming support in the Council, as well as in the General Assembly, for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of all the parties concerned, including Palestine. The Council must respond to the clear desire for early resolution of the longest regional conflict of our time.

(Mr. Razali, Malaysia)

It can do so by initiating discussions in the Council, beginning with its permanent members, which have a special responsibility and leadership role in the resolution of this question.

We appeal to the permanent members to take practical steps in that direction. We urge them to begin their consideration of the early establishment of a preparatory committee for the international peace conference, concerning which there is wide support from members of the Council. We appeal in particular to the United States, whose role is pivotal in the final resolution of the problem. We appeal to the Soviet Union, in the context of the détente in its relations with the United States, to engage the latter in serious and urgent discussions of the problem, as it has done on other issues of international peace and security. We call on Israel to look beyond its immediate security concerns towards a longer term, historical perspective of a durable peace with its Arab neighbours.

Malaysia believes that the time is perhaps opportune for a decisive move towards a resolution of the problem. The times certainly appear to be propitious for such a breakthrough. There is increasing agreement between the two super-Powers on many international issues. There are at the same time the positive trends ushered in by the historic decisions of the Palestine National Council at its extraordinary session in Algiers, as well as the steadily developing contacts and dialogues between the United States and Palestine. There are also the tentative but encouraging signs of a move towards conciliation and peace within certain sectors of the Israeli society, which can only increase in a society already tired of a state of perpetual conflict. What is lacking is the courage and bold vision on the part of the Israeli leadership to make a decisive move for peace.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): I thank the representative of Malaysia for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. TORNUDD (Finland): I have the honour, first, Sir, to extend to you my delegation's sincere congratulations on your assumption, on behalf of your great country of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of November. We look forward to fruitful co-operation, under your able guidance, with you and the other members of the Council during this month.

Furthermore, I wish to thank the Permanent Representative of Canada, Ambassador Fortier, once again for his skilful and effective leadership during his presidency in October.

The situation in the territories occupied by Israel continues to be a source of grave concern to the international community. In recent months we have seen attempts to come to grips with the political aspects of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, although evidence of real progress has mostly been hard to detect. At the same time, we should like to see evidence of policies and practices designed to build confidence among the population of the occupied territories, which could lay the basis for stable and friendly coexistence in the region. What we see, however, is continuing tension, violations of human rights, and violations of international law.

A just, durable and peaceful settlement in the Middle East is not yet in sight, but the principles upon which it must be based are well known. In the long term, different political and security arrangements are conceivable, but one thing is clear: the occupation must come to an end. A way must be found for the Palestinians to exercise their right to self-determination in peace. Israel, like other States, must have secure and recognized borders. Until the occupation is over, the Palestinians deserve particular support and protection.

In this respect, the patient efforts of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) continue to be of central importance. The task of UNRWA is difficult and demanding, and it is fundamental

(Mr. Tornudd, Finland)

that UNRWA should be able to carry out all its humanitarian functions without hindrance. We are therefore very upset by the recent interventions by Israeli military units against UNRWA offices and personnel in the West Bank and Gaza. We trust that such interventions will not be repeated.

Others have already referred in this debate to recent excessive measures by the Israeli army in Beit Sahur and elsewhere in the occupied territories. We deplore all violence, and we appeal once more to the Israeli authorities to act in accordance with the Fourth Geneva Convention, to respect human rights and, more than that, to show a constructive concern for the grievances of the Palestinian population.

My delegation regrets particularly that the overall situation in the occupied territories continues to deteriorate. The Israeli people and authorities themselves cannot be satisfied with the present situation. There must emerge a realistic understanding about how to take the first steps on the road to improvements. The international community expects that the political will to change the situation will emerge with growing strength in Israel itself.

Meanwhile, what my delegation has said on previous occasions this year here in the Security Council remains valid. Finland's position on the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole is likewise on the record.

With more urgency than ever we say that it is time for a change also in the Middle East.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): I thank the representative of Finland for the kind words he addressed to me.

Sir Crispin TICKELL (United Kingdom): We welcome you to the presidency, Sir, and give our warm thanks to your predecessor. I will not embarrass either of you with excessive praise but it is none the less fully deserved.

(Sir Crispin Tickell, United Kingdom)

It is a matter of deep concern to my Government that the situation in the occupied territories has not improved since we last debated this subject, in June. Indeed, in many ways the situation has deteriorated. We are particularly concerned about the situation of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). In his speech to the Special Political Committee on 24 October the Commissioner-General stated that UNRWA had had obstacles placed in its way by the Israeli authorities. We should not forget that UNRWA provides basic services for the most needy elements in the Palestinian population. In particular, my Government deplores the recent raids by the Israeli Defence Force on UNRWA premises in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. These appear to be a violation of the privileges and immunities of a respected United Nations body. The Israeli authorities have still not responded to the protest made by UNRWA on 20 October. We hope that a reply will be forthcoming soon.

The situation in Beit Sahur seems to present a new example of repressive Israeli action in the occupied territories. The British Consul-General in Jerusalem has visited the town twice recently to see the situation there for himself. My Government is disturbed by his reports. Whatever the rights and wrongs of the tax strike by the citizens of Beit Sahur, due legal process must be followed. There can be no excuse for the illegal and arbitrary confiscation of furniture and household belongings and of the machinery which provides the livelihood for small business people. We have expressed our serious concern to the Israeli authorities and we call for an end to the blockading of Beit Sahur.

(Sir Crispin Tickell,
United Kingdom)

My Government is also concerned that on 27 October the Israeli authorities prevented the Greek Orthodox, Latin and Armenian Patriarchs from visiting the town to celebrate mass and distribute food. This interference with freedom of religious practice runs counter to the basic principles for which all civilized countries, including Israel, stand.

Israel has continued to deport individuals from the occupied territories, in breach of its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention and in repeated defiance of this Council's resolutions. Education continues to suffer. The universities remain closed, and the education of many children has been damaged by the two-year closure of schools in the West Bank.

There is a continuing cost in human lives caused by the conflict in the occupied territories. My Government condemns all such killing - both the killing of civilians by the Israeli forces and the killing of so-called Palestinian collaborators. Violence begets violence.

The need for steps to be taken towards a negotiated settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict is more urgent than ever. My Government fully supports the efforts of all concerned to initiate a dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians. We hope that agreement making this possible will soon be reached. We continue to hold that elections should take place in the occupied territories on the basis of land for peace, in fulfilment of the Council's resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). This could set in motion a process leading to an international peace conference, to be held under United Nations auspices. This would be the appropriate forum for direct negotiations between the parties with a view to reaching a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. DJOUDI (Algeria) (interpretation from French): It is a great pleasure for the Algerian delegation to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of November. The esteem and regard in which your colleagues hold you and the personal and professional qualities which have won you their appreciation give us confidence in the way in which our work will be conducted.

I also wish, Sir, to extend the warm congratulations of my delegation to Ambassador Fortier of Canada, your predecessor, on the remarkable way in which he directed the Council's work last month.

At a time when the whole international community is at last expressing its unrestrained indignation at and condemnation of the suffering and injustice to which the Palestinian people is being subjected in its occupied homeland, the Security Council is once again being called upon - for the eighth time in two years - to make the necessary response to a situation whose seriousness is known to all. Although the continued escalation of repression against the Palestinian people was foreseeable, being inherent in the very logic of an occupation in disorder, it is no less distressing for that, and because of its magnitude the Council must now put an end to an intolerable situation.

In the 23 months of the intifadah not a day has gone by without its sad list of murders, persecution, the dynamiting of homes, expulsions and humiliation of all kinds. The toll of Palestinian victims, while clearly showing the brutality, magnitude and sophistication of the means of repression being used, is also overwhelming proof of the unshakeable will of the Palestinian people, armed only with its courage and its determination to free itself of the yoke of oppression.

Faced with that resolve, the occupier - pretending to forget the inescapable lessons of history, which teach us that no domination, however brutal, can bend the

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

will of a people to win back its freedom - still prefers to use more force, more violence and more repression. Therefore, should we be surprised that the most basic human rights are being so outrageously trampled under foot? How could we fail to see in the expansion of repressive brutality a frenzied resolve to break the resistance of the Palestinian people, to wound it mortally, to dispossess it of its goods and to do harm even to its most sacred spiritual values?

The courageous attitude of the 12,000 inhabitants of the village of Beit Sahur is a perfect symbol of the dimensions of the tragedy of the Palestinian people and the injustice it has been fighting for more than 40 years. The events taking place there inevitably make us aware of the realities of the Israeli occupation and reveal, if that is needed, what the dynamics of these events involve and represent.

Above all, Beit Sahur is striking proof of the determination of the Palestinian people to resist the occupation. By refusing to pay the tax, by that courageous, collective act of solidarity, the inhabitants of Beit Sahur have shown that the domination of a people cannot - it has never been possible anywhere - take on the appearances of normality and appeasement and that their resistance will never give way to any kind of accommodation. We also see another symbol, that of the unity and solidarity of all Palestinians, demonstrated in the general strike, lasting five days, which paralysed Gaza and the West Bank at the very time when the inhabitants of Beit Sahur were refusing to pay taxes to the occupier and his war machine.

The events at Beit Sahur are also symbolic because they reveal the pitiful means available to the Palestinians faced with the occupier's repressive arsenal - which, although already formidable, is constantly being strengthened. Openly stating their intention of teaching a lesson - those were the very words used by the Zionist Minister of Defence - the occupation forces themselves were taught a

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

lesson, because they were not able to break the unshakeable will of the inhabitants of the village, even though those forces tried everything - even a blockade to starve the inhabitants and deprive them of care, to brutalize them, and finally to steal their belongings.

It must be said that what happened at Beit Sahur will be added to the list of heroic acts of the Palestinian people, to strengthen its determination and will to resist the forces of occupation, whatever the scope of the methods they use. It must also be said that the events at Beit Sahur and the continuing general uprising are nothing less than the expression of the will of a people to live in freedom, affirm its identity and build its own State on the soil of its homeland.

One of the great merits of the intifadah is that it has given the struggle of the Palestinian people a new dimension and prevented the struggle of several generations from being taken for granted, ensuring that the Palestinians are not victims of further injustice and indifference. Thanks to the intifadah, the international community has finally become aware of the true dimensions of the tragedy of the Palestinian people and of the noble struggle they are waging, and it has repeatedly expressed its concern and denounced the oppressor's attitude. The fact that many indignant and accusing voices are being raised, even by those whom one could not suspect of sympathy for the Palestinian people, is striking proof that the justice of that people's struggle and its claims is recognized.

At last everyone recognizes the clear reality that the Middle East crisis will be resolved only when the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people are fully met - its aspirations to attain its national rights to self-determination and the establishment of its own State in its homeland.

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

If the tragedy of the Palestinian people is still continuing today, it is more than ever up to the international community, and particularly, to those within our Organization who have special responsibilities to see that the way to just and lasting peace is resolutely followed whenever the situation so requires. In the Middle East, neither the situation of the population in the occupied territories nor the threats to international peace and security posed by the prolongation of the Palestinian tragedy can justify any delay. They require resolute commitment on the part of all to promote a just and lasting solution in the Middle East.

Towards that end, the General Assembly has already defined the course of action. By pronouncing itself in favour of the restoration of the national rights of the Palestinian people, by recognizing the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the sole and legitimate representative of that people, and by proclaiming that the only appropriate forum is the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of the PLO and all other parties concerned, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, the General Assembly has made its decisive contribution to a global settlement of the crisis in the Middle East.

It is within the framework of the establishment of the conditions necessary for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East that the Council is being called upon today to shoulder its responsibilities under the United Nations Charter. This means, first of all, that it must take a stand on the urgent measures needed to ensure at last the security and integrity of the population of the occupied territories, in accordance with the Fourth Geneva Convention. In view of the systematic and continued violations of that Convention it is incumbent upon the Council to act promptly and with determination. In so doing the Council will not only be acting in a way consistent with the serious

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

developments in the occupied territories, but it will also be doing what the international community expects it to do in order that international law may prevail. It would thus be acting in accordance with the requirements of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. That is what the international community expects of it and that is the urgent appeal of the Palestinian people.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): I thank the representative of Algeria for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. FORTIER (Canada): Sir, allow me to begin my statement this morning by congratulating you most sincerely on your assumption of the office of President of the Security Council for the month of November. I have full confidence that your stewardship of this office will be carried out with the efficiency and effectiveness for which you are so well known. I should also like to take this occasion to express my heartfelt appreciation, and that of my delegation, for the many gracious and generous words of tribute which have been made to Canada for its service as President of the Council for the month of October.

We are meeting in this Chamber to consider once again the situation in the occupied territories at a time when the concern of the community of nations for the situation in those troubled and strife-torn territories has deepened. The continuing climate of violence only serves to lessen the chances for building a peaceful future and achieving a comprehensive political solution to the Arab-Israeli dispute.

The acts of vigilantism which have occurred and the incidents of violence directed by Palestinians against other Palestinians are particularly distressing to my Government. Canada also remains deeply concerned at the continuing use, on the part of the Israeli authorities, of arbitrary measures, including collective

(Mr. Fortier, Canada)

punishment, as part of its efforts to attempt to repress the uprising in the occupied territories.

In that connection, the recent raids conducted by members of the Israeli security forces on offices of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and frequent actions which prevent UNRWA staff from carrying out their mandate to provide educational, health and social services to the Palestinian refugees, cannot be passed over in silence. The Government of Canada has repeatedly called upon Israel to allow UNRWA to implement fully and effectively its difficult mandate.

Canada believes the human rights of the Palestinian inhabitants of the occupied territories must be respected fully by the Israeli authorities, and we cannot accept the imposition of arbitrary measures and the use of collective punishment such as occurred recently in the town of Beit Sahur. These events have only served to underline the urgent need for the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention to be fully applied to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. A decision on the part of the Israeli authorities to do so would make a significant contribution to establishing a climate in which a dialogue between the parties could lead to early results.

The past year has seen a number of welcome steps and initiatives on the part of several Governments and parties with an immediate interest in the early and successful resolution of the Arab-Israeli dispute. These positive developments, which have led my Government to hope that a peaceful resolution to this long-standing dispute could be found on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), must not be hindered by a continuing cycle of violence. To this end, all parties must exercise restraint and avoid actions which are clearly in violation of the human rights of others. Only then can the stage be set for negotiations between the parties on the basis of a willingness to compromise and in a climate of good will and mutual respect.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): I thank the representative of Canada for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. GOSHU (Ethiopia): Sir, allow me, at the outset, to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of November. Keenly aware, as we are, of your eminent qualities as a skilled diplomat, we are confident that your guidance will enable the Council to consider the issue before us in the most effective manner.

I should also like to pay a well-deserved tribute to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Canada, Ambassador Yves Fortier, for the businesslike manner in which he conducted the work of the Council last month.

The Council has met once again to consider the deteriorating situation in the occupied Palestinian territories. Once again, our attention is drawn to a situation involving the use of force by an occupying Power against a civilian population under occupation. My country has, on previous occasions, pronounced itself on the increased use of force by Israel against Palestinians in the territories under its occupation. None the less, the latest incidents, such as those at Beit Sahur and other towns, compel us to restate our position on this grave matter.

The tragic situation involving the siege of towns as well as the arbitrary arrest and intimidation of civilians in the territories under consideration are not merely aberrations on the part of a few members of the occupying Power, but rather a manifestation of a consistent pattern pursued in order to suppress the popular resistance of the Palestinian population. Indeed, the harsh measures taken with a view to undermining the cultural relics and symbols of the population is a matter we cannot condone, nor are the vigilante attacks against a civilian population.

(Mr. Goshu, Ethiopia)

If the use of force against the Palestinians in the occupied territories continues to go unchecked, prospects for a peaceful and just solution to the Middle East problem will continue to be marginalized. It is our considered view that the use of repressive measures and concerted acts of violence against those who demand justice will only contribute to the further deterioration of a complicated situation. Consequently, it is incumbent upon the Council to urge the occupying Power to assume its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, create the conditions for peace and tranquillity to prevail in the occupied Palestinian territories and ensure the humane treatment of the population under occupation. In that connection the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report of 21 January 1988 are worthy of attention by the Council.

The manifestations of violence in the occupied territories to which I have alluded are painful symptoms associated with a profoundly complex problem. As such, unless and until the broader problem of the Middle East and the specific issue of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are addressed, the attainment of peace will remain elusive. The Council should take measures aimed at imposing a universally recognized code of conduct on the occupying Power with a view to ensuring respect for the rights of the population under its control. It is equally vital that the Council should contribute its share to the resolution of the conflict in the Middle East. In the same vein, we believe the Council should call on all parties to contribute to the process within which a just and lasting settlement of the Middle East question can be brought about. In that noble endeavour, all States, and particularly those with special responsibilities in matters pertaining to the maintenance of international peace and security, must assume their moral obligations.

(Mr. Goshu, Ethiopia)

The volatile situation in the Middle East must not be allowed to deteriorate any further. The Council must assume its responsibilities regarding the impartial international protection of the Palestinian civilian population. Appropriate and timely action on the matter before the Council could constitute an initial step in the protracted and arduous struggle for peace and justice in the Middle East.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): I thank the representative of Ethiopia for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. de ALENCAR (Brazil): May I congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of November. Your personal qualities and diplomatic skills and experience are guarantees of success for our work.

I should like also to express our thanks to your predecessor, Ambassador Yves Fortier of Canada, and to congratulate him warmly on the efficient manner in which he conducted the business of the Council during the month of October.

Once again, the Arab Group has requested the Council to meet in order to examine the disturbing situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, and once again we are faced with reports of repressive measures imposed by Israel in those territories. The recent events in the town of Beit Sahur indicate that the already appallingly long list of brutal repressive practices introduced by Israel in the territories has been expanded by actions such as besieging towns, putting unacceptable pressure on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and keeping it from carrying out its function of providing basic services, preventing the heads of religious communities from performing their religious functions, and ransacking houses for the purpose of illegally and arbitrarily confiscating valuables.

(Mr. de Alencar, Brazil)

Such practices not only violate the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of which Israel is a Contracting Party, but they also have been taken in complete disregard of resolutions adopted by this Council, including resolution 605 (1987), whereby Israel, the occupying Power, was called upon to abide scrupulously by the Convention and to desist from policies and practices which are in violation of its provisions.

The policies and practices of repression implemented by Israel in the occupied territories throughout the Palestinian uprising have given rise to grave concern on the part of the international community. Accordingly, this Council has several times called upon Israel to respect the Fourth Geneva Convention and to accept its de jure applicability to the occupied territories. Such appeals have, unfortunately, been met with contempt and with even more repressive measures on the part of Israel.

It is therefore proper that now this Council should not only reiterate its call for Israel to abide immediately and scrupulously by the Fourth Geneva Convention and to cease forthwith all acts that are in violation of its provisions, but also, as recently requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 44/2, consider measures for the protection of the Palestinian civilian population under Israeli occupation. In order to implement the latter, the Council should endorse some of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report of 21 January 1988 (S/19443).

The Brazilian delegation is ready to support the draft resolution contained in document S/20945/Rev.1, which addresses the main points mentioned above and which might help diminish the suffering of the Palestinian people.

(Mr. de Alencar, Brazil)

The difficult situation in the occupied territories only heightens the pressing need for negotiations with the participation of all parties concerned, with a view to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. Brazil is ready to lend its support to all endeavours towards that end, and particularly towards the convening of an international peace conference under United Nations auspices, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 43/176.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): I thank the representative of Brazil for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. PENALOSA (Colombia) (interpretation from Spanish): I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. Our two countries have very special bonds of friendship and co-operation. We are convinced that, under your able leadership, the work of the Council during your term of office will be successful.

We want also to express our appreciation to Ambassador Fortier of Canada for his effective leadership and dedication last month.

(Mr. Peñalosa, Colombia)

Colombia, together with the other non-aligned members of the Security Council, is a sponsor of the draft resolution now before the Council for its consideration. As we have said on other occasions, it is frustrating to have to address the issue of the occupied territories once again without having seen any improvement in the situation and without the smallest sign that Israel, the occupying Power, is aware of the position taken by the Council over the past 22 years.

My delegation is especially concerned by - and has protested against - the violation of the rights of the Palestinian people and particularly the present occurrences at Beit Sahur, where not only does a state of siege exist but the inhabitants are being taken from their homes and their goods and possessions are being arbitrarily confiscated.

My delegation wishes to reaffirm once again that the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War is applicable to the Palestinian territories and that, therefore, Israel must comply with that Convention and refrain from any act that violates it.

My delegation has always been in favour of the prompt convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), on an equal footing, and of the five permanent members of the Security Council.

We must also repeat that any settlement must establish and ensure the right of all States in the region, including Israel, to exist within secure, internationally recognized boundaries, and assert and guarantee the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including the right to establish their own State.

We hope that the draft resolution before the Security Council will be adopted, as a further demonstration of the Council's concern and of its condemnation of Israeli practices in clear violation of legal and moral imperatives.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): I thank the representative of Colombia for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. BLANC (France) (interpretation from French): On behalf of my delegation, I extend to you, Sir, our congratulations on China's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of November. I should also like to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Yves Fortier of Canada, who presided over the Council's deliberations last month.

France views as particularly serious the situation prevailing in the occupied territories, which is becoming increasingly alarming. We are witnessing with growing concern a continuing escalation of violence and an intensification of confrontation in the West Bank and Gaza. The continuing repression by the occupying forces in those territories, which has already claimed hundreds of victims, including many adolescents and even small children, has with the passing months taken many different forms, and the Council's attention has been drawn to them on many occasions.

The facts before us today are particularly serious. The feelings they have aroused, both in the occupied territories and in the international community, as reflected by this meeting of the Security Council, are legitimate. Whatever the justifications offered, the events that have occurred at Beit Sahur and the methods employed by the Israeli army against its inhabitants must be condemned. My country also condemns the conduct of the military occupation authorities, which have forbidden access to the town by representatives of foreign States. The measures of confiscation that have been taken against the population of Beit Sahur should therefore be rescinded. On behalf of my Government, I once again call upon Israel strictly to respect its obligations as an occupying Power under the Fourth Geneva Convention.

(Mr. Blanc, France)

Recent developments in the situation on the ground, and particularly the sorry affair at Beit Sahur, are further indications of the untenable status quo in the occupied territories. Indeed, never has there been a greater need for violence and tension to give way to dialogue and negotiation, and prospects of this have emerged in recent months. We must all strive to encourage and strengthen them. Genuine and lasting peace can only be based on mutual recognition by Palestinians and Israelis of each other's respective rights and aspirations. In our view, and I repeat it here, a comprehensive political settlement - the imperative need for which is recognized by all - must ensure Israel's right to live within secure and recognized borders and the equally important right of the Palestinian people to a homeland in which they can establish the structures of their choice. France will continue its efforts to promote progress towards such a settlement.

In this connection the international community has a duty to perform and a role to play. In our view, it is within the framework of an international peace conference dealing with all aspects of the conflict and bringing together all the protagonists that negotiations between the parties directly concerned can finally be begun with the best possible chance of success.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): I thank the representative of France for the kind words he addressed to me.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations in order to present the position of the Chinese delegation on the item we are considering.

Both the Security Council and the General Assembly have considered the situation in the occupied Arab territories on many occasions and adopted numerous resolutions calling for strict compliance by the Israeli authorities with the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time

(The President)

of War and the immediate cessation of their policies and practices in contravention of the provisions of the Convention. However, the Israeli authorities, in total defiance of the solemn and just demands and strong appeals of the international community, continue to subject the innocent Palestinian people in the occupied territories to such inhumane practices as killing, detention and deportation and demolition of houses. Several hundred Palestinian civilians have been killed in the past two years or so. Moreover, in disregard of the dangerous plight of the Palestinian refugees, the Israeli authorities have arbitrarily obstructed the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in performing its duties by providing food, medicine and other humanitarian relief services. Such practices on the part of the Israeli authorities cannot but arouse the just resistance of the Palestinian people and the widespread condemnation of the international community.

(The President)

The Chinese Government and people are greatly concerned at the deteriorating situation in the occupied territories and wish to express their deeply felt sympathy for the Palestinian people, who are now going through untold suffering as a nation. The Chinese delegation supports the draft resolution submitted by the non-aligned countries and is in favour of the Security Council taking action resolutely to check the Israeli authorities' suppression of the Palestinians in the occupied territories.

China is of the view that the fundamental solution to the question of the occupied territories hinges on a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Middle East question. In this connection, I wish to reiterate the five points in the proposal made recently by the Chinese Government. They are: First, the Middle East question should be settled through political means and all parties should refrain from using force. Secondly, China supports the convocation of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations, to be attended by the five permanent members of the Security Council and the various parties concerned. Thirdly, China urges the parties concerned in the Middle East to hold various forms of dialogue deemed appropriate, including direct dialogue between the PLO and Israel. Fourthly, Israel must stop suppressing Palestinian residents in the occupied areas and must withdraw from the occupied Arab territories; accordingly, the security of Israel should also be guaranteed. And, fifthly, the State of Palestine and the State of Israel should extend mutual recognition and the Arab and Jewish peoples should coexist peacefully.

We believe that this proposal points to the correct way for turning the Middle East from a region of protracted turbulence into one of peace and tranquillity.

I now resume my function as President of the Council.

(The President)

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. If I hear no objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, I put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/20945/Rev.1.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour: Algeria, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Malaysia, Nepal, Senegal, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Yugoslavia

Against: United States of America

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): The result of the voting is as follows: 14 in favour and 1 against. The draft resolution has not been adopted, owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Security Council.

I shall now call on those members of the Council who have asked to be allowed to make statements following the voting.

Mr. PICKERING (United States of America): The United States is deeply distressed by the continuing violence and confrontation in the occupied territories. We have repeatedly called on all parties to exercise maximum restraint, to avoid bloodshed and reduce tensions. We remain convinced that the situation in the occupied territories can be resolved only through a comprehensive, negotiated settlement which is firmly based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and which recognizes Israel's need for secure and recognized boundaries and the legitimate rights of the Palestinians.

(Mr. Pickering, United States)

My Government is now engaged in intensive efforts to help launch an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue, which could lead to elections and negotiations on a comprehensive peace in the region. In our view, repeated recourse to the Security Council with one-sided draft resolutions does not contribute to this process nor to a real reduction of confrontation in the occupied territories. Such draft resolutions and the divisive debate that accompanies them do not help to alleviate conditions in the area, nor do they help to create an atmosphere conducive to the establishment of a constructive dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians. On the contrary, such resolutions and debates exacerbate tensions and distract the parties from the critical issues that need to be addressed in the region.

The text before the Council today, like others before it, criticizes Israeli actions without regard for the existing political and security situation in the occupied territories. For example, there is no reference to acts of violence directed by Palestinians against Israelis, and by Palestinians against other Palestinians. All members are aware that the United States is not willing to support unbalanced proposals of this kind. Our voting record in the Security Council is clear. However, as members of the Council are also aware, we have accepted adoption of resolutions on these issues when they have met the test of balance and fairness. We also do not agree with the draft resolution's request that the Secretary-General conduct on-site monitoring of the situation in the occupied territories, as this connotes to us a permanent, ongoing presence on the ground. However, we do support efforts by the Secretary-General, and his representatives, to visit the occupied territories to report periodically on the situation there.

I need not reiterate United States policy regarding the human rights situation in the occupied territories or on the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention

(Mr. Pickering, United States)

to the area. These positions are well known. We have long opposed administrative detention, deportation and house destructions and sealings, and other forms of collective punishment, which are contrary to the provisions of that Convention. We have raised directly with the Government of Israel our concerns over such issues as the blockade of Beit Sahur, interference with the operations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, school closures and other questions concerning Israel's administration of the occupied territories. Our dialogue with Israel on these questions will continue.

For the reasons I have just described, my Government has voted against the draft resolution.

Mr. FORTIER (Canada) (interpretation from French): The draft resolution just voted upon refers to "Palestinian territory occupied by Israel" and "the occupied territory". We wish to emphasize that we take it as understood that the territories to which the resolution refers are the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, which have been under Israeli occupation since 1967. The Canadian vote in favour of this draft resolution does not indicate any change in my Government's view on the status of these territories.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): I call on the representative of Palestine.

Mr. TERZI (Palestine): It is really distressing to see a concern expressed so overwhelmingly by the Security Council being undermined by a permanent member.

That permanent member described the debate here as divisive. We have all listened to all the statements. Fourteen members of the Council voted in favour and in their statements all expressed their concern. The only divisive and undermining element was the position of that particular permanent member, the United States.

He also stated that resolutions exacerbate the situation. Of course, while billions of dollars are given to the occupying Power to persist in its policies - inhuman, atrocious acts of State terrorism - a resolution calling for peace would be considered an exacerbating element. We sincerely hoped and wished that the Council had met to consider the global approach, the political situation, and not the derivatives of that situation which have been manifested through the criminal acts and acts of State terrorism of the occupying Power.

If I recall rightly, the Council has before it a request from the General Assembly that it should help towards resolving the problem in a comprehensive settlement. My understanding is that so far it is the United States that is tying the hands of the Secretary-General, preventing him from pursuing his endeavours, and that is the obstacle to convening a meeting of the Council to start, just start, a comprehensive peace process.

Of course, we are aware that the United States is undertaking some individual action. I wish the United States would realize that the situation does not permit of individual action. It should be collective action by the Council and by the international community. It is the responsibility in the first place of the five permanent members to get together as they did in other cases and let the Council and the Secretary-General move.

Concerning on-site monitoring, I cannot understand why the Government of the United States is trying to cover up for what the Israelis are doing. On-site monitoring does not entail any unnecessary violation of the sovereignty of the State of Israel. These are crimes committed in a territory under occupation, and

(Mr. Terzi, Palestine)

it is incumbent upon the United Nations - it is its duty - to have a presence there in order to report on such violations as those that have been referred to during this discussion.

Again, it is distressing that the Palestinian people in their glorious intifadah, in their hope that the Security Council will help and facilitate the bringing of peace, will only learn that the United States Government does not urge Israel to return illegally and arbitrarily confiscated property to its owners. They will interpret that as the United States condoning and encouraging such action. Our people will not understand that the United States wants Israel to desist from committing such practices and actions. Our people will understand the position of the United States as giving blessings to what the Israelis are doing.

It is really important for international peace and security, but primarily for the welfare of those children and women in the territory under Israeli occupation, that the state of belligerency should come to an end and that the children, our children as well as the children of the Israeli occupying forces, should be able to look forward with a smile towards a bright future and peace.

The position taken by the Palestinian people, as expressed in our National Council, has been a peace initiative. The entire international community supported it in the resolution adopted last year in the General Assembly. We only hope that that permanent member will no longer be the obstacle to the achievement of peace in the Middle East through a just solution to the question of Palestine by enabling the Palestinian people to enjoy their rights and exercise them in their own country, in their own independent State.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.