

Considering that, in accordance with Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter of the United Nations, all States Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or acting in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations,

Gravely concerned at the threat to peace and security in the Mediterranean region posed by the air raid perpetrated on 1 October by Israel in the area of Hammam-Plage, situated in the southern suburb of Tunis,

Drawing attention to the serious effect which the aggression carried out by Israel and all acts contrary to the Charter cannot but have on any initiative designed to establish an overall, just and lasting peace in the Middle East,

Considering that the Israeli Government claimed responsibility for the attack as soon as it had been carried out,

1. Condemns vigorously the act of armed aggression perpetrated by Israel against Tunisian territory in flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and norms of conduct;

2. Demands that Israel refrain from perpetrating such acts of aggression or from threatening to do so;

3. Urges Member States to take measures to dissuade Israel from resorting to such acts against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States;

4. Considers that Tunisia has the right to appropriate reparations as a result of the loss of human life and material damage which it has suffered and for which Israel has claimed responsibility;

5. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council on the implementation of the present resolution by 30 November 1985 at the latest;

6. Decides to remain seized of the matter.

On 29 November 1985, the Secretary-General submitted a report in pursuance of paragraph 5 of Security Council resolution 573 (1985).<sup>16</sup> The Secretary-General annexed to his report the replies he had received from Israel, Oman and Tunisia to his note by which he had transmitted to all Member States the text of resolution 573 (1985), drawing particular attention to paragraph 3 of the resolution. The reply from the representative of Israel<sup>17</sup> contended that Security Council resolution 573 (1985) condemned Israel for defending itself from PLO terrorist attacks, thus distorting not only the principle of self-defence but also the very concept of aggression, and that, therefore, Israel viewed the content of the resolution as entirely unacceptable and rejected, in particular, the improper use of the terms "acts of aggression" and "acts of armed aggression". On the other hand, the reply from the representative of Tunisia,<sup>18</sup> which had been prepared in accordance with paragraph 4 of resolution 573 (1985), included a report evaluating the damage that had resulted from Israel's armed aggression against Tunisian territory on 1 October 1985.

<sup>16</sup>S/17659, subsequently replaced by S/17659/Rev.1.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., annex II.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., annex II and appendix.

### 13. STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL [IN CONNECTION WITH THE *ACHILLE LAURO* INCIDENT]

Decision of 9 October 1985 (2618th meeting): Statement by the President

By a letter dated 8 October 1985,<sup>1</sup> the representative of Italy requested that the hijacking of the Italian ship *Achille Lauro* be brought to the attention of the Security Council with a view to firmly condemning the act and to appeal for the prompt liberation of the hostages.

At the 2618th meeting, on 9 October 1985, prior to the adoption of the agenda,<sup>2</sup> the President made the

following statement on behalf of the members of the Council:<sup>3</sup>

The members of the Security Council welcome the news of the release of the passengers and the crew of the cruise ship *Achille Lauro* and deplore the reported death of a passenger.

They endorse the Secretary-General's statement of 8 October 1985, which condemns all acts of terrorism.

They resolutely condemn this unjustifiable and criminal hijacking as well as other acts of terrorism, including hostage-taking.

They also condemn terrorism in all its forms, wherever and by whomever committed.

<sup>1</sup>S/17548.

<sup>2</sup>The agenda for the meeting was "The Middle East problem, including the Palestinian question".

<sup>3</sup>S/17554.

### 14. THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM, INCLUDING THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION

Decision: No decision

By a letter dated 30 September 1985,<sup>1</sup> the representative of India, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, requested the urgent convening of the Security Council under the item entitled "The Middle East problem, including the Palestinian question".

At its 2618th meeting, on 9 October 1985, the Security Council included the item in its agenda. The Council decided to invite the following, at their request, to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure: at the 2619th meeting, the representatives of Israel, Kuwait and the Syrian Arab Republic; at the 2620th meeting, the representatives of Algeria, Czechoslovakia, Morocco, Pakistan and Yugoslavia; at the 2621st meeting, the representatives

<sup>1</sup>S/17507.

of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, the German Democratic Republic and Indonesia; and at the 2622nd meeting, the representatives of Cuba and Jordan.

At its 2619th meeting, on 10 October 1985, the Council decided, by a vote, and in accordance with the Council's previous practice, to extend an invitation to the representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) (the Head of the Political Department and Member of the Executive Committee of the PLO), Mr. Farouk Kadoumi). The Council extended an invitation under rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure at the 2619th meeting to the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and at the 2620th meeting to the Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States (LAS) to the United Nations (Mr. C. Mak-soud). At the 2621st meeting, on 11 October 1985, an invitation was extended, also under rule 39, to the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (Mr. S. S. Pirzada).

The Council considered the item at its 2618th to 2622nd meetings, on 9 to 11 October 1985.

At the 2619th meeting, on 10 October 1985, the representative of India stated that the current meeting of the Security Council had been convened in pursuance of the decision taken by the Ministerial Conference of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries in order to discuss all aspects of the question of Palestine, which was considered to be the crucial element in a just and lasting political settlement in the Middle East. The proposal was aimed at focusing attention on the basic issue of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. Recent developments in the area, such as Israel's occupation of Lebanon, in defiance of Security Council resolutions 508 (1982) and 509 (1982), the creation of new settlements in the occupied territories and the latest attack on Tunisia had resulted in further destabilization. India's support for the establishment of the Palestinian State was rooted in its awareness of the historical, territorial and national identity of the Palestinians. However, their lands, even beyond those defined by the General Assembly in its resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 partitioning Palestine, had remained forcibly occupied. Israel, as an occupying Power, by repression, terror and denial of fundamental rights, violated the Geneva Conventions and was seeking to bring about permanent geopolitical and demographic changes in the region at the expense of the Palestinians. The speaker referred to the International Conference on the Question of Palestine held in 1983 and the Geneva Declaration calling for the convening of an international conference on peace in the Middle East on the basis of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant United Nations resolutions. The proposed conference was to be convened under the auspices of the United Nations with the participation of all parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the PLO as well as the United States of America, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and other concerned States. The Security Council was given the primary responsibility for creating appropriate institutional arrangements to guarantee and carry out the accords of the conference. That recommendation had been endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth sessions. The representative recalled General Assembly resolutions 38/58 C and 39/49 D requesting the Secretary-General, in consul-

tation with the Security Council, to convene the conference and to report to the Assembly on his efforts. Gratitude was expressed to the Secretary-General for initiating the process of consultations. India agreed with the proposed plan of action, suggesting, however, that there be some flexibility in the selection of the participants. In regard to the time-frame for the conference, he expressed the view that urgent preparatory measures should be undertaken so that it could be convened at the earliest possible time. He regretted that, while most of the States were in agreement with the proposed peace conference, others were not.

The speaker reiterated the position of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries: that the question of Palestine was the core of the Middle East problem and the root cause of the Arab-Israeli conflict. They had been particularly active in mobilizing international support against Israeli actions in the occupied territories and its invasion of Lebanon; they reaffirmed their opposition to Israeli practices and policies in the occupied territories. The fundamental principles for the solution of the problem, as reaffirmed by the recent Ministerial Conference, were that a durable peace could not be achieved without the total and unconditional withdrawal of Israel from all Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by it since 1967, including Jerusalem, and without a just solution of the problem of Palestine, on the basis of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including the right to establish a Palestinian independent State in its homeland, Palestine.

The speaker acknowledged the important role played by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. He expressed his profound distress at the acts of violence against innocent persons and condemned terrorism in all its forms. He appealed to the international community to join efforts to find a speedy, just and comprehensive solution to the problem. He hoped that the Security Council would demonstrate the necessary will to take resolute action.<sup>2</sup>

At the same meeting, the President of the Security Council, speaking in his capacity as representative of the United States of America, acknowledged the seriousness of the situation in the Middle East. It grew more violent. The number of innocent lives lost was increased with the murder of his countrymen. Terrorism was one aspect of the situation in the region but it dominated all others. His country welcomed a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, which could be only achieved at the negotiating table. He was relieved at the release of the passengers and crew of the Italian ship *Achille Lauro*, but was angered that one American, a 69-year-old passenger, had been brutally murdered by the terrorists. The speaker recalled other incidents and victims of terrorism, nationals of different States, who were still being held hostage. He compared the terrorists to pirates, who were for centuries considered as *hostis humani generis*. He considered every terrorist attack as an attack on the world community, every justification offered for terrorism as undermining the rule of law. The representative thanked the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General for their statements on the subject of terrorism and called upon the United Nations to speak out firmly and unmistakably against such acts. He

<sup>2</sup>S/PV.2619, pp. 7-15.

also quoted the President of the United States and the Secretary of State who condemned terrorism and political intimidation as antithetical to freedom of political expression, a return to barbarism undermining all that the modern world had achieved and making further progress impossible. He urged all peoples and Governments to renounce terrorism, whatever its presumed justification, as inimical to the norms of civilization.<sup>3</sup>

Also at the same meeting, the representative of the PLO, referring to the hijacking of the Italian ship, said that during the incident the Government of Italy had asked the PLO to intervene and attempt to save the lives of those on board the ship. Consonant with the belief in the rights of the individual, the PLO had stepped in. The speaker gave an account of the cases in the past when the PLO had been asked and indeed had assisted in protecting the lives of United States citizens despite the position of its Government that was hostile to the PLO cause. The National Council of the PLO had condemned international as well as State terrorism. With respect to the 69-year-old victim of the hijacking, the representative stated that there was no evidence that he had been killed by the hijackers and according to his family he had had heart attacks in the past and was paralysed. He also recalled the 165 Palestinians killed in Tunisia. Turning to the main issue, the representative stated that the United States and Israel were the creators of terrorism and tension in the area and the only obstacles to a solution of the problem.

He thanked the Council for the opportunity to participate in its work. He saw the invitation as a reaffirmation of the conviction that Palestine was at the core of the Middle East conflict. Referring to the recent Israeli aggression against Tunisia and against the PLO, he noted that the Security Council had condemned that act of aggression, but had failed to impose the necessary sanctions against Israel under Chapter VII of the Charter. Israel was not a peace-loving State and its policies posed great dangers to international peace and security. Similarly, by its unwillingness to support that action, the United States persisted in impeding the proceedings of the Security Council, in preventing it from deterring Israel and from taking the necessary steps that would contribute to the advancement of the peace process in the Middle East. The United States thus did not measure up to its role as a super-Power, a permanent member of the Security Council and a State that assumed responsibility in that capacity for the implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations.

The speaker further stated that the debates in the Security Council demonstrated the extent of the isolation of Israel and the United States on the subject. The recent act of aggression was a blow against the peace effort in the area, which could not intimidate the Palestinian people into capitulating. On the contrary, such acts gave them more courage in defending their rights and their territories. The acts had proved that the Israeli iron fist policy in the Palestinian territories and the other occupied Arab territories, as well as the policy of aggression and terrorism against the displaced Palestinian people, would only lead to more violence, destruction and suffering for all the peoples of the world.

Turning to the current meeting of the Security Council, the representative of the PLO noted that it had been convened in the framework of General Assembly resolution 38/58 of 13 December 1983. That resolution called for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East and requested the Secretary-General to undertake preparatory measures. It also invited the Security Council to facilitate the organization of the conference. All positive efforts were obstructed by the United States.

The speaker observed that the United States recognized only one Security Council resolution, namely, 242 (1967), as, in their words, not dealing with the political dimension of the Palestinian question. Thus, the American veto was directed solely against the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people. Furthermore, the United States had regressed and refused a meeting with a joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation. The representative recalled General Assembly resolution 181 (II) accepting the establishment of an Arab State in Palestine side by side with a Jewish State. It had requested the Security Council to implement that resolution but the Council had not shouldered its responsibilities.

Instead, it recommended that Israel be accepted as a Member of the United Nations, without taking account of the results. Since then, Israel had tried to obliterate the Palestinian people; expropriated its land and property; prevented the return of the refugees. It had waged wars against the neighbouring Arab countries and occupied the territories of Egypt, the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon. It had been widening the circle of violence to Iraq and Tunisia. By such a policy and such practices Israel flouted Security Council resolutions. Its arrogance of power, supported by the United States, made it cynical about the rights of the Palestinian people and the international community. Israel had never put forward or accepted any peace initiatives. On the contrary, it had always impeded such initiatives. The Palestinian people, under the leadership of the PLO, confronted the most extreme conditions of occupation, displacement and aggression and faced the Israeli war machine, repression and terrorism. It had never given up its peaceful goal, because a just and lasting peace would guarantee the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people as recognized by the United Nations, including the right to self-determination and the establishment of its independent State. The PLO had welcomed the joint USA-USSR statement of 1 October 1977, the Soviet initiative of 1981 and the Arab Peace Plan of 1982. The PLO also accepted the resolutions adopted in 1983 by the international conference organized by the United Nations, in particular the Geneva Declaration on Palestine containing guidelines for an international peace conference on the Middle East. The representative considered that time was of the essence. The conditions created in the territories by Israel might create negative consequences for the prospects of peace. A feeling of despair about the achievement of a just and comprehensive solution would lead to extremism. All attempts to circumvent the exercise by the Palestinian people of their rights, including the attempt to ignore the PLO, its sole legitimate representative, would never lead to the desired peace. He called on the Security Council, which had the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, to bear in mind General Assembly resolution 38/58 and to facilitate the continued efforts of the Secretary-General, as well as those being made interna-

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 15-20.

tionally, within the framework of the United Nations on the basis of all the United Nations resolutions concerning the Palestinian question.<sup>4</sup>

At the same meeting, the representative of Egypt stated that convening the Security Council to consider the agenda item proposed by the Conference of the Foreign Ministers of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries was a reaffirmation of confidence in the United Nations, during the fortieth anniversary of its founding, and of the primary role of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security. The Council was expected to set the Palestinian question—the core of the conflict in the Middle East—on the right path that would lead to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of that conflict. He recalled that at the commemorative meeting a number of Foreign Ministers of States, members of the Security Council, had pointed out that the resolutions adopted by the Council formed the legal and political basis for the establishment of peace, in particular resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). During the general debate in the General Assembly the representatives of all Member States had called for speedy and responsible steps to be taken to reach a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East.

He said that Israel's practices against the Palestinians, whether within its territory or against those who had been forced from the occupied territories, would not lead to a solution of the problem. Escalation would not weaken Egypt's resolve to continue efforts towards peace. He welcomed the decisive steps taken by the PLO and Jordan and their joint programme of action aimed at breaking the stalemate. The Arab parties wished to move to serious negotiations with other parties to the conflict within an appropriate international framework. The United Nations should continue to provide support for those initiatives.

The policy of occupation and domination had not achieved either peace or security, rather it had made clear that the restoration of the occupied territories in return for peace, safety and good-neighbourliness was the key to real security.

Egypt was prepared to play its part. It was for the Israeli side to show a real and serious response. In Egypt's view the requirements for establishing peace were, firstly, the affirmation of the right of all peoples and States in the region to live in peace within legitimate borders and free from outside interference; secondly, recognition of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, including self-determination; thirdly, Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories, including the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Syrian Golan Heights and, first and foremost, of the Holy City of Jerusalem; and, fourthly, the establishment of normal relations between all the parties to the conflict. The United Nations had long been witnessing that historical crisis, with its complications and its victims. It had attempted, through its mediation efforts, its envoys, its observers and the peacekeeping troops to contain the repercussions and deal with the implications. It was high time for the Organization to demonstrate true collective will and to establish stability in the region.

In conclusion, the representative turned to the *Achille Lauro* incident. He said that Egypt, proceeding from its firm principle to condemn violence by whomsoever com-

mitted, condemned the hijacking of that Italian vessel. He pointed out that the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Egypt noted among other things that the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East was the best guarantee of a halt to acts of violence and counterviolence and the only path that could lead to stability in the region and the maintenance of regional security. As the incident had taken place outside Egyptian territorial waters, on the high seas, on a vessel that was flying the flag of a country friendly to Egypt and to Palestinians, Egypt, on humanitarian grounds, and so as to save innocent lives, had taken on the difficult task of intermediary. Egypt was happy when the crisis was resolved and regretted the disappearance of one of the passengers in a manner indicating that a crime had been committed. That act was condemned. They regretted, as did everyone else, that the happiness of saving all lives was tinged by an innocent victim.<sup>5</sup>

At the 2620th meeting, on 10 October 1985, the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (Senegal) supported the position of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries that the attention of the international community, and especially of the Security Council, should be drawn to the urgent need to restore peace to the Middle East, for the benefit of all States and peoples of the region. The question of Palestine was at the heart of the Israeli-Arab conflict. The United Nations, through the Security Council, had the responsibility for ensuring recognition of the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, to independence, to national sovereignty, to return of its property and to physical protection and decent living conditions in the refugee camps.

He recalled the recommendations made by the Committee, in accordance with its mandate, and contained in its first report, in 1976. Those recommendations had been endorsed every year by the General Assembly. However, the Security Council had neither followed them nor implemented them. Since 1983 the Committee had promoted the recommendations adopted by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, which called, *inter alia*, for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East. The General Assembly had endorsed the proposal (resolutions 38/58 C and 39/49 D) and invited the Council to make appropriate provisions and take steps for the holding of that conference. The guiding principles for such a conference were as follows: (a) attainment by the Palestinian people of their rights; (b) the right of the PLO to participate on an equal footing with other parties in all efforts and in the conferences on the Middle East; (c) the need to put an end to Israel's occupation of Arab territories; and (d) the right of all States in the region to existence within secure and internationally recognized boundaries. The Assembly had therefore invited all parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the PLO, as well as the United States of America, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the other members of the Security Council and other States concerned to participate in an international conference on peace in the Middle East. Only the United Nations and in particular the Security Council, according to the speaker, could provide the legal and political framework acceptable to the majority of the international community.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 20-37.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 37-47.

The Chairman considered that the first element of that conference already existed. He mentioned recommendations made by the Committee, the Fez Arab Plan, the Jordanian-Palestinian plan and other approaches. The Committee, in its programme of work for 1985, had given priority to the convening of that conference; it had sent delegations to the capitals of certain members of the Security Council, emphasizing the Council's primary role in the matter. The Committee was encouraged by the growing acceptance of the idea of the conference, which had emerged at various seminars and symposia, and by work undertaken by many non-governmental organizations. It was also pleased by the positive responses given by the majority of the members of the Council, but regretted the reservations of certain States.

He thanked the Secretary-General for his efforts and once again called upon the Security Council not to miss the historic opportunity that might be given by an international conference on peace in the Middle East. The Council could, by its legitimate authority, and with appropriate political will, establish peace in the region.<sup>6</sup>

At the 2620th meeting, the representative of Israel addressed the recent hijacking of the Italian cruise liner *Achille Lauro*. He said that the 69-year-old passenger, confined to a wheelchair, who was Jewish, had been brutally killed by the hijackers. He considered that the Security Council, if it were to act responsibly, would discuss that latest manifestation of terrorism and piracy on the high seas, which affected every country, either directly or indirectly. He presented a report of the Israeli intelligence services distributed also to a number of Member States. According to the representative, the hijacking of the *Achille Lauro* had been carried out with the prior knowledge and approval of the PLO Chairman. Therefore his subsequent protestations and "benevolent intermediacy" were a cover-up for his own role and for the failure of the mission.

The speaker stated that originally the plan had been for the terrorists to travel to the Israeli port, to disembark and to stage a hostage-taking there and then to demand the release of the terrorists being held in Israeli jails. He referred to the letters he had submitted to the Security Council describing similar seaborne attacks by the PLO. The speaker considered that the terrorists on the *Achille Lauro* could not carry out the operation as planned; they had been discovered and had had to act. The hijackers had then put forward their demands to release 50 Palestinian Arab terrorists held in Israel and then shot the passenger. Besides that, all the Governments concerned had refused to accept the ship and refused to negotiate with the ship. At that point, the PLO Chairman had appeared on the scene as a mediator. In fact, he had ordered the hijackers to bring the ship back to Egypt and to give themselves up to the Egyptian authorities.

The representative went on to say that the attempts of the PLO to deflect world attention from its own crimes could not deceive anybody. He reminded the Council of many killings that he considered to have been committed by the PLO, but denied by them. The Security Council should discuss how to stop these killings and the terrorism, and how to deal with the States that give them support. He

claimed that there were three categories: States who opposed terrorism, States who supported it and States that assumed a neutral position. But on the question of terrorism there could be no neutrality. Those States who fought terrorists should not give them safe passage, should extradite them or prosecute them, and should not facilitate their activities. As for the countries which supported terrorism, the international community should organize the political, economic and, if necessary, military measures to be taken jointly against these outlaw States.

The representative welcomed the forceful statement of the Security Council concerning the *Achille Lauro* cruise ship and suggested that the Council proceed to a concrete discussion of the steps that were necessary.

The representative of Israel noticed that he had not been sitting at the Council's table, but in the back. He had done that deliberately to express the feeling that the meeting was irrelevant and unwarranted—not only because of the failure to address the immediate problem of terrorism and piracy but also because of his disagreement with the approach to the item on the agenda. His country was not going to agree to a conference unless there was a real desire on the part of some representatives to discuss the situation in the Middle East. He presented a summary of the burning aspects of the situation in the Middle East to be dealt with and gave an example of the violent acts that he attributed to the issue. He also referred to the broader tendencies of several extremist Arab regimes and groups to plunge the region into violence, bloodshed and terror. He concluded by saying that until the Security Council acted responsibly and devoted attention to the real situation in the Middle East he would sit away from the Council table.

The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic stated that the Council was considering the crisis in the Middle East and the cause of Palestine, which was the essence thereof. He attributed Israel's persistence in escalating its policy of aggression and terrorism against the Arab people to the expansionist nature of Zionism, the plan to establish "great Israel" and the support of imperial forces, headed by the United States. Israel's idea of "peace" amounted to short periods of truce between their unceasing aggressive acts in the name of religion, race or history. He called Zionism a second stage of a colonialist movement born of the European imperialism that was using the same doctrine and methods. Israel had acquired territory by force, replaced the indigenous population with foreign settlers and tried to deprive the Arabs of their human rights. In order to justify taking over the lands of Palestine and surrounding territories, Zionism had invented the notion of "the chosen people" and "the promised land".

The speaker considered the annexation of Arab territories and Israel's policy to constitute crimes against humanity and to be violations of international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention, and compared its actions with those of South Africa. He also underlined that the expansionist plans could not have been carried out without foreign support. The United States, which had taken over from the British Empire in the Middle East, had provided Israel with military power and economic assistance to create situations of fait accompli. However, despite the division within the Arab world, the Arab people had never stopped their resistance. Referring to Israel's claim that the Arabs—who were defending their land, homes and their very existence—were terrorists, he said that the Western world by

<sup>6</sup>See S/PV.2620.

nature, and Israel by imitation, believed that resistance against an aggressor was permissible. Thus, European resistance against the Nazis was not terrorism. He wondered how resistance by the Arab population could be considered terrorism.

Turning to the Camp David Accords, the representative stated that his country rejected that deal and favoured a just, comprehensive and complete peace based on the spirit of unanimity of the Arab Peace Plan, which had been agreed to at the 1982 Fez Summit.

The Syrian Arab Republic rejected partial solutions, such as the Amman Agreement of 11 February 1985, which was an attempt to eliminate the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to establish their own independent State in their national homeland. That right to self-determination was the keystone of the United Nations resolutions dealing with the situation in the Middle East. Renunciation of that right would make the concept of self-determination devoid of meaning. His country supported the idea of convening an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Soviet Union and the United States. He further stated that the United States and Israel not only rejected the principles of a comprehensive settlement, they also rejected the invitation to participate in an international conference on peace in the Middle East called upon in General Assembly resolution 38/58 C of 1983, which had been adopted by 124 votes in favour, with 4 votes against, including the United States and Israel. The Israeli and American rejection of any constructive initiative reflected their resolve to pursue only their own aggressive interests, to the detriment of the interest of all Arab nations. They wanted to eliminate the role that other countries could play, in particular the Soviet Union and the non-aligned countries, as well as to make all the United Nations resolutions on the Middle East null and void and to deprive the Secretary-General and the United Nations of any role in any possible attempt to achieve peace.

The representative presented quotations from the speeches or articles of the United States Secretary of State as proof of American-Israeli strategic anti-Arab cooperation and strongly criticized the States that adhered to partial solutions.

He called upon the Security Council to adopt the following measures: firstly, to emphasize the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, above all the right to an independent State; secondly, to oblige Israel to withdraw unconditionally from all occupied territories; thirdly, to convene an international conference on peace in the Middle East with the participation of all parties involved. Otherwise, sanctions should be applied against Israel under Chapter VII of the Charter.<sup>7</sup>

At the same meeting, the representative of Australia stated that he believed that peace in the Middle East could be achieved only through a negotiated agreement that would take account of the rights and legitimate aspirations and concerns of all peoples of the region. Ultimately, a comprehensive settlement would be possible on the basis of a series of related compromises, including Israel's withdrawal from occupied Arab territories; the recognition by

the States of the region and the PLO of Israel's right to exist; acceptance of all elements of resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973); and the acknowledgement of the right of self-determination for the Palestinian people. He recognized that the core of the Middle East problem was the future of the Palestinians and that a durable settlement was possible with the involvement of all interested parties. He called for compromises and flexibility and welcomed the latest positive developments.

The speaker considered that the hijacking of the *Achille Lauro* and the Israeli raid on the headquarters of the PLO in Tunisia were not isolated incidents. Terrorism and violence in the Middle East of that type were matters of concern to the international community and a threat to peace.

The representative of Australia expressed the concern of his delegation about the course of that and other recent debates in the Security Council for two reasons. Firstly, the potential effectiveness of the Council was being eroded by its misuse as a smaller General Assembly. The Council was not a forum—it had responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and could contribute only by adopting a cooperative approach. Secondly, the Council seemed to have become an arena of confrontation rather than a forum for conciliation. Statements blaming one side or another did not advance the cause of peace in the Middle East; statements should be constructive and helpful rather than polemical. He concluded by saying that the Council could only play a useful role in that or any dispute if the world community put aside the questions of violence and vengeance and turned to conciliation.<sup>8</sup>

At the same meeting, the representative of Peru stated that the rule of law was being undermined by a desire to pursue specific interests to the detriment of ethical and legal considerations. Many elements that characterized the Middle East crisis were prohibited by international law: occupation, de facto annexation and a constant recourse to the threat and use of force, which encouraged terrorism and violence. Nevertheless, fundamental principles and the framework for a solution of the conflict already existed. His country's position included, firstly, the radical affirmation that everything related to Palestine was an essential part of the problem of the Middle East; secondly, recognition that the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people included the right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent State; thirdly, a fundamental criterion that any solution must ensure the right of all States to exist within secure and internationally recognized borders; and fourthly, the convening of an international conference on the Middle East. The task before the Security Council was to combine all those elements into a workable plan. It would require perseverance and political will. However, the international community should not lose sight of the original commitment, which almost 40 years later remained unfulfilled. Nothing could be accomplished without the re-establishment of justice vis-à-vis the Palestinian people, the truth, the Organization and history.<sup>9</sup>

At the same meeting, the representative of Thailand reiterated the consistent and steadfast support of his Govern-

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 23-46.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., pp. 46-50.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. 50-53.

ment of the rights of the Palestinian people represented by the PLO, recognized the crucial importance of that issue and the need to convene an international peace conference to advance further the prospects of peace in the region.<sup>10</sup>

At the 2621st meeting, on 11 October 1985, the representative of Morocco stated that the Middle East had become a chronic hotbed of tension that jeopardized international peace and security. The United Nations provided a sound international framework for the establishment of a just and balanced order. In response to the intransigence of Israel and its attempts to frustrate efforts to resolve the problems by peaceful means, measures needed to be taken to halt the deterioration of the situation. The United Nations resolutions concerning the imposition of sanctions on Israel in accordance with the provisions of the Charter should be implemented. He denounced the aggressive Israeli actions, such as the invasion of Lebanon, the annexation of Gaza, the Golan and Jerusalem, expropriation of Arab property, the expansion of settlements and the imposition of Israeli laws in the occupied territories. Israel defied the Security Council resolutions that declared those measures null and void: its unchanging policy exceeded even the policies of the dark days of colonialism.

The latest act of aggression against Tunisia and the headquarters of the PLO aimed at collective punishment of the Arabs, a goal that Israel did not even deny. The Israeli aim was to create an irreversible situation to subjugate the Palestinian people for the sake of "Greater Israel", extending from the Nile to the Euphrates.

He went on to say that the question of Palestine was the core of the conflict in the Middle East. He referred to the decisions of the United Nations organs on the subject. He reaffirmed his country's support for the proposals made at the Fez Summit in 1982. He also declared that, in accordance with the principles held by Arab nations and guided by Arab civilization and tradition, the Summit strongly deplored all forms of terrorism from whatever source—and foremost among them being Israeli terrorism—within and outside the occupied territories. At the same time, he called for adherence to the principles of law and justice in the achievement of national goals and in defence of national rights, especially the rights of the Palestinian people. He reaffirmed the solidarity of Morocco with the people of Lebanon and expressed support for its unity and stability.

He called for the Security Council to take the steps necessary to convene an international peace conference on the Middle East under the aegis of the United Nations with the participation of the United States of America, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the other permanent members of the Security Council, as well as the PLO, the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. He also expressed his gratification at the efforts of the Secretary-General, as well as the Division for Palestinian Rights and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.<sup>11</sup>

At the same meeting, the representative of China summarized the main aspects of the Middle East question. Firstly, since 1948 Israel had pursued a policy of aggression and expansion. That had brought disasters to the Palestinian people: the prolonged occupation of Arab land and

the grave violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon. The Palestinian and other Arab countries would not cease their just struggles to recover the lost territories and regain their national rights. Regrettably, the logic of "might makes right" prevented the Security Council from upholding justice and checking aggression. Secondly, the core of the Middle East question was the Palestinian issue, the most tragic in contemporary history. The geographical nature and population composition of the occupied territories were incessantly being altered and millions of refugees were forced to wander homeless. Israel was bent on destroying the PLO and the Palestinian people themselves and on eliminating their national rights. Notwithstanding the fact that the struggle would be protracted and tortuous, those rights could not be wiped out by anyone. Thirdly, the correct way to solve the problem was to find a comprehensive, just and durable settlement, which included the following basic elements: withdrawal of Israeli troops from all occupied territories, including Arab Jerusalem, the restoration of the rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and establishment of their own State, and the universal right of all countries in the region to independence and existence. The Chinese delegation supported all the proposals to that end. It considered that the PLO had the right to participate in a comprehensive settlement on an equal footing.

It favoured an international peace conference on the Middle East in compliance with the principles of the Charter and the relevant resolutions adopted by the United Nations. It hoped that the consideration of the question would make the Security Council better informed as regards the urgency of achieving a settlement and would take effective measures to promote it, so as fully to perform its duties of maintaining international peace and security.<sup>12</sup>

Also at the same meeting, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan stated that violence and instability in the Middle East were a direct consequence of the denial of the national rights of the Palestinian people. Demand for the recognition of those rights was seen by Israel as a threat to its expansionist ambitions resulting in its unprovoked attacks against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Arab States and the utter disregard of the resolutions of the Security Council. Responsibility for Israeli intransigence must be shared by its powerful allies. Israel's assertion to arrogate itself to strike any country, at any time, in defence of its arbitrarily conceived interests, did not arise from a sense of weakness or insecurity.

Instability and a cycle of terror and counterterror would benefit no one. Israel would reap the bitter fruit of a bitter endeavour unless it refrained from the course of reckless aggression and responded constructively to the Arab initiatives for peace.

The Minister called on the Security Council to make a beginning towards rectifying the injustices perpetrated against the Palestinian people for more than half a century by promoting the United Nations proposal for an international conference on the Middle East. The Security Council must also reaffirm its past decisions. Failure to restrain Israel would intensify the Middle East conflict. In conclusion he reiterated the solidarity of his country with the Arab States and the Palestinian people in their struggle to

<sup>10</sup>ibid., pp. 53-58.

<sup>11</sup>S/PV.2621, pp. 1-12.

<sup>12</sup>ibid., pp. 12-16.

bring stability to their area and to regain their legitimate national rights.<sup>13</sup>

At the same meeting, the representative of Algeria said that the circle of crisis continued to widen because of the essentially centrifugal Israeli violence. Thus, through planned horizontal escalation, the western Mediterranean had become, since the aggression against Tunisia, the new axis of a permanent threat. Hence, the entire Mediterranean was in danger of conflagration. The threat was at the doors of Europe. Security could not be only centred on Europe, which had been unable either to contribute to the settlement of so-called peripheral crises or to save itself from the present, much less the future, unpredictable consequences of an uncontrollable conflict. It would be a dangerous illusion to believe that a conflict such as that in the Middle East could be kept within limits acceptable within the concept of world peace.

Israeli faits accomplis could not make the world forget the established rights of the Palestinian people. Palestinian resistance was proof of the determination of that people to regain their national rights.

The Security Council, for the first time in many years, and on the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, was taking an overall look at the Middle East conflict and the prospects for its settlement. It would be to the honour of the Council if it proved equal to the task of dealing with the problem, becoming aware of the seriousness of the threat and promoting a just and lasting solution to the conflict, in all its dimensions, within the framework of an international conference in order to restore the rights of the Palestinian people and re-establish internationally guaranteed peace and security for the peoples of the Middle East.<sup>14</sup>

Also at the 2621st meeting, the representative of Yugoslavia stated that as one of the non-aligned his country had always considered that the solution of the Middle East crisis had to be comprehensive and that self-determination, sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, equality, non-interference, withdrawal of foreign troops from occupied territories and full respect for the right of peoples to chose their own way of development were the only basis on which to build peace.<sup>15</sup>

At the same meeting, the representative of Indonesia said that the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, while maintaining solidarity with the Palestinian people, had time and again taken the initiative in the search for a peaceful solution. The decision to call again upon the Security Council to consider the Middle East problem was prompted by the seemingly unsurmountable obstacles in the way of convening of the international peace conference. The responsibility for the deadlock fell on Israel. The list of its transgressions against the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of civilized behaviour had been fully documented by the scores of resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. The representative went on to say that Indonesia had always condemned terrorist acts directed against innocent civilians. He also emphasized that, despite insufficient action by the Security Council in the past, the international community continued to place its fervent hope and expectation on the Council, which had

the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. He hoped that the major Powers would eschew their strategic designs on the region and cooperate with the Secretary-General in his efforts to achieve agreement on the modalities of the international peace conference. The active support and participation of both super-Powers was essential. He concluded by reiterating that the only way to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace was through diplomacy and serious negotiations.<sup>16</sup>

At the 2622nd meeting, on 11 October 1985, the representative of Bangladesh noted that the Security Council had shown exemplary determination in dealing with the two latest acts of aggression by Israel and South Africa against Tunisia and Angola, respectively. The present situation in the Middle East was a direct consequence of a historic injustice towards the Palestinian people uprooted from their homes through the creation of Israel, who adopted an aggressive and hostile policy in violation of all cannons of international law. All the efforts of the United Nations had been bluntly rejected by Israel. The latest act had been committed against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Tunisia. Israel's argument that it had the right to attack any State, at any time, on the pretext of the self-conceived notion of its defence considerations was unacceptable. The international community must oppose the propagation of such a new doctrine of state terrorism, the only purpose of which was to continue to acquire new territories through acts of aggression. Although the General Assembly and the Security Council had been concerned with the problem of terrorism for some time, no concrete and effective actions had yet been taken to stop those criminal acts. Bangladesh condemned all forms of terrorism, whenever and wherever committed. Terrorism begot terrorism. Therefore he strongly urged that some initiative be taken in that regard by the General Assembly.

The Palestinian question was at the core of the Middle East problem. It could not be settled unless the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people were fully restored. His delegation supported the proposal of the convening of the international conference and the Arab peace plan. The Security Council, in particular its permanent members, had the responsibility to bring peace to the region. The Council's failure in the past to ensure implementation of its own decisions and resolutions had encouraged Israel to intensify its aggressive policies. There was an urgent need to enhance the effectiveness of the Security Council in carrying out its principal role and also to examine the possibilities of further improvement of its functioning. The Council should adopt effective and concrete measures for the initiation of the peace process.<sup>17</sup>

At the same meeting, the representative of the German Democratic Republic attributed the problem of the Middle East to the unqualified support of Israel by the main imperialist Power: united in the so-called strategic alliance, the United States of America and Israel sought to involve the Arab region to a greater extent in an imperialist's global confrontation course to expand its military pressure and to extend the range of operations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to that part of the world. Such plans and practices had to be halted. He supported the joint ac-

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 16-21.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 21-27.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 27-31.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 32-36.

<sup>17</sup>S/PV.2622, pp. 1-11.



tion of Arab forces on the basis of the Fez Peace Plan and the convening of the international conference.<sup>18</sup>

At the same meeting, the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics shared the concern of the non-aligned States at the turn of events in the Middle East. His country closely monitored the situation in that part of the world and was acting with a great sense of responsibility to ensure that the situation did not get out of control. The reasons for the persistence of the hotbed of tension in the region was the aggressive and expansionist policy of the Israeli leadership. The main victim was the Arab people of Palestine. He reminded the Council that Israel owed its very existence to a decision taken by the United Nations and that same decision also envisaged the formation of an Arab State in Palestine. However, Israel had raised to the level of State policy flouting the rights of other peoples and using terror and violence. It could not pursue its policies without the support of the United States of America. He emphasized that the struggle that the Arab people had had to wage for independence and honor could not be overcome by intimidation, blackmail or military adventures. The strength of the Arabs was in their unity. The unfortunate lessons of Camp David showed that the problems of the Middle East could not be tackled on the basis of separate deals. Only the collective method could provide genuine prospects of establishing lasting peace. He supported the convening of an international peace conference with a view to reaching a radical solution. He denounced the obstructionist position of the United States of America and Israel in this regard. The representative further outlined the proposals of the USSR, which were in conformity with the Arab peace plan. He also expressed the readiness of his country to participate in the international safeguards for settling the Middle East problem.<sup>19</sup>

At the same meeting, the Permanent Observer for LAS to the United Nations said that the objective of the meeting of the Security Council was to bring about an input in the best way to exhaust the political and diplomatic options that the mechanism of the United Nations could provide in order to minimize violence, terrorism, occupation and a drain on the credibility of the Organization. He condemned the recent murder of the Director of the American Anti-Arab Discrimination Committee in California, USA, who was a distinguished American of Palestinian origin. He also expressed sympathy and concern over the condemnable events on the hijacked Italian ship and the murder of an American passenger. He thought that the rhetoric of vengeance generated an atmosphere of permissiveness towards violence. The Council had to refocus on the possibility of using the United Nations mechanism to resolve the crisis in the Middle East. The Arab League believed in negotiations, whether direct or indirect. Yet it could not accept negotiations that tended to be transformed into a way of dictating the terms and the outcome. He considered that the Security Council could be utilized for the achievement of a peaceful solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. He went on to say that Israel used every incident and accident in their part of the world to support its position of denial to the Palestinians of their legitimate rights, as well as a pretext for aggression. For this purpose, the activities of

certain fringe groups were attributed to the PLO, a recognized United Nations observer and a member of LAS. Israel also used a systematic propaganda campaign in a deliberate attempt to picture the aberration that had taken place on the ship in the Mediterranean as a pattern characteristic of the PLO. This intensive campaign of distortion was designed to provide the pretext for action like the one against Tunisia.

The Arab League placed great hopes on the forthcoming meeting of the leaders of the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. He did not want the Arab-Israeli conflict to be put in the context of Soviet-American tensions or competition. He considered that the defusing of the problems in the region could contribute to the objectives of disarmament and thought that the meeting could create a climate conducive to the convening of the international conference. The Observer noted that unilateral crisis management had proved counterproductive in the Middle East. He considered that the best way to defuse tension and achieve success was to resolve regional conflicts within the framework of the United Nations. He referred to the instances where the call for an international conference by one super-Power had been opposed by the other. He thought that, because all issues in the Middle East were interrelated, their resolution must follow the pattern of simultaneously addressing the problems. In that context, he viewed the convening by the Security Council of an international conference as a means to remove the causes of violence in the Middle East. He also condemned the Israeli policy of blackmailing the international community and called upon the United States to examine issues on their merit, independent from Israeli influence. He concluded by saying that it was critical that Israel did not practice a vicarious veto on the United Nations.<sup>20</sup>

Also at the 2622nd meeting, the Secretary-General of OIC stated that the Middle East problem was of particular concern to the Islamic world. The current meeting was being held against the backdrop of two recent events. The first was the unprovoked aggression by Israel against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Tunisia with the loss of more than 60 innocent lives and the injury of many others. That was an act of state terrorism. The second was the hijacking of an Italian vessel by four Palestinians, which had resulted in the death of an elderly passenger. That was an act of individual terrorism. The plane carrying the four hijackers had been intercepted by the United States Air Force and landed at a United States military base in Italy, a matter that had legal implications out of the scope of that debate. He continued by saying that the cycle of violence, however, was a symptom rather than the cause of the conflict in the Middle East. The basic cause was the denial of the national rights of the Palestinian people, a nation that was being destroyed. For 40 years Israel had violated the Charter of the United Nations, the principles of international law and morality. It rejected all peace proposals. The Security Council, which had primary responsibility under the Charter for preserving international peace and security, was helpless because Israel enjoyed the backing of a veto-wielding member of the Council. He called upon the United States of America to review its position and its policies and to join the international community in eradicating

<sup>18</sup>*ibid.*, pp. 76 and 77.

<sup>19</sup>*ibid.*, pp. 16-22.

<sup>20</sup>*ibid.*, pp. 22-33.

injustice towards the people of Palestine. He then referred to the principles of a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East, saying that it was the duty of the Security Council to ensure the recognition of those principles by all the parties. The best means to do so would be to convene an international conference. He concluded by stating that the Council must be prepared, in the exercise of its functions, to apply sanctions under Chapter VII of the Charter against those who refused to implement its decisions.<sup>21</sup>

At the same meeting, the representative of Jordan considered that the Security Council had to recall the four facts that were at the root of the conflict. Firstly, the basic problem of the Middle East was the continued Israeli occupation of the Arab Territories and the denial of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. Secondly, the increase in acts of terrorism on the one hand and of legitimate resistance on the other reaffirmed the seriousness of the absence of a comprehensive peace and call for prompt actions to achieve peace. Thirdly, the continuation of a state of no war-no peace was the cause of violence in the region and of a continued resistance to the occupiers. And, fourthly, the time factor was not working in anybody's favour. Time could either run against the interests of all if it was used to strengthen aggression and expansion, or be in the interests of all if it was used properly through the adoption of flexibility and moderation.

In its search for peace, Jordan, in cooperation with other Arab countries, had advocated the political option to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict—that of territory in return for peace. The international unanimity on the question, nevertheless, had not led to the establishment of peace in the Middle East. The speaker considered that Palestinians should participate in the formulation of a just and lasting peace. They should also take part in guaranteeing it through the PLO, which had committed itself to the principle of peace and coexistence, based on the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people. He reiterated the principles of the Palestinian-Jordanian Accord of 1985 and

of the Fez resolutions of 1982 and expressed his support for the convening of an international conference attended by all parties in addition to the permanent members of the Security Council. He recalled that all parties concerned had supported the convening of a conference at one stage or another beginning with the aftermath of the 1973 war. He did not believe that such a conference would strengthen the negotiating position of one party at the expense of the other. He concluded by urging the parties to adopt a more positive and flexible position in order to enhance the possibility for peace.<sup>22</sup>

Also at the same meeting, the representative of Israel conveyed a statement by his Foreign Ministry expressing satisfaction and appreciation for the resolute action of the United States in intercepting the aircraft carrying the terrorists responsible for the act of piracy against the *Achille Lauro*. He considered that act to be an essential step towards the eradication of global terrorism. He stated that the debate degraded the Security Council and that, with the exception of the representative of Israel, none of the speakers had addressed the many conflicts that were consuming the Middle East. Instead, the Council's attention was being deflected from the real issue: PLO terrorism and its danger to world security. He referred to the murder of the *Achille Lauro* passenger and said that the PLO was trying to transform its crime into a victory. He considered that the terrorist act was known and approved by the PLO leadership. He also referred to the bombing of the PLO headquarters in Tunisia, stating that the United States Armed Forces had not participated in the operation. The representative recounted several other incidents demonstrating his country's position on the question. He concluded by saying that his country had called repeatedly for the negotiation of a peace agreement with neighbouring countries—to follow the model of Camp David—direct negotiations without preconditions. He was looking forward to the time when the Security Council would be the scene of constructive diplomacy.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 33-38.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 46-53.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 53-58.

#### 15. LETTER DATED 6 DECEMBER 1985 FROM THE CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF NICARAGUA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

By a letter dated 6 December 1985,<sup>1</sup> the representative of Nicaragua requested an urgent meeting of the Security Council for the purpose of considering the extremely serious situation created by the escalation of acts of aggression directed against his country by the United States Administration.

At its 2633rd meeting, on 10 December 1985, the Security Council included the item in its agenda and invited at the same meeting the representatives of Nicaragua, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mexico, the Syrian Arab Republic and Viet Nam; at the 2634th meeting, the representatives

of Costa Rica, Cuba, Honduras and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya; and at the 2636th meeting, the representative of Zimbabwe, at their request, to participate, without the right to vote, in the consideration of the item.<sup>2</sup> The Council considered the question at its 2633rd, 2634th and 2636th meetings, on 10 to 12 December 1985.

At the same meeting, the President drew the attention of the members of the Council to documents S/17674, S/17675 and S/17676, which contained the texts of letters dated 5 and 6 December 1985 from the Chargé d'affaires

<sup>1</sup>S/17671.

<sup>2</sup>For details, see chap. III of the present *Supplement*.