

"Mr. President, Honorable Members :

It never occurred to me that my second meeting with this honorable assembly since 1974 would take place in the hospitable city of Geneva. I had thought that the new political positions and postures evolved by our Palestinian people in the course of the Algiers meeting of the Palestine National - Council (PNC), all of which have been made public and extremely well received internationally, would have necessitated my travel to the United Nations headquarters in New York to brief you on our resolutions and projections on the issue of peace in our homeland as formulated by our PNC, the highest legislative authority in the Palestinian body politic.

I am both proud and happy to meet with you today, here in Geneva, after an arbitrary American decision barred me from going to you there. I am proud because I am in your midst and you are the highest rostrum for the problems of justice and peace in the world. I am happy because I am in Geneva, where justice and neutrality are a guidepost and a constitution in a world where the arrogance of power drives some to lose their sense of neutrality and justice. The resolution passed by your esteemed assembly, with 154 member nations voting to move the session here, was not a victory over the American decision but an unprecedented landslide for the international consensus in favor of justice and Peace. It is proof that our people's just cause has become embedded in the fabric of the human conscious.

Our Palestinian people will never forget the position taken by this honorable assembly and these friendly States in support of right and justice and in defense of the values and principles for which the United Nations organization was established- This position will be a source of confidence and security to all peoples subjected to injustice, oppression, and occupation and struggling, like the Palestinian people, for freedom, dignity, and survival.

I extend deep gratitude to all nations, forces, and international organizations and personalities who backed our people and supported its national right- particularly our friends in the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China, the socialist countries, the non-aligned States, the Islamic States, the African States, the States, the Latin American States, and other friendly States. I also thank Western European nations and Japan for their latest stands toward our people and I invite them to take further steps positively to evolve their resolutions in order to open the way for Peace and a just settlement in our region the Middle East.

I reiterate our solidarity with and Support for the liberation movements in Namibia and South Africa in their struggle, and our support for the African frontline states against the aggression of the racist South African regime. I seize this opportunity to express my gratitude to those friendly states which took the initiative in supporting us, in endorsing our PNC resolutions, and in recognizing the State Of Palestine. And I will not miss this opportunity to thank warmly His Excellency the of the United Nations, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, and his assistants for their relentless efforts to achieve humanity's aspirations for international detente and the settlement of its problems, particularly those related to the Palestine question. I also extend my thanks and appreciation to the chairman and members of the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People on their endeavors for Our people's cause, and I salute the nonaligned nations, "Committee of Nine on the Palestine Question" for all its constructive contributions to our people's cause.

And to you, Mr. President, my warm congratulations on the occasion of your election as president of this assembly. I have full confidence in your wisdom and insight. I also congratulate your predecessor on his skillful handling of the proceedings of the previous session. Lastly, I extend warm greetings and thanks to the Swiss government and People for making this meeting possible.

Mr President, Honorable Members

Fourteen Years ago on 13 November 1974, I received a gracious invitation from You to expound the Problem Of Our Palestinian People before this dignified assembly. Here I am returning to you after all these eventful years to see now Peoples taking their places in your midst, crowning thereby their victories in the battles for freedom and independence. To the representatives of these peoples, I extend the warm congratulations of our own. Let it be known that I return to you with a stronger voice, a firmer determination and a greater coincidence to reiterate my conviction that our struggle will bear fruit and that the State of Palestine, which we proclaimed at Our Palestine National Council, will take its place among you to join [hands with] You in consolidating the charter of this organization and the Universal Declaration of Human rights, in putting an end to the tragedies afflicting humanity, and in upholding the Principles of right, justice- Peace, and freedom for all.

Fourteen years ago, when you told us in the General Assembly hall- "Yes to Palestine and the people Palestine, yes to the Palestine Liberation Organization, yes to the inalienable national rights of the people of Palestine," a few imagined that your resolutions would carry little weight, failing to realize that these resolutions were among the springs that watered the olive branch I carried that day. Since then, we have watered it with blood, tears, and sweat, and it has turned into into a tree with roots

entrenched in the ground, and a stem reaching for the sky promising to bear the fruits of victory over coercion, injustice, and occupation.

You gave us hope that freedom and justice would triumph and we gave you a generation of our people that has dedicated its life to the realization of that dream. It is the generation of the blessed intifadah, which today is wielding the homeland's Stones to defend the honor of this homeland and be worthy of belonging to a people thirsting for freedom and independence

I bring you greetings from those heroic people, from our men and our women, from the masses of our blessed intifadah, which now enters its second year with great momentum and painstaking organization, using a civilized, democratic approach to weather and confront occupation, coercion, tyranny and the barbaric crimes committed daily by the Israeli occupiers. Greetings to you from our young men and women in the occupation forces' prisons and collective detention centers. Greetings from the children of stones who are challenging occupation forces armed with warplanes, tanks, and weapon-an unarmed Palestinian David facing, a heavily armed Israeli Goliath.

I said in concluding my address in our first encounter that as chairman of the Palestine Liberation organization and leader of the Palestine revolution, I reaffirm that we do not wish to see a drop of Jewish or Arab blood shed, that we do not want the continuation of the fighting for one extra minute. I appealed to you then to spare us all these ordeals and sufferings and to speed up work on the foundations of a just peace based on securing the rights, hopes, and aspirations of our people and the equal rights of all peoples

I said that I was calling upon you to stand by the struggle of our People to exercise its right to self-determination and to enable our people to return from the exile into which it was driven at gunpoint. I solicited your help to end this injustice to which successive generations of our people have been subjected over several decades so that they can live free and sovereign on their soil and in their homeland, enjoying all their national and human rights. The last thing I said from this rostrum, was that war breaks out from Palestine and that peace starts in Palestine.

The dream we entertained at the time was to establish a democratic State of Palestine in which Muslims, Christians, and Jews would live with equal rights and obligations as one unified community, like other peoples in this contemporary world.

We were shocked to hear Israeli officialdom interpret this Palestinian dream-inspired by the spiritual heritage that illuminated Palestine and the civilizational and humanitarian values calling for coexistence in a free democratic society-as a scheme to destroy and obliterate their entity.

Mr President:

We had to draw the necessary conclusion regarding the gap between this reality and the dream. We set out in the Palestine Liberation Organization to look for realistic and attainable formulas that would settle the issue on the basis of possible, rather than absolute, justice while securing the rights of our people to freedom, sovereignty, and independence ; ensuring for everyone peace, security, and stability; and sparing Palestine and the Middle East wars and battles that have been going on for forty years.

Didn't we, Mr. President, take the initiative of relying, on the charter and resolutions of the United Nations, the Declaration of Human Rights, and international legitimacy as the basis for the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict?

Did we not welcome the Vance-Gromyko communique of 1977 as a move that could form the basis of a proposed solution to this conflict ? Did we not agree to participate in the Geneva conference on the basis of the American-Egyptian statement of 1977 to push forward the prospects of a settlement and peace in the region ? Did we not endorse the Arab peace plan in Fez in 1982 and later the call for an international peace conference under the auspices of the United Nations and in keeping with its resolutions ? Did we not underwrite the Brezhnev plan for peace in the Middle East ? Did we not welcome and support the Venice declaration by the European Community as the basis for a just peace in the area ? Did we not welcome and support the joint initiative of presidents Gorbachev and Mitterand on a preparatory committee for the international conference ? Did we not welcome scores of political statements and initiatives put forward by African, Islamic, non-aligned, socialist, European, and other groups and states for the purpose of finding a peaceful settlement based on the principles of international legitimacy ?

What has been the attitude of Israel on all this, even though not a single one of the aforementioned initiatives or plans or communiqués lacks political balance or overlooks the claims and interests, of any of the parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict ?

Israel's response to all this has been the escalation of its settlement and annexation schemes ; the fanning of the flames of conflict with more destruction, devastation, and bloodshed ; and the expansion of the confrontation fronts to include brotherly Lebanon, which was invaded by the occupation troops in 1982, an invasion punctuated with slaughters and massacres perpetrated against

the Lebanese and Palestinian peoples, including the Sabra and Shatila massacres. Until this moment, Israel continues to occupy parts of south Lebanon, and Lebanon faces daily raids as well as air, sea, and land attacks on its cities and villages and our camps in the south.

It is painful and regrettable that the American government alone should continue to back these aggressive and expansionist schemes as well as Israel's continued occupation of Palestinian and Arab territories, its crimes, and its iron-fist policy against our children and women. It is painful and regrettable, too, that the American government should continue refusing to recognize the right of six million Palestinians to self-determination, a right which is sacred to the American people and other peoples on this planet.

I remind them, of the position of President Wilson, author of the two universal principles of international relations, ie, the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and the right of peoples to self-determination. I remind them, too, that when the Palestinian people were consulted by the King-Crane Commission in 1919, they chose the United States as the mandatory power.

Circumstances having prevented that, the mandate was given to Britain. My question to the American people is this : Is it fair that the Palestinian people should be deprived of what President Wilson prescribed ?

The successive American administrations realize that the only birth certificate for the establishment of the State of Israel is Resolution 181, approved by the General Assembly on 29 November 1947, and endorsed at the time by the United States and the Soviet Union. It provides for the establishment of two states in Palestine, one Palestinian Arab and one Jewish.

How then does the American government explain its position which acknowledges and recognizes the half of the resolution that pertains to Israel and rejects the half pertaining to the Palestinian state ?

How does the United States government explain its lack of commitment to the execution of a resolution that it has endorsed on more than one occasion in your esteemed assembly, ie., (UNGA) Resolution 194, which provides for the right of the Palestinians to return to the homes and properties from which they were evicted and for compensation for those wishing not to exercise this right ?

The United States government knows that neither the U.S. nor anyone else has the right to apportion international legitimacy and fragment the provisions of international law.

Mr President:

The uninterrupted struggle of our people for its rights has been going on for several decades during which it has offered hundreds of thousands of martyrs and wounded and endured all kinds of tragedies. On the contrary, its adherence to its Palestinian homeland and national identity has grown stronger.

The leaders of Israel, in their intoxication, deluded themselves into believing that, after our exodus from Beirut, the Palestine Liberation Organization would be thrown into the sea. Little did they expect our march into exile to turn into a procession of return to the homeland, to the field of battle, to occupied Palestine. The result was the heroic popular intifadah within our occupied land, the intifadah which is there to stay until the fulfillment of our goals of freedom and national independence.

I take pride, Mr President, in being one of the sons of these population [sic], whose men, women, and children are writing with their blood an outstanding epic of national resistance and who are performing legendary miracles daily to sustain their intifadah and make it grow until it can impose its will and prove that fight can prevail over might. We salute with deep pride our people of the intifadah as the authors of a unique democratic revolutionary experiment.

Theirs is the faith that could not be crushed by Israel's military machine ; that could not be killed by any kind of ammunition ; that could not be shaken by the burial of people alive, the breaking of bones, the inducement of miscarriages, or the usurpation of water resources ; and that could not be deterred by detention, internment, exile, deportation, collective punishment, the demolition of homes, the closure of universities, schools, trade unions, associations, institutions, and newspapers ; or the laying of siege to camps, villages, and towns. Those brutal reprisals have only served to strengthen that faith, spreading it to every household and giving it roots in every inch of our national soil.

A people with such a heritage and such a history is invincible. All the forces of tyranny and terror cannot sway its deep-rooted faith in its right to its homeland and in such values as justice, peace, love, coexistence, and tolerance. The rifle of the revolutionary has protected us from liquidation and the destruction of our national identity in the arenas of hot confrontation. We are fully confident of our ability to protect our green (olive) branch in the arenas of political confrontation-

The worldwide embrace of our just cause, pressing for the realization of peace based on justice, demonstrates clearly that the world has unequivocally identified the predator and the prey, the aggressor and the victim, the struggler for freedom and peace and the terrorist. The day-to-day practices of the occupation army and the gangs of fanatic armed settlers against our people, women and children, have unveiled the ugly face of Israeli occupation and exposed its true aggressive nature-

This growing worldwide awareness, has reached Jewish groups within Israel itself and outside. Their eyes have been opened to the reality of the problem and the essence of the conflict, particularly since they have witnessed the inhuman, day-to-day Israeli practices that undermine the tolerant spirit of Judaism itself.

It has become difficult, if not impossible, for a Jew to reject racial persecution and uphold freedom and human rights while remaining silent about Israel's crimes against Palestinian human rights, the Palestinian people, and the Palestinian homeland, particularly the ugly day-to-day practices of the occupiers gangs of settlers.

We distinguish, Mr. President, between the Jewish citizen whom the Israeli ruling circles have continuously sought to disinform and mislead and the Practices of the leaders of Israel. We realize that there are within and outside Israel courageous and honorable Jewish people who do not condone the Israeli governments policy of repression, massacres, expansion, settlement and expulsion and who recognize the equal rights of our people to life, freedom, and independence. On behalf of the Palestinian people, I thank them for their courageous and honorable stance.

Our people does not want a right which is not its own or which has vested in it by international legitimacy and international law. It does not seek its freedom at the expense of anyone else's freedom, nor does it want a destiny which negates the destiny of another people. Our people refuses to be better or worse than any other people. Our people wants to be the equal of all other peoples, with the same rights and obligations. I call upon all peoples of the world, especially those which were afflicted by the Nazi occupation and considered it their duty to close the chapter of coercion and oppression by one people against another and to lend a willing hand to all the victims of terrorism, fascism, and Nazism, to see clearly today the responsibilities cast upon them by history toward our downtrodden People which wants its children to have a place under the sun in their homeland-a place where they can live in freedom, like the rest of the children of the world.

Mr President.

It is cause for optimism that our struggle should culminate in the ongoing intifadah when the international atmosphere is marked by a serious and sustained quest for international detente, accord, and progress. We are heartened by the successes scored by the United Nations and its secretary-general in contributing effectively to settling many problems and defusing trouble spots around the world in this new environment of international detente.

Surely, it is impossible to consolidate this new, positive international climate without addressing problems and trouble spots around the globe. This would enable us to formulate a more accurate and reliable yardstick to assess the endeavors of man and nations and to brace for the next century and the challenges and new responsibilities it will lay before us in terms of averting wars and destruction and promoting more freedom, well-being, peace, and progress for mankind.

No one, Mr. President, would dispute the fact that the Palestine problem is the problem of our contemporary world. It is the oldest on your agenda. It is the most intricate and complex. Of the regional issues, it poses the most serious threat to international peace and security. Hence, its priority among the issues that should command the attention of the two superpowers and all the countries of the world. Hence, the need for an effort to outline a course for its equitable solution-a solution that would spread peace across the Middle East.

We in the Palestine Liberation Organization-as a leadership responsible for the people of Palestine and its destiny, loyal to the struggle of our people, venerating the sacrifices of our martyrs, eager to contribute to the prevailing climate of coexistence and detente, and [the] consensus of the need to participate in the peaceful efforts to find a political settlement that would put an end to the tragedies of wars and fighting and would open the way for peaceful coexistence under international law-summoned our Palestine National Council to convene in an extraordinary session in Algiers last 12-15 November ; the purpose being-, to specify and clarify our position as a main party to the Arab-Israeli conflict, which cannot be settled without its participation and approval.

It pleases me to inform you, with great pride, that our Palestine National Council, through a totally free exercise of democracy, has again demonstrated its ability to shoulder its national responsibilities, endorsing serious constructive and responsible resolutions which pave the way for us to reinforce and highlight our desire and contribution to find a peaceful settlement that would secure the national and political rights of our people as well as peace and security for everyone else.

Mr President :

. The first and decisive resolution of our Palestine National Council was the proclamation of the establishment of the State of Palestine, with the holy city of Jerusalem [al-Quds ash-Sharif) as its Capital. The State of Palestine was declared :

. By virtue of the Palestinian Arab people's natural historic, and legal right to their homeland, Palestine, and of the sacrifices of their successive generations in defense of the liberty and independence of their homeland ;

o Pursuant to the resolutions of the Arab summit conference,

o By the authority of international legitimacy, as embodied in the resolutions of the United Nations since 1947 ;

. In implementation of the Palestinian Arab people's right to self-determination, political independence, and sovereignty on their soil, and in conformity with your Successive resolutions.

It is important for me, in repeating this historic proclamation before the international community, now that it has become one of the Official United Nations documents to reaffirm that this decision is irreversible and that we will not relent until it succeeds in casting Off the Occupation, enabling Our Palestinian people wherever they may be to exercise their sovereignty in their state, the State of Palestine. In it they shall develop their national and cultural identity and enjoy full equality in rights. Their religious and political beliefs and their human dignity shall be safeguarded under a democratic parliamentary system of government built on freedom of opinion ; the freedom to form parties ; the protection of the rights of the minority by the majority and respect for the decision of the majority by the minority ; social justice and equal rights, free of ethnic, religious, racial, or sexual discrimination ; a constitution that guarantees the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary ; and on the basis of total allegiance to the centuries-old spiritual and civilizational Palestinian heritage of religious tolerance and coexistence.

The State of Palestine is an Arab State ; its people are an integral Part of the Arab nation and of the nation's heritage, its civilization, and its aspiration to attain its goals of social progress, unity and liberation. [The State of Palestine] is committed to the Charter of the League of Arab States, the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the principles of non-alignment.

It is a peace-loving state committed to the principles of peaceful coexistence and it shall strive with ail states and peoples to attain a permanent peace built on justice and respect of rights.

It is a state which believes in the settlement of international and regional disputes by peaceful means in accordance with the charter and resolutions of the United Nations. It rejects threats of force, violence, terrorism, or the use of these against its territorial integrity and political independence, or against the territorial integrity of any other state, without prejudice to its natural right to defend its territory and independence.

It is a state which believes that the future can only bring security to those who are just or have come back to justice. This, Mr. President, is the State of Palestine which we proclaimed and which we shall endeavor to embody so that it can take its place among the states of the world and share creatively in shaping a free world where justice and peace prevail. Our state, God willing, shall have its provisional government at the earliest possible opportunity. The PNC has mandated the PLO Executive Committee to assume the functions of the said government in the interim.

To embody the aforementioned decision, our Palestine National Council adopted a series of resolutions. I am keen to spotlight the most salient of these, which underline our serious determination to pursue the path of an equitable peaceful settlement and to exert maximum effort to ensure its success.

Our PNC reaffirmed the necessity of convening an international conference on the issue of the Middle East and its core, the Palestinian issue, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and all parties to the conflict in the region, including, on an equal footing, the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, on the understanding that the international conference will be held on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 and the safeguarding of the legitimate national and political rights of the Palestinian people, foremost among which is its right to self-determination.

Our PNC reasserted the need for Israel's withdrawal from all the Palestinian and Arab territories it occupied in 1967, including Arab Jerusalem ; the establishment of the Palestinian state ; the annulment of all expropriation and annexation measures ; and the dismantling of the settlements established by Israel in the Palestinian and Arab territories since 1967, as called for in the Arab summit resolutions of Fez and Algiers.

Our PNC also reaffirmed the necessity seeking to place the occupied Palestinian territories, including Arab Jerusalem, under the supervision of the United Nations for a limited Period, to protect our people to create an atmosphere conducive to the success of the proceedings of the international conference toward the attainment of a comprehensive Political settlement and the achievement of peace and security for all peoples and states in the Middle Fast, on the basis of mutual consent, and to enable

the State of Palestine to exercise its effective authority in these territories reaffirmed earlier by the resolutions of the Arab summits.

Our PNC called for the settlement of the issue of Palestinian refugee, in accordance with the pertinent United Nations resolutions. It guaranteed freedom of worship and the right to engage in religious rites for all faiths in the holy Places in Palestine. And it reconfirmed that the relationship between the fraternal Jordanian and Palestinian peoples is a privileged one and that the future relationship between the State of Palestine and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan will be built on confederal foundations, on the basis of the two fraternal people's free and voluntary choice, in consolidation of the historic ties that bind them and the vital interests they hold in common. The PNC reaffirmed the need for the Security Council to draw up and guarantee arrangements for security and peace between all the states that are parties to the conflict in the region.

It is important for me, Mr. President, to point out that these resolutions, in their content and wording, reflect our firm desire for peace and freedom, and our total awareness of the climate of international detente and of the eagerness of international community to achieve balanced solutions that address the claims and fundamental interests of the parties in conflict. These resolutions attest to the solemnity of the Palestinian's people's position on the question of peace ; that they are committed to peace and believe that it should be secured and guaranteed by the security council under the aegis of the United Nations. These resolutions constitute a firm , unambiguous response to all arguments, prejudices, stands, and pretexts used by some nations to cast doubt on the position and policy of the Palestine Liberation organization

At a time when our people were voting for peace through their intifadah and their representatives in the PNC, thereby confirming their positive response to the prevailing mood of detente in international relation and to the growing trend of toward the settlement of world conflicts by peaceful means, the Israeli government was fanning the flames of aggressive, expansionist conflicts, and religious fanaticism, thereby announcing its adherence- to the option of belligerence and the dismissal of our people's right.

The Palestine side, for its part, has formulated clear and responsible political positions which conform with the will of the international community, to promote the convening of the international peace conference and the success of its proceedings. The gratifying and courageous international backing as expressed in the recognition of the State of Palestine is further proof of the credibility of our course and resolutions and their compliance with the international will for peace.

While we greatly appreciate the free American voices that have explained and supported our position and resolutions, we note that the U.S. administration remains uncommitted to even-handedness in its dealings with the parties to the conflict. It continues to demand from us alone the acceptance of positions which cannot be determined prior to negotiation and dialogue within the framework of the international conference.

I would point out here that the answer to the many questions being posed, regardless of their source, rests solely on the acceptance of the equality of the two parties to the conflict and on the recognition of their equal rights on a reciprocal basis. And if the policies applied on the ground are any reflection of the policy-makers intentions, it is the Palestinian side that has more cause to worry and to demand reassurances about its fate and its future, facing as it does a state of Israel that is bristling with the latest of arms, including nuclear weapons.

Mr President :

Our Palestine National Council has reaffirmed its commitment to the UN resolutions that uphold the right of peoples to resist foreign occupation, colonialism, and racial discrimination, and their right to struggle for independence. It has also reaffirmed its rejection of terrorism. in all its forms, including state terrorism, emphasizing its commitment to its past resolutions in this regard, to the resolution of the Arab summit in Algiers in 1988, to UN resolutions 421/159 of 1987 and 61/40 of 1985, and to what was stated on this subject in the Cairo Declaration of 7 November 1985.

The position, Mr President, is clear and free of all ambiguity. And yet, I, as chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization, hereby once more declare that I condemn terrorism in all its forms, and at the same time salute those sitting before me in this hall who, in the days when they fought to free their countries

from the yoke of colonialism, were accused. of terrorism by their oppressors, and who today are the faithful leaders of their peoples, stalwart champions of justice and freedom. I also offer a reverent salute to the martyrs who have fallen at the hands of terrorism and terrorists, foremost, among whom is my lifetime companion and deputy, the martyr-symbol. Kbalil al-Wazir, and the martyrs who fell in the massacres to which our people have been subjected in the various cities, villages, and camps of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and South Lebanon.

Mr president, Honorable Members :

. The situation in our Palestinian homeland can bear no more waiting. Our people and our children, leading our march to liberty, holding aloft the torch of freedom, are being martyred daily for the sake of ending the occupation and laying the foundation of peace in their free, independent homeland. and in the region as a whole.

For this reason, the Palestine National Council, taking into consideration the circumstances of the Palestinians and the Israelis and the need for a spirit of tolerance between them, built its resolutions on foundations of realism.

The United Nations bears an historic, extraordinary responsibility toward our people and their rights. More than forty years ago, the United Nations, in its Resolution 181, decided on the establishment of two states in Palestine, one Palestinian Arab and the other Jewish. Despite the historic wrong that was done to our people, it is our view today that the said resolution continues to meet the requirements of International legitimacy which guarantee the Palestinian Arab people's right to sovereignty and national independence.

The acceleration of the peace process in the region requires special efforts on the part of the international community, particularly the United States and the Soviet Union, who bear a great responsibility toward the cause of peace in our region.

The United Nations, the permanent members of the Security Council, and all International blocs and bodies have a vital role to play at this stage. In my capacity as chairman of the PLO Executive Committee, presently assuming the functions of the provisional government of the State of Palestine, I therefore present the following Palestinian peace initiative :

First : That a serious effort be made to convene, under the supervision of the secretary-general of the United Nations, the preparatory committee of the international conference for peace in the Middle East in accordance with the initiative of President Gorbachev and president Mitterand, which President Mitterand presented to your assembly toward the end of last September and which was supported by many states-- to pave the way for the convening of the international conference, which commands universal support except from the government of Israel.

Second. In view of our belief in international legitimacy and the vital role of the United Nations, that actions be undertaken to place our occupied Palestinian land under temporary United Nations supervision, and that international forces be deployed there to protect our people and, at the same time, to supervise the withdrawal of the Israeli forces from our country.

Third : The PLO will seek a comprehensive settlement among the parties concerned in the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the State of Palestine, Israel, and other neighbors, within the framework of the international conference for peace in the Middle East on the basis of resolutions 242 and 338 and so as to guarantee equality and the balance of interests, especially our people's rights, in freedom, national independence, and respect the right to exist in peace and security for all.

If these principles are endorsed at the international conference, we will have come a long way toward a just settlement, and this will enable us to reach agreement on all security and peace arrangements.

Mr President :

I hope it is clear to everyone that our Palestinian people, determined though they are to gain their legitimate national rights to self-determination, repatriation, and the ending of the occupation of the Palestinian state's territory, are equally determined to strive for those goals by peaceful means within the framework of the international conference under the sponsorship of the United Nations and in accordance with its charter and resolutions. I assure you that, like all other peoples on earth, we are a people that yearns for peace--and perhaps with greater enthusiasm, considering our long years of suffering and the harsh conditions that plague us and our children, who are deprived of the normalcy of a life free of war, free of tragedy, free of the torment of exile, free of hopelessness and daily anguish.

So let the voices supporting the olive branch, peaceful coexistence, and international entente be heard. Let all hands join in defense of an historic, possibly irreplaceable opportunity to put an end to a tragedy that has lingered too long and cost thousands of lives and the destruction of hundreds of village and cities. We reach for the olive branch because it sprouts in our hearts from the tree of the homeland, the tree of freedom.

Mr President, Honorable Members :

I come to you in the name of my People, offering my hands that we can make true peace, peace based on justice. I ask the leaders of Israel to come here, under the sponsorship of the United Nations, so that, together, we can forge that peace. I say to them, as I say to you, that our people, who want dignity, freedom, and peace for themselves and security for their state, want the same things for all the states and parties involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict. And here, I would address myself specifically to the Israeli people in all their parties and forces, and especially to the advocates of democracy and peace among them. I say to them : Come, let us make peace. Cast away fear and intimidation. Leave

behind the specter of the wars that have raged continuously in the furnace of this conflict for the past forty years. Set aside all threats of wars to come, whose fuel could only be the bodies of our children and yours. Come, let us make peace. Let us make the peace of the bold, far from the arrogance of power and the weapons of destruction ; far from occupation, oppression, humiliation, murder, and torture.

"Say : O Peoples of the Book ! Come to common terms," so that we can build peace in the land of peace, the land of Palestine. "Glory to God in the highest, and on Earth peace, goodwill toward men." "O Lord, thou art the peace, and the peace is of you, and the peace shall return unto you. Let us live, O Lord, in peace, and enter Heaven thy house, the house of peace." Finally, I say to our people : The dawn approaches. Victory is at hand. I see the homeland in your holy stones. I see the flag of our independent Palestine fluttering over the hills of our beloved homeland. Thank you. Peace be upon you, and God's mercy and His blessings."

Yasser Arafat, Speech at UN General Assembly, Geneva 13 December 1988