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**ORGANISATION DE L'UNITE
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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE MIDDLE EAST QUESTION



Council of Ministers
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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION

1. The Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity, meeting in its Forty-fourth Ordinary Session in Addis Ababa from 21 to 26 July 1986, considered the Report of the Secretary General on the Situation in the Middle East, contained in document CM/1388 (XLIV) and after a lengthy debate during which all the members of the Council acknowledged that there was an increase in the violence in the region, adopted resolution CM/Res.1057 (XLIV).
2. There have been no positive developments during the period under review as the Council expected, despite efforts made by Arab and African leaders at international meetings.
3. The Middle East situation had been a subject of grave concern and was discussed at the United Nations General Assembly. In fact, in his report to the Forty-first regular session of the General Assembly, the United Nations Secretary General described the lack of progress in the Middle East peace negotiations as alarming. He expressed, particularly, concern over the decision of the Zionist regime of Israel to establish new settlements in the occupied territories. The Secretary General stressed that the situation in the region remained highly explosive, pointing out that should the current stalemate in the peace process persist, a new major conflict was likely to break out in the Middle East.
4. At the moment, the peace process calls for the organization of an International Middle East Peace Conference. It should be recalled that in 1983 the United Nations General Assembly requested the convening of such a Conference to be attended by the fifteen members of the United Nations Security Council as well as the parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization. The idea has since remained a dead letter; nonetheless, there has been some developments in so far as the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council is now being evoked.

5. It is therefore gratifying to note that bilateral talks among many delegations attending the Forty-first regular session of the United Nations General Assembly focused on the possibility of convening an International Conference on Peace in the Middle East. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of six Arab countries (Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Oman and Syria) held talks with the United States Secretary of State on the need for an International Conference so as to advance the Middle East peace process.

6. The question is, will Israel accept to negotiate? It should be pointed out, however, that at the end of the Egypt-Israeli Summit held in Alexandria, Egypt, September last, the Israeli Prime Minister for the first time reacted positively to the convening of an International Conference, stressing that agreement had to be reached beforehand on the form and participation at the said Conference. Reference is made here to the participation of PLO and the Soviet Union. Indeed, the President of Israel Foreign Affairs and Defence Parliamentary Commission declared after the Alexandria Summit that Israel would allow the participation of Soviet Union in an International Conference, to which the five permanent members of the Security Council would be invited, with the hope that Moscow would accept to modify its position vis-à-vis Soviet Jews and the State of Israel. Israel had always maintained that USSR should not play the least role in the Middle East peace process so long as it had not renewed its diplomatic ties with the Hebrew state, which were broken off in 1967.

7. While bilateral negotiations towards the convening of the International Conference are in progress, Israel continues to pursue its policy of aggression in the Middle East in defiance of the basic rules of International Law. This is a source of serious concern to the international community, particularly the Arab and African communities. Talks between President Mubarak of Egypt and King Hussein of Jordan during their meeting at the end of August 1986, focused on the recent developments in the Middle East situation, the steps taken by the parties concerned as part of the peace process in the region, as well as the Palestinian cause and the situation in the occupied territories.

8. The African Group at the United Nations, for its part, is doing everything possible to cause the adoption of the various resolutions on the Middle East situation, the Palestinian issue and the Hebrew State's **dangerous** policy of acquiring new arms. In November 1986, the main Political Committee of the UN Assembly adopted, to the great displeasure of the United States and Israel, an important resolution urging the Security Council to inquire into Israel's nuclear activities and the assistance it receives in this regard from other States, parties or institutions. This text, prepared by twenty Arab States, reproduces, in the main, the resolutions adopted in recent years. Approved by 92 votes in favour, two against (United States and Israel) and 42 abstentions, the resolution once again condemns Israel for its refusal to refrain from acquiring nuclear arms and calls upon the Security Council to ensure that Israel comply with the directives of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as far as its nuclear installations are concerned.

9. It should be pointed out that Syria also comes under pressure from America and Europe following the accusations levelled against her by Great Britain in the Indawi affair.

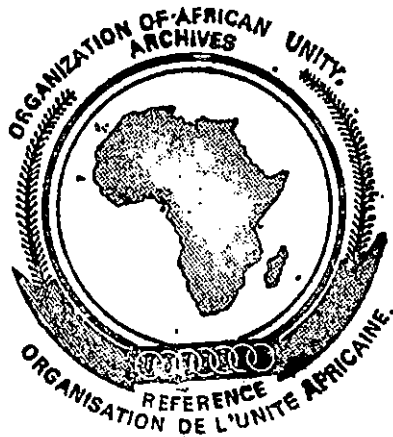
10. The measures adopted in London on 10 November 1986 by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the European Economic Community (EEC) against Syria were described as insulting by the League of Arab States which believes that the declaration of the Twelve EEC countries was made more for reasons of solidarity than for strict objectivity.

11. The Secretary-General of the League of Arab States hopes that EEC will re-examine its position with a view to removing any obstacle that may undermine relations between the two communities. In a letter addressed to EEC on 6 November 1986, the contents of which were not disclosed in Tunis, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States recalled the Arab position and warned the European Economic Community against any measures likely to poison Euro-Arab relations.

12. Great Britain broke off diplomatic ties with Syria and the Federal Republic of Germany reduced the number of Syrian diplomatic staff in Bonn following the trial of Indawi's cousin in connection with the West Berlin bombing attempt. The United States, for its part, announced on 14 November 1986, a series of sanctions against Syria including further reduction in the export of equipment particularly computers and security communication devices to Syria.
13. The measures also include the suspension of sales of planes, helicopters and spare parts. American and Syrian diplomatic missions will be reduced in the two countries, visits by high-ranking officials as well as Import-Export Bank credits cancelled. Air Agreement between the two States will be revoked and the United States has called on American oil companies (especially the Pecten-Syria companies, a branch of Shell-USA and Marathon/Jill) operating in Syria to leave Syria. We are, indeed, witnessing an attempt to isolate Syria.
14. Another hot spot in the Middle East is the Gulf region where a war of an indescribable atrocity has been raging since 1980. The Iraq-Iran war has resumed after a relative lull and the question being asked is whether we are going to witness a renewed war of cities with the attendant destructions. The military communiques issued by the two warring factions in recent months point to this.
15. According to President Mubarak of Egypt and King Hussein of Jordan, the pursuit and escalation of the war and its effects on the region are a serious threat to the Arab world. They were of the opinion that the deteriorating situation in the Arab world was ascribable to the disunity within it and that inter-Arab co-operation was vital to face up to the dangers threatening the world.

16. The Middle East, which is a crossroad between Africa, Europe and Asia is undoubtedly of strategic importance. It should therefore regain its peace. The establishment of a lasting peace in the region requires the effective participation of all the parties concerned, including PLO, in the negotiations on the thorny issue of the Middle East.

17. The Secretary-General will continue to monitor developments in the situation and will submit a report thereon to the next Council of Ministers.



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