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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE SITUATION IN
THE MIDDLE-EAST



CM-1049

MIGROFICHE

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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE-EAST

Since the Thirty-third Ordinary Session of the OAU Council of Ministers in Monrovia, the situation in Middle-East has remained alarming despite intense political and diplomatic activities undertaken to find a solution to the problem.

2. It will be recalled that at Monrovia, the Council of Ministers adopted resolution CM/Res.726 (XXXIII) on the Middle-East which inter alia:

1. Reaffirmed its support to the Arab Frontline States and to the Palestinian People in their just struggle to recover the occupied territories and legitimate rights;
2. Strongly condemned the plans and belligerent intentions of Israel, its expansionist and segregationist policy as well as its defiance of UN resolutions which constitute a serious threat to peace in the region and in the world;
3. Strongly condemned the bellicose collusion between Israel and the racist regimes in Southern Africa against African and Arab peoples;
4. Condemned all partial agreements and separate treaties which violate the recognised national rights of the Palestinian People and contradict the principles of a just and comprehensive solution to the Middle-East problem to ensure the establishment of a just peace in the area.

5. Reaffirmed the right of the Arab Frontline States and the Palestinian People to full sovereignty over their territories, their wealth and natural resources;

6. Urged the international community to intensify its pressure on Israel in all fields to compel her to abide by the UN and the Security Council resolutions.

A resolution similar to that adopted by the OAU Council of Ministers was adopted in Colombo and Havana respectively during the meetings of the Non-aligned countries in which the General Secretariat of the OAU participated. During the 34th Ordinary Session of the General Assembly of the UN, the Middle-East issue was discussed and a resolution similar to that of Havana was adopted by the General Assembly.

3. The situation in the Middle-East has remained alarming because of the continued intransigence of Israel and her refusal to evacuate Arab territories occupied by force since 1967 and this, in spite of the numerous resolutions of the Security Council, the General Assembly of the UN, the Non-aligned Movement and of the OAU. Furthermore, the fact that the Palestinian question which is the crux of the Middle-East problem still remains unresolved makes the situation as explosive as ever.

4. It is certainly important, for a better understanding of the evolution of the situation in the Middle-East, to underline the development on the Palestinian question after the Camp David negotiations and, in particular, after the signature of the Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel on 26 March, in Washington (USA).

5. Since Mid-February 1980, the Egyptian and Israeli Governments have agreed on the establishment of a new framework for negotiations in order to speed up the process which has started since the signature of the Camp David agreements.

6. Moreover, Egypt considers that the normalization of its relations with the State of Israel will help in promoting its contacts and in speeding up the peace process in order to defend the cause of the Palestinian People and to help them recover their rights. Although Egypt has not received a mandate allowing it to speak or to negotiate in the name of the Palestinian People, the Egyptian Government thinks that all it is doing, is only the preparation of framework which will allow Palestinians to exercise their rights.

7. The efforts of Egypt in relation to the Middle-East situation have led to the exchange of diplomatic missions between her and Israel. Commercial air links between Tel-Aviv and Cairo started on 3rd March 1980 and, on this very day, the first agreement of cultural exchanges between Egypt and Israel

were signed in Cairo. All these steps and negotiations of Egypt and Israel, in conformity with the conditions of the Peace Treaty and with the spirit of the agreements of Camp David, have allowed Egypt to recover three-fourths of the Sinai one year after the signature of the Treaty. In fact, Israel has withdrawn from the part of the Sinai which lies between El Arish and Ras Mohammed in the South of Sinai on the Red Sea. The part which has been conceded includes the sacred mountains of St. Catherine and the Oil deposits of Alma as well as the strategic routes of Metla and El Gagi.

8. It is true that the Peace Treaty enabled Egypt to recover a major part of Sinai, particularly the strategic passes of the mountains of the Peninsula, but with respect to the Palestinian autonomy, it is noticeable that almost nothing has been achieved so far between the negotiators who have been meeting regularly for one year now. This is because the Israeli stand on the Palestinian Autonomy has remained different from that of Egypt. This explains the discussions by the UN Security Council on 31 March 1980, on the Palestine Question at the request of the UN Ad-Hoc Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. The Committee, once more stressed the right of the Palestinian People to self-determination and the creation of an independent Palestinian State after the withdrawal of Israel from the territories she presently occupies. It insisted on a satisfactory and global solution

to the Palestinian question and underscored as imperative the participation of the PLO, its legitimate representative in any negotiation concerning Palestine.

9. In the same vein, the Heads of State and Government, assembled in Bamako in March 1980 for the Sahara Summit Conference, expressed, in a final political declaration, their concern over the deterioration of tension in the Middle-East. They confirmed that any settlement of the Middle-East problem should necessarily go through the restoration of the occupied Arab Territories including Jerusalem and the recognition of the Palestinian People, led by the Palestinian Liberation Organization, their authentic and legitimate representative.

10. However, despite the efforts of Egypt, the Arab countries of the Steadfastness Front have maintained their condemnation of the Camp David agreement. During their meeting in Baghdad, these countries decided to end the economic and financial assistance to Egypt, to impose an oil embargo on her and to sever their diplomatic relations with Egypt. They not only decided to transfer the Secretariat of the Arab League from Cairo to Tunis, they decided to suspend Egypt from its membership of the Islamic Conference.

11. Even as recent as 12 to 15 April 1980, the Steadfastness Front of Arab countries at its meeting in Tripoli in which the leader of the PLO Mr. Yasser Arafat, attended a number of resolutions were adopted once again condemning the Camp David

agreements. The Front furthermore decided to struggle to the end against Zionism, which is considered as the main enemy of the Arab nation and considered ways and means necessary to combat what it considers to be manoeuvres which tend to disturb the region.

12. Finally, in spite of the separate meetings between the U.S.A., Egypt and Israel in the month of April, during which the deadline for a solution to the question of the autonomy of West Bank and Gaza Strip was fixed for the 26th May 1980 — a deadline which was not met — tension still persists in this region. The persistence of Israel with her illegal measures in Jerusalem and in all the occupied Arab territories led to the declaration by Egypt in May, 1980 which suspended the negotiations with Israel until the Israeli government reviews its position. It is clear therefore that there will be no peace in the Middle-East as long as the Palestinian question is not settled in its entirety.

13. The General Secretariat of the OAU which continues to follow developments of the Middle-East problem will report accordingly to the Council of Ministers.



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