

The Secretary-General of the United Nations: It is a great honour for me to open this historic Conference and to welcome the representatives of the participating Governments. It is also a source of gratification to me that this unique event is taking place under the auspices of the United Nations. The Palais des Nations has housed many historic meetings, but none have been of more potential importance, both to the Governments concerned and to the international community as a whole, than this Conference on peace in the Middle East.

I am certain that I am speaking on behalf of all the participants in the Conference when I also take this opportunity to thank sincerely the Federal and Cantonal authorities of Switzerland for their valuable assistance. We are indeed most grateful for their unflinching and generous co-operation in making the necessary arrangements possible.

There is no need to remind the distinguished representatives of the Governments here assembled of the concern of the international community for the success of our deliberations. This concern was emphasized most recently by the Security Council when it expressed the hope that the Conference would make speedy progress towards the establishment of a just and durable peace in the Middle East. The United Nations has been seized of the various aspects of the Middle East conflict for more than a quarter of a century and has devoted an immense amount of time and effort both to keeping the peace and to the search for a just and lasting settlement.

On 11 October of this year, five days after bitter fighting had broken out once again in the Middle East, I appealed to the Governments concerned to look urgently to the possibility of turning the tragic conflict into a starting point for a new effort at a real settlement. Similar appeals were made by numerous Governments. Now, two months later, this new effort is taking shape here in Geneva. None of us, I know, underestimates the difficulties of the task ahead, but the very fact of this Conference, and the willingness of the Governments concerned to respond to this new effort to find a just and lasting settlement, is a source of encouragement and hope for all mankind.

The basis for this meeting was laid down in Security Council resolution 338 of 22 October 1973. That resolution called upon the parties for an immediate cessation of all firing and a termination of all military activity. It called upon the parties to start immediately the implementation of Security Council resolution 242 in all its parts, and it decided that negotiations should begin at once between the parties concerned under appropriate auspices aimed at establishing a just and durable peace in the Middle East.

In subsequent resolutions on 23 and 25 October, the Council confirmed its decisions on an immediate cessation of all kinds of firing and of all military

action, called for United Nations observation of the cease-fire and decided to set up a United Nations Emergency Force. The United Nations Military Observers and the Force were immediately put into the field, and they continue to exert their best efforts to keep the peace.

On 11 November the representatives of Egypt and Israel, under the auspices of the Commander of UNEF, met at Kilometre Marker 101 on the Cairo-Suez road and signed the six-point agreement which had been communicated to the Secretary-General on 9 November by the Secretary of State of the United States. In subsequent meetings the modalities for the implementation of five of the six points were agreed upon by the parties and were put into effect with the assistance of UNEF and the International Committee of the Red Cross. It is gratifying that in this way the humanitarian aspects of the six-point agreement have been largely fulfilled.

I am aware of the outstanding humanitarian problems relating to the Middle East question as a whole. The Commander of UNEF, in close co-operation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, is making persistent efforts to find solutions to some of these problems, and I myself have taken initiatives in an effort to resolve others. It is my earnest hope that through such efforts and through the proceedings of this Conference rapid progress may be made in this regard.

On the implementation of one point of the agreement, namely, the question of the return to the October 22 position in the framework of agreement on the disengagement and separation of forces under the auspices of the United Nations, the parties have not so far reached accord, although detailed exploratory discussions have been held. I hope that through its deliberations this Conference may make progress on this important matter, as well as embarking on the next step envisaged in resolution 338, namely, the negotiations aimed at establishing a just and durable peace in the Middle East.

The presence of the Secretary-General of the United Nations here today reflects the deep concern of the international community in the Middle East question. It also symbolizes the willingness of the Organization to be of assistance whenever the parties require it. I want to assure all of the parties here present that in that spirit I and my staff, both at United Nations Headquarters and in the Middle East, stand ready to be of assistance in any way that may seem useful to them. We have, I believe, amply demonstrated this readiness to act promptly in the critical events of recent months.

Before concluding, may I express appreciation to all the Governments which, by their spirit of co-operation and their desire to make progress on this most complex and crucial question, have made possible the convening

of this Conference today. The Conference has a unique opportunity to come to grips with a most difficult, dangerous and complex international problem. If this opportunity is not seized, the world will inevitably be confronted once again with a dangerous and highly explosive situation in the Middle East. Unless progress can be made, the cease-fire and the United Nations peace-keeping arrangements already in operation in the area will remain fragile, and there will be an ever-present danger that fighting will break out again.

This Conference presents a historic challenge to its participants not only because the eyes of the world are upon it, but because the situation in the Middle East, with all its manifold implications, urgently demands the statesmanship, courage, patience and vision of each and all of the participants. I know that these qualities are not lacking in this room. I am sure that all the participants share a sense of urgency and will not fail to seize the opportunity to build a lasting structure of peace in the area. It is an opportunity which may not recur for a very long time. I wish this Conference all success in its noble task.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations:

I call upon the representative of the USSR, Foreign Minister Gromyko.

Mr. Gromyko (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian):

Mr. Secretary-General, distinguished colleagues. It is with a deep feeling of satisfaction that the Soviet Union welcomes the convening of this conference. A first, but important, step has been taken on the road to the political solution of one of the most acute international problems. For a quarter of a century now it has been a constant source of tension, not only in the Middle East but also far beyond its boundaries.

From time to time, and we are all witnesses to that, the tension in this area turns into open armed conflict. Every time that happens, the fate of the whole world is in jeopardy. That was so six years ago, as it was quite recently in October this year, when the military activities, although they did not last long, were marked by extreme violence.

There can hardly be any doubt that further sanguinary military clashes in the Middle East will take place in the future as well unless we eradicate the main tensions prevailing there. Anyone must inevitably come to that conclusion who has even a slight knowledge of the actual situation and approaches the question objectively.

The intolerable situation in the Middle East created because of the policy of Israel cannot continue. We should like to hope that the participants in the Conference will recognize this, that they came here with the firm intention of laying the foundation for a just settlement.

There is no alternative to such a settlement which would be acceptable to the peoples of the area, to the peoples of the world as a whole. This is irrefutably demonstrated by the whole course of events, including those which have happened recently. It is now quite clear to all that the Arab States will never reconcile themselves to the loss of the territories which were taken away from them in 1967. The Soviet Union has full understanding of their position, and supports it. The Arab countries have the support of the overwhelming majority of the States of the world in their righteous struggle. They have on their side the strengthening solidarity of the Arab world.

It is hopeless to think that the occupied territories can be kept by force. The need for another, a realistic approach to the problems of war and peace in the Middle East, of which the Soviet Union has always spoken, cannot be deferred.

The overwhelming majority of the States of the world have very definitely shown, in one form or another, that they will not tolerate the perpetuation of a source of tension in the Middle East. Not to take this into account would be to go against the expressed will of the peoples.

Also conducive to a lasting settlement of the situation in the Middle East are the positive movements towards détente in the world as a whole that have been achieved in recent years. In many parts of the world a number of important international problems have been solved, including some which had seemed unapproachable. It is sufficient to recall the termination of the war in Viet-Nam, the settlement of acute and important post-war problems in Europe, and the important turn towards normalization and the improvement of relations among States with different social structures on the basis of peaceful co-existence through the conclusion of international treaties and agreements.

A real indicator of the positive changes that have taken place in the Middle East, too, was the initiative taken by the Soviet Union and the United States, which found its expression in the well-known decisions of the United Nations Security Council. In the light of all this, the continuing Middle East conflict, even though the military activities have stopped, seems an inadmissible anomaly.

We do not wish to say again whose responsibility it is. We know whose it is and we believe we are not the only ones who do. Now that the question of a settlement is no longer deadlocked, something else is more important: to determine what must be done in order to establish such a peace in the Middle East as would be lasting and just to all States and peoples in the area.

In the first place, it is the Soviet Union's firm conviction that a fundamental principle of international life must be unswervingly applied - the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by means of war.

That is the key to the whole problem. If the participants in the conference really wish to rid the Middle East area of the threat of new conflicts, it is necessary to remove the initial cause of the crisis - the occupation of Arab territories which has been continuing now for more than six years. These territories must be returned in full to their lawful owners. It is our conviction that, so long as Israeli forces are in these territories, there will be no peace in the Middle East.

Any document adopted by this conference must contain precise and clear obligations concerning the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the territories occupied in 1967.

Without the achievement of an agreement by the parties on this question of principle, we do not see how it would be possible to ensure a settlement which would satisfy the interests of the Arab States and Israel, and the interests of international security. On the other hand, if agreement was reached on this basis, the solution of many other aspects of the settlement would undoubtedly be greatly simplified.

At the same time it is necessary to ensure respect for and recognition of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all the States of the Middle East, and of their right to live in peace. This also refers to Israel. Our position is clear and consistent from start to finish - peace and security for all the peoples of the area. This implies, of course, that justice will be ensured as regards the Arab people of Palestine. Their legitimate rights must be protected. It goes without saying that the Palestinian problem cannot be considered and decided without the participation of representatives of the Arab people of Palestine.

The contention that Israel is being deprived of the right to existence is of course advanced as one of the main arguments, if not the main argument, in favour of the occupation of other peoples' territory. It is an argument which does not stand up to criticism. Israel was recognized to possess that right by the very fact of the creation of that State by decision of the United Nations.

Possession of that right was confirmed by the establishment in due course of diplomatic relations with Israel by many States, including the Soviet Union. The Arab neighbours of Israel have expressed their willingness to negotiate a settlement on the basis of the well-known resolutions of the Security Council, in which the principle is clearly expressed that all States involved in the conflict have the right to existence.

That right cannot be unilateral, however. It is inconceivable without respect for the sovereign rights of other States and countries. One cannot use one's right to existence to the detriment of the interests of others. Only obligations of a reciprocal kind, based on equality of rights, and a readiness to observe them rigorously, can ensure normal development of inter-State relations in the Middle East.

This is fully applicable to the principle of the integrity of frontiers. Just as in other parts of the world, reliable frontiers are, above all, peaceful frontiers which provide an assurance that they will not be violated. It is naive to believe that secure frontiers can be ensured by the seizure of alien territories. The only frontiers that are truly secure are legal frontiers that are recognized by those on both sides of them. In the specific circumstances of the Middle East, these are the demarcation lines that existed on 4 June 1967.

This is the Soviet Union's position on the most fundamental aspect of a settlement in the Middle East. It is fully in accordance with the letter and spirit of the decisions adopted by the United Nations since 1967. This applies, above all, to the well-known Security Council resolution 242 of 22 November 1967.

The Soviet Union, which firmly pursues a policy of securing a radical improvement of the situation in the Middle East, has not deviated from this position nor does it intend to do so.

We are convinced that the 1967 Security Council resolution we have mentioned continues to retain its full significance as a realistic and sound approach to the problems existing in the Middle East and to the settlement of those problems.

And we are not alone in this conviction. It is shared by virtually all States Members of the United Nations, which have frequently expressed a desire for the appropriate action both within the United Nations and outside it.

It is, of course, one thing to recognize resolutions in the word, but another to carry them out in deeds. If this had been done, the problem of a Middle East settlement would long since have been removed from the agenda. However, even as I speak, the smell of gunpowder and burning still hangs over Sinai

and the Golan Heights and the pain of bloody wounds still wrings the hearts of thousands of Arabs as well as of Israelis.

The practical task of this Conference is to work out a concrete, realistic programme for implementing the above-mentioned Security Council resolution in all its parts. Such action is also required by the decisions which were taken by the Security Council during the recent military operations and in which a cease-fire in the Middle East was linked with the start of immediate negotiations with a view to a sound solution of the Middle East problem.

As we see it, the agreements on such a settlement that are reached between the parties concerned will be embodied in the appropriate documents at the Conference. It is important that these should be substantial documents and should be binding on all the parties that subscribe to them. In other words, they must have the force of law.

In this way a firm foundation would be laid for peaceful co-existence and good neighbourly relations between all States and peoples of the Middle East.

Obligations assumed by the parties under international law would be the best guarantee of their mutual security, which can be ensured only through trust and co-operation between States, through strict fulfilment of the treaties and agreements they have concluded, and not through seizure of the territories of others.

If it proves necessary to lend additional weight to such agreements, the Soviet Union, taking into account the wishes of the interested parties, is ready, together with appropriate other Powers, to assume the responsibilities involved. The Security Council of the United Nations can also make an important contribution in this connexion. What is vital is that the political settlement in the Middle East should be a truly solid one.

Other measures to achieve the same effect are also possible. I have in mind, in particular, the question of establishing demilitarized zones in certain sectors on a basis of reciprocity and the temporary deployment of international personnel in particular areas. All these matters would, of course, have to be the subject of separate negotiations and, what is most important, would have to be settled on terms which are mutually acceptable to the parties concerned.

It seems to me that, given agreement on the main problem to which we have referred, such matters would not constitute an obstacle to a general settlement.

Despite all its difficulties, the Middle East problem can be solved. We have said this before, and we reaffirm it now in this Conference. But we have also warned about something else: the conflagration of war in the Middle East could flare up at any moment. A dangerous situation continues to exist in the area. Further delays in achieving a peaceful settlement are fraught with great danger. We hope that all those present in this room are bearing this fully in mind.

The participants in this Conference bear a heavy responsibility. Their joint efforts can and must bring a dependable peace to the peoples of the Middle East. The Soviet Union has set itself, as one of the principal tasks, the task of helping to eliminate the hotbed of tension in the Middle East. We have supported and continue to support the Arab peoples in their efforts to establish a lasting and just peace in the Middle East area. At this Conference, too, we will do everything we can to help reach the necessary agreements so that such a peace will become a reality.

The Soviet Union is not hostile to the State of Israel as such. The policy of annexation and the flouting of the norms of international law and of United Nations resolutions - these are what have given rise to the general condemnation of Israel, by us among others. Israel has even come to this Conference without having implemented resolutions 338 and 339 of the Security Council. The situation can change when Israel confirms its readiness to arrive at an honourable and mutually acceptable settlement by deeds. The important and immediate task now is to decide the question of an effective withdrawal of troops.

The establishment of a genuine peace is in accordance with the fundamental interests of all the States of the Middle East. Enjoying the advantages of a peaceful life, their peoples could switch their efforts from hostility, which squanders human and material energies on both sides, to solving the problems of social and economic progress.

This would benefit other States and peoples which, because of certain circumstances, are experiencing the negative consequences of the Middle East conflict. These consequences are now being felt and quite perceptibly - both by countries in the immediate vicinity of the Middle East and by those which are situated many thousands of kilometres away from the area. International economic co-operation, trade and navigation - to mention only this aspect - would all be in a much better state.

One can only imagine the extent to which the entire international atmosphere would become more healthy and progress would be made towards the relaxation of tension as a result of the elimination of the Middle East conflict. This would have a most beneficial effect on the situation

throughout the whole Mediterranean basin, in Europe, Asia and indeed throughout the whole world.

The peoples of the Middle East and indeed of the whole world expect practical measures aimed at ensuring a stable peaceful settlement in this area. The Soviet Union will do everything in its power to ensure that the work of the Conference proceeds in this direction and that it is businesslike and constructive.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations:

I thank the distinguished Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of the United States of America, Secretary of State, Mr. Kissinger.

Mr. Kissinger (United States of America):

Mr. Secretary-General, distinguished Foreign Ministers, delegates.

Mr. Secretary-General, as one of the Co-Chairmen of this Conference, let me express my gratitude to the United Nations and to you personally for providing such excellent facilities for the Conference, for convening it, and for doing us all the honour of presiding at this historic moment.

We are convened here at a moment of historic opportunity for the cause of peace in the Middle East, and for the cause of peace in the world. For the first time in a generation the peoples of the Middle East are sitting together to turn their talents to the challenge of a lasting peace.

All of us must have the wisdom to grasp this moment - to break the shackles of the past, and to create at last a new hope for the future.

Two months ago what we now refer to as the fourth Arab-Israeli war was coming to an end. Today, there is the respite of an imperfect cease-fire, but the shadow of war still hangs over the Middle East. Either we begin today the process of correcting the conditions which produced that conflict, or we doom untold tens of thousands to travail, sorrow and further inconclusive bloodshed.

When the history of our era is written, it will speak not of a series of Arab-Israeli wars, but of one war broken by periods of uneasy armistices and temporary cease-fires. That war has already lasted twenty-five years. Whether future histories will call this the era of the twenty-five year Arab-Israeli war, or the thirty year war, or the fifty year war, rests in large measure in our hands. And above all, it rests in the hands of the Israeli and

Arab Governments, not only those whose distinguished representatives are seated around this table, but also those who are absent and who we all hope will join us soon.

We are challenged by emotions so deeply felt - by causes so passionately believed and pursued - that the tragic march from cataclysm to cataclysm, each more costly and indecisive than the last, sometimes seems pre-ordained. Yet our presence here today - in itself a momentous accomplishment - is a symbol of rejection of this fatalistic view. Respect for the forces of history does not mean blind submission to those forces.

There is an Arab saying, *Eli Fat Mat*, which means that the past is dead. Let us overcome old myths with new hope. Let us make the Middle East worthy of the messages of hope and reconciliation that have been carried forward from its stark soil by three great religions.

Today there is hope for the future, for the conflict is no longer looked upon entirely in terms of irreconcilable absolutes. The passionate ideologies of the past have, in part at least, been replaced by a recognition that all the peoples concerned have earned, by their sacrifice, a long period of peace.

From two recent trips through the Middle East I have the impression that people on both sides have had enough of bloodshed. No further proof of heroism is necessary; no military point remains to be made. The Middle East - so often the source of mankind's inspiration - is challenged to another act of hope and reconciliation significant not only for its own peoples but for all mankind.

What does each side seek? Both answer with a single word: peace. But peace has of course a concrete meaning for each. One side seeks the recovery of sovereignty and the redress of grievances suffered by a displaced people. The other seeks security and recognition of its legitimacy as a nation. The common goal of peace must be broad enough to embrace all these aspirations.

For the United States, our objective is such a peace.

We cannot promise success, but we can promise dedication. We cannot guarantee a smooth journey towards our goal, but we can assure you of an unswerving quest for justice.

The United States will make a determined and unflagging effort.

President Nixon has sent me here because for five years he has endeavoured to build a new structure of international peace in which ties with old friends

are strengthened, and new and constructive relationships replace distrust and confrontation with adversaries.

But world peace remains tenuous and incomplete so long as the Middle East is in perpetual crisis. Its turmoil is a threat to the hopes of all of us in this room.

It is time to end this turmoil.

The question is not whether there must be peace. The question is how do we achieve it. What can we do here to launch new beginnings?

First, this Conference must speak with a clear and unequivocal voice: the cease-fire called for by the Security Council must be scrupulously adhered to by all concerned. Prior to last October the United States did all it could to prevent a new outbreak of fighting. But we failed because frustration could no longer be contained.

After the fighting began we, in concert with the Soviet Union, helped bring an end to the hostilities by sponsoring a number of resolutions in the Security Council. The six-point agreement of 11 November consolidated the cease-fire. It helped create the minimal conditions necessary for carrying forward our efforts here. All these resolutions and agreements must be strictly implemented.

But regardless of these steps, we recognize that the cease-fire remains fragile and tentative. The United States is concerned over the evidence of increased military preparedness. A renewal of hostilities would be both foolhardy and dangerous. We urge all concerned to refrain from the use of force, and to give our efforts here the chance they deserve.

Second, we must understand what can realistically be accomplished at any given moment.

The separation of military forces is certainly the most immediate problem. Disengagement of military forces would help to reduce the danger of a new military outbreak; it would begin the process of building confidence between the two sides.

Based on intensive consultations with the leaders of the Middle East, including many in this room today, I believe that the first work of this Conference should be to achieve early agreement on the separation of military forces, and I believe too that such an agreement is possible.

Serious discussions have already taken place between the military representatives of Egypt and Israel at Kilometre 101. It is important to build promptly on the progress achieved there. And on the Jordanian and Syrian fronts a comparable base for the lessening of tensions and the negotiation of further steps towards peace must be found. Progress towards peace should include all parties concerned.

Third, the disengagement of forces is an essential first step - a consolidation of the cease-fire and a bridge to the "peaceful and accepted settlement" called for in Security Council resolution 242. Our final objective is the implementation in all of its parts of this resolution. This goal has the full support of the United States.

Peace must bring a new relationship among the nations of the Middle East - a relationship that will not only put an end to the state of war which has persisted for the last quarter of a century, but will also permit the peoples of the Middle East to live together in harmony and safety. It must replace the reality of mistrust with a new reality of promise and hope. It must include concrete measures that make war less likely.

A peace agreement must include these elements among others: withdrawals, recognized frontiers, security arrangements such as demilitarized zones, guarantees, a settlement of the legitimate interests of the Palestinians and a recognition that Jerusalem contains places considered holy by three great religions.

Peace will require that we relate the imperative of withdrawals to the necessities of security, the requirement of guarantees to the sovereignty of the parties, the hopes of the displaced to the realities now existing.

Fourth, we believe there must be realistic negotiations between the parties. Resolution 338 provides just such a process. It is on the parties that the primary responsibility rests. The United States intends to help facilitate these talks in every feasible way, to encourage moderation and the spirit of accommodation. We are prepared to make concrete suggestions to either side if this will help promote practical progress. But we must always remember that while a Middle East settlement is in the interest of us all, it is the people of the area that must live with the results. It must, in the final analysis, be acceptable to them.

Peace, in short, cannot last unless it rests on the consent of the parties concerned. The wisest of realists are those who understand the power of a moral consensus. There is a measure of safety in power to prevent aggression, but there is greater security still in arrangements considered so just that no one wishes to overthrow them.

As we open this Conference we take a momentous step. We are challenging a history of missed opportunities, of mutual fear and bottomless distrust. Our backdrop is a war that has brought anguish and pain, a war that has been costly to both sides, that has brought neither victory nor defeat, that reflected the failure of all our past efforts at peaceful solutions.

Mr. Secretary-General, fellow delegates, President Nixon has sent me here with the purpose of affirming America's commitment to a just and lasting peace.

We do not embark on this task with false expectations. We do not pretend that there are easy answers. A problem that has defied solution for a generation does not yield to simple remedies.

In all efforts for peace the overriding problem is to relate the sense of individual justice to the common good. The great tragedies of history occur not when right confronts wrong, but when two rights face each other.

The problems of the Middle East today have such a character. There is justice on all sides, but there is a greater justice still in finding a truth which merges all aspirations in the realization of a common humanity. It was a Jewish sage, who speaking for all mankind, expressed this problem well: "If I am not for myself, who is for me, but if I am for myself alone, who am I?"

Fellow delegates, in the months ahead we will examine many problems. We will discuss many expedients. We will know success - and I dare say we shall experience deadlock and perhaps occasionally despair.

But let us always keep in mind our final goal:

We can exhaust ourselves in manoeuvres or we can remember that this is the first real chance for peace the Middle East has had in three decades.

We can concentrate on our resentments or we can be motivated by the consciousness that this opportunity, once past, will not return.

We can emphasize the very real causes of distrust, or we can remember that if we succeed our children will thank us for what they have been spared.

We can make propaganda or we can try to make progress.

The American attitude is clear. We know we are starting on a journey whose outcome is uncertain and whose progress will be painful. We are conscious that we need wisdom and patience and good will. But we know, too, that the agony of three decades must be overcome and that somehow we have to

muster the insight and courage to put an end to the conflict between peoples who have so often ennobled mankind.

So we in the American delegation are here to spare no effort in the quest of a lasting peace in the Middle East, a task which is as worthy as it may be agonizing. If I may quote the words of a poet: "Pain that cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart until in our despair there comes wisdom through the awful grace of God."

The Secretary-General of the United Nations: I thank the distinguished Secretary of State of the United States.

I have been informed that the distinguished representative of Egypt wishes to speak now. If so, I give to the floor to the distinguished Foreign Minister of Egypt, Mr. Ismail Fahmy.

Mr. Fahmy (Egypt): Mr. Secretary-General, we are meeting today under the auspices of the United Nations, and we are indeed pleased to meet under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Your presence symbolizes the interest of the Organization in the question of the Middle East, which has been the concern of the United Nations since its inception. We would wish to thank you and all your colleagues, and we are sure that the United Nations will follow with keen interest our deliberations. I would appreciate it, if and when our work departs -and heaven forbid that it should - from the principles enshrined in the Charter, if you and the United Nations would fulfil your duty and put us back on the path prescribed by the Charter. resistance when faced with wrongs perpetrated against them. Legitimate grievances never fail to generate increasing resolve to do away with injustice. We in Egypt have had to face along the centuries many kinds of wrongs inflicted upon us. Each time we have resisted and suppressed them and have emerged in the end triumphant. No sacrifices were too great and no sufferings unbearable when nations pursuing such a noble cause worked with determination for justice and genuine peace. Such are the teachings of history. This we must remember when all of us look ahead and delve into the future.

When applying these lessons to the Middle East, one hardly needs to point out the tragic events that have taken place since the Palestinians were denied their national rights over their country and driven by force from their own land, a land to which they and we eternally belong. This area has since then continuously suffered from the militaristic and expansionist policy of Israel and from its unrelenting efforts to conquer and annex ever more territory, thus seriously endangering the independence, and infringing upon the territorial integrity, of the countries in the area.

The conflict in the Middle East is not and never has been a struggle that arose because its peoples hold different beliefs. For centuries these peoples, irrespective of their creed or religion, lived peacefully side by side. They could have continued living in peace, enjoying the immense opportunities which God and nature have bestowed on this good earth, had it not been for the wedge that was driven by force and in the alleged name of religion into their midst for the sake of domination, exploitation and racist practices. I do not wish, however, to dwell on this well-known matter, but merely want to say that only when warlike acts and aggression cease to be the maxim of Israel, which is trying to convince the world that its very existence can be built on military rashness and supremacy, only then can a just peace at last be envisaged for the region.

As a result of the events which took place on 6 October, the Israelis must, we hope, have decided to relinquish this maxim and to change their course towards real peace, durable peace and just peace. So far as Egypt is concerned, my presence here symbolizes our deep desire to restore to our ravaged and embattled region a durable and just peace. This Conference is an historic event on which all the hopes of the world are focused. It would be a real tragedy if the wisdom of those most directly concerned - or even of those only indirectly linked with the future of the Middle East - should fail to seize this unique opportunity to come to grips with the basic issues involved and find genuine solutions which could form the foundation of a lasting peace leading to an era of enlightened accomplishment rather than tragic disillusion.

This Conference is, as I have said, both historic and unique in the sense that it represents the culmination of the manifold efforts and endeavours which all nations and statesmen of the world have exerted with the aim of bringing to an end a struggle which has lasted only too long. As for the Arab countries, they have come to this Conference ready and prepared to lay the cornerstone of the edifice of peace in the Middle East.

This Conference is unique in nature because, if Israel does not comprehend the deeper significance of our work here, the chances of repeating such an historic gathering will be very remote indeed. The net result will then be, no doubt, the recourse to other means in order to liberate our lands and to restore the legitimate rights of the Palestinians who have lived under appalling conditions for more than a quarter of a century. This Conference is, furthermore, unique and, if I may say so, unparalleled, since for the first time in history a conference dealing with the Middle East has amongst its participants the Soviet Union and the United States, that is, the two global Powers which shoulder responsibilities unprecedented in history for the maintenance of international peace and security. I take their participation as being a good omen, and the fact that they are represented here by their

Foreign Ministers is added evidence of their wish to guarantee that a peaceful and just settlement will prevail in the Middle East.

For Egypt and, I am sure, for the world as a whole, this is an historic event of a highly political significance. Consequently, I hope we all agree that a durable and just peace cannot emerge in our region unless it conforms with certain basic norms and principles constituting what I should like to call "the essentials for peace in our area". In this connexion I am sure that all of us here, including the super-Powers, fully realize that a just and durable peace in the Middle East cannot be built on the basis of the following:

- (i) expansion by force by one country against another;
- (ii) the acquisition of foreign territories by force;
- (iii) the threatening of international and recognized boundaries under any pretext or argument;
- (iv) the infringement of the sovereignty of States and the violation of their territorial integrity;
- (v) the denial of the inalienable rights of the Palestinians to self-determination and to live in peace.

As for us, Mr. Secretary-General, we are sincerely and hopefully looking forward to achieving a durable and just peace. To our minds, nothing less should emerge from this historic gathering; otherwise we would produce a most unusual document which public opinion in our countries and in the world at large would never accept, but rather oppose and reject. Such a peace would be as vulnerable and fragile as the present cease-fire and as shaky and dangerous as were the conditions which, for the last 25 years or so, have persisted in the Middle East as a result of the failure to implement the many relevant resolutions adopted by the different organs of the United Nations.

Mr. Chairman, my presence here is a true and faithful continuation and implementation of the policies and the strategy laid down by President Sadat. In fact, as you may recall, he proposed on 14 February 1971 a programme for achieving peace based on the full implementation of Security Council resolution 242 (1967). Again, on 16 October of this year, he proposed that a peace conference be convened at the United Nations: such a conference was to lay down the modalities and establish the guarantees for building peace in the area based on respect for the legitimate rights of the people living therein.

Egypt's determination to work for peace equals its resolve to see that, in one way or another, its land, the Arab lands and those of our neighbours, are liberated, and that the Palestinians enjoy their legitimate right to live in peace and dignity. This, in fact, represents what Egypt has been endeavouring to achieve since 5 June 1967, and up to 6 October 1973. Indeed, Egypt worked unremittingly for peace. These efforts were recognized and welcomed by all the countries of the world, whether in Africa, Asia or Europe, by the Soviet Union and even by the United States. My

President, and with him the Egyptian people, are on record as declaring that they have done their best to attain a durable and just peace by peaceful means. Alas, all these efforts were met by a persistent cry and determination to retain Arab territories unlawfully and by the use of force. Then the hour of 6 October 1973 struck, as a result of which we hope that the Israeli Government has now realized that Israeli security does not lie in retaining geographical trophies or in achieving military supremacy, but that it would best be safeguarded if it undertakes to live in peace with its neighbours. We hope, furthermore, that Israel now also understands that Egypt and, for that matter, all the Arab countries cannot be conquered by force or allow their lands to remain occupied. Nor will the Arab world accept the continued inhumane treatment of the Palestinians or agree that Jerusalem, the city of peace, should remain under the banner of the conqueror. Territories are the heritage most jealously guarded and defended by a people. They are handed from generation to generation. They are part of its history and prompt a profound sense of pride and thus of nationhood. Loss of territory deeply affects them and provokes a strong resolve to regain by all possible means what is theirs by right. Peoples do not bargain or barter over their territories, and the Arab nation is no exception. To expect the Arabs to give up part of their lands is tragically to misread their determination to the contrary. To insist that this be done would wreck all hopes for this Peace Conference to achieve what it has set out to do.

For all of us, coming to this Conference is a major step on the road to peace. We realize that this Conference would never have materialized if it were not for the multiple efforts of all countries of the world and their resolve to see to it that peace is at last restored to the region. Egypt is attending this Conference with the full determination to do its best in a businesslike manner to achieve a just and lasting peace. In doing so, however, we will never overlook the following basis essentials for peace in our area:

1. the total withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Arab territories occupied since 5 June 1967;

2. the liberation of the Arab city of Jerusalem and non-acceptance of any situation which may be injurious to the complete Arab sovereignty over the holy city;
3. the exercise by the Palestinians of the right to self-determination and to live in peace and dignity;
4. the right of every State in the area to enjoy territorial inviolability and political independence;
5. that there be international guarantees by the major Powers or the United Nations or both, as an added safeguard to international peace and security in the area.

These essentials for peace are in conformity with and fully reflect the decisions taken at the recent Arab summit in Algiers. Egypt, for its part, is fully prepared to honour all its other obligations emanating from Security Council resolution 242 (1967) both in letter and in spirit.

Mr. Secretary-General, I hope that I have made clear the basic philosophy of my Government, and that I have conveyed to you and the members around this table the extent to which we in Egypt are prepared to co-operate in establishing a just and durable peace. We realize that this cannot be achieved through Egypt's will and determination alone. Peace needs an equally profound desire and determination by all those concerned with this conflict, and in particular the United States and the Soviet Union, to take upon themselves a unique responsibility unprecedented in history. Durable and just peace in the Middle East must be maintained without ambiguities, in conformity with international law and basic principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, and reflected in the resolutions and decisions of the world organization, which are in fact the true expression of the opinion and the hopes of the peoples of the world. Egypt has come to this conference to sustain the rights of the Arab nations and to obtain by peaceful means the restitution of all Arab territories occupied since June 1967 and the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinians. Thank you.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations:

I thank the distinguished Foreign Minister of Egypt. The last speaker on my list for our meeting today is the distinguished representative of Jordan. I give the floor to the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Jordan, Mr. Zeid El-Rifai.

Mr. Zeid El-Rifai (Jordan):

Mr. Secretary-General, as we come to this Peace Conference, it might be in order to recall the words of Rabindranath Tagore: "Give me the supreme faith of love, this is my prayer, the faith of the life in death, of the victory in defeat, of the power hidden in the frailness of beauty."

Indeed, Mr. Chairman, it is this victory of right over wrong, of justice over injustice, and of peace over war which the delegation of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is coming to seek at this Conference.

It has been a long time, too long, since we started our search for peace in the Palestine area. The Middle East crisis of today, which earlier was known as the question of Palestine, is a tragedy the like of which humanity has never witnessed on such a large scale.

From the days of the First World War, when the Jews in Palestine were no more than 56,000 people who owned no more than 2 per cent of the total area of Palestine, to the days when they increased immensely and rapidly through emigration from various other lands, and expanded in Arab Palestine through invasion and occupation, the struggle between the Israeli invader and the Arab indigenous people has weighed heavily on the human conscience.

The tide, however, never stopped at any limit. The resolution on the partition of Palestine adopted by the United Nations in 1947 was overshadowed by the delineation of the Armistice lines in 1949 as a result of Israel's military gains. Thus, while the Jewish State, in the partition of 1947, was given 56 per cent of the total area of Palestine, it was able to occupy 77.4 per cent of this total area and, in its ambitious expansionist policy, Israel followed its own time-table for the acquisition of Arab territory. In 1967, twenty years after its establishment, Israel swept over all of Palestine plus large areas of three neighbouring Arab States. Today its armed forces stand on the banks of the Jordan river, on the plains of Damascus, and west of the Suez. By force or arms, Israel reached that extent.

Is it the sword that shall win? Is it the force of arms, as Israel's leaders put it, that shall determine the issue? Can Israel establish its future in the Arab ocean through continued adventures?

Throughout the twenty-five years of its life, Israel has failed to win the slightest degree of love or acceptance by its Arab neighbours. It has always been looked upon as an authority of terror and aggression, the conduct of which is always characterized by defiance and arrogance. The seeds of oppression which it planted in the Arab soil grew with hatred. It is not the intention of my delegation to speak at this opening stage of the Conference on other aspects and episodes involved in the Israeli expansionist policy in

its various phases. It will take a long time to speak of the expulsion of the native Arab population, of the eradication of their roots, of the suppression of those who were left behind, of the repressive measures taken against them, of the large-scale deportation of Arab inhabitants, of the confiscation and expropriation of land and property, of the desecration of holy place and venerated shrines, and of the change of historical and cultural heritage. It is not time to speak of the damage, destruction and murder that was committed against the Arab people and homeland at the hands of Israel. But it is time, no doubt, to ask - at the outset of this Conference - how long will this Israeli armed aggression and occupation be allowed to continue and to remain?

Should the Arabs always have to wage war in order to restore right and justice? Should we always suffer in order to live in peace? Those piles of resolutions which were adopted at the United Nations by its various organs stand witness to the failure of the international community to heed the call of justice. The fact, the naked fact, remains that Israel's armed occupation of Arab territory constitutes an act of continued and escalating aggression which the world has watched in silence.

It is from this position, the position of recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny, that the Arabs had to take up arms. The fighting which broke out in our area at the Egyptian and Syrian fronts on 6 October last was a gallant effort by the Arab forces, dedicated to making peace a reality. The economic measures taken by other Arab countries were another resolute expression of the demand for compliance by Israel with the conditions of peace.

The sacred heritage which has come down to our people through history and the well-established civilization which we safeguard motivate us continuously to avoid exposing this legacy to danger and destruction. Israel does not seem to share this concern with us. Could it be because it does not belong to our environment? Could it be because it is a stranger in our homeland?

The measures Israel took, despite the universal will of mankind, to alter the status of the Holy City of Jerusalem and to change life and tradition in it are a grave violation which neither history nor the future would forgive or tolerate.

How could Israel be introduced into the Arab region and live in permanent peace with the Arab surroundings as long as it insists on being foreign and hostile?

The peace, Mr. Chairman, which we would conclude with Israel is one that would restore to the Arab people their occupied land; one that would return

to the legitimate inhabitants their inalienable rights; and one that would ensure security against Israeli attacks for its Arab neighbours.

Mr. Chairman, we meet today, as directly concerned parties, under appropriate auspices, with the aim of establishing a just and durable peace through the implementation of Security Council resolution 242 of 22 November 1967 in all its parts.

In fact, the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has never failed on any single occasion to call for the implementation of resolution 242 as a way to achieve peace. This has been our steady position since the adoption of this resolution. Whether at the General Assembly of the United Nations, or the Security Council, or whether with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Jordan has maintained this stand.

We sincerely believe that the delay in the implementation of this resolution, which primarily requires withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from all Arab territories occupied in 1967 and back to the lines from which they advanced, caused, indeed, a delay in starting the process of establishing peace.

Resolution 242 (1967), the implementation of which has become the fundamental demand of the whole community of nations and all individual States and regional organizations, emphasized clearly at the start of its preamble and in the first operative part, the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and the demand for Israel's withdrawal from the territories it occupied as a result of the 1967 military operations.

Neither in international law nor in sound logic can a state of occupation by armed attack be acceptable or permissible. Nor could such a state be allowed to continue simply because the occupying authority insists on imposing its own will. Six and a half years have passed at the expense of peace and tranquillity in the Middle East. There was no reason for failure to achieve peace during that period except the refusal of Israel to comply with the pronouncements of the United Nations, with the rule of law, and with the prerequisites of peace.

We ought to declare unequivocally that time will continue to lapse vainly unless Israel commits itself to complete withdrawal from all the Arab territories it has occupied since 5 June 1967. And this includes Syrian occupied territory, since the absence of Syria from this Conference should not in any way prejudice its right to full withdrawal of Israeli forces from all its occupied territory, and since the position of my Government is that the principle of withdrawal is indivisible.

This, Mr. Chairman, is the only way to proceed if we, at this Conference, are to reach a peaceful settlement.

My Government believes that there are major issues in the construction of peace which should be decided upon in this Conference. These issues are as follows:

First, Israel's complete withdrawal from all Arab territories which it has occupied since 5 June 1967. A programme of implementation and a timetable for this withdrawal should be drawn up and agreed upon.

Second, international boundaries of the States of the area must be recognized and respected, as well as the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of these States.

Third, wherever there are no international boundaries between an Arab State and Israel, such boundaries are to be established by agreement and on the basis of the inadmissibility of the acquisition by force.

Fourth, the right of every State in the area to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries, free from threats or acts of force, must be pledged and guaranteed.

Fifth, the legitimate rights of the Arab people of Palestine must be fulfilled in accordance with the resolutions of the United Nations, and the Palestinian refugees must exercise their right of repatriation and/or compensation in accordance with law and justice.

Sixth, Arab Jerusalem is an inseparable part of Arab occupied territory. Therefore, Israel is to relinquish its authority over it. Arab sovereignty must be restored in the Arab sector of the city. The Holy Places of all the three divine religions must be preserved, protected and respected, and free access for all the followers of these three religions must be secured and maintained.

Mr. Chairman, when Israel was established by the United Nations in 1947 and was admitted to the membership of the United Nations in 1948, it made a declaration that it "unreservedly accepts the obligations of the United Nations Charter and undertakes to honour them from the day it becomes a Member of the United Nations".

With such an undertaking, Mr. Chairman, Israel failed to honour its first obligation of membership under the Charter of the United Nations, which stipulates that "all Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State".

For the last six and a half years, Israel has been violating the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of three Arab States, namely Egypt, Jordan and Syria, and has, for the last twenty-five years, been violating the legitimate rights of the Arab people of Palestine.

Today, we come, as directly involved parties and most concerned with the problem, to try to arrive at a settlement through peace.

My Government's attitude towards the deliberations and conclusions of this Conference is that an over-all settlement of the problem before us and the major issues related to it is a collective responsibility of all the parties directly concerned. Questions of withdrawal, boundaries, Palestinian rights, refugees, obligations of peace and the status of Jerusalem are all of common concern and a collective responsibility. My delegation, therefore, is not prepared to conclude any partial settlement on matters that we feel are of a joint interest with our Arab brothers at this Conference.

Sir, faithful to our obligations towards the United Nations, and noting that the only recognized documents before us today are Security Council Resolutions 242 of 22 November 1967 and 338 of 22 October 1973, my Government is pleased to have the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Dr. Waldheim, preside over the opening meeting of this Conference.

May I also be allowed, Mr. Chairman, to acknowledge on this occasion, with sincere appreciation and high admiration, the effective and noble role which both the United States of America and the Soviet Union have played to bring this Conference into being. Needless to say we are also grateful to have had the chance to convene our Peace Conference in Switzerland, the land of peace, beauty and human dignity.

And as we meet today, we know that the eyes of the world are turning towards us. Here on the European continent the voice of right is echoing stronger and stronger. On the free soil of Africa our African brothers are boldly knocking at the gates of peace. Great Asia is backing our efforts with all its weight and dignity. Every patriot, every refugee, and every free man is wishing us success in our work. Let us, therefore, give, in the present test, the lofty principles of mankind the seriousness, sincerity and devotion they deserve. Let us give to the Middle East, the torch of civilization and the cradle of prophets, the peace which it has missed for many decades.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations:

I thank the distinguished Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Jordan. May I ask whether any other delegation wishes to take the floor in our meeting today? The distinguished representative of Israel.

Mr. Eban (Israel):

If there is a chance of addressing the Conference this afternoon I would like to study the addresses that have been made and to speak at the next session. If it could be this afternoon I would prefer it, but I leave that, Sir, to the Chair.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations:

Is there any objection to having a meeting this afternoon? Originally I had intended to hold the next meeting tomorrow morning at 10.30 and to leave the afternoon free for private consultations, but of course I am in the hands of the Conference, of the distinguished members of this Conference, and therefore I wish to consult you as to whether you prefer a meeting tomorrow morning or this afternoon. May I ask the distinguished representative of Israel whether he would agree to speak tomorrow morning?

Mr. Eban (Israel):

If there is no reason for not having a meeting this afternoon, Mr. Chairman, I would like to address the Conference this afternoon. But I would at any rate like to address it at the next meeting.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations:

Do the delegates agree to hold a meeting this afternoon? I see no objection. I assume therefore that you agree to hold our next meeting this afternoon at, may I suggest, 3.30? I take it then that we agree to hold the next meeting this afternoon at 3.30. It is so decided. The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p. m.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations:

I call the meeting to order and I give the floor to the distinguished representative of Israel, Foreign Minister Abba Eban.

Mr. Eban (Israel):

Mr. Secretary-General, distinguished Prime Minister, Foreign Ministers, Gentlemen. There has never been an Arab-Israel peace conference before. Instead there have been many wars, for which the price has been paid in thousands of lives and in a region's long agony. Today at last a new opportunity is born. No wonder that this Conference opens under the burden of an immense expectation. Millions of people across the world are hoping that we shall somehow succeed to break the cycle of violence, to give a new purpose and direction to Middle East history, and to bring a halt to the spreading contagion of force.

We have no way of knowing whether this opportunity will be fulfilled or wasted. The answer lies in the intentions of many governments and peoples in the Middle East -- and beyond. Israel for its part is resolved to seize the chance.

Now, the agreed purpose of this Conference is to negotiate peace between States whose relations until now have been scarred by a fierce enmity which has exploded again and again into war. The assault launched against us by Egyptian and Syrian armies on 6 October was only the most recent link in a chain of violence extending with tragic results across the entire life of Israel as a modern State. To achieve its aim, therefore, this Conference must reverse the whole tide of recent history. It is not going to be an easy task, nor at best can its fulfilment be rapid. We shall have to reconcile a sense of urgency with a capacity for patience. And yet, when all the calculations of prudence and caution and realism are duly made, our heart and imagination inspire a positive hope. We cannot ignore experience but nor are we committed to its endless reiteration. So Israel comes to Geneva in the conviction that there is room for innovation, initiative and choice.

We must be well aware of the particular complexity of our task. There is nothing in any degree similar to the Arab-Israel conflict. The crisis of the Middle East has many consequences, but only one cause. Israel's right to peace, security, sovereignty, commerce, international friendship, economic development, maritime freedom, indeed its very right to live, has been forcibly denied and constantly attacked. All the other elements of the conflict are consequences of this single cause. In no other dispute has there ever been such a total denial, not only of the sovereign rights of a State but even of its legitimate personality. And the emotional assault on Israel has gone much beyond the political context. It sweeps all human solidarities aside. It is nourished by a copious literature with official endorsement that gives support to Nazi anti-Jewish myths. It nourishes a conspiratorial theory of Jewish history. It explodes into the mutilation of Israeli soldiers in the field, the murder and torture of Israeli prisoners, and it has culminated most recently in Syria's sadistic refusal to carry out the Geneva Convention on the treatment of prisoners of war. Out of this kind of ferocious hatred springs

the kind of assault on humane values that was enacted in Munich last year, in Rome airport five days ago and with weary regularity in other places between, before and since. When sportsmen in the shelter of the Olympic flag are bound hand and foot and calmly shot in the head, one by one, when passengers in a civil aircraft are methodically blown up and burned, to fragments, do we not come face to face with the mentality and ideology which produced the gas chambers and the gallows of Auschwitz?

It is from this tradition that we must seek to break away. The prospects for this Conference to succeed depends in the last analysis on whether the Arab nations and Israel want to reach an objective understanding of each other. Now, we have no trouble or reluctance in understanding what Arab nationalism is all about. It is the moving story of a people's liberation from external servitudes. It is an effort to build a bridge between past glories and future hopes. The success of the Arab nationalist enterprise is reflected in the existence of 19 States, occupying 12 million square kilometres, in which 100 million Arabs live under their sovereign flags, in command of vast resources. The world, including Israel, has come to terms with Arab nationalism. The unsolved question is whether Arab nationalism will frankly come to terms with the modest rights of another Middle Eastern nation to live securely in its original, and only, home.

For this to happen it will, I suggest, be necessary for political and intellectual leaders in the Arab world to reject the fallacy that Israel is alien to the Middle East. Israel is not alien to the Middle East: it is an organic part of its texture and memory. Take Israel and all that has flowed from Israel out of Middle Eastern history and you evacuate that history of its central experiences. Israel's historic, religious, national roots in the Land of Israel are a primary element of mankind's cultural history. Nothing - not even dispersion, exile, martyrdom, long separation - has ever disrupted this connexion. Modern Israel is the resumption of a primary current in the flow of universal history. We ask our neighbours to believe that it is an authentic reality from which most of the other elements in Middle Eastern history take their birth. Israel is no more or less than the Jewish people's resolve to be itself and to live, renewed, within its own frame of values, and thus to contribute its particular shape of mind to the universal human legacy.

That is what Israel is all about, and all this is much too deep and old and strong to be swept away. I ask Arab leaders and thinkers when they reflect on Israel, to ponder a French historian's definition of nationhood: "A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle. To share a common glory in the past, a common will in the present; to have done great things together; to want to do them again - these are the essential conditions of being a nation."

When to all this memory you add the special tragedy of Jewish homelessness, you will understand why Israel faces the other Middle Eastern nations in the perfect consciousness of its own legitimacy. It will neither disappear nor apologize for itself, nor compromise its sovereign destiny nor surrender its name and image, nor be swallowed up in something else. Within the framework of its own legitimate existence it seeks reconciliation and peace.

It seems to me that the effort to resist the existential truth about Israel as inseparable from Middle Eastern destiny lies at the root of every other discord. We ought to remember that the war against Israel is a little older than the State of Israel itself. If we want to know the authentic answer to the question "How did it all begin?", we could go to the library downstairs and look up the documents and find the report of the United Nations Partition Commission of 20 April 1948. I quote:

"Arab opposition to the plan of the General Assembly has taken the form of organized efforts by strong Arab elements both inside and outside Palestine, to prevent its implementation and thwart its objectives by threats and acts of violence.... Powerful Arab interests, both inside and outside Palestine, are defying the resolution of the General Assembly, and are engaged in a deliberate effort to alter by force the settlement envisaged therein."

That is the report.

How little has changed since then. Can we not describe today's condition in these sentences without changing many words? The pendulum of military advantage swings this way and that. The tide of political struggle ebbs and flows. One thing alone has been constant - the volcanic atmosphere in which the Middle East lives, with only a few years between each eruption and each succeeding lull. And so in the twenty-sixth year, as in the first, we woke up one morning to find the Arab forces moving against us from south and north. Nobody believes that if those massive armoured thrusts had gone forward as their commanders wished, they would have come to a voluntary halt, at any particular line. The distinguished Egyptian writer, Muhammad Hasainein Heikal, has put it very clearly in "Al-Ahram" of 19 October:

"If the Arabs succeeded by force of arms in liberating the lands conquered in June 1967, what is to prevent them in the next stage from liberating the whole of Palestine itself by force of arms?"

What indeed? And so in October 1973, as in May 1948, the issue for Israel became no less than the survival of life and home, of national future, of personal destiny, of all that had been built and cherished and defended, in common action, for 25 years.

And yet with all the similarity between 1948 and 1973, there has been one ominous transformation. All of us around these tables must be aware of it. Small Middle Eastern countries can now use arms in such quantities and of such destructive force as would have been available only to the greatest military Powers one generation ago. And therefore the Golan and Sinai are strewn with young bodies of Israelis and Arabs, and the burnt-out hulks of armoured vehicles and trucks. Two thousands tanks were destroyed in the one, single month of October. For the price of them the countries of the Middle East could have had 20,000 tractors to bring fertility to their lands.

It may be that one thing has changed for the better, namely that a mutual understanding of the sterility of war and the sterility of political deadlock has become sufficiently alive to bring all of us here to Geneva - Israel, Egypt and Jordan. We come with a mandate from our Governments to seek peace. We also have a common mandate from bereaved mothers and widows and orphans to bring 25 years of insanity to an end. The pathos of it all is that this Peace Conference could have been convened six years ago, after the 1967 war, or indeed at any time since the 1948 war ended with the 1949 armistice agreements. A peace negotiation is what Israel has been proposing all the time. We could have had this moment, without all those graves, without all that blood.

The question now is whether we can break out of past deadlocks into a new vision and a new hope. Well, a common interest in bringing the war to an end has already brought Egypt and Israel together in three agreements. We have accepted a cease-fire in pursuance of Security Council resolution No. 338, of 22 October. On 7 November, we signed a six-point agreement for stabilizing the cease-fire. The Egyptian and Israeli senior officers who concluded that agreement met face to face and pursued their discourse in a civilized atmosphere at Kilometre 101, until 10 December. Now Egypt and Israel, together with Jordan, have agreed on the procedure and terms of reference for a peace conference.

These three decisions are the bridge across which we wish to make a transition from belligerency to peace. It is especially vital that the cease-fire continue to be observed by land and air and sea.

I propose that Egypt and Israel pledge themselves at this Conference to observe the cease-fire on the basis of reciprocity. I give that pledge on Israel's behalf. Surely the maintenance of the cease-fire is an indispensable condition before any useful negotiation.

Beyond these transitional steps we should have a clear conception of our objective. Israel's aim at this Conference is a peace treaty defining the terms of our co-existence in future years. Since the purpose of this Conference is

peace we must have an understanding of what that term involves. Peace is not a mere cease-fire or armistice. Its meaning is not exhausted by the absence of war. It commits us also to positive obligations which neighbouring States owe to each other by virtue of their proximity and of their common membership in the international community. Above all, a durable peace must create a new human reality. It does not rest on the cold formalism of documents alone. Nations at peace are not separated from each other by hermetically sealed boundaries guarded by international police forces. Indeed the emphasis on the interposition of police units in so much of the public debate on the Middle East is a confession that the peace that is envisaged is not authentic or stable or real. The ultimate guarantee of a peace agreement lies in the creation of common regional interests, in such degree of intensity, in such multiplicity of inter-action, in such entanglement of reciprocal advantage, in such mutual human accessibility, as to put the possibility of future war beyond any rational contingency.

Let us all atone for 25 years of separation by working towards a co-operative relationship similar to that which European States created after centuries of conflict and war. It may take time to achieve that full objective. But does not every serious architect design a vision of the finished structure before anybody begins to face the prosaic difficulties of construction? At any rate, our vision must be one of sovereign States, the Arab States and Israel, each pursuing its national life within its own particularity while co-operating with its neighbours in a broader regional devotion.

The peace treaties that we want to negotiate and conclude should provide for the permanent elimination of all forms of hostility, boycott and blockade. The peace settlement must be the product of mutual agreement and not of external pressure, or of intimidation of one party by the other. It is only by freely accepting national and international responsibility for the peace that the signatory Governments can ensure its stability. Our peace agreements should of course provide for the renunciation of the use of force in our relations with each other. They should contain specific and unequivocal recognition of each other's political independence, integrity and sovereignty.

They should prohibit any hostile action, including terrorist action, conducted from the territory of one of the signatories against the territory and population of the other. They should formally proclaim the permanent end of the conflict and the renunciation of all claims or acts arising from belligerency. They should ensure that all international conventions which each of the signatories has signed should be applicable to the other signatory without any of the reservations entered by Arab Governments in the past into such international obligations. Nations at peace with each other do not seek to impede the movement of each other's ships or aircraft, or forbid them the normal civilities of air transit and maritime passage. Governments

establishing peaceful relations after long years of conflict invariably define their intentions with respect to formal relations with each other in the economic, commercial, cultural and political domains. With the establishment of peace it would become normal for Israel and the Arab States to take their places jointly in regional development organizations.

There is also need for attitudinal change. Bertrand Russell wrote that "all wars originate in classrooms". Long years of conflict have given successive generations of our people a distorted vision of each other. The transition to peace should have its effects in educational systems, expelling all the images and stereotypes which nations at war invoke both as causes and consequences of their hostility. A peace settlement should unlock the arteries of our region's communications.

Now, these aims may seem very remote and visionary today, but they do not go beyond what Governments have usually accomplished in their transition from hostility to peace. In fact, I have never come across any peace agreement which does not include everything that I have listed here. The three Governments represented at this Conference all accepted these aims when they endorsed Security Council resolution 242, of which the main provisions are the establishment of a just and lasting peace, the mutual acknowledgement by all States in the area of each other's sovereignty, integrity, independence and right to security. Another provision of that resolution is the elimination of all forms of belligerency, agreement on secure and recognized boundaries to which forces would be withdrawn in the context of a peace settlement. Israel adheres to what it said on this subject in its communications to you, Mr. Secretary-General, in August 1970.

We shall seek to know from the Arab participants in this Conference whether they share our understanding of the obligations, rights and prohibitions involved in a peace agreement. If we can reach a harmonious understanding on this point, we shall still face many complexities but there will be a stronger probability, than otherwise, of agreement and compromise.

Of course, the peace treaty to be negotiated with each neighbouring State should contain an agreement on boundaries. The decisive test for Israel will be the defensibility of its new boundaries against the contingency of attacks and blockades, such as those threatened and carried out in 1967 and 1973. The experience of October 1973 confirmed our view that the permanent boundaries must be negotiated with the utmost precision and care. If those armoured thrusts had begun from EI Arish or northern Gaza, or from the Golan Heights itself, then the first assault might well have been the last. Peace-makers do not reconstruct vulnerable, inflammatory situations. They

try to correct them. Therefore there cannot be a return to the former armistice lines of 1949-1967, which proved to be inherently fragile and which served as a temptation to an aggressive design of encirclement and blockade, from which Israel broke out in 1967 after weeks of solitude and peril.

In this matter as in others there must be a basic readiness on all sides to make such concessions as do not threaten vital security interests. Israel does not seek acceptance of any of its positions as a prior condition of the negotiation, just as we should not be asked to seek acceptance of any prior condition as a condition of negotiation. Having heard Arab positions and stated our own, we should at an appropriate stage seek to bring our policies into compromise. Security arrangements and demilitarized areas can supplement the negotiated boundary agreement, without, of course, replacing it.

But for Israel the overriding element in the peace discussion is that of security. It is true that we have again come out successfully from a military assault, this time with every conceivable advantage on the other side - advantage in numbers, in quantity of weapons, in initiative and total surprise. But despite this success the mood in Israel is sombre, for we come up again and again against the predicament of human vulnerability. The losses sustained in 1973 compound the sacrifices of 1948 and 1956 and 1967 and all the attritions and infiltrations in between. And Israelis always contemplate these losses against the cruel background of the European holocaust, which took millions of our kinsmen away to their deaths. Now there is no other national experience even remotely similar to this. Too much of Jewish history is occupied by the simple ambition of being Jewish and yet staying alive, and usually this reconciliation has not been achieved. The only people to suffer such massive annihilation of its human resources and the only sovereign State to live for 25 years without a single month of peace - how does anyone expect such a people and such a State not to claim respect for a particularly intense concern for individual and collective survival.

The attainment of peace will make it possible to resolve the problem of refugees by co-operative regional action with international aid. We find it astonishing that States whose revenues from oil exports surpass 15,000 million dollars a year were not able to solve this problem in a spirit of kinship and human solidarity. In the very years when the Arab refugee problem was created by the assault on Israel in 1947 and 1948, 700,000 Jewish refugees from Arab and Moslem lands and from the debris of Hitler's Europe were received by Israel and integrated in full citizenship and economic dignity. There have been other such solutions in Europe, in the Indian sub-continent, in Africa. The Arab refugee problem is not basically

intractable: it has been perpetuated by a conscious decision to perpetuate it. But surely a peace settlement will remove any political incentive which has prevented a solution in the past. At the appropriate stage Israel will define its contribution to an international and regional effort for refugees resettlement. We shall propose compensation for abandoned lands in the context of a general discussion on property abandoned by those who have left countries in the Middle East to seek a new life.

I presume that our negotiation with Jordan - I believe that it will define the agreed boundaries and other conditions of co-existence between two States occupying the original area of the Palestine Mandate - Israel and the neighbouring Arab State. The specific identity of the Palestinian and Jordanian Arabs will be able to find expression in the neighbouring State - I hope, in peaceful co-operation with Israel.

We declare our opposition to any explosive fragmentation of the area between three States in the region between the desert and the sea, where there are after all two nations, two languages, two cultures, and not three.

Today the bridges and the borders are open, and Arabs to the west and east of the Jordan - indeed, from all over the Arab world - move freely in and out of Israel, back and forth, into every part of the region. In a peace settlement with agreed boundaries we should strive to preserve and develop these conditions of human contact and accessibility. Separate political sovereignties need not rule out a large measure of economic and social co-operation. We aspire to a community of sovereign States in the Middle East, with open frontiers and regional institutions for co-operation.

We are deeply aware that Israel's capital, Jerusalem, now united forever, is the cradle of two other religious traditions, and the home of their Holy Places. Israel does not wish to exercise exclusive jurisdiction or unilateral responsibility in the Holy Places of Christendom and Islam - Holy Places should be under the administration of those who hold them sacred. We would be willing to discuss ways of giving expression to this principle as well as of working out agreements on free access and pilgrimage.

Israel would support a proposal to discuss a disengagement agreement with Egypt as first priority, when the Conference meets after the inaugural phase. On other possible agenda items we shall give our views at a later stage. Today I shall only refer to some urgent issues of which the solution is compelling, both on human grounds and in the interests of the Conference itself.

The absence of Syria from the opening session is regrettable, but frankness and indignation compel me to state that Syria, in our judgment, has not yet

qualified for participation in a peace conference because it continues to inflict a perverse injury on prisoners-of-war and their agonized and distraught families, in contravention of the Geneva Convention. This violation of human decencies continues unchecked. Syria is not to be trusted in the honourable treatment of prisoners-of-war and there are precedents much too harrowing for me to narrate. But we know that helpless prisoners-of-war are shackled and then murdered in cold blood. We have reported 42 such cases to the International Committee of the Red Cross. We know that prisoners are tortured and maimed, beaten and dishonoured. By withholding lists and refusing Red Cross visits, the Syrian Government creates wide circles of anguish and uncertainty amongst hundreds of families and thousands of citizens. Lists of Syrian prisoners have been presented by Israel to Red Cross Committees, and Red Cross visits do proceed regularly. The obligations of States under the Third Geneva Convention are unconditional and may not be made dependent on any other claim or request. Nevertheless, Israel has agreed, simultaneously with prisoner release, to the return of thousands of Syrian civilians to the territory east of Golan captured in the October war and even to handing over to the United Nations Emergency Force of two positions occupied between 22 and 24 October.

We would also emphasize the urgency for Egyptian action in reply to our queries on additional missing prisoners and on the repatriation of the bodies of soldiers fallen in action. In general, whenever we talk of this issue of prisoners, surely the time has come to banish the savageness which has marked the treatment of Israelis in Arab hands and to adapt the life of our region to the principles of international civility.

We want to substitute the idea of international civility for the present atmosphere of Middle Eastern life today. Too much of international life is left under the hijacker's philosophy. The slogan of the hijacker is "Do what I tell you, or else". This is said by terrorists to pilots of aircraft, by some oil-producing States to European and other Governments, by some Arab Governments to States whose relations with Israel they wish to weaken, by boycott committees to commercial companies. Now this slogan "Do what I tell you or else" is not the best prescription for Middle Eastern stability. It gets some immediate results but it is bound in the last resort to encounter resistance. What we seek is a transformation of all the concepts and attitudes which govern international relations in our region.

For many years, the Middle Eastern conflict has been a constant theme of public debate. The eyes of the world are upon this meeting, but I do hope that in the next stages of its work the Conference will develop compact, reticent procedures to discuss each component of the dispute. We do not rule out agreed stages of progress towards the final settlement, but the

Conference should not be satisfied as an ultimate result with anything less than a permanent, overall peace.

The distinction between a public debate in the General Assembly and a peace conference is crucial. In the case of a public debate there is an attempt to solve problems by adjudication; in a peace conference, by agreement. We hope for restraint by Governments outside the area who may think that they know the exact point of balance at which the interests of the parties should be reconciled. Our free agreement is essential because in the last resort nobody outside Israel is called upon - or is ever likely - to risk any life or blood for Israel's survival. Whenever there is that kind of sacrifice, we shall have to face it alone. We ask therefore for respect for our solitude of responsibility, that is to say, for our judgment of what the basic minimal conditions for Israel's security and survival are. We intend to preserve that domain of ultimate decision with traditional tenacity. This issue is especially sensitive. We have accepted the joint initiative of both co-chairmen as a reflection of the real balance of forces at work. We understood from Foreign Minister Gromyko's speech that in his view Israel's legitimacy and right to security are not under any doubt. As we read the Algiers Declaration, however, that declaration puts both of those things in doubt. The word "peace" does not exist in that declaration at all, nor does the word "Israel", and there is an ominous reference to "the enemy". That is why the Algiers Declaration is really not the sort of declaration that can guide a peace conference.

But while we have accepted the joint initiative of both co-chairmen, we cannot ignore that one of them identifies himself exclusively with our adversaries and has felt no balancing necessity to concern itself with Israel's welfare or destiny. This has been the case in the arms race as well. There is therefore no symmetry here, even if the imbalance is less marked than in the broader multilateral arena. The true remedy then is to allow maximum opportunity for the parties themselves to achieve dialogue and to come to agreed solutions.

In conclusion, Mr. Secretary-General, while the components of the problem are complex, everything comes back in simple terms to the intentions that we bring with us to this table. Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon - and in the final resort all of these should be participants - are relatively new as sovereign States, but Arab and Jews are very old as peoples. Both of us have always had the gift of memory, neither of us has ever been very good at forgetting. In this generation we have been made more aware of our divisions than of our common humanity but there are some ideas and recollections that are common to us both. There is one cave at Machpelah in which our common ancestors, the Patriarchs and the Matriarchs, are laid to rest.

Our common ancestor, Abraham, shocked all his contemporaries by breaking the idols and suggesting something new. That is what we now have to do, to smash the idolatries of war and hate and suspicion, to break the adoration that men give to their traditional attitudes and above all to their traditional slogans, to strike out towards a horizon, uncertain, but better than the terrible certainties that face us if we stay behind.

Our Holy Book puts it simply (spoken in Hebrew and English): "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." But it is put with equal simplicity in your Holy Book (spoken in Arabic): "If they incline to peace, then turn towards it and put your trust in God".

Thank you.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations:

I thank the distinguished Foreign Minister of Israel. I have been informed that the distinguished Foreign Minister of Egypt wants to speak. I give him the floor.

Mr. Fahmy (Egypt):

Mr. Chairman, with your permission and the permission of the distinguished Foreign Ministers, I would like to say a few words in connexion with the statement which we have just heard from the Foreign Minister of Israel.

This morning I have tried with all the responsibility at my command to place the Egyptian position based on facts and nothing but facts. I have myself, as you have all witnessed, avoided referring to anything else but facts. Why did I do so? Because I thought, and I hope that this will remain true, that we are starting or embarking on a very solemn occasion at this historic moment in this Conference. Secondly, I was not in need of resorting to the procedure which the Foreign Minister of Israel chose because I do not have any problem of speaking here for home consumption and I do not have any election campaign which is going to take place in a few days in my country. This is my first remark.

My second remark is that it is really a pity that Mr. Eban refers to the archives of the United Nations in this library and he knows better than anybody else that the archives of the United Nations are full of resolutions adopted by the Security Council of the United Nations and the General Assembly, more than 100 times condemning Israel for its behaviour against the world community, for its behaviour against the Arab countries, and for its behaviour against the Palestinians. Israel for that reason has now found herself alone, completely isolated. There is no other country or Member

State of the United Nations which finds itself in the situation in which Israel finds itself now. Why is this? Because of the misbehaviour of the Arab countries? Because all the Member States of the United Nations do not know the truth, but only Israel knows the truth, only Israel gives advice and only Israel knows the facts? They know the facts, yes; but they know only the facts which they wanted to believe themselves; nobody else believes them. So much for the archives, for the isolation of Israel, and for the behaviour of Israel.

Then he tried again to belittle the intelligence of us here whilst talking to the gallery for home consumption and trying to distort facts again, as we are accustomed to hear. He thought it fit even to refer to the Palestinians, to some incidents of desperate people, a desperate nation. Mr. Eban and his colleagues invaded their country by force in 1947 and this is why they are behaving in that way, and they are entitled to do that. But it is not for a Government which believes that it is a responsible Government to take certain actions - I am going to refer to only a few of them. First of all Deir Yassin in 1947; Kibya and Nahalin in 1954; the Lavon affair in 1954; Khan Younis and Gaza in 1955; Kafr Kassem in 1956; Karame in 1958; Samoa in 1965; the airport of Beirut 1968; the invasion against Beirut, 1968; Southern Lebanon, 1969; mass murder on the instructions of the Government of Israel - I repeat, the mass murder of some of the leaders of the Palestinians; the mass invasion of Beirut, 1973; and the hitting of the tents of the Palestinians in Syria and Lebanon.

These are acts of Governments - responsible people, if they are responsible at all but he thinks that we don't know. We know, but he thinks that the other people do not know. Everybody around this table, everybody outside this table knows the facts, and I hope that for the future if he would like to work in a serious way he should not use this rostrum for propaganda. He spoke about Syria. He spoke about Syria because Syria is absent. I am ready to keep you here for three hours and tell you how the Israelis act and react, what kind of atrocities they do, what their armies are doing either on the cease-fire or around the cease-fire or during the battle itself. Even Mr. Eban cannot deny that his planes dropped booby-traps on villages in my country - to kill what? Farmers and children. And now he speaks about security. What kind of security? Security through agreement. What does he mean? He means annexed territories. He means by "agreement" that the Arab countries must agree to what? To give him Arab land for the sake of his security. And he forgot - I doubt it, that he forgot that in 1947 it was the Zionists who engaged with Palestine: 1956 he remembers, and I think he participated in that collusion against my country. In 1967 they invaded my country and all the Arab countries. And he speaks about 1973, the sixth of October. He admitted in his statement that now - and this is the lesson he should learn - that now, after 1973, he knows very well that not only the Israelis can use

weapons, modern and sophisticated weapons. He is trying here to present himself as the lamp of the whole world - the most peaceful legend in history.

He referred to the Algiers decision of the Arab Summit, and he is very angry that we did not mention the name of Israel. We will mention the name of Israel when Israel behaves, when Israel would like to live in peace in this country, not to annex territory under any pretext whatsoever, not to try to confuse and mislead people under this fallacy of so-called security. Security of whom, Mr. Eban? You threaten the security of all the Arab countries as long as you are using these militaristic maxims of yours. But in his speech today, while he was pleading for peace, he never uttered once the word "withdrawal from Arab territories" - not a single time - and this is how he would like to plead for peace here. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations:

I thank the distinguished representative of Egypt. Does any other delegation wish to speak? Apparently this is not the case. May I then propose that we adjourn this meeting and that we hold a closed meeting tomorrow morning at 11 o'clock? The purpose of that meeting would be to discuss the organization of the future work of this Conference.

I call on the distinguished Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union.

Mr. Gromyko (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian):

Tomorrow we shall have to discuss the question you have raised, but if anybody has any considerations to put forward on the substance of the problem, then of course he will be free to express those considerations as well at tomorrow's meeting. I take it that this stands to reason.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations:

I think that there is certainly no objection to this interpretation; I think the Conference agrees that, if any delegation wants to discuss substance, it is accepted. Are there any other comments? If not, I adjourn this meeting until tomorrow at 11 a.m.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations:

It is a great honour for me to open this historic Conference and to welcome the representatives of the participating Governments. It is also a source of gratification to me that this unique event is taking place under the auspices

of the United Nations. The Palais des Nations has housed many historic meetings, but none have been of more potential importance, both to the Governments concerned and to the international community as a whole, than this Conference on peace in the Middle East.

I am certain that I am speaking on behalf of all the participants in the Conference when I also take this opportunity to thank sincerely the Federal and Cantonal authorities of Switzerland for their valuable assistance. We are indeed most grateful for their unfailing and generous co-operation in making the necessary arrangements possible.

There is no need to remind the distinguished representatives of the Governments here assembled of the concern of the international community for the success of our deliberations. This concern was emphasized most recently by the Security Council when it expressed the hope that the Conference would make speedy progress towards the establishment of a just and durable peace in the Middle East. The United Nations has been seized of the various aspects of the Middle East conflict for more than a quarter of a century and has devoted an immense amount of time and effort both to keeping the peace and to the search for a just and lasting settlement.

On 11 October of this year, five days after bitter fighting had broken out once again in the Middle East, I appealed to the Governments concerned to look urgently to the possibility of turning the tragic conflict into a starting point for a new effort at a real settlement. Similar appeals were made by numerous Governments. Now, two months later, this new effort is taking shape here in Geneva. None of us, I know, underestimates the difficulties of the task ahead, but the very fact of this Conference, and the willingness of the Governments concerned to respond to this new effort to find a just and lasting settlement, is a source of encouragement and hope for all mankind.

The basis for this meeting was laid down in Security Council resolution 338 of 22 October 1973. That resolution called upon the parties for an immediate cessation of all firing and a termination of all military activity. It called upon the parties to start immediately the implementation of Security Council resolution 242 in all its parts, and it decided that negotiations should begin at once between the parties concerned under appropriate auspices aimed at establishing a just and durable peace in the Middle East.

In subsequent resolutions on 23 and 25 October, the Council confirmed its decisions on an immediate cessation of all kinds of firing and of all military action, called for United Nations observation of the cease-fire and decided to set up a United Nations Emergency Force. The United Nations Military Observers and the Force were immediately put into the field, and they continue to exert their best efforts to keep the peace.

On 11 November the representatives of Egypt and Israel, under the auspices of the Commander of UNEF, met at Kilometre Marker 101 on the Cairo-Suez road and signed the six-point agreement which had been communicated to the Secretary-General on 9 November by the Secretary of State of the United States. In subsequent meetings the modalities for the implementation of five of the six points were agreed upon by the parties and were put into effect with the assistance of UNEF and the International Committee of the Red Cross. It is gratifying that in this way the humanitarian aspects of the six-point agreement have been largely fulfilled.

I am aware of the outstanding humanitarian problems relating to the Middle East question as a whole. The Commander of UNEF, in close co-operation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, is making persistent efforts to find solutions to some of these problems, and I myself have taken initiatives in an effort to resolve others. It is my earnest hope that through such efforts and through the proceedings of this Conference rapid progress may be made in this regard.

On the implementation of one point of the agreement, namely, the question of the return to the October 22 position in the framework of agreement on the disengagement and separation of forces under the auspices of the United Nations, the parties have not so far reached accord, although detailed exploratory discussions have been held. I hope that through its deliberations this Conference may make progress on this important matter, as well as embarking on the next step envisaged in resolution 338, namely, the negotiations aimed at establishing a just and durable peace in the Middle East.

The presence of the Secretary-General of the United Nations here today reflects the deep concern of the international community in the Middle East question. It also symbolizes the willingness of the Organization to be of assistance whenever the parties require it. I want to assure all of the parties here present that in that spirit I and my staff, both at United Nations Headquarters and in the Middle East, stand ready to be of assistance in any way that may seem useful to them. We have, I believe, amply demonstrated this readiness to act promptly in the critical events of recent months.

Before concluding, may I express appreciation to all the Governments which, by their spirit of co-operation and their desire to make progress on this most complex and crucial question, have made possible the convening of this Conference today. The Conference has a unique opportunity to come to grips with a most difficult, dangerous and complex international problem. If this opportunity is not seized, the world will inevitably be confronted once again with a dangerous and highly explosive situation in the Middle East. Unless progress can be made, the cease-fire and the United Nations peace-

keeping arrangements already in operation in the area will remain fragile, and there will be an ever-present danger that fighting will break out again.

This Conference presents a historic challenge to its participants not only because the eyes of the world are upon it, but because the situation in the Middle East, with all its manifold implications, urgently demands the statesmanship, courage, patience and vision of each and all of the participants. I know that these qualities are not lacking in this room. I am sure that all the participants share a sense of urgency and will not fail to seize the opportunity to build a lasting structure of peace in the area. It is an opportunity which may not recur for a very long time. I wish this Conference all success in its noble task.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations:

I call upon the representative of the USSR, Foreign Minister Gromyko.

Mr. Gromyko (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian):

Mr. Secretary-General, distinguished colleagues. It is with a deep feeling of satisfaction that the Soviet Union welcomes the convening of this conference. A first, but important, step has been taken on the road to the political solution of one of the most acute international problems. For a quarter of a century now it has been a constant source of tension, not only in the Middle East but also far beyond its boundaries.

From time to time, and we are all witnesses to that, the tension in this area turns into open armed conflict. Every time that happens, the fate of the whole world is in jeopardy. That was so six years ago, as it was quite recently in October this year, when the military activities, although they did not last long, were marked by extreme violence.

There can hardly be any doubt that further sanguinary military clashes in the Middle East will take place in the future as well unless we eradicate the main tensions prevailing there. Anyone must inevitably come to that conclusion who has even a slight knowledge of the actual situation and approaches the question objectively.

The intolerable situation in the Middle East created because of the policy of Israel cannot continue. We should like to hope that the participants in the Conference will recognize this, that they came here with the firm intention of laying the foundation for a just settlement.

There is no alternative to such a settlement which would be acceptable to the peoples of the area, to the peoples of the world as a whole. This is irrefutably demonstrated by the whole course of events, including those which have happened recently. It is now quite clear to all that the Arab States will never reconcile themselves to the loss of the territories which were taken away from them in 1967. The Soviet Union has full understanding of their position, and supports it. The Arab countries have the support of the overwhelming majority of the States of the world in their righteous struggle. They have on their side the strengthening solidarity of the Arab world.

It is hopeless to think that the occupied territories can be kept by force. The need for another, a realistic approach to the problems of war and peace in the Middle East, of which the Soviet Union has always spoken, cannot be deferred.

The overwhelming majority of the States of the world have very definitely shown, in one form or another, that they will not tolerate the perpetuation of a source of tension in the Middle East. Not to take this into account would be to go against the expressed will of the peoples.

Also conducive to a lasting settlement of the situation in the Middle East are the positive movements towards détente in the world as a whole that have been achieved in recent years. In many parts of the world a number of important international problems have been solved, including some which had seemed unapproachable. It is sufficient to recall the termination of the war in Viet-Nam, the settlement of acute and important post-war problems in Europe, and the important turn towards normalization and the improvement of relations among States with different social structures on the basis of peaceful co-existence through the conclusion of international treaties and agreements.

A real indicator of the positive changes that have taken place in the Middle East, too, was the initiative taken by the Soviet Union and the United States, which found its expression in the well-known decisions of the United Nations Security Council. In the light of all this, the continuing Middle East conflict, even though the military activities have stopped, seems an inadmissible anomaly.

We do not wish to say again whose responsibility it is. We know whose it is and we believe we are not the only ones who do. Now that the question of a settlement is no longer deadlocked, something else is more important: to determine what must be done in order to establish such a peace in the Middle East as would be lasting and just to all States and peoples in the area.

In the first place, it is the Soviet Union's firm conviction that a fundamental principle of international life must be unswervingly applied - the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by means of war.

That is the key to the whole problem. If the participants in the conference really wish to rid the Middle East area of the threat of new conflicts, it is necessary to remove the initial cause of the crisis - the occupation of Arab territories which has been continuing now for more than six years. These territories must be returned in full to their lawful owners. It is our conviction that, so long as Israeli forces are in these territories, there will be no peace in the Middle East.

Any document adopted by this conference must contain precise and clear obligations concerning the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the territories occupied in 1967.

Without the achievement of an agreement by the parties on this question of principle, we do not see how it would be possible to ensure a settlement which would satisfy the interests of the Arab States and Israel, and the interests of international security. On the other hand, if agreement was reached on this basis, the solution of many other aspects of the settlement would undoubtedly be greatly simplified.

At the same time it is necessary to ensure respect for and recognition of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all the States of the Middle East, and of their right to live in peace. This also refers to Israel. Our position is clear and consistent from start to finish - peace and security for all the peoples of the area. This implies, of course, that justice will be ensured as regards the Arab people of Palestine. Their legitimate rights must be protected. It goes without saying that the Palestinian problem cannot be considered and decided without the participation of representatives of the Arab people of Palestine.

The contention that Israel is being deprived of the right to existence is of course advanced as one of the main arguments, if not the main argument, in favour of the occupation of other peoples' territory. It is an argument which does not stand up to criticism. Israel was recognized to possess that right by the very fact of the creation of that State by decision of the United Nations. Possession of that right was confirmed by the establishment in due course of diplomatic relations with Israel by many States, including the Soviet Union. The Arab neighbours of Israel have expressed their willingness to negotiate a settlement on the basis of the well-known resolutions of the Security Council, in which the principle is clearly expressed that all States involved in the conflict have the right to existence.

That right cannot be unilateral, however. It is inconceivable without respect for the sovereign rights of other States and countries. One cannot use one's right to existence to the detriment of the interests of others. Only obligations of a reciprocal kind, based on equality of rights, and a readiness to observe them rigorously, can ensure normal development of inter-State relations in the Middle East.

This is fully applicable to the principle of the integrity of frontiers. Just as in other parts of the world, reliable frontiers are, above all, peaceful frontiers which provide an assurance that they will not be violated. It is naive to believe that secure frontiers can be ensured by the seizure of alien territories. The only frontiers that are truly secure are legal frontiers that are recognized by those on both sides of them. In the specific circumstances of the Middle East, these are the demarcation lines that existed on 4 June 1967.

This is the Soviet Union's position on the most fundamental aspect of a settlement in the Middle East. It is fully in accordance with the letter and spirit of the decisions adopted by the United Nations since 1967. This applies, above all, to the well-known Security Council resolution 242 of 22 November 1967.

The Soviet Union, which firmly pursues a policy of securing a radical improvement of the situation in the Middle East, has not deviated from this position nor does it intend to do so.

We are convinced that the 1967 Security Council resolution we have mentioned continues to retain its full significance as a realistic and sound approach to the problems existing in the Middle East and to the settlement of those problems.

And we are not alone in this conviction. It is shared by virtually all States Members of the United Nations, which have frequently expressed a desire for the appropriate action both within the United Nations and outside it.

It is, of course, one thing to recognize resolutions in the word, but another to carry them out in deeds. If this had been done, the problem of a Middle East settlement would long since have been removed from the agenda. However, even as I speak, the smell of gunpowder and burning still hangs over Sinai and the Golan Heights and the pain of bloody wounds still wrings the hearts of thousands of Arabs as well as of Israelis.

The practical task of this Conference is to work out a concrete, realistic programme for implementing the above-mentioned Security Council resolution in all its parts. Such action is also required by the decisions which were taken by the Security Council during the recent military operations and

in which a cease-fire in the Middle East was linked with the start of immediate negotiations with a view to a sound solution of the Middle East problem.

As we see it, the agreements on such a settlement that are reached between the parties concerned will be embodied in the appropriate documents at the Conference. It is important that these should be substantial documents and should be binding on all the parties that subscribe to them. In other words, they must have the force of law.

In this way a firm foundation would be laid for peaceful co-existence and good neighbourly relations between all States and peoples of the Middle East.

Obligations assumed by the parties under international law would be the best guarantee of their mutual security, which can be ensured only through trust and co-operation between States, through strict fulfilment of the treaties and agreements they have concluded, and not through seizure of the territories of others.

If it proves necessary to lend additional weight to such agreements, the Soviet Union, taking into account the wishes of the interested parties, is ready, together with appropriate other Powers, to assume the responsibilities involved. The Security Council of the United Nations can also make an important contribution in this connexion. What is vital is that the political settlement in the Middle East should be a truly solid one.

Other measures to achieve the same effect are also possible. I have in mind, in particular, the question of establishing demilitarized zones in certain sectors on a basis of reciprocity and the temporary deployment of international personnel in particular areas. All these matters would, of course, have to be the subject of separate negotiations and, what is most important, would have to be settled on terms which are mutually acceptable to the parties concerned.

It seems to me that, given agreement on the main problem to which we have referred, such matters would not constitute an obstacle to a general settlement.

Despite all its difficulties, the Middle East problem can be solved. We have said this before, and we reaffirm it now in this Conference. But we have also warned about something else: the conflagration of war in the Middle East could flare up at any moment. A dangerous situation continues to exist in the area. Further delays in achieving a peaceful settlement are fraught with

great danger. We hope that all those present in this room are bearing this fully in mind.

The participants in this Conference bear a heavy responsibility. Their joint efforts can and must bring a dependable peace to the peoples of the Middle East. The Soviet Union has set itself, as one of the principal tasks, the task of helping to eliminate the hotbed of tension in the Middle East. We have supported and continue to support the Arab peoples in their efforts to establish a lasting and just peace in the Middle East area. At this Conference, too, we will do everything we can to help reach the necessary agreements so that such a peace will become a reality.

The Soviet Union is not hostile to the State of Israel as such. The policy of annexation and the flouting of the norms of international law and of United Nations resolutions - these are what have given rise to the general condemnation of Israel, by us among others. Israel has even come to this Conference without having implemented resolutions 338 and 339 of the Security Council. The situation can change when Israel confirms its readiness to arrive at an honourable and mutually acceptable settlement by deeds. The important and immediate task now is to decide the question of an effective withdrawal of troops.

The establishment of a genuine peace is in accordance with the fundamental interests of all the States of the Middle East. Enjoying the advantages of a peaceful life, their peoples could switch their efforts from hostility, which squanders human and material energies on both sides, to solving the problems of social and economic progress.

This would benefit other States and peoples which, because of certain circumstances, are experiencing the negative consequences of the Middle East conflict. These consequences are now being felt and quite perceptibly - both by countries in the immediate vicinity of the Middle East and by those which are situated many thousands of kilometres away from the area. International economic co-operation, trade and navigation - to mention only this aspect - would all be in a much better state.

One can only imagine the extent to which the entire international atmosphere would become more healthy and progress would be made towards the relaxation of tension as a result of the elimination of the Middle East conflict. This would have a most beneficial effect on the situation throughout the whole Mediterranean basin, in Europe, Asia and indeed throughout the whole world.

The peoples of the Middle East and indeed of the whole world expect practical measures aimed at ensuring a stable peaceful settlement in this

area. The Soviet Union will do everything in its power to ensure that the work of the Conference proceeds in this direction and that it is businesslike and constructive.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations:

I thank the distinguished Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of the United States of America, Secretary of State, Mr. Kissinger.

Mr. Kissinger (United States of America):

Mr. Secretary-General, distinguished Foreign Ministers, delegates.

Mr. Secretary-General, as one of the Co-Chairmen of this Conference, let me express my gratitude to the United Nations and to you personally for providing such excellent facilities for the Conference, for convening it, and for doing us all the honour of presiding at this historic moment.

We are convened here at a moment of historic opportunity for the cause of peace in the Middle East, and for the cause of peace in the world. For the first time in a generation the peoples of the Middle East are sitting together to turn their talents to the challenge of a lasting peace.

All of us must have the wisdom to grasp this moment - to break the shackles of the past, and to create at last a new hope for the future.

Two months ago what we now refer to as the fourth Arab-Israeli war was coming to an end. Today, there is the respite of an imperfect cease-fire, but the shadow of war still hangs over the Middle East. Either we begin today the process of correcting the conditions which produced that conflict, or we doom untold tens of thousands to travail, sorrow and further inconclusive bloodshed.

When the history of our era is written, it will speak not of a series of Arab-Israeli wars, but of one war broken by periods of uneasy armistices and temporary cease-fires. That war has already lasted twenty-five years. Whether future histories will call this the era of the twenty-five year Arab-Israeli war, or the thirty year war, or the fifty year war, rests in large measure in our hands. And above all, it rests in the hands of the Israeli and Arab Governments, not only those whose distinguished representatives are seated around this table, but also those who are absent and who we all hope will join us soon.

We are challenged by emotions so deeply felt - by causes so passionately believed and pursued - that the tragic march from cataclysm to cataclysm, each more costly and indecisive than the last, sometimes seems pre-ordained. Yet our presence here today - in itself a momentous accomplishment - is a symbol of rejection of this fatalistic view. Respect for the forces of history does not mean blind submission to those forces.

There is an Arab saying, *Eli Fat Mat*, which means that the past is dead. Let us overcome old myths with new hope. Let us make the Middle East worthy of the messages of hope and reconciliation that have been carried forward from its stark soil by three great religions.

Today there is hope for the future, for the conflict is no longer looked upon entirely in terms of irreconcilable absolutes. The passionate ideologies of the past have, in part at least, been replaced by a recognition that all the peoples concerned have earned, by their sacrifice, a long period of peace.

From two recent trips through the Middle East I have the impression that people on both sides have had enough of bloodshed. No further proof of heroism is necessary; no military point remains to be made. The Middle East - so often the source of mankind's inspiration - is challenged to another act of hope and reconciliation significant not only for its own peoples but for all mankind.

What does each side seek? Both answer with a single word: peace. But peace has of course a concrete meaning for each. One side seeks the recovery of sovereignty and the redress of grievances suffered by a displaced people. The other seeks security and recognition of its legitimacy as a nation. The common goal of peace must be broad enough to embrace all these aspirations.

For the United States, our objective is such a peace.

We cannot promise success, but we can promise dedication. We cannot guarantee a smooth journey towards our goal, but we can assure you of an unswerving quest for justice.

The United States will make a determined and unflagging effort.

President Nixon has sent me here because for five years he has endeavoured to build a new structure of international peace in which ties with old friends are strengthened, and new and constructive relationships replace distrust and confrontation with adversaries.

But world peace remains tenuous and incomplete so long as the Middle East is in perpetual crisis. Its turmoil is a threat to the hopes of all of us in this room.

It is time to end this turmoil.

The question is not whether there must be peace. The question is how do we achieve it. What can we do here to launch new beginnings?

First, this Conference must speak with a clear and unequivocal voice: the cease-fire called for by the Security Council must be scrupulously adhered to by all concerned. Prior to last October the United States did all it could to prevent a new outbreak of fighting. But we failed because frustration could no longer be contained.

After the fighting began we, in concert with the Soviet Union, helped bring an end to the hostilities by sponsoring a number of resolutions in the Security Council. The six-point agreement of 11 November consolidated the cease-fire. It helped create the minimal conditions necessary for carrying forward our efforts here. All these resolutions and agreements must be strictly implemented.

But regardless of these steps, we recognize that the cease-fire remains fragile and tentative. The United States is concerned over the evidence of increased military preparedness. A renewal of hostilities would be both foolhardy and dangerous. We urge all concerned to refrain from the use of force, and to give our efforts here the chance they deserve.

Second, we must understand what can realistically be accomplished at any given moment.

The separation of military forces is certainly the most immediate problem. Disengagement of military forces would help to reduce the danger of a new military outbreak; it would begin the process of building confidence between the two sides.

Based on intensive consultations with the leaders of the Middle East, including many in this room today, I believe that the first work of this Conference should be to achieve early agreement on the separation of military forces, and I believe too that such an agreement is possible.

Serious discussions have already taken place between the military representatives of Egypt and Israel at Kilometre 101. It is important to build promptly on the progress achieved there. And on the Jordanian and Syrian fronts a comparable base for the lessening of tensions and the negotiation of

further steps towards peace must be found. Progress towards peace should include all parties concerned.

Third, the disengagement of forces is an essential first step - a consolidation of the cease-fire and a bridge to the "peaceful and accepted settlement" called for in Security Council resolution 242. Our final objective is the implementation in all of its parts of this resolution. This goal has the full support of the United States.

Peace must bring a new relationship among the nations of the Middle East - a relationship that will not only put an end to the state of war which has persisted for the last quarter of a century, but will also permit the peoples of the Middle East to live together in harmony and safety. It must replace the reality of mistrust with a new reality of promise and hope. It must include concrete measures that make war less likely.

A peace agreement must include these elements among others: withdrawals, recognized frontiers, security arrangements such as demilitarized zones, guarantees, a settlement of the legitimate interests of the Palestinians and a recognition that Jerusalem contains places considered holy by three great religions.

Peace will require that we relate the imperative of withdrawals to the necessities of security, the requirement of guarantees to the sovereignty of the parties, the hopes of the displaced to the realities now existing.

Fourth, we believe there must be realistic negotiations between the parties. Resolution 338 provides just such a process. It is on the parties that the primary responsibility rests. The United States intends to help facilitate these talks in every feasible way, to encourage moderation and the spirit of accommodation. We are prepared to make concrete suggestions to either side if this will help promote practical progress. But we must always remember that while a Middle East settlement is in the interest of us all, it is the people of the area that must live with the results. It must, in the final analysis, be acceptable to them.

Peace, in short, cannot last unless it rests on the consent of the parties concerned. The wisest of realists are those who understand the power of a moral consensus. There is a measure of safety in power to prevent aggression, but there is greater security still in arrangements considered so just that no one wishes to overthrow them.

As we open this Conference we take a momentous step. We are challenging a history of missed opportunities, of mutual fear and bottomless distrust. Our backdrop is a war that has brought anguish and pain, a war that has

been costly to both sides, that has brought neither victory nor defeat, that reflected the failure of all our past efforts at peaceful solutions.

Mr. Secretary-General, fellow delegates, President Nixon has sent me here with the purpose of affirming America's commitment to a just and lasting peace.

We do not embark on this task with false expectations. We do not pretend that there are easy answers. A problem that has defied solution for a generation does not yield to simple remedies.

In all efforts for peace the overriding problem is to relate the sense of individual justice to the common good. The great tragedies of history occur not when right confronts wrong, but when two rights face each other.

The problems of the Middle East today have such a character. There is justice on all sides, but there is a greater justice still in finding a truth which merges all aspirations in the realization of a common humanity. It was a Jewish sage, who speaking for all mankind, expressed this problem well: "If I am not for myself, who is for me, but if I am for myself alone, who am I?"

Fellow delegates, in the months ahead we will examine many problems. We will discuss many expedients. We will know success - and I dare say we shall experience deadlock and perhaps occasionally despair.

But let us always keep in mind our final goal:

We can exhaust ourselves in manoeuvres or we can remember that this is the first real chance for peace the Middle East has had in three decades.

We can concentrate on our resentments or we can be motivated by the consciousness that this opportunity, once past, will not return.

We can emphasize the very real causes of distrust, or we can remember that if we succeed our children will thank us for what they have been spared.

We can make propaganda or we can try to make progress.

The American attitude is clear. We know we are starting on a journey whose outcome is uncertain and whose progress will be painful. We are conscious that we need wisdom and patience and good will. But we know, too, that the agony of three decades must be overcome and that somehow we have to muster the insight and courage to put an end to the conflict between peoples who have so often ennobled mankind.

So we in the American delegation are here to spare no effort in the quest of a lasting peace in the Middle East, a task which is as worthy as it may be agonizing. If I may quote the words of a poet: "Pain that cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart until in our despair there comes wisdom through the awful grace of God."

The Secretary-General of the United Nations: I thank the distinguished Secretary of State of the United States.

I have been informed that the distinguished representative of Egypt wishes to speak now. If so, I give to the floor to the distinguished Foreign Minister of Egypt, Mr. Ismail Fahmy.

Mr. Fahmy (Egypt): Mr. Secretary-General, we are meeting today under the auspices of the United Nations, and we are indeed pleased to meet under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Your presence symbolizes the interest of the Organization in the question of the Middle East, which has been the concern of the United Nations since its inception. We would wish to thank you and all your colleagues, and we are sure that the United Nations will follow with keen interest our deliberations. I would appreciate it, if and when our work departs -and heaven forbid that it should - from the principles enshrined in the Charter, if you and the United Nations would fulfil your duty and put us back on the path prescribed by the Charter. resistance when faced with wrongs perpetrated against them. Legitimate grievances never fail to generate increasing resolve to do away with injustice. We in Egypt have had to face along the centuries many kinds of wrongs inflicted upon us. Each time we have resisted and suppressed them and have emerged in the end triumphant. No sacrifices were too great and no sufferings unbearable when nations pursuing such a noble cause worked with determination for justice and genuine peace. Such are the teachings of history. This we must remember when all of us look ahead and delve into the future.

When applying these lessons to the Middle East, one hardly needs to point out the tragic events that have taken place since the Palestinians were denied their national rights over their country and driven by force from their own land, a land to which they and we eternally belong. This area has since then continuously suffered from the militaristic and expansionist policy of Israel and from its unrelenting efforts to conquer and annex ever more territory, thus seriously endangering the independence, and infringing upon the territorial integrity, of the countries in the area.

The conflict in the Middle East is not and never has been a struggle that arose because its peoples hold different beliefs. For centuries these peoples, irrespective of their creed or religion, lived peacefully side by side. They

could have continued living in peace, enjoying the immense opportunities which God and nature have bestowed on this good earth, had it not been for the wedge that was driven by force and in the alleged name of religion into their midst for the sake of domination, exploitation and racist practices. I do not wish, however, to dwell on this well-known matter, but merely want to say that only when warlike acts and aggression cease to be the maxim of Israel, which is trying to convince the world that its very existence can be built on military rashness and supremacy, only then can a just peace at last be envisaged for the region.

As a result of the events which took place on 6 October, the Israelis must, we hope, have decided to relinquish this maxim and to change their course towards real peace, durable peace and just peace. So far as Egypt is concerned, my presence here symbolizes our deep desire to restore to our ravaged and embattled region a durable and just peace. This Conference is an historic event on which all the hopes of the world are focused. It would be a real tragedy if the wisdom of those most directly concerned - or even of those only indirectly linked with the future of the Middle East - should fail to seize this unique opportunity to come to grips with the basic issues involved and find genuine solutions which could form the foundation of a lasting peace leading to an era of enlightened accomplishment rather than tragic disillusion.

This Conference is, as I have said, both historic and unique in the sense that it represents the culmination of the manifold efforts and endeavours which all nations and statesmen of the world have exerted with the aim of bringing to an end a struggle which has lasted only too long. As for the Arab countries, they have come to this Conference ready and prepared to lay the cornerstone of the edifice of peace in the Middle East.

This Conference is unique in nature because, if Israel does not comprehend the deeper significance of our work here, the chances of repeating such an historic gathering will be very remote indeed. The net result will then be, no doubt, the recourse to other means in order to liberate our lands and to restore the legitimate rights of the Palestinians who have lived under appalling conditions for more than a quarter of a century. This Conference is, furthermore, unique and, if I may say so, unparalleled, since for the first time in history a conference dealing with the Middle East has amongst its participants the Soviet Union and the United States, that is, the two global Powers which shoulder responsibilities unprecedented in history for the maintenance of international peace and security. I take their participation as being a good omen, and the fact that they are represented here by their Foreign Ministers is added evidence of their wish to guarantee that a peaceful and just settlement will prevail in the Middle East.

For Egypt and, I am sure, for the world as a whole, this is an historic event of a highly political significance. Consequently, I hope we all agree that a durable and just peace cannot emerge in our region unless it conforms with certain basic norms and principles constituting what I should like to call "the essentials for peace in our area". In this connexion I am sure that all of us here, including the super-Powers, fully realize that a just and durable peace in the Middle East cannot be built on the basis of the following:

- (i) expansion by force by one country against another;
- (ii) the acquisition of foreign territories by force;
- (iii) the threatening of international and recognized boundaries under any pretext or argument;
- (iv) the infringement of the sovereignty of States and the violation of their territorial integrity;
- (v) the denial of the inalienable rights of the Palestinians to self-determination and to live in peace.

As for us, Mr. Secretary-General, we are sincerely and hopefully looking forward to achieving a durable and just peace. To our minds, nothing less should emerge from this historic gathering; otherwise we would produce a most unusual document which public opinion in our countries and in the world at large would never accept, but rather oppose and reject. Such a peace would be as vulnerable and fragile as the present cease-fire and as shaky and dangerous as were the conditions which, for the last 25 years or so, have persisted in the Middle East as a result of the failure to implement the many relevant resolutions adopted by the different organs of the United Nations.

Mr. Chairman, my presence here is a true and faithful continuation and implementation of the policies and the strategy laid down by President Sadat. In fact, as you may recall, he proposed on 14 February 1971 a programme for achieving peace based on the full implementation of Security Council resolution 242 (1967). Again, on 16 October of this year, he proposed that a peace conference be convened at the United Nations: such a conference was to lay down the modalities and establish the guarantees for building peace in the area based on respect for the legitimate rights of the people living therein.

Egypt's determination to work for peace equals its resolve to see that, in one way or another, its land, the Arab lands and those of our neighbours, are liberated, and that the Palestinians enjoy their legitimate right to live in

peace and dignity. This, in fact, represents what Egypt has been endeavouring to achieve since 5 June 1967, and up to 6 October 1973. Indeed, Egypt worked unremittingly for peace. These efforts were recognized and welcomed by all the countries of the world, whether in Africa, Asia or Europe, by the Soviet Union and even by the United States. My

President, and with him the Egyptian people, are on record as declaring that they have done their best to attain a durable and just peace by peaceful means. Alas, all these efforts were met by a persistent cry and determination to retain Arab territories unlawfully and by the use of force. Then the hour of 6 October 1973 struck, as a result of which we hope that the Israeli Government has now realized that Israeli security does not lie in retaining geographical trophies or in achieving military supremacy, but that it would best be safeguarded if it undertakes to live in peace with its neighbours. We hope, furthermore, that Israel now also understands that Egypt and, for that matter, all the Arab countries cannot be conquered by force or allow their lands to remain occupied. Nor will the Arab world accept the continued inhumane treatment of the Palestinians or agree that Jerusalem, the city of peace, should remain under the banner of the conqueror. Territories are the heritage most jealously guarded and defended by a people. They are handed from generation to generation. They are part of its history and prompt a profound sense of pride and thus of nationhood. Loss of territory deeply affects them and provokes a strong resolve to regain by all possible means what is theirs by right. Peoples do not bargain or barter over their territories, and the Arab nation is no exception. To expect the Arabs to give up part of their lands is tragically to misread their determination to the contrary. To insist that this be done would wreck all hopes for this Peace Conference to achieve what it has set out to do.

For all of us, coming to this Conference is a major step on the road to peace. We realize that this Conference would never have materialized if it were not for the multiple efforts of all countries of the world and their resolve to see to it that peace is at last restored to the region. Egypt is attending this Conference with the full determination to do its best in a businesslike manner to achieve a just and lasting peace. In doing so, however, we will never overlook the following basis essentials for peace in our area:

1. the total withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Arab territories occupied since 5 June 1967;
2. the liberation of the Arab city of Jerusalem and non-acceptance of any situation which may be injurious to the complete Arab sovereignty over the holy city;

3. the exercise by the Palestinians of the right to self-determination and to live in peace and dignity;
4. the right of every State in the area to enjoy territorial inviolability and political independence;
5. that there be international guarantees by the major Powers or the United Nations or both, as an added safeguard to international peace and security in the area.

These essentials for peace are in conformity with and fully reflect the decisions taken at the recent Arab summit in Algiers. Egypt, for its part, is fully prepared to honour all its other obligations emanating from Security Council resolution 242 (1967) both in letter and in spirit.

Mr. Secretary-General, I hope that I have made clear the basic philosophy of my Government, and that I have conveyed to you and the members around this table the extent to which we in Egypt are prepared to co-operate in establishing a just and durable peace. We realize that this cannot be achieved through Egypt's will and determination alone. Peace needs an equally profound desire and determination by all those concerned with this conflict, and in particular the United States and the Soviet Union, to take upon themselves a unique responsibility unprecedented in history. Durable and just peace in the Middle East must be maintained without ambiguities, in conformity with international law and basic principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, and reflected in the resolutions and decisions of the world organization, which are in fact the true expression of the opinion and the hopes of the peoples of the world. Egypt has come to this conference to sustain the rights of the Arab nations and to obtain by peaceful means the restitution of all Arab territories occupied since June 1967 and the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinians. Thank you.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations:

I thank the distinguished Foreign Minister of Egypt. The last speaker on my list for our meeting today is the distinguished representative of Jordan. I give the floor to the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Jordan, Mr. Zeid El-Rifai.

Mr. Zeid El-Rifai (Jordan):

Mr. Secretary-General, as we come to this Peace Conference, it might be in order to recall the words of Rabindranath Tagore: "Give me the supreme faith of love, this is my prayer, the faith of the life in death, of the victory in defeat, of the power hidden in the frailness of beauty."

Indeed, Mr. Chairman, it is this victory of right over wrong, of justice over injustice, and of peace over war which the delegation of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is coming to seek at this Conference.

It has been a long time, too long, since we started our search for peace in the Palestine area. The Middle East crisis of today, which earlier was known as the question of Palestine, is a tragedy the like of which humanity has never witnessed on such a large scale.

From the days of the First World War, when the Jews in Palestine were no more than 56,000 people who owned no more than 2 per cent of the total area of Palestine, to the days when they increased immensely and rapidly through emigration from various other lands, and expanded in Arab Palestine through invasion and occupation, the struggle between the Israeli invader and the Arab indigenous people has weighed heavily on the human conscience.

The tide, however, never stopped at any limit. The resolution on the partition of Palestine adopted by the United Nations in 1947 was overshadowed by the delineation of the Armistice lines in 1949 as a result of Israel's military gains. Thus, while the Jewish State, in the partition of 1947, was given 56 per cent of the total area of Palestine, it was able to occupy 77.4 per cent of this total area and, in its ambitious expansionist policy, Israel followed its own time-table for the acquisition of Arab territory. In 1967, twenty years after its establishment, Israel swept over all of Palestine plus large areas of three neighbouring Arab States. Today its armed forces stand on the banks of the Jordan river, on the plains of Damascus, and west of the Suez. By force or arms, Israel reached that extent.

Is it the sword that shall win? Is it the force of arms, as Israel's leaders put it, that shall determine the issue? Can Israel establish its future in the Arab ocean through continued adventures?

Throughout the twenty-five years of its life, Israel has failed to win the slightest degree of love or acceptance by its Arab neighbours. It has always been looked upon as an authority of terror and aggression, the conduct of which is always characterized by defiance and arrogance. The seeds of oppression which it planted in the Arab soil grew with hatred. It is not the intention of my delegation to speak at this opening stage of the Conference on other aspects and episodes involved in the Israeli expansionist policy in its various phases. It will take a long time to speak of the expulsion of the native Arab population, of the eradication of their roots, of the suppression of those who were left behind, of the repressive measures taken against them, of the large-scale deportation of Arab inhabitants, of the confiscation and expropriation of land and property, of the desecration of holy place and

venerated shrines, and of the change of historical and cultural heritage. It is not time to speak of the damage, destruction and murder that was committed against the Arab people and homeland at the hands of Israel. But it is time, no doubt, to ask - at the outset of this Conference - how long will this Israeli armed aggression and occupation be allowed to continue and to remain?

Should the Arabs always have to wage war in order to restore right and justice? Should we always suffer in order to live in peace? Those piles of resolutions which were adopted at the United Nations by its various organs stand witness to the failure of the international community to heed the call of justice. The fact, the naked fact, remains that Israel's armed occupation of Arab territory constitutes an act of continued and escalating aggression which the world has watched in silence.

It is from this position, the position of recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny, that the Arabs had to take up arms. The fighting which broke out in our area at the Egyptian and Syrian fronts on 6 October last was a gallant effort by the Arab forces, dedicated to making peace a reality. The economic measures taken by other Arab countries were another resolute expression of the demand for compliance by Israel with the conditions of peace.

The sacred heritage which has come down to our people through history and the well-established civilization which we safeguard motivate us continuously to avoid exposing this legacy to danger and destruction. Israel does not seem to share this concern with us. Could it be because it does not belong to our environment? Could it be because it is a stranger in our homeland?

The measures Israel took, despite the universal will of mankind, to alter the status of the Holy City of Jerusalem and to change life and tradition in it are a grave violation which neither history nor the future would forgive or tolerate.

How could Israel be introduced into the Arab region and live in permanent peace with the Arab surroundings as long as it insists on being foreign and hostile?

The peace, Mr. Chairman, which we would conclude with Israel is one that would restore to the Arab people their occupied land; one that would return to the legitimate inhabitants their inalienable rights; and one that would ensure security against Israeli attacks for its Arab neighbours.

Mr. Chairman, we meet today, as directly concerned parties, under appropriate auspices, with the aim of establishing a just and durable peace

through the implementation of Security Council resolution 242 of 22 November 1967 in all its parts.

In fact, the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has never failed on any single occasion to call for the implementation of resolution 242 as a way to achieve peace. This has been our steady position since the adoption of this resolution. Whether at the General Assembly of the United Nations, or the Security Council, or whether with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Jordan has maintained this stand.

We sincerely believe that the delay in the implementation of this resolution, which primarily requires withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from all Arab territories occupied in 1967 and back to the lines from which they advanced, caused, indeed, a delay in starting the process of establishing peace.

Resolution 242 (1967), the implementation of which has become the fundamental demand of the whole community of nations and all individual States and regional organizations, emphasized clearly at the start of its preamble and in the first operative part, the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and the demand for Israel's withdrawal from the territories it occupied as a result of the 1967 military operations.

Neither in international law nor in sound logic can a state of occupation by armed attack be acceptable or permissible. Nor could such a state be allowed to continue simply because the occupying authority insists on imposing its own will. Six and a half years have passed at the expense of peace and tranquillity in the Middle East. There was no reason for failure to achieve peace during that period except the refusal of Israel to comply with the pronouncements of the United Nations, with the rule of law, and with the prerequisites of peace.

We ought to declare unequivocally that time will continue to lapse vainly unless Israel commits itself to complete withdrawal from all the Arab territories it has occupied since 5 June 1967. And this includes Syrian occupied territory, since the absence of Syria from this Conference should not in any way prejudice its right to full withdrawal of Israeli forces from all its occupied territory, and since the position of my Government is that the principle of withdrawal is indivisible.

This, Mr. Chairman, is the only way to proceed if we, at this Conference, are to reach a peaceful settlement.

My Government believes that there are major issues in the construction of peace which should be decided upon in this Conference. These issues are as follows:

First, Israel's complete withdrawal from all Arab territories which it has occupied since 5 June 1967. A programme of implementation and a timetable for this withdrawal should be drawn up and agreed upon.

Second, international boundaries of the States of the area must be recognized and respected, as well as the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of these States.

Third, wherever there are no international boundaries between an Arab State and Israel, such boundaries are to be established by agreement and on the basis of the inadmissibility of the acquisition by force.

Fourth, the right of every State in the area to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries, free from threats or acts of force, must be pledged and guaranteed.

Fifth, the legitimate rights of the Arab people of Palestine must be fulfilled in accordance with the resolutions of the United Nations, and the Palestinian refugees must exercise their right of repatriation and/or compensation in accordance with law and justice.

Sixth, Arab Jerusalem is an inseparable part of Arab occupied territory. Therefore, Israel is to relinquish its authority over it. Arab sovereignty must be restored in the Arab sector of the city. The Holy Places of all the three divine religions must be preserved, protected and respected, and free access for all the followers of these three religions must be secured and maintained.

Mr. Chairman, when Israel was established by the United Nations in 1947 and was admitted to the membership of the United Nations in 1948, it made a declaration that it "unreservedly accepts the obligations of the United Nations Charter and undertakes to honour them from the day it becomes a Member of the United Nations".

With such an undertaking, Mr. Chairman, Israel failed to honour its first obligation of membership under the Charter of the United Nations, which stipulates that "all Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State".

For the last six and a half years, Israel has been violating the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of three Arab States, namely Egypt, Jordan and Syria, and has, for the last twenty-five years, been violating the legitimate rights of the Arab people of Palestine.

Today, we come, as directly involved parties and most concerned with the problem, to try to arrive at a settlement through peace.

My Government's attitude towards the deliberations and conclusions of this Conference is that an over-all settlement of the problem before us and the major issues related to it is a collective responsibility of all the parties directly concerned. Questions of withdrawal, boundaries, Palestinian rights, refugees, obligations of peace and the status of Jerusalem are all of common concern and a collective responsibility. My delegation, therefore, is not prepared to conclude any partial settlement on matters that we feel are of a joint interest with our Arab brothers at this Conference.

Sir, faithful to our obligations towards the United Nations, and noting that the only recognized documents before us today are Security Council Resolutions 242 of 22 November 1967 and 338 of 22 October 1973, my Government is pleased to have the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Dr. Waldheim, preside over the opening meeting of this Conference.

May I also be allowed, Mr. Chairman, to acknowledge on this occasion, with sincere appreciation and high admiration, the effective and noble role which both the United States of America and the Soviet Union have played to bring this Conference into being. Needless to say we are also grateful to have had the chance to convene our Peace Conference in Switzerland, the land of peace, beauty and human dignity.

And as we meet today, we know that the eyes of the world are turning towards us. Here on the European continent the voice of right is echoing stronger and stronger. On the free soil of Africa our African brothers are boldly knocking at the gates of peace. Great Asia is backing our efforts with all its weight and dignity. Every patriot, every refugee, and every free man is wishing us success in our work. Let us, therefore, give, in the present test, the lofty principles of mankind the seriousness, sincerity and devotion they deserve. Let us give to the Middle East, the torch of civilization and the cradle of prophets, the peace which it has missed for many decades.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations:

I thank the distinguished Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Jordan. May I ask whether any other delegation wishes to take the floor in our meeting today? The distinguished representative of Israel.

Mr. Eban (Israel):

If there is a chance of addressing the Conference this afternoon I would like to study the addresses that have been made and to speak at the next session. If it could be this afternoon I would prefer it, but I leave that, Sir, to the Chair.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations:

Is there any objection to having a meeting this afternoon? Originally I had intended to hold the next meeting tomorrow morning at 10.30 and to leave the afternoon free for private consultations, but of course I am in the hands of the Conference, of the distinguished members of this Conference, and therefore I wish to consult you as to whether you prefer a meeting tomorrow morning or this afternoon. May I ask the distinguished representative of Israel whether he would agree to speak tomorrow morning?

Mr. Eban (Israel):

If there is no reason for not having a meeting this afternoon, Mr. Chairman, I would like to address the Conference this afternoon. But I would at any rate like to address it at the next meeting.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations:

Do the delegates agree to hold a meeting this afternoon? I see no objection. I assume therefore that you agree to hold our next meeting this afternoon at, may I suggest, 3.30? I take it then that we agree to hold the next meeting this afternoon at 3.30. It is so decided. The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p. m.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations:

I call the meeting to order and I give the floor to the distinguished representative of Israel, Foreign Minister Abba Eban.

Mr. Eban (Israel):

Mr. Secretary-General, distinguished Prime Minister, Foreign Ministers, Gentlemen. There has never been an Arab-Israel peace conference before. Instead there have been many wars, for which the price has been paid in thousands of lives and in a region's long agony. Today at last a new opportunity is born. No wonder that this Conference opens under the burden of an immense expectation. Millions of people across the world are hoping that we shall somehow succeed to break the cycle of violence, to give a new

purpose and direction to Middle East history, and to bring a halt to the spreading contagion of force.

We have no way of knowing whether this opportunity will be fulfilled or wasted. The answer lies in the intentions of many governments and peoples in the Middle East -- and beyond. Israel for its part is resolved to seize the chance.

Now, the agreed purpose of this Conference is to negotiate peace between States whose relations until now have been scarred by a fierce enmity which has exploded again and again into war. The assault launched against us by Egyptian and Syrian armies on 6 October was only the most recent link in a chain of violence extending with tragic results across the entire life of Israel as a modern State. To achieve its aim, therefore, this Conference must reverse the whole tide of recent history. It is not going to be an easy task, nor at best can its fulfilment be rapid. We shall have to reconcile a sense of urgency with a capacity for patience. And yet, when all the calculations of prudence and caution and realism are duly made, our heart and imagination inspire a positive hope. We cannot ignore experience but nor are we committed to its endless reiteration. So Israel comes to Geneva in the conviction that there is room for innovation, initiative and choice.

We must be well aware of the particular complexity of our task. There is nothing in any degree similar to the Arab-Israel conflict. The crisis of the Middle East has many consequences, but only one cause. Israel's right to peace, security, sovereignty, commerce, international friendship, economic development, maritime freedom, indeed its very right to live, has been forcibly denied and constantly attacked. All the other elements of the conflict are consequences of this single cause. In no other dispute has there ever been such a total denial, not only of the sovereign rights of a State but even of its legitimate personality. And the emotional assault on Israel has gone much beyond the political context. It sweeps all human solidarities aside. It is nourished by a copious literature with official endorsement that gives support to Nazi anti-Jewish myths. It nourishes a conspiratorial theory of Jewish history. It explodes into the mutilation of Israeli soldiers in the field, the murder and torture of Israeli prisoners, and it has culminated most recently in Syria's sadistic refusal to carry out the Geneva Convention on the treatment of prisoners of war. Out of this kind of ferocious hatred springs the kind of assault on humane values that was enacted in Munich last year, in Rome airport five days ago and with weary regularity in other places between, before and since. When sportsmen in the shelter of the Olympic flag are bound hand and foot and calmly shot in the head, one by one, when passengers in a civil aircraft are methodically blown up and burned, to fragments, do we not come face to face with the mentality and ideology which produced the gas chambers and the gallows of Auschwitz?

It is from this tradition that we must seek to break away. The prospects for this Conference to succeed depends in the last analysis on whether the Arab nations and Israel want to reach an objective understanding of each other. Now, we have no trouble or reluctance in understanding what Arab nationalism is all about. It is the moving story of a people's liberation from external servitudes. It is an effort to build a bridge between past glories and future hopes. The success of the Arab nationalist enterprise is reflected in the existence of 19 States, occupying 12 million square kilometres, in which 100 million Arabs live under their sovereign flags, in command of vast resources. The world, including Israel, has come to terms with Arab nationalism. The unsolved question is whether Arab nationalism will frankly come to terms with the modest rights of another Middle Eastern nation to live securely in its original, and only, home.

For this to happen it will, I suggest, be necessary for political and intellectual leaders in the Arab world to reject the fallacy that Israel is alien to the Middle East. Israel is not alien to the Middle East: it is an organic part of its texture and memory. Take Israel and all that has flowed from Israel out of Middle Eastern history and you evacuate that history of its central experiences. Israel's historic, religious, national roots in the Land of Israel are a primary element of mankind's cultural history. Nothing - not even dispersion, exile, martyrdom, long separation - has ever disrupted this connexion. Modern Israel is the resumption of a primary current in the flow of universal history. We ask our neighbours to believe that it is an authentic reality from which most of the other elements in Middle Eastern history take their birth. Israel is no more or less than the Jewish people's resolve to be itself and to live, renewed, within its own frame of values, and thus to contribute its particular shape of mind to the universal human legacy.

That is what Israel is all about, and all this is much too deep and old and strong to be swept away. I ask Arab leaders and thinkers when they reflect on Israel, to ponder a French historian's definition of nationhood: "A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle. To share a common glory in the past, a common will in the present; to have done great things together; to want to do them again - these are the essential conditions of being a nation."

When to all this memory you add the special tragedy of Jewish homelessness, you will understand why Israel faces the other Middle Eastern nations in the perfect consciousness of its own legitimacy. It will neither disappear nor apologize for itself, nor compromise its sovereign destiny nor surrender its name and image, nor be swallowed up in something else. Within the framework of its own legitimate existence it seeks reconciliation and peace.

It seems to me that the effort to resist the existential truth about Israel as inseparable from Middle Eastern destiny lies at the root of every other discord. We ought to remember that the war against Israel is a little older than the State of Israel itself. If we want to know the authentic answer to the question "How did it all begin?", we could go to the library downstairs and look up the documents and find the report of the United Nations Partition Commission of 20 April 1948. I quote:

"Arab opposition to the plan of the General Assembly has taken the form of organized efforts by strong Arab elements both inside and outside Palestine, to prevent its implementation and thwart its objectives by threats and acts of violence.... Powerful Arab interests, both inside and outside Palestine, are defying the resolution of the General Assembly, and are engaged in a deliberate effort to alter by force the settlement envisaged therein."

That is the report.

How little has changed since then. Can we not describe today's condition in these sentences without changing many words? The pendulum of military advantage swings this way and that. The tide of political struggle ebbs and flows. One thing alone has been constant - the volcanic atmosphere in which the Middle East lives, with only a few years between each eruption and each succeeding lull. And so in the twenty-sixth year, as in the first, we woke up one morning to find the Arab forces moving against us from south and north. Nobody believes that if those massive armoured thrusts had gone forward as their commanders wished, they would have come to a voluntary halt, at any particular line. The distinguished Egyptian writer, Muhammad Hasainein Heikal, has put it very clearly in "Al-Ahram" of 19 October:

"If the Arabs succeeded by force of arms in liberating the lands conquered in June 1967, what is to prevent them in the next stage from liberating the whole of Palestine itself by force of arms?"

What indeed? And so in October 1973, as in May 1948, the issue for Israel became no less than the survival of life and home, of national future, of personal destiny, of all that had been built and cherished and defended, in common action, for 25 years.

And yet with all the similarity between 1948 and 1973, there has been one ominous transformation. All of us around these tables must be aware of it. Small Middle Eastern countries can now use arms in such quantities and of such destructive force as would have been available only to the greatest military Powers one generation ago. And therefore the Golan and Sinai are strewn with young bodies of Israelis and Arabs, and the burnt-out hulks of armoured vehicles and trucks. Two thousands tanks were destroyed in the

one, single month of October. For the price of them the countries of the Middle East could have had 20,000 tractors to bring fertility to their lands.

It may be that one thing has changed for the better, namely that a mutual understanding of the sterility of war and the sterility of political deadlock has become sufficiently alive to bring all of us here to Geneva - Israel, Egypt and Jordan. We come with a mandate from our Governments to seek peace. We also have a common mandate from bereaved mothers and widows and orphans to bring 25 years of insanity to an end. The pathos of it all is that this Peace Conference could have been convened six years ago, after the 1967 war, or indeed at any time since the 1948 war ended with the 1949 armistice agreements. A peace negotiation is what Israel has been proposing all the time. We could have had this moment, without all those graves, without all that blood.

The question now is whether we can break out of past deadlocks into a new vision and a new hope. Well, a common interest in bringing the war to an end has already brought Egypt and Israel together in three agreements. We have accepted a cease-fire in pursuance of Security Council resolution No. 338, of 22 October. On 7 November, we signed a six-point agreement for stabilizing the cease-fire. The Egyptian and Israeli senior officers who concluded that agreement met face to face and pursued their discourse in a civilized atmosphere at Kilometre 101, until 10 December. Now Egypt and Israel, together with Jordan, have agreed on the procedure and terms of reference for a peace conference.

These three decisions are the bridge across which we wish to make a transition from belligerency to peace. It is especially vital that the cease-fire continue to be observed by land and air and sea.

I propose that Egypt and Israel pledge themselves at this Conference to observe the cease-fire on the basis of reciprocity. I give that pledge on Israel's behalf. Surely the maintenance of the cease-fire is an indispensable condition before any useful negotiation.

Beyond these transitional steps we should have a clear conception of our objective. Israel's aim at this Conference is a peace treaty defining the terms of our co-existence in future years. Since the purpose of this Conference is peace we must have an understanding of what that term involves. Peace is not a mere cease-fire or armistice. Its meaning is not exhausted by the absence of war. It commits us also to positive obligations which neighbouring States owe to each other by virtue of their proximity and of their common membership in the international community. Above all, a durable peace must create a new human reality. It does not rest on the cold formalism of documents alone. Nations at peace are not separated from each

other by hermetically sealed boundaries guarded by international police forces. Indeed the emphasis on the interposition of police units in so much of the public debate on the Middle East is a confession that the peace that is envisaged is not authentic or stable or real. The ultimate guarantee of a peace agreement lies in the creation of common regional interests, in such degree of intensity, in such multiplicity of inter-action, in such entanglement of reciprocal advantage, in such mutual human accessibility, as to put the possibility of future war beyond any rational contingency.

Let us all atone for 25 years of separation by working towards a co-operative relationship similar to that which European States created after centuries of conflict and war. It may take time to achieve that full objective. But does not every serious architect design a vision of the finished structure before anybody begins to face the prosaic difficulties of construction? At any rate, our vision must be one of sovereign States, the Arab States and Israel, each pursuing its national life within its own particularity while co-operating with its neighbours in a broader regional devotion.

The peace treaties that we want to negotiate and conclude should provide for the permanent elimination of all forms of hostility, boycott and blockade. The peace settlement must be the product of mutual agreement and not of external pressure, or of intimidation of one party by the other. It is only by freely accepting national and international responsibility for the peace that the signatory Governments can ensure its stability. Our peace agreements should of course provide for the renunciation of the use of force in our relations with each other. They should contain specific and unequivocal recognition of each other's political independence, integrity and sovereignty.

They should prohibit any hostile action, including terrorist action, conducted from the territory of one of the signatories against the territory and population of the other. They should formally proclaim the permanent end of the conflict and the renunciation of all claims or acts arising from belligerency. They should ensure that all international conventions which each of the signatories has signed should be applicable to the other signatory without any of the reservations entered by Arab Governments in the past into such international obligations. Nations at peace with each other do not seek to impede the movement of each other's ships or aircraft, or forbid them the normal civilities of air transit and maritime passage. Governments establishing peaceful relations after long years of conflict invariably define their intentions with respect to formal relations with each other in the economic, commercial, cultural and political domains. With the establishment of peace it would become normal for Israel and the Arab States to take their places jointly in regional development organizations.

There is also need for attitudinal change. Bertrand Russell wrote that "all wars originate in classrooms". Long years of conflict have given successive generations of our people a distorted vision of each other. The transition to peace should have its effects in educational systems, expelling all the images and stereotypes which nations at war invoke both as causes and consequences of their hostility. A peace settlement should unlock the arteries of our region's communications.

Now, these aims may seem very remote and visionary today, but they do not go beyond what Governments have usually accomplished in their transition from hostility to peace. In fact, I have never come across any peace agreement which does not include everything that I have listed here. The three Governments represented at this Conference all accepted these aims when they endorsed Security Council resolution 242, of which the main provisions are the establishment of a just and lasting peace, the mutual acknowledgement by all States in the area of each other's sovereignty, integrity, independence and right to security. Another provision of that resolution is the elimination of all forms of belligerency, agreement on secure and recognized boundaries to which forces would be withdrawn in the context of a peace settlement. Israel adheres to what it said on this subject in its communications to you, Mr. Secretary-General, in August 1970.

We shall seek to know from the Arab participants in this Conference whether they share our understanding of the obligations, rights and prohibitions involved in a peace agreement. If we can reach a harmonious understanding on this point, we shall still face many complexities but there will be a stronger probability, than otherwise, of agreement and compromise.

Of course, the peace treaty to be negotiated with each neighbouring State should contain an agreement on boundaries. The decisive test for Israel will be the defensibility of its new boundaries against the contingency of attacks and blockades, such as those threatened and carried out in 1967 and 1973. The experience of October 1973 confirmed our view that the permanent boundaries must be negotiated with the utmost precision and care. If those armoured thrusts had begun from EI Arish or northern Gaza, or from the Golan Heights itself, then the first assault might well have been the last. Peace-makers do not reconstruct vulnerable, inflammatory situations. They try to correct them. Therefore there cannot be a return to the former armistice lines of 1949-1967, which proved to be inherently fragile and which served as a temptation to an aggressive design of encirclement and blockade, from which Israel broke out in 1967 after weeks of solitude and peril.

In this matter as in others there must be a basic readiness on all sides to make such concessions as do not threaten vital security interests. Israel does not seek acceptance of any of its positions as a prior condition of the negotiation, just as we should not be asked to seek acceptance of any prior condition as a condition of negotiation. Having heard Arab positions and stated our own, we should at an appropriate stage seek to bring our policies into compromise. Security arrangements and demilitarized areas can supplement the negotiated boundary agreement, without, of course, replacing it.

But for Israel the overriding element in the peace discussion is that of security. It is true that we have again come out successfully from a military assault, this time with every conceivable advantage on the other side - advantage in numbers, in quantity of weapons, in initiative and total surprise. But despite this success the mood in Israel is sombre, for we come up again and again against the predicament of human vulnerability. The losses sustained in 1973 compound the sacrifices of 1948 and 1956 and 1967 and all the attritions and infiltrations in between. And Israelis always contemplate these losses against the cruel background of the European holocaust, which took millions of our kinsmen away to their deaths. Now there is no other national experience even remotely similar to this. Too much of Jewish history is occupied by the simple ambition of being Jewish and yet staying alive, and usually this reconciliation has not been achieved. The only people to suffer such massive annihilation of its human resources and the only sovereign State to live for 25 years without a single month of peace - how does anyone expect such a people and such a State not to claim respect for a particularly intense concern for individual and collective survival.

The attainment of peace will make it possible to resolve the problem of refugees by co-operative regional action with international aid. We find it astonishing that States whose revenues from oil exports surpass 15,000 million dollars a year were not able to solve this problem in a spirit of kinship and human solidarity. In the very years when the Arab refugee problem was created by the assault on Israel in 1947 and 1948, 700,000 Jewish refugees from Arab and Moslem lands and from the debris of Hitler's Europe were received by Israel and integrated in full citizenship and economic dignity. There have been other such solutions in Europe, in the Indian sub-continent, in Africa. The Arab refugee problem is not basically intractable: it has been perpetuated by a conscious decision to perpetuate it. But surely a peace settlement will remove any political incentive which has prevented a solution in the past. At the appropriate stage Israel will define its contribution to an international and regional effort for refugees resettlement. We shall propose compensation for abandoned lands in the

context of a general discussion on property abandoned by those who have left countries in the Middle East to seek a new life.

I presume that our negotiation with Jordan - I believe that it will define the agreed boundaries and other conditions of co-existence between two States occupying the original area of the Palestine Mandate - Israel and the neighbouring Arab State. The specific identity of the Palestinian and Jordanian Arabs will be able to find expression in the neighbouring State - I hope, in peaceful co-operation with Israel.

We declare our opposition to any explosive fragmentation of the area between three States in the region between the desert and the sea, where there are after all two nations, two languages, two cultures, and not three.

Today the bridges and the borders are open, and Arabs to the west and east of the Jordan - indeed, from all over the Arab world - move freely in and out of Israel, back and forth, into every part of the region. In a peace settlement with agreed boundaries we should strive to preserve and develop these conditions of human contact and accessibility. Separate political sovereignties need not rule out a large measure of economic and social co-operation. We aspire to a community of sovereign States in the Middle East, with open frontiers and regional institutions for co-operation.

We are deeply aware that Israel's capital, Jerusalem, now united forever, is the cradle of two other religious traditions, and the home of their Holy Places. Israel does not wish to exercise exclusive jurisdiction or unilateral responsibility in the Holy Places of Christendom and Islam - Holy Places should be under the administration of those who hold them sacred. We would be willing to discuss ways of giving expression to this principle as well as of working out agreements on free access and pilgrimage.

Israel would support a proposal to discuss a disengagement agreement with Egypt as first priority, when the Conference meets after the inaugural phase. On other possible agenda items we shall give our views at a later stage. Today I shall only refer to some urgent issues of which the solution is compelling, both on human grounds and in the interests of the Conference itself.

The absence of Syria from the opening session is regrettable, but frankness and indignation compel me to state that Syria, in our judgment, has not yet qualified for participation in a peace conference because it continues to inflict a perverse injury on prisoners-of-war and their agonized and distraught families, in contravention of the Geneva Convention. This violation of human decencies continues unchecked. Syria is not to be trusted in the honourable treatment of prisoners-of-war and there are precedents

much too harrowing for me to narrate. But we know that helpless prisoners-of-war are shackled and then murdered in cold blood. We have reported 42 such cases to the International Committee of the Red Cross. We know that prisoners are tortured and maimed, beaten and dishonoured. By withholding lists and refusing Red Cross visits, the Syrian Government creates wide circles of anguish and uncertainty amongst hundreds of families and thousands of citizens. Lists of Syrian prisoners have been presented by Israel to Red Cross Committees, and Red Cross visits do proceed regularly. The obligations of States under the Third Geneva Convention are unconditional and may not be made dependent on any other claim or request. Nevertheless, Israel has agreed, simultaneously with prisoner release, to the return of thousands of Syrian civilians to the territory east of Golan captured in the October war and even to handing over to the United Nations Emergency Force of two positions occupied between 22 and 24 October.

We would also emphasize the urgency for Egyptian action in reply to our queries on additional missing prisoners and on the repatriation of the bodies of soldiers fallen in action. In general, whenever we talk of this issue of prisoners, surely the time has come to banish the savageness which has marked the treatment of Israelis in Arab hands and to adapt the life of our region to the principles of international civility.

We want to substitute the idea of international civility for the present atmosphere of Middle Eastern life today. Too much of international life is left under the hijacker's philosophy. The slogan of the hijacker is "Do what I tell you, or else". This is said by terrorists to pilots of aircraft, by some oil-producing States to European and other Governments, by some Arab Governments to States whose relations with Israel they wish to weaken, by boycott committees to commercial companies. Now this slogan "Do what I tell you or else" is not the best prescription for Middle Eastern stability. It gets some immediate results but it is bound in the last resort to encounter resistance. What we seek is a transformation of all the concepts and attitudes which govern international relations in our region.

For many years, the Middle Eastern conflict has been a constant theme of public debate. The eyes of the world are upon this meeting, but I do hope that in the next stages of its work the Conference will develop compact, reticent procedures to discuss each component of the dispute. We do not rule out agreed stages of progress towards the final settlement, but the Conference should not be satisfied as an ultimate result with anything less than a permanent, overall peace.

The distinction between a public debate in the General Assembly and a peace conference is crucial. In the case of a public debate there is an attempt

to solve problems by adjudication; in a peace conference, by agreement. We hope for restraint by Governments outside the area who may think that they know the exact point of balance at which the interests of the parties should be reconciled. Our free agreement is essential because in the last resort nobody outside Israel is called upon - or is ever likely - to risk any life or blood for Israel's survival. Whenever there is that kind of sacrifice, we shall have to face it alone. We ask therefore for respect for our solitude of responsibility, that is to say, for our judgment of what the basic minimal conditions for Israel's security and survival are. We intend to preserve that domain of ultimate decision with traditional tenacity. This issue is especially sensitive. We have accepted the joint initiative of both co-chairmen as a reflection of the real balance of forces at work. We understood from Foreign Minister Gromyko's speech that in his view Israel's legitimacy and right to security are not under any doubt. As we read the Algiers Declaration, however, that declaration puts both of those things in doubt. The word "peace" does not exist in that declaration at all, nor does the word "Israel", and there is an ominous reference to "the enemy". That is why the Algiers Declaration is really not the sort of declaration that can guide a peace conference.

But while we have accepted the joint initiative of both co-chairmen, we cannot ignore that one of them identifies himself exclusively with our adversaries and has felt no balancing necessity to concern itself with Israel's welfare or destiny. This has been the case in the arms race as well. There is therefore no symmetry here, even if the imbalance is less marked than in the broader multilateral arena. The true remedy then is to allow maximum opportunity for the parties themselves to achieve dialogue and to come to agreed solutions.

In conclusion, Mr. Secretary-General, while the components of the problem are complex, everything comes back in simple terms to the intentions that we bring with us to this table. Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon - and in the final resort all of these should be participants - are relatively new as sovereign States, but Arab and Jews are very old as peoples. Both of us have always had the gift of memory, neither of us has ever been very good at forgetting. In this generation we have been made more aware of our divisions than of our common humanity but there are some ideas and recollections that are common to us both. There is one cave at Machpelah in which our common ancestors, the Patriarchs and the Matriarchs, are laid to rest.

Our common ancestor, Abraham, shocked all his contemporaries by breaking the idols and suggesting something new. That is what we now have to do, to smash the idolatries of war and hate and suspicion, to break the adoration that men give to their traditional attitudes and above all to their

traditional slogans, to strike out towards a horizon, uncertain, but better than the terrible certainties that face us if we stay behind.

Our Holy Book puts it simply (spoken in Hebrew and English): "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." But it is put with equal simplicity in your Holy Book (spoken in Arabic): "If they incline to peace, then turn towards it and put your trust in God".

Thank you.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations:

I thank the distinguished Foreign Minister of Israel. I have been informed that the distinguished Foreign Minister of Egypt wants to speak. I give him the floor.

Mr. Fahmy (Egypt):

Mr. Chairman, with your permission and the permission of the distinguished Foreign Ministers, I would like to say a few words in connexion with the statement which we have just heard from the Foreign Minister of Israel.

This morning I have tried with all the responsibility at my command to place the Egyptian position based on facts and nothing but facts. I have myself, as you have all witnessed, avoided referring to anything else but facts. Why did I do so? Because I thought, and I hope that this will remain true, that we are starting or embarking on a very solemn occasion at this historic moment in this Conference. Secondly, I was not in need of resorting to the procedure which the Foreign Minister of Israel chose because I do not have any problem of speaking here for home consumption and I do not have any election campaign which is going to take place in a few days in my country. This is my first remark.

My second remark is that it is really a pity that Mr. Eban refers to the archives of the United Nations in this library and he knows better than anybody else that the archives of the United Nations are full of resolutions adopted by the Security Council of the United Nations and the General Assembly, more than 100 times condemning Israel for its behaviour against the world community, for its behaviour against the Arab countries, and for its behaviour against the Palestinians. Israel for that reason has now found herself alone, completely isolated. There is no other country or Member State of the United Nations which finds itself in the situation in which Israel finds itself now. Why is this? Because of the misbehaviour of the Arab countries? Because all the Member States of the United Nations do not know the truth, but only Israel knows the truth, only Israel gives advice and

only Israel knows the facts? They know the facts, yes; but they know only the facts which they wanted to believe themselves; nobody else believes them. So much for the archives, for the isolation of Israel, and for the behaviour of Israel.

Then he tried again to belittle the intelligence of us here whilst talking to the gallery for home consumption and trying to distort facts again, as we are accustomed to hear. He thought it fit even to refer to the Palestinians, to some incidents of desperate people, a desperate nation. Mr. Eban and his colleagues invaded their country by force in 1947 and this is why they are behaving in that way, and they are entitled to do that. But it is not for a Government which believes that it is a responsible Government to take certain actions - I am going to refer to only a few of them. First of all Deir Yassin in 1947; Kibya and Nahalin in 1954; the Lavon affair in 1954; Khan Younis and Gaza in 1955; Kafr Kassem in 1956; Karame in 1958; Samoa in 1965; the airport of Beirut 1968; the invasion against Beirut, 1968; Southern Lebanon, 1969; mass murder on the instructions of the Government of Israel - I repeat, the mass murder of some of the leaders of the Palestinians; the mass invasion of Beirut, 1973; and the hitting of the tents of the Palestinians in Syria and Lebanon.

These are acts of Governments - responsible people, if they are responsible at all but he thinks that we don't know. We know, but he thinks that the other people do not know. Everybody around this table, everybody outside this table knows the facts, and I hope that for the future if he would like to work in a serious way he should not use this rostrum for propaganda. He spoke about Syria. He spoke about Syria because Syria is absent. I am ready to keep you here for three hours and tell you how the Israelis act and react, what kind of atrocities they do, what their armies are doing either on the cease-fire or around the cease-fire or during the battle itself. Even Mr. Eban cannot deny that his planes dropped booby-traps on villages in my country - to kill what? Farmers and children. And now he speaks about security. What kind of security? Security through agreement. What does he mean? He means annexed territories. He means by "agreement" that the Arab countries must agree to what? To give him Arab land for the sake of his security. And he forgot - I doubt it, that he forgot that in 1947 it was the Zionists who engaged with Palestine: 1956 he remembers, and I think he participated in that collusion against my country. In 1967 they invaded my country and all the Arab countries. And he speaks about 1973, the sixth of October. He admitted in his statement that now - and this is the lesson he should learn - that now, after 1973, he knows very well that not only the Israelis can use weapons, modern and sophisticated weapons. He is trying here to present himself as the lamp of the whole world - the most peaceful legend in history.

He referred to the Algiers decision of the Arab Summit, and he is very angry that we did not mention the name of Israel. We will mention the name of Israel when Israel behaves, when Israel would like to live in peace in this country, not to annex territory under any pretext whatsoever, not to try to confuse and mislead people under this fallacy of so-called security. Security of whom, Mr. Eban? You threaten the security of all the Arab countries as long as you are using these militaristic maxims of yours. But in his speech today, while he was pleading for peace, he never uttered once the word "withdrawal from Arab territories" - not a single time - and this is how he would like to plead for peace here. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations:

I thank the distinguished representative of Egypt. Does any other delegation wish to speak? Apparently this is not the case. May I then propose that we adjourn this meeting and that we hold a closed meeting tomorrow morning at 11 o'clock? The purpose of that meeting would be to discuss the organization of the future work of this Conference.

I call on the distinguished Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union.

Mr. Gromyko (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian):

Tomorrow we shall have to discuss the question you have raised, but if anybody has any considerations to put forward on the substance of the problem, then of course he will be free to express those considerations as well at tomorrow's meeting. I take it that this stands to reason.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations:

I think that there is certainly no objection to this interpretation; I think the Conference agrees that, if any delegation wants to discuss substance, it is accepted. Are there any other comments? If not, I adjourn this meeting un