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ORGANISATION DE L'UNITE
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SPEECH BY THE PLO DELEGATION TO THE 22ND SESSION

OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

SPEECH BY THE PLO DELEGATION TO THE 22ND SESSION
OF THE OAU COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

Mr. Chairman,
Honourable Delegates,
Fellow representatives of African Liberation Movements.

It is with great pleasure that I and fellow members of the Palestine Liberation Organization delegation address you at this historic meeting which is a true expression and manifestation of Afro-Arab solidarity as reflected in the presence here of the PLO, the sole non-African movement to attend this Session. This, however, is not to be marvelled at since the Palestinian revolution was the vanguard of the Arab Liberation Movement just as African liberation movements are a manifestation of the African struggle. Both the Palestinian and African revolutions are an indivisible part of the universal struggle for freedom, justice and peace.

Brothers,

In the name of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole representative of the Palestinian people, we wish to express our thanks and appreciation to you all, to the Heads of State, to the governments and to the people. We would also affirm that our joint struggle will continue until our peoples' aspirations to national independence, freedom and peace are realized.

Similar to South Africa, Rhodesia and Namibia, the Palestine problem represents a racist, colonialist settlement and expansionist aggression. It was Great Britain which was originally responsible for creating these problems that are now being nurtured by the United States in an unholy alliance with Portugal and world imperialism.

Ever since the Balfour Declaration and until the present day denial of the Palestinians' existence and consequently, their right to self-determination has been a salient feature of the Palestine problem.

The Balfour Declaration which was issued by a non-possessing state to a non-deserving group disregarded the existence of our people and referred to them as "other groupings" at a time when they actually formed 94% of the population and owned 96% of the land. Later on, the Partition resolution deprived us of the right to self-determination despite the fact that we formed two thirds of the population and owned 94% of the land. In adopting this resolution the UN exceeded its authority as defined in its charter. The UN does not have the right to partition homelands or set up states; it may only decide on accepting or rejecting the membership of this or that country.

As regards Security Council Resolution 242, it has reduced our cause to a refugee problem, thus denying our people even mere existence. Furthermore, since the start of the Palestine cause and until the present day, our people had to face an international conspiracy fomented by world imperialism and the world Zionist movement. Speaking from experience, we wish to assert that were it not for imperialism there would not have been Zionism, and without Zionism there could not have been Israel.

The Zionists misled the world into believing that they had been the victim of Nazism whereas it is a well known fact that Nazism started in Germany in 1933 and that the organized Zionist movement dates back to 1897. Hence, Zionism is much older than Nazism; the Zionist superiority complex preceded that of the Nazis just as the hostile Zionist designs preceded their Nazi counterparts.

However, even conceding that the Jews suffered at the hands of the Nazis why should the Palestinians be made to pay the price? Was this an accidental choice as was it a historical mistake? The answer is certainly in the negative as Britain had offered both Uganda and Cyprus to the Zionist movement to set up a Zionist State.

Palestine lies at the very heart of the Arab world. It borders the Mediterranean, the Red Sea and the east bank of the Suez Canal. Considering this highly strategic geographical position, it was essential from the point of view of colonialism and its agent to remain in this region. The old Jewish myth fitted with the colonialist designs, and Zionism formed an alliance with imperialism in order to plant an alien body in this sensitive part of the world.

But conceding to the old Jewish myth that Jews used to live in Palestine 2,000 years ago will signify that all peoples on earth would have to exchange places since only a few nations would be able to prove that 20000 years ago they had occupied the same land they actually hold at present. However, the Palestinian people have been on their land for 4,500 consecutive years.

World Zionism started bringing Jews into Palestine under the protection of British arms. Our people staged several revolts but the most outstanding was the one which took place in 1936-39. During this outbreak an unprecedented 6 months strike paralysed all aspects of life. But the forces were unequal and the Arab world as well as the African and Asian peoples laboured under imperialism and occupation. During the last days of World War II and with the waning of the British empire, the United States appeared on the scene as leader of the imperialist camp. The capital of Zionism moved from London to New York and the United States was able to use its influence for the adoption of the resolution on the partition of Palestine. At the time, the UN membership was almost entirely formed of European and American States while African and Asian countries merely enjoyed symbolic representation. Those of them present on the occasion either voted against the partition resolution or abstained.

Hence the resolution can be described as Euro-American and reflects the continued domination of the white race over coloured races. The white man's complex lies in his belief that he is the master of the universe. He initiated a type of civilization which, for long decades, suppressed other peoples with steel and fire, plundered their wealth and built Europe's prosperity at the cost of other people's lives and economic resources.

Now, Israel which had come into being through a UN resolution is the only state in the world which has rejected all UN resolutions including the one on partition which had created it. It occupied 80% of Palestine in 1948 and all of it in 1967 with the addition of some Egyptian and Syrian territory. Far from satisfied, Israel now demands secure borders which nobody knows where they lie.

This Zionist process is quite unique. We have been taught by international law that states usually start with a piece of land on which a people live and who later form a government either by divine right or social contract,

thus establishing the state. But the Israelis reversed the order of things; they first set a government, then brought the people and later looked for land.

Hence it is not surprising that Israel should renounce all human values and disregard all laws and traditions. Many attempts, including one by the OAU Committee of Ten, were made to give Israel the benefit of the doubt, but they all went in vain due to the fact that Israel is different from other states. It is what is known in international law as a condominium. It has two governments:- the one in Tel Aviv and the World Zionist Movement government. The link between the two is well established and they are exerting maximum effort to bring 17 million people to Palestine while denying the Palestinians their right to repatriation. If their efforts are successful, it would be impossible to accommodate this large number of people in Palestine and further expansion would have to be made at the expense of neighbouring Arab territory. This is what actually took place in 1967 and Egyptian and Syrian citizens joined the ranks of Palestinian refugees while the Israelis settled in Egyptian and Syrian as well as Palestinian territory. The latent danger of the Zionist movement lies in the fact that through its alliance with world imperialism, it poses a threat not only to the region but to the entire world. A corroboration of the above was provided by the United States which, sensing an imminent Israeli defeat on October 6, alerted all its military and even nuclear bases throughout the world.

It is thus obvious that the Palestinians and Arabs do not have to contend with Israel or Zionism alone but also with world imperialism led by the United States.

The Palestinian people who were ousted from their homeland and rendered homeless never surrendered despite the object misery and dire destitution in which they lived. Despite all liquidation attempts these people remained adamant in their determination until the outbreak of their 1965 revolution with all the hostilities it encountered and the friends it made. This revolution had to face Zionist suppression, mass murder, demolition of homes and entire villages, detention in Nazi-like Zionist prisons and concentration camps where thousands of our sons and daughters were kept under inhuman conditions while

half of our people laboured under Zionist occupation and the rest remained homeless in refugee camps. To make it worse, even these refugee camps were not spared from Zionist acts of aggression. Israel used and continues to use napalm on our camps in Syria and Lebanon and has even committed murder. It assassinated three Palestinian leaders as well as the representatives of the Palestine revolution in Paris, Rome and Cyprus. Furthermore, Israel hijacked an Iraqi plane from Beirut airport, shot down a civilian Libyan airliner with 107 innocent passengers on board and destroyed several planes on land in Beirut airport.

This is a sample of what our people had to go through since the outbreak of the revolution on January 1st, 1965. It has cost us some 40,000 lives besides the tens of thousands of people who were injured and the thousands who are being detained in jails and concentration camps.

Despite all the suffering caused by the Zionists, our people were able to make their presence and personality felt by the Zionists and imperialists and have thus won the enhanced respect and support of friends.

The Palestinian revolution which broke out in 1965 with the support of all freedom, justice and peace-loving nations will carry on the struggle until the return of the Palestinian people to their land, the liquidation of the Zionist entity and the establishment of a Democratic State in Palestine where Christians, Jews and Moslem can live together in peace and harmony and enjoy equal rights as they had done for centuries before the Zionist movement made its abhorrent appearance on the scene. It had been in Palestine and on Arab land that the Jews sought sanctuary from persecution by European fanaticism.

An answer should be found to the question as to whether Judaism is a religion or a nationality. We know, and history bears witness to the fact that Judaism is a religion and never was at any time a nationality. What sort of a nationality could Judaism possibly be and how can a movement claiming to be progressive and socialist be based on religion?

Israel claims to be a socialist state but we wonder how this socialism could spring from imperialism and world cartels and how can it tally with the hostile attitude Israel assumes towards all liberation movements throughout the world. Israel is opposed to the socialist states

and is allied to the imperialist leadership represented by the United States and its lackeys in South Africa and Portugal.

Brothers,

We look forward to a closer cooperation between the PLO and the African liberation movements in Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, Namibia and South Africa so that these racist entities could be eradicated from our Arab and African soil. The almighty will not forgive us if we allow these bases of aggression to continue to pose a threat to the peace and security of our peoples. It is essential to promote cooperation and strengthen the ties between the Palestine revolution and the African liberation movements in all the military, political and information fields if all our objectives are to be realized. We are actually fighting for the same cause and are facing our common enemy in our quest for freedom, justice and peace.

The colonialist settlement in South Africa, Rhodesia and Palestine constitutes advanced military bases in Africa and the Arab world and is based on racism, continued aggression, expansion and settlement. Its ultimate objective is the perpetuation of colonialism in our countries, the exploitation of our peoples, the suppression of liberation movements and the maintenance of partition. Hence it is only natural that this unholy trinity should form an alliance and that Israel should provide South Africa, Rhodesia and Portugal with arms. It was also natural that South African fighter planes should fight with the Israelis during the October 6 war. This alliance among our enemies renders an organic alliance with our friends an essential need. This view was previously voiced by that great African leader Amilcar Cabral who, speaking on behalf of African militants, noted that the ammunition used against his people in Guinea Bissau was supplied by the U.S. Army while Portugal's means of communications were made by Britain, its warships by France and most of its weapons by Israel with which it has very close ties. Continuing, Mr. Cabral said similar to the Arab people who are struggling for the liberation of Palestine we are struggling against Portugal for the liberation of the land.

He added that what was happening in Palestine was similar to what was taking place in South Africa, Angola and Guinea Bissau and observed that any victory achieved by the Arabs and the Palestinians against the Zionists is a victory for the people of Guinea Bissau and for the struggle for liberation.

Both the Organization of African Unity and the League of Arab States have made vast strides along this course. Africa severed relations with Israel just as Arab States previously broke off relations with South Africa and Portugal. Furthermore, Arab oil was used as a weapon for both the Arab and African causes. We consider this a starting point and believe that ahead of us lies a long road of cooperation in all the political, economic, information and military fields, necessary for the confrontation with world imperialism, racism, colonialism and colonialist settlement.

The Afro-Arab destiny is not a matter of choice. It is preordained that we close ranks and cooperate to the full. Africa and the Arab world are linked by historic ties and we shall allow no one to tamper with our relations as they did with our history and geography. Please allow me to seize this opportunity to say that the history and even the geography of Africa should be rewritten. The October war which made use of part of the Arab and African potential has altered many concepts. Let us pool our undivided efforts for the liberation of our will, our territory and our people, and let us give them a better life in which they can enjoy freedom, justice and peace.

The Palestinian people will always be grateful for the fraternal and militant stand taken by the African countries towards the Palestine cause.

We thank the leaders of Africa for their attitude and for their initiative in breaking off relations with the Israeli enemy as well as for the recent call for severing all economic and cultural relations with Israel. We are confident that they will continue to support our people in their quest for freedom, repatriation and peace. We also thank all the African States and leaders who have allowed the PLO to open offices in their capitals thus bearing witness to the close ties linking the Palestinian and African struggle.

We also express our deepest thanks to our brother President Idi Amin of Uganda for his initiatives and courageous attitude towards the Palestinian people's cause, for his support of our armed revolution and for the leading role he played in the struggle against Zionism and imperialism in Africa.

We further thank the fraternal people and the government of Uganda for their warm hospitality and for the cordiality with which we were met everywhere we went.

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Speech by the PLO Delegation to the 22nd Session of the Council of Ministers

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