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Venue : [s.l]
Date : 27 NOVEMBER 2000
Title : MEETING OF THE OIC MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE WITH UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL ON THE AGENDA ITEM: THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST, INCLUDING THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION

Mr President,

May I at the outset thank Mr Secretary-General and members of the Security Council for the opportunity to meet with you on matters of grave humanitarian concern. The world is witnessing a human tragedy, which needs to be stopped immediately.

I share the views expressed by the Chairman of the OIC Ministerial Committee on Palestine. However, I wish to take this opportunity to reiterate the following points for the serious consideration of the Security Council.

- The SC has the responsibility under the UN Charter on the maintenance of peace and security to protect civilians in armed conflicts anywhere in the world.
- Indeed the SC has taken decisive measures in respect of East Timor, Bosnia-Herzegovina and elsewhere so as to prevent bloodshed and violence affecting civilians.
- In view of the grave situation prevailing in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the SC has to act immediately and decisively as time is of the essence.
- The SC cannot simply ignore, wish away or sweep the issue affecting the Palestinians under the carpet.
- The SC cannot be selective or discriminatory in its action - lest its credibility will be at stake vis-à-vis the OIC member countries, which make up one third of the UN membership and representing more than one billion Muslims.

Mr President

- We are here in support of the cause of peace and the peace process so as to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace.
- But the current situation calls for the immediate establishment of a UN Protection Force. This is not intended to jeopardize the peace process but rather in our view, Mr. President, to complement the peace process itself.
- The establishment of the UN Protection Force is in the interest of both parties to the conflict and not necessarily the Palestinians.
- Israel should cease its present blockade and siege as well as the economic strangulation of the Palestinians cities and villages as doing so would further aggravate the conflict.

Mr President,

- We fear if nothing is done the feelings and emotions of the Muslims worldwide will be inflamed and the frustration and anger of the Muslims will have severe

consequences. This may include economic consequences that will bring no benefits to the international community.

Mr President,

Members of this OIC Ministerial Committee on Palestine have come a long way to meet in this August body that represents the hopes and aspirations of all member states. It is our prayer and hope that our efforts would not be in vain.

New York

27th November 2000