

improper use of the terms "acts of aggression" and "act of armed aggression".

Tunisia, by a reply of 27 November, had submitted a governmental commission report investigating the consequences of, and evaluating the damage caused by, Israel's aggression, as a basis for claim for reparations. It stated that the assessment was not complete, either in respect of individuals or corporate losses or in respect of property destroyed. In addition to the material damage, the effects of the feeling of insecurity engendered by the attack were bound to make themselves felt, in particular in the tourism industry and foreign investment. Tunisia reserved its right to return to the question when it had sufficient evidence to claim damages for violation of its sovereignty and impairment of its economic and social development.

Oman, by a reply of 13 November, said it considered that the Council was required to adopt more serious resolutions in order to prevent or halt repeated Israeli acts of aggression against Arab territories. With regard to paragraph 3, Oman believed that certain super-Powers with which Israel had special relationships were the States most qualified to play a greater role.

Hijacking of the Achille Lauro

On 7 October 1985, the Italian cruise ship Achille Lauro, with several hundred persons aboard, was hijacked and one of its passengers, the American citizen Leon Klinghoffer, was killed and thrown overboard. The Secretary-General, in a statement of 8 October, endorsed by the members of the Security Council the next day, condemned all acts of terrorism and noted that the hijacking was another escalation of violence in the Middle East; he urged those responsible to understand that their act was criminal and unjustifiable and should be ended without delay in a manner that would avoid further suffering by the innocent victims.

Communications. By a letter of 8 October,⁽⁸³⁾ Italy requested, following the events which led to the hijacking, that the matter be brought to the attention of the Security Council, with a view to condemning firmly such an act and appealing for prompt liberation of the hostages. On the same date,⁽⁸⁴⁾ Austria appealed to the Council President to undertake every effort to contribute to an early end of the tragedy; Greece, on 9 October,⁽⁸⁵⁾ also said it hoped that the act might be resolved as quickly as possible without loss of human life. Both countries understood that some of their citizens were aboard. On the same date,⁽⁸⁶⁾ Italy asked the Council President to inform the Council members that the hijackers had abandoned the Achille Lauro and released the hostages; therefore, no further consideration of the matter appeared necessary.

SECURITY COUNCIL ACTION

On 9 October, the Council President made a statement on behalf of the Council members:⁽⁸⁷⁾

"The members of the Security Council welcome the news of the release of the passengers and the crew of the cruise ship Achille Lauro and deplore the reported death of a passenger.

"They endorse the Secretary-General's statement of 8 October 1985, which condemns all acts of terrorism.

"They resolutely condemn this unjustifiable and criminal hijacking as well as other acts of terrorism, including hostage-taking.

"They also condemn terrorism in all its forms, wherever and by whomever committed."

Meeting numbers. SC 2618-2620, 2622.

During a Council meeting the following day on the Middle East situation, including the Palestine question, Israel gave an account of the killing of Leon Klinghoffer, saying he had been singled out from other passengers on the ship because he was Jewish, there being no Israelis aboard. The facts showed, Israel said, that the hijacking had been carried out by the Abul Abbas faction of PLO's Palestine Liberation Front (PLF), with the full prior approval of the PLO Chairman.

It had not been planned originally as a hijacking, Israel believed; the PLF men were to have travelled on the ship to the Israeli port of Ashdod, to have staged there a hostage-taking and then demanded the release of Al Fatah terrorists held in Israeli jails. However, when the terrorists were discovered, they hijacked the ship, demanded the release of 50 Palestinian terrorists and then shot Klinghoffer. Then, on orders from Arafat, acting through a lieutenant, the hijackers gave themselves up to Egyptian authorities, Israel said.

The Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference said the hijacking was an act of terrorism by individuals, which could not be condoned. Since then, he added, the aircraft carrying the four hijackers out of Egypt had been intercepted by the United States Air Force and forced to land at a United States military base in Sicily; they were currently in custody.

PLO contended that there was no proof that Klinghoffer was murdered. PLO had intervened in the hijacking, at the request of the Italian Government, to save the lives of the almost 400 passengers and crew. Its endeavours had helped put an end to the operation and saved the vessel and those on board from dire consequences. The hijackers were on their way to a Palestinian court, PLO went on; Chairman Arafat, who had expressed PLO's condemnation of the operation, had declared that PLO would interrogate them in coordination with the Egyptian and Italian authorities. The arrest of the four Palestinians would not put an end to violence and terrorism