

Cuba stated that Israel's policy, aimed at annexing all the Arab territories occupied since 1967, was an integral part of its determination to de-Arabize the territory of Palestine, to deny the Palestinians the exercise of their inalienable national rights and to prevent any genuine settlement of the Middle East conflict. Israel's action, said Mexico, showed its refusal to seek solutions through negotiation and jeopardized the partial agreements already concluded. Panama hoped Israel would correct an action which, in its view, violated international law and showed lack of respect for the United Nations.

The German Democratic Republic said it shared the view of the Syrian Arab Republic that Israel should be called upon by a certain deadline to annul its action on the Golan Heights. In the view of the USSR, Israel's attempt to annex part of Syrian territory was aimed at consolidating the effects of Israeli aggression; it worsened a tense situation and set new obstacles to peace in the region.

France condemned Israel for an act amounting to annexation and appealed to it to abide by the rules of international law and not to jeopardize the chances of peace. Ireland believed that Israel's decision could be dangerous to its own interests, as it aggravated tensions in the region. The position of the United Kingdom was that the Golan Heights belonged to the Syrian Arab Republic, and it could not accept any unilateral initiative by Israel to change the status of that area from occupied territory to an area subject to Israeli law, jurisdiction and administration. In Spain's opinion, it was contrary to international law for the occupying Power to replace existing law in the territory by the law of the occupier just so that Israeli law could be applied to individuals.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION. By a resolution of 17 December,⁽¹⁶⁾ the General Assembly declared that Israel's decision to apply Israeli law to the Golan Heights was null and void and had no legal validity. It demanded that Israel rescind its decision and all related measures, and called on States and international institutions not to recognize that decision. It requested the Security Council, in the event of Israel's failure to comply, to invoke Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations (on action with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace and acts of aggression), and requested the Secretary-General to report by 21 December.

This resolution was adopted by a recorded vote of 121 to 2, with 20 abstentions. Paragraph 6, containing the request to the Security Council, was adopted by a recorded vote of 92 to 19, with 26 abstentions. Cuba, which introduced the 13-nation text, observed that it had been drafted by

the Arab Group and the Working Group on the Middle East and Palestine of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The Assembly's main resolution on the Middle East situation, also adopted on 17 December, contained a provision⁽¹⁵⁾ by which the Assembly strongly condemned, and declared null and void, Israeli annexationist policies and practices in the Golan Heights, the establishment of settlements, land confiscation, the diversion of water resources, the intensification of repressive measures against Syrians in that territory and the forcible imposition of Israeli citizenship on them. This paragraph was adopted by a recorded vote of 132 to 1, with 7 abstentions.

Israel rejected the resolution on the Golan Heights, saying that it ignored the persistent aggression of the Syrian Arab Republic against Israel since 1948 and its adamant refusal to recognize Israel, negotiate and make peace with it. The Assembly was precluded from adopting such a resolution, as the Security Council was seized of the matter.

The United States, although opposing any unilateral change in the status of the Golan Heights, voted against the resolution and abstained on the paragraph because the resolution invoked Chapter VII of the Charter and because it was improper for the Assembly to make recommendations on a situation before the Council.

Australia, Canada, Chile, New Zealand, Sweden and the United Kingdom—the last speaking for the European Community (EC) members—deplored Israel's decision but said they were unable to support the request to the Council because the Assembly should not act on questions that were before the Council. Reservations with regard to that request were also expressed by Austria, Chile and Uruguay, which supported the text. Canada did not believe some of the allegations about Israel's actions against Syrians in the Golan Heights.

During the debate on the Middle East situation, Democratic Yemen saw the decision to apply Israeli law to the Golan Heights as an instance of arrogance and contempt for the United Nations. Djibouti regarded the Israeli action as defiance of the United Nations and a violation of the principle that territory must not be acquired by war. Nicaragua said Israel's decision made clear its intention to reject political solutions and to perpetuate its colonialist policy throughout the occupied territories. Norway deplored the action as a step that would seriously undermine the search for peace in the Middle East. The decision was also condemned by Oman, Pakistan, Turkey, the USSR and Yemen.

FURTHER COMMUNICATIONS. During the latter half of December, several countries sent