

Embassy of the State I; i MUjJ BJL-nd
of Palestine.

SPEECH DELIVERED BY

THE PRESIDENT OF THE STATE OF PALESTINE

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AT THE ,

ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN UNITY CONFERENCE

IN

_ABUJA - NIGERIA

MAY 1991:

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H.E. Brother President Ibrahim Babangida
Chairman of the Organisation of African Unity
President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
Brothers Presidents and Leaders of the African States
Brothers Heads of Delegations
Esteemed Guests,
Greetings,

It gives me great pleasure as I stand among the leaders of the great African continent, at your august conference, in Abuja, the capital of friendly Nigeria, to convey to you all, in the name of the State and People of Palestine, and in the name of my brothers the members of the Executive Committee of the Palestine, Liberation Organisation and in my own name, to convey our best greetings and deepest affection and appreciation for the firm and principled positions which you have adopted in support and solidarity with our people's just struggle to end the Israeli occupation, to regain their inalienable rights, and to realize just peace in our area in accordance with international legality and United Nations resolutions which are based on the resolutions of African summits and the support of African and other friendly states in the international organisation.

I seize this important opportunity to express our profound appreciation for H.E. Brother President Yowari Museveni, the outgoing Chairman of the OAU, for his wise leadership at the helm of this organization in one of the most difficult periods through which our contemporary world is passing.

I seize this opportunity as well to express our warmest congratulations for H.E. President Ibrahim Babangida for chairing this esteemed organisation, wishing him success in guiding it and realizing its noble aims of progress and success for the peoples and states of the friendly and fraternal African continent. I express as well our deepest thanks to the friendly people of Nigeria for this great and fraternal hospitality.

Brother Presidents, esteemed guests,
We are assembled here at this Conference missing a great friend of Africa, the Arabs and of Palestine, I mean our late friend Rajiv Gandhi whose loss means the loss of one of the great leaders of Non-Alignment.
Brother Presidents, esteemed guests,

Allow me, as you gather at this august conference, to expound before you our views concerning the fateful, historical and important events through which the area has passed, especially that you are meeting today at this critical and dangerous juncture through which the world is passing and which will affect directly all the peoples of the Third World including the peoples of Africa.

Our Arab area has witnessed a most destructive war. Since the start of the crisis, we have warned against the consequences of this war and called for a peaceful solution of the crisis within the Arab family and within an international context, in order to avoid the war and its destructive consequences. As soon as this war started, we did our best to achieve a cease-fire. We had, Mr. President, dear brother Presidents, apprised you of our initiatives and the mechanisms of solution which we proposed to solve this crisis, and in which we called for the withdrawal of the Iraqi forces from Kuwait along with the withdrawal of all foreign forces from the area. These are initiatives which we made in consultation with a number of Arab states, the Soviet Union, and other friendly states. Yet, at the same time, we have stressed that we are with Iraq against foreign aggression, and the presence of foreign troops on its territory; that we are with Iraq's unity and that of its people, Arabs and Kurds alike. And we have stressed the brotherhood between them. This we have adopted on the basis of our principles and policies to stand on the side of any state or people exposed to foreign aggression, exactly as we stood on the side of Egypt in the face of the Tripartite aggression, with Libya against American aggression, and exactly as we stand on the side of the African Frontline States in the face of continued aggressions perpetrated against them by the racist apartheid regime in Pretoria or by its lackeys; and as we now stand with Lebanon against continued Israeli aggression on it and on the Palestinian refugee camps, and Lebanese towns and villages in the south. As you know, dear brothers, this mad war inflicted destruction on two Arab States, Iraq and Kuwait, As has been made public in the U.S. by a report from Georgetown University, Arab losses due to the war, have totalled 438 billion U.S. dollars, a sum which could have covered the economic problems of the countries of the Third World.

This war caused, as well, environmental catastrophes in the region and in the world at large as a result of the burning oil fields, the oil slick in the Gulf waters, in addition to other existential, health, economic and social catastrophes and to the negative repercussions which have even affected the principles of peaceful coexistence among nations, and the way small states and their peoples view the unequal relations whose features have now started to appear in the new world order, the mono-polar world, the new Rome and the relations of

alliances established between it and the other major powers which use unhesitatingly the most modern productions in their military arsenal to destroy: the elements of progress of the small states, putting on the mask of international legality to maintain their interests at the cost of the interests of smaller states, at a time when they ignore the racist regime in South Africa as well as the Israeli occupation and its crimes in the Arab and Palestinian occupied territories, including Holy Jerusalem. The repercussions and wounds created by this war are indeed profound.

Fortunately, our Arab nation is exerting every possible effort to heal its wounds quickly. This was demonstrated at the meeting of the Arab Foreign Ministers held recently at the Arab League in Cairo, where Mr. Ismet Abdul Magid, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt, was elected the new Secretary General. This in addition to the efforts being made by all Arab states to restore Arab solidarity and a unified Arab position.

Brothers leaders and heads of delegations

After the end of the war, the U.S. President, Mr. Bush, proposed on 6 March 1991 before the U.S. Congress a number of principles for solving the Arab Israeli conflict, as follows:

1. Land for peace,
2. Carrying out Security Council resolutions 242 and 338
3. Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories,
4. Legitimate political rights of the Palestinian people,
5. Security for Israel.

Despite their clear shortcomings we have welcomed these principles, officially and publicly, as an initiative carrying positive points.

However, it became clear from the shuttle visits of Mr James Baker, the U.S. Secretary of State, to the area that he came with a different plan called "the double track policy" in order to normalize Arab-Israeli relations, to grant the Palestinians nothing more than self-rule, which is a new slavery for our people similar to the Bantustans in South Africa. In fact, Israel has started to isolate the areas in our Occupied Territories, to confiscate land, to establish settlements, so as to swallow land and rights, and to judaize the sacred places, helped by waves of Jewish immigration from the Soviet Union, East Europe, Ethiopia and other places, an

immigration which poses great threat to us and to the region. From this it has become clear once again, how much by this "double track policy" the U.S. curries favour with Israel and gives it unlimited support at all levels and in all fields, how much it opposes the principles and aims adopted by the international community, and the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organisation in the peace efforts. It has started recently to ignore the role of Syria and the issue of the occupied Golan (Heights), totally putting aside the issue of Jerusalem and its sacred Islamic and Christian holy places in order to judaize and annex them to the so-called Greater Israel.

You know, dear leaders, that all these positions contravene the resolutions of international legality. Despite that, we were and still are positive in pushing forward the peace process in the area, a position which has unmasked the true Israeli stance as one rejecting any solution, or peace steps, and has shown it as one which aims at continuing its occupation of our land and its crimes against our people. That is why we have approved the meeting between a delegation comprising our national leaders inside our Occupied Territories and Mr Baker. Unfortunately, the U.S. activities which Mr Baker has set into motion do not aim at applying international legality and its resolutions to Palestine and the Middle East; rather they seek to apply a double standard. The Israeli "nos" thus coincide with U.S. "nos" on the rights of the Palestinian people and the application of the international resolutions that pertain to them.

Excellency, Mr President.

Brothers Presidents and Leaders,

Despite these biased policies against our people and the Palestine Liberation Organisation, their sole legitimate representative, we have however always adopted a positive position vis-a-vis all efforts and moves being made at the local regional and international levels to establish a just peace in the area because our aim is to alleviate the suffering of our Palestinian people, to end the Israeli occupation of our land and to establish peace in the land of peace, in Palestine. The Israeli Government, however, continues to reject all peace initiatives. It has rejected the Egyptian Ten Points Plan and Baker's Five Point Plan on Palestinian Israeli dialogue in Cairo. Finally, Israel is a well putting hindrances on the U.S. activities, is continuing to build settlements and to control and rob the water resources. It continues as well in its racist policies and repressive practices against our people and their blessed Intifada, practices which, inter alia, include all kinds of blatant violations of United Nations resolutions, the U.N. Charter, human rights, and the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Undoubtedly, esteemed leaders, you are following how our people are confronting the Israeli occupation, its crimes and massacres; how our people have escalated their resistance and Intifada with great sacrifices. We have lost 1500 martyrs; we have suffered ninety thousand injured, ninety eight thousand detainees, in addition to thousands of cases of forced miscarriages because of the use of internationally prohibited gases, as well as continuous attacks on our Islamic and Christian holy places.

I call upon the U.S. Government, which started to perceive half of the truth, namely that Israeli policies are the obstacle to the march of peace, I call upon it to see the other half, namely that of the national and inalienable rights of our Palestinian people, to recognize them in accordance with international legality and its resolutions. It is a challenge that faces the U.S. Government and its leadership as well as all Western leaders and the United Nations itself. It is the challenge to the credibility and efficacy of the U.N. Will international legality be applied to the Palestinian cause, the crux of the conflict in the area, with the same vigour and desire as it was carried out in the Gulf, or will a different standard be applied to the Palestinian cause? We call upon all to apply the same standard on the Palestinian cause, to the Middle East and to South Africa, that have been applied in the Gulf.

I would like to assure you that we are committed to the Palestinian Peace Initiative adopted by our Palestine National Council in Algiers in November 1988 and which I have declared in Geneva in December of the same year. We are convinced as well that the best means to realize just peace is to convene the International Conference for peace in the Middle East with the participation of the permanent member states in the Security Council and all the concerned parties in the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organisation and the Government of Israel on equal basis with the other parties and on the basis of international legality and its resolutions, especially those on the political, national and legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

Mr President,

Dear Presidents and leaders,

As we stand today among you in this august conference, we feel the strength of our cause, and feel that you are our true friends. You, here in Africa, stand by our side like brothers and friends. You have declared that the Palestinian cause is an African cause and for that we are indeed grateful.

On this occasion I convey my deepest thanks to His Excellency President Kenneth David Kaunda, and to the leaders of the Frontline States who have honoured me by inviting me to

participate in their recent meeting, held in Lusaka.

We also appreciate the position of the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, the European position, and that of the European Economic Community (EEC) and that of Presidents Gorbachev and Mitterrand, especially after their last statement on the International Peace Conference in the Middle East and their support for the rights of the Palestinian people.

We appreciate, as well, the position of the Non-Aligned states, whose ministerial conference will be held this year in friendly Ghana.

We appreciate the position of the Islamic countries, whose summit conference will be convened also this year in friendly Senegal. Is it by chance that all these conferences are being held this year in Africa? Definitely not. Africa plays a significant role in the Third World and in all our people's issues.

From this rostrum it is my pleasure to convey my thanks to His Holiness the Pope and to all Islamic and Christian religious leaders in the world for their noble and principled positions on the side of the just cause of the Palestinian people.

I convey also my greetings to all honourable and freedom-loving people the world over.

Brother Presidents, Leaders of the African Continent, Allow me to reaffirm from this rostrum our firm and continuous care to strengthen the bonds of friendship, joint cooperation and effective solidarity among the Arab African peoples to serve their best interest, their progress and prosperity. I would like to reaffirm the importance of convening the Arab African Conference, which has become necessary and urgent in these sensitive and important international circumstances, so as to be able to confront the challenges posed by this international order with which they are trying to order the world, forcing it upon the peoples of the Third World and so as to find for ourselves a place as part of this new world order, where we participate in deciding the future of humanity, so that this new world order would not be established at the cost of our peoples, nations, wealth and future generations. I am confident that my brothers the Arab and African leaders share with me importance and necessity of all this.

Brother Presidents and Leaders,

I would like here to convey to you the firm and principled support of the Palestine Liberation Organisation for the

struggle of the African peoples to realize their national noble aims of unity, progress and prosperity. I assure you that we will continue to work for brotherhood, solidarity and joint cooperation among our Palestinian people and the friendly African peoples in all aspects and fields.

I express our congratulations for the Angolan people on the occasion of signing the agreement to end the dispute which friendly Angola and its people witnessed.

It is my great pleasure to convey my special greetings and profound appreciation to my brothers in the same trench of struggle, the ANC and the PAC who today form a United Front for waging a common struggle against racism and racial discrimination, and for dismantling the apartheid system, and who work with all the freedom-fighters in South Africa to stop the violence and the bloodshed. We express our support for the efforts they and the African leaders are exerting to realize this noble aim. Be confident, dear militant brothers in South Africa, we will continue to be on your side with our humble but sincere capabilities, supporting your struggle, deriving from your victories the spirit of victory and providing you from the spirit of our Intifada the spirit of sacrifice and national unity. We will continue to march hand in hand, from victory to victory until we realize our common aims.

I say to you that great sacrifices are the price of freedom, the price paid by peoples in defence of their homelands. It is also the price our people are paying in defence of our blessed land, and the Christian and Islamic holy places, and in defence of their inalienable historical and national rights. Be confident dear brothers, our people will continue their blessed Intifada and their just struggle, wave upon wave, to realize a just and permanent peace in Palestine, the land of peace, love and brotherhood. Our people are confident that with your support and solidarity, their Intifada and their just struggle will be crowned with certain victory by ending the Israeli occupation of their land and holy places, and by realizing their national aims in freedom, independence and sovereignty, and so that the Palestinian flag will flutter over the walls of Jerusalem, the minarets of Jerusalem and the churches of Jerusalem.

Finally, I reiterate our profound thanks and appreciation wishing your esteemed conference success and the peoples of the African continent progress and prosperity.

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