

an international conference could give to the peace process. Its aims however must be accepted by all the parties to the dispute. It must facilitate, not hinder, direct negotiations among them.

Mr. President, were the Arab-Israeli dispute the sole source of tensions in the region it would require our undivided attention. Unfortunately the Middle East is beset by other grievous conflicts.

The war between Iran and Iraq has now entered its seventh year. That conflagration has cost hundreds of thousands of lives. It has led to unconscionable waste of national wealth and blighted the futures of millions. It shows no sign of abating. Indeed there is good reason to believe that the coming months may bring an acceleration of the bloodshed. The effects of the conflict have not been confined to the combatants but have also been felt by neighbouring states. They have been subjected to acts of violence. There have been strikes against merchant ships serving their ports and the shelling and bombing of civilian targets which have claimed innocent victims.

All of this do we know, we must not allow the Gulf war to become an endless conflict with untold consequences for the peoples of the region and the world generally. It must not be allowed to undermine the stability of states who wish only to be left in peace. This institution, through the office of the Secretary General, has made repeated attempts to end this wasteful and tragic war. So too have the Arab League and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Mr. President, both parties to that conflict must accept the repeated calls which have been made in Security Council Resolutions 582 and 588. They must lay down the implements of war. They must turn to the negotiating table. They must bring this senseless conflict to an end.

I turn, in this sad litany, Mr. President, to the tragedy of Lebanon. Over the past decade we have witnessed the shattering of a worthy experiment. Lebanon once stood as a beacon. Lebanon was founded on the concept of cooperation among the communities comprising its social fabric. This achievement has been rent asunder. Undoubtedly some of Lebanon's problems are indigenous. They have been exacerbated by the failure to adapt institutions to changing circumstances. But I also submit that Lebanon is a victim. It is a victim of the generalized malaise which has afflicted the Middle East and radicalized much of the region's youth. It is a victim of tensions in the region and the interference in Lebanon's internal affairs which these have engendered.