

The withdrawal from the Sinai is just one stage in the peace process, of course. There are continuing efforts under the Camp David accords which Israel has committed itself to making, together with Egypt, to reach agreement on West Bank autonomy for the transitional period before the permanent status of the West Bank and Gaza Strip is settled. There is also the process of normalization of relations to which both Israel and Egypt are committed. We believe it is in everyone's interest that these aspects of the Camp David peace process be strongly supported, and we have given them our support from the very beginning. Efforts in both these fields must succeed, so that eventually the Palestinian problem, which the parties to the Camp David accords are trying to grapple with, can be resolved and so eliminated as a source of conflict between Arabs and Israelis.

**Problem of
establishment
of settlements**

However, we have frankly to say that Israel has recently created problems for itself and for its friends. At the heart of these problems are the measures it has taken in its search for security and national fulfilment. These include the continued establishment of settlements in the occupied territories and the passage of the Jerusalem and Golan Heights laws — actions which are perceived as laying permanent claim to territory acquired by force.

We and most other countries have strongly opposed these measures, which we view as contrary to international law and which make the achievement of a just and lasting peace in the area — and support from Israel's friends — all the more difficult.

Of course, we continue to support Israel on other questions, or even on other aspects of these questions. At the Emergency Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on the Golan Heights when Israel's standing in the United Nations was questioned, we regarded this move as running counter to the principle of universality, and we therefore voted against it, even though we strongly opposed the Israeli government's own action.

I cannot see the efforts against Israel diminishing in the near future unless somehow the cycle of action and reaction can be broken.

Events such as those occurring now in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which we cannot but deplore, provide a classic example of the kind of escalation I am talking about, and contribute to international deterioration of Israel's position. As I pointed out in a statement on March 25, "If not checked, such violence could not only create further obstacles to the success of the autonomy negotiations but could also have far-reaching consequences for stability and peace in the region." In the end, such policies of relying on force rather than political persuasion in reaching a solution to the conflict do not serve the interests of peace.

For this reason, I called on all those involved in the latest events to exercise restraint and avoid provocation and violence.