

**Speech by Soviet Representative A. A. Gromyko
at Plenary Meeting of UN General Assembly,
November 26, 1947**

It is common knowledge that the Soviet Union has no direct material or other interests in Palestine. It is concerned about the Palestine issue as a member of the United Nations Organisation and as a great power bearing along with the other great powers particular responsibility for

the maintenance of international peace. This determines the position taken by the Government of the Soviet Union on the question of Palestine.

A fairly detailed outline of the Soviet Union's position has already been given at the special session of the General Assembly early this year and during the discussion at this session of the Assembly.

When the future of Palestine was discussed at the special session the Soviet Government proposed two highly likely ways of settling this question. One variant was to create a single democratic Arab-Jewish state with equal rights for the Arabs and Jews. If this turned out to be unrealistic in the event that the Arabs and Jews declared they could not live together because of worsened relations between them, the Soviet Government, through its delegation at the Assembly, proposed an alternative: division of Palestine into two independent democratic states—Arab and Jewish.

As you know the special session of the Assembly had set up a committee to make a thorough study of the Palestine issue with a view to finding the most appropriate solution. When the committee had finished its work, we stated with satisfaction that the proposal it submitted, or to be more exact, the proposal backed by the majority of its members, coincided with one of the two ways outlined by the Soviet delegation at the special session, the proposal to divide Palestine into two independent democratic states, an Arab and a Jewish state.

Consequently, the Soviet Union's delegation was bound to support this recommendation by the special committee. It has now been found that

besides the special committee set up to study what should be done about Palestine, the overwhelming majority of the other delegations to the General Assembly also favoured the proposal on having two independent states. The overwhelming majority of the countries belonging to the United Nations arrived at the same conclusion as the Soviet Government, as a result of a thoroughgoing investigation of what the future Palestine should be.

The question arises: Why did the overwhelming majority of the delegations to the General Assembly favour this recommendation instead of some other one? The only answer to this is that all other proposals on the solution of the Palestine issue were unreal and unpractical. By that I also mean the proposal for creating a single independent Arab-Jewish state with equal rights for the Arabs and Jews. The study of the Palestine question, including the experience of the special committee, has proved that the Jews and Arabs in Palestine cannot or will not live together. Hence the logical conclusion: since these two peoples living in Palestine, both having deep-going historical roots in that country, cannot live together within the boundaries of one state, there is no alternative except to set up two states instead of one—an Arab state and a Jewish state. In the opinion of the Soviet delegation no other practical way can be found.

Those opposing the idea of Palestine's division into two independent democratic states usually claim this decision is directed against the Arabs, against the Arab population of Palestine and against the Arab states in general. For obvious reasons the delegations of the Arab countries are

especially vociferous about this. The Soviet delegation cannot agree with their view. The proposal to divide Palestine into two independent states, as well as the committee's resolution approving this proposal which we are now discussing, is not aimed against the Arabs. This resolution is not aimed at either of the two biggest peoples populating Palestine. On the contrary, the Soviet delegation believes that this resolution accords with the basic national interests of both these peoples, both the Jews and the Arabs.

The representatives of the Arab states stress that the division of Palestine is a historical injustice. But it is impossible to agree with this view even if only because the Jewish people have been associated with Palestine for a long historical period. Besides, we cannot ignore the position in which the Jewish people have found themselves as a result of the last world war, and the Soviet delegation has already pointed this out at the special session of the General Assembly. I shall not repeat what the Soviet delegation said on this point at the session. Nevertheless it will not be too much to recall now that as a result of the war forced on the world by Hitler Germany the Jews as a people suffered more than any other people. You know that not a single state in Western Europe was able to offer the Jewish people adequate protection from nazi high-tyranny and violence.

Touching on the proposal for the division of Palestine, the representatives of some countries spoke of the Soviet Union and tried to question its foreign policy. The Lebanon's representative was twice particularly eloquent on this subject. I have already emphasised that the proposals

concerning the division of Palestine into two independent states and the Soviet Union's position on this question, are not directed against the Arabs, and that it is our profound belief that such a solution would accord with the vital national interests of both the Jews and Arabs alike.

The peoples of the Soviet Union have always sympathised and continue to sympathise with the national aspirations of the peoples of the Arab East. The Soviet Union appreciates and sympathises with the attempts being made by these peoples to free themselves of the remaining shackles of colonial dependence. This is why we do not associate the poorly thought-out statements of some Arab representatives on Soviet policy concerning Palestine's future with the vital national interests of the Arabs. We distinguish between statements of this sort, made evidently on the spur of the moment, and the basic interests of the Arab people. The Soviet delegation is confident that the time will come when Arabs and the Arab countries will more than once look in the direction of Moscow, expecting assistance from the Soviet Union in their struggle for their legitimate interests, in their striving to free themselves from the remaining strings of foreign dependence.

The Soviet delegation also believes that the resolution on the division of Palestine accords with the lofty principles and goals of the United Nations. It accords with the principle of national self-determination of the peoples. The nationalities policy the Soviet Union has pursued since the inception of the Soviet state, is a policy of concord and self-determination of the peoples. It is precisely for that reason that all the peoples

of the Soviet Union constitute one united family, which was able to endure the grim trials of the war in the struggle against the strongest and most dangerous enemy ever faced by peace-loving peoples.

The solution of the Palestine question on the basis of this country's division into two independent states will be of great historical significance, since this solution will meet half-way the legitimate demands of the Jewish people, of whom, as you know, hundreds of thousands are still homeless, with no hearths of their own, who have found temporary shelter in the special camps in some West European countries.

The Assembly is working persistently to find the most just, most tangible, and at the same time, most radical solution to the question of Palestine's future. In this it proceeds on the basis of certain irrefutable facts which have given rise to the Palestine issue at the United Nations. They are as follows:

First: the mandate system has not justified itself. I shall even say more: the mandate system has proved bankrupt. We have heard declarations from the British representatives as well, that the system of administration of Palestine by mandate has not been justified. Statements to this effect were made at the special session and also at this session of the General Assembly. It is precisely because of the bankruptcy of the mandate system that the Government of Great Britain appealed to the United Nations for help. It requested the Assembly to work out an appropriate decision and thus take over the responsibility of determining Palestine's future.

Second: Having appealed to the United Nations Organisation, the Government of Great Britain stated that it could not assume responsibility for all the measures that it would have to be taken with regard to Palestine in line with the probable decision of the General Assembly. In this way the Government of Great Britain recognised, that by virtue of the rights and powers vested in it, the General Assembly could take the responsibility for settling the question of the future of Palestine.

However the Soviet delegation deems it useful to draw the Assembly's attention to the fact that it still does not feel that the support it had the right to expect from Great Britain has been forthcoming. On the one hand, the British Government has turned to the Assembly for assistance in solving the question of Palestine's future. On the other, it has made so many reservations during the discussion of the issue at the special session and at the current Assembly session, that one involuntarily wonders if Great Britain really wishes the question of Palestine to be settled through the United Nations Organisation.

The British representative at the special session declared his country's readiness to implement the United Nations resolutions on condition that Britain would not be solely responsible for the likely measures to be taken. By this statement the British delegation clearly made it understood to other states that it was ready to co-operate with the United Nations in the solution of this question.

Nevertheless, at the same special session the British representative declared that his government was prepared to implement the respective

General Assembly's resolutions only in the event that the Jews and the Arabs would agree on some solution of the question. It is clear to anyone that the first declaration contradicts the second. The first indicates Britain's readiness to co-operate with the United Nations Organisation on this question and the second serves to notice that the British Government may also ignore the Assembly's resolution.

The representative of Great Britain has made similar reservations at this session too. We have heard Mr. Cadogan on this question today.

He repeated, though in a somewhat modified form, the idea that Great Britain would agree to implement the Assembly's resolution provided the Jews and the Arabs were to agree. But we are all perfectly aware that the Arabs and Jews have not reached agreement between themselves. The discussion of the issue at this session proves that they cannot reach agreement. We see no prospect of agreement between them.

The view of the Soviet delegation is shared by all the delegations that have come to the conclusion that it is necessary to adopt a definite decision on this question even at the current Assembly session.

All these reservations on the part of the British delegation show that Great Britain has no real wish even today to co-operate fully with the United Nations in the solution of this question. At a time when the majority of the delegations at the General Assembly favour a definite settlement of Palestine's future even now—that it should be divided into two states—the Government of Great Britain declares that it will consider the Assembly's resolution only when the Jews and

Arabs reach agreement. I repeat that to make such a stipulation means to bury the resolution even before the Assembly adopts it. Is it proper for Great Britain to act this way on this matter, especially now when, after prolonged discussion, it has become clear to everybody, Britain included, that the overwhelming majority of states support the division of Palestine?

Whereas it was possible to at least understand the British delegation's reservations at the first session, when the question of a possible solution of the problem of Palestine's future was first brought up, to make such reservations at present, when the opinion of the majority of the UN members has become known, amounts to announcing beforehand that Britain does not consider herself bound by the possible resolution of the General Assembly. We have a right to expect Britain's co-operation in this matter. We have a right to expect that should the Assembly adopt such a recommendation, Britain will observe it, especially since the current regime in Palestine is hateful both to the Jews and the Arabs alike. You all know the feelings expressed about this regime, particularly by the Jews.

I consider it necessary to mention one more fact.

Ever since the discussion of this question a number of the delegations, mainly the delegations of the Arab countries, have tried to convince us that this question is not within the competence of the United Nations to decide. And, as was to be expected, they could not advance any weighty arguments, nothing but general and groundless declarations and utterances.

The General Assembly, just as the United Na-

tions Organisation as a whole, not only has the right to examine this question but, considering the situation that has arisen in Palestine, is duty-bound to make an appropriate decision. The Soviet delegation believes that the plan for the Palestinian settlement drawn up by the committee, whereby the Security Council should take measures in line with its implementation, fully accords with the interests of maintaining and consolidating international peace and with the interests of strengthening co-operation between states. It is precisely for this reason that the Soviet delegation supports the recommendation concerning the division of Palestine.

Unlike certain other delegations, the Soviet delegation has from the very beginning taken a precise and clear stand. It has persistently followed this line. It is not going to manoeuvre or manipulate with the votes in a certain way, a fact which unfortunately occurs at the Assembly in connection with the discussion on the Palestine question.

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