

**Middle East conflict -
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Statement by A.A. GROMYKO (Min. for Foreign Affairs of USSR)
(Press conference of Soviet and foreign journalists in New York)

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S T A T E M E N T

BY A.A. GROMYKO, MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF USSR AT PRESS
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The Delegation of the Soviet Union has invited you here bearing in mind the wishes of representatives of the press and radio who want to know our evaluation of the results of the Emergency Special Session of the UN General Assembly.

It should be noted first of all that the Soviet Delegation is satisfied with the results of the Session of the General Assembly as, by adopting the decision which you all know on the question discussed, the Session has made an important step along the road of easing the tension in the Near and Middle East brought about by the aggression of the United States of America and the United Kingdom against Lebanon and Jordan.

The Assembly decision has reflected the will of the peoples who demanded and are demanding the spediest withdrawal of foreign troops from Lebanon and Jordan, for it speaks directly of the necessity for an early withdrawal of United States and United Kingdom troops from the territories of these countries. No excuses and subterfuges will help to by-pass this fact, and any attempts

to attribute any other purport to the content of the resolution are absolutely unfounded.

A look into the speeches of the participants of the Session suffices to see that the overwhelming majority of delegations, including the representatives of United States neighbour countries, which is very gratifying have come out for the withdrawal of Anglo-American troops. The United States neighbours also know what even indirect approval of United States armed intervention in the internal affairs of other countries, not to speak of direct approval, would mean for their own destiny.

Having adopted the proposal of the ten Arab states, the Assembly has resolutely condemned foreign interference in the internal affairs of Near and Middle East countries. It not only did not support the actions of those who, in violation of the Charter of our Organization, undertook armed interference in the internal affairs of two sovereign Arab states, but, expressing the will of the overwhelming majority of countries, pronounced itself in favour of the Arab peoples themselves resolving their internal affairs.

Thereby the United Nations came out resolutely in defence of its Charter and this is very good as in the course of recent years no few attempts were made to turn this Charter into a scrap of paper although it carries the signatures of almost all the countries of the world, the Great Powers included. The adopted decision calls upon all UN member states to act in international relations strictly in accordance with the principles of mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty,

of non-aggression , of strict non-interference in each other's internal affairs. Who can deny that this appeal represents an unequivocal warning to those who have crudely violated the principles of the United Nations by committing armed intervention against Lebanon and Jordan.

There can appear people who would like to present matters as if the principles of relations between countries , approved by the Assembly, are applicable with regard to the Arab states only with the reservation that some Arab countries cannot as yet do without foreign bayonets. However, it goes without saying that there can be no two measures here. Non-interference in internal affairs is a major principle of international relations which is equally binding upon both Arab states and the United States, the United Kingdom and all other countries.

Having once again approved the principle of non-interference of any powers in the affairs of others, the Assembly has thereby pronounced itself against all kinds of "doctrines" by means of which attempts are being made to justify expansion and aggression with regard to the countries of the Near and Middle East. Even though some delegates did not mention this fact directly for reasons which are known to everybody such a conclusion is indisputable. It is not fortuitous that practically no voices were raised in the Assembly in defense of such doctrines.

Certainly, it would be a mistake to assume that now that the Assembly has adopted a good decision, everything has already been done to resolve the situation in the Near and Middle East. It does not suffice to adopt a good decision, one should also, ensure that it be carried out and speedily at that. No delays should be allowed in its implementation. It should be said that a certain share of responsibility in this respect also falls upon the UN Secretary-General, who, as we hope, will contribute to an early withdrawal of foreign troops. It would mean ignoring the will of the Assembly if someone in his attempts to delay the withdrawal of troops were to try to hide behind the Secretary-General's back. It seems to us that the United Nations should be on guard in this respect.

The Assembly's decision also testifies to the fact that the overwhelming majority of its participants has rejected the attempts of the United States and Great Britain to secure the approval of their armed action or, at least, the approval of their policy to prolong the occupation of Lebanon and Jordan. The letters of the US Secretary of State and of the British foreign minister addressed to the president of the Assembly, which have been ignored by the Assembly, as well as the draft resolution, submitted by Norway and some other countries but reflecting in fact the view point of the United States and United Kingdom constituted precisely such an attempt.

It should also be noted as a positive fact that the Assembly did not allow itself to be sidetracked from consideration of the main issue - the withdrawal of troops - by talk about plans for

"economic development" of the Arab countries, projects to create United Nations armed forces and other such projects which have no bearing on the task of removing tension and the critical situation which obtains in the Near and Middle East area as a result of the actions of the United States and the United Kingdom.

Having met at the Session with almost unanimous condemnation of the armed intervention of the United States and the United Kingdom in the Near East those who bear the responsibility for it are now putting a good face on the matter by praising to the skies Arab nationalism which only yesterday they were abusing. It is hard to believe their words today, and the Arab peoples who know full well the value of such a momentary transformation will hardly take them seriously.

It is necessary to touch upon yet another important aspect of the decision taken by the General Assembly. This decision testifies to the Arab countries having made a good step toward their unity. This fact shows that there exists the possibility to bring about the unity of Arab countries when their actions are based upon the interests of peace, the national interests of the Arab peoples and not on the alien interests of foreign quarters who view the Arab East as an object of expansion.

Let us hope that this experience will serve the cause of rallying together the Arab states on the basis of defence and consolidation of their independence and sovereignty. It is precisely this and only this that the Arab peoples are wished by the Soviet Union which is vitally interested in the area of the Near and Middle East being an area of stable peace and not a

place of imperialist intrigues and military provocations where already over a number of years ever more inflammable material has been piling up, and where therefore the danger of an explosion is heightening which can lead to grave consequences for the cause of peace.

Certainly, one should be too great an optimist to draw a conclusion that the danger of continuing the policy of playing on these or others artificially created contradictions between separate Arab states and the danger of new attempts to incite these states, against each other have been removed from now on. The powers which have created by their actions the present tense situation in the Near and Middle East area can, judging by everything, continue the attempts to introduce a split among Arab states and to warm their hands on differences between them. But one can say with the same certainty that from day to day it becomes more and more difficult to pursue such a policy with regard to Arab states.

Many can ask what is the explanation of the Soviet Union's firm stand with regard to the withdrawal of the American and British troops from the Near and Middle East and why the Soviet Union insists on the necessity of their immediate withdrawal? It seems to us it is not difficult to answer this question. The countries of the Near and Middle East are our neighbours and, therefore, the Soviet state, our people as a whole can in no way be indifferent to what is going on in this area. The presence of foreign troops on the territory of the Near and Middle East countries, the creation of foreign military bases there and all kinds

of intrigues, which threaten to violate peace in this area, constitute a direct menace to the security of the Soviet Union.

We are convinced that only blind people or those who deliberately close their eyes to the real situation cannot see all this.

The Soviet Union proceeds also from the fact that tension in this area and, the more so, violation of peace constitute a threat to universal peace.

That is why the Soviet Union takes such a firm stand in this question and why it repeatedly drew the attention of the Governments of the United States, United Kingdom and many other states to the danger of the situation obtained in the Near and Middle East.

The Soviet Union has repeatedly undertaken attempts to come to an agreement with the Western powers in order to put an end to foreign interference in the domestic affairs of the Near and Middle East countries, to give the peoples of these countries the opportunity to solve their internal affairs by themselves without any interference from outside. We regret that up to now these attempts have not been crowned with success. Let us hope that the resolution, adopted by the General Assembly, which says that the interference of any states in the internal affairs of other states is inadmissible, will induce the Western powers and, in the first place the United States, to take a more sober attitude towards the evaluation of the situation in the Near and Middle East and to renounce their policy of gross interference in the domestic affairs of the states of this area.

All this enables us to express our gratification by the results of the emergency session of the General Assembly, convened on the proposal of the Soviet Union, which, as the Soviet delegation pointed out at yesterday's final meeting of the Assembly, has done a very useful thing.
