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Eliot, George Fielding, 1947.

POWER AND POLICY
By George Fielding Eliot

There has been considerable criticism of what is called the "neutral" attitude of the American government with regard to the United Nations proceedings on the Palestine question.

Without attempting to criticize or to defend the official position, I think it may be useful to set down here in as few words as possible just what the American policy on this question is.

American policy favors now, as in the past, a considerable increase of Jewish immigration into Palestine. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that there has been no change in the views of the President and his advisers.

There has never, however, been a precise definition of American policy with regard to the political status of Palestine.

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The present tendency -- it has not crystallized into a definite policy -- is, however, against partition. There is a feeling that Palestine is already so small that to split it up further would be to weaken it against the storms of the future -- perhaps hopelessly.

Those who reason thus recognize the difficulty of reconciling this point of view with the American desire to speed up Jewish immigration. Outright independence now would certainly mean that the existing Arab majority would take steps to stop any further Jewish immigration. Independence at some fixed future date would merely mean that both sides would maneuver for advantage at the chosen date.

Further, there is a desire to avoid any appearance of influencing, much less constraining, the U. N. investigating committee. When this committee reports to the fall meeting of the General Assembly (if its report is ready in time) the American delegation to the General Assembly will not be without instructions and a definite policy. But until then, at least as of the present time, there is a feeling in Administration circles that it is better not to stick our necks out.

We fought hard for a neutral committee, a small-power committee. We would not look well if by any act or word we seemed to be trying to influence the findings of this group. So far as this reporter knows, there are not even any conversations going on with the British as to what the course of action will or should be when the committee reports.

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The hope is, however, quite freely expressed by American officials that the General Assembly, having received and considered the report of the investigating committee, will be able to produce clear recommendations on two points: Jewish immigration and the conditions of land acquisition and tenure. Once these two points have been the subject of definite action by the General Assembly of the United Nations, it is felt that a policy based on the General Assembly's views can be carried out by the mandatory power (if the existing mandate is continued) or by the power or powers charged with trusteeship over Palestine, should a trusteeship

be brought into being.

It is clearly recognized that the General Assembly can only recommend; it has no power of executive action. Whatever affirmative and positive action is taken in Palestine will have to be taken by one or both of the two nations which have the means of acting effectively in the eastern Mediterranean; Great Britain and the United States. The British have said that they cannot promise to implement any U. N. recommendations which calls for additional expenditures and efforts on their part. Any such solution would require the support and participation of the United States.

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The moral force of the General Assembly's recommendation, particularly as regards controversial issues, will, it is felt, be of much assistance to the United States should any such responsibility devolve upon this government. Meanwhile, there is to be no attempt to influence the investigating committee's action; but this does not preclude taking of a clear and firm stand by the United States delegation when the General Assembly meets in September to consider the committee's report.

