Explanation of Vote by the United States on a UN General Assembly Resolution Enabling the Palestinians to Act as Chair of the Group of 77

October 16, 2018

The U.S. Mission to the United Nations

<https://usun.state.gov/remarks/8654>

For decades, the United States has been committed to achieving a comprehensive end to the Israeli Palestinian conflict. We have been clear that only through direct negotiations between the parties can the Israelis and Palestinians achieve the peace that they both deserve.

That remains our goal today. We cannot support efforts by the Palestinians to enhance their status outside of direct negotiations.

The United States does not recognize that there is a Palestinian state and notes that no such state has been admitted as a UN Member State. Therefore, we strongly oppose the Palestinian election as Chair of the G77, as well as this so-called enabling resolution.

If this misguided resolution is adopted, the United States will leave no doubt about where we stand. When the Palestinians speak as Chair of the G77 in the General Assembly, we will remind our fellow Member States that the United States does not recognize that there is a Palestinian state and that no such state has been admitted as a UN Member State.

Only UN Member States should be entitled to speak and act on behalf of major groups of states at the United Nations, such as the Group of 77 and China. It is entirely inappropriate for an observer to play the role of representing a group of states in the General Assembly or elsewhere in the United Nations system.

The United States has long opposed enhancements of Palestinian status at the United Nations. We voted against the General Assembly’s resolution designating the Palestinian delegation as a non-member Observer State. We have consistently and formally objected to Palestinian accession to treaties to which we are a party. That is because, as we said, the United States does not recognize that there is a Palestinian state, and we do not consider ourselves to be in a treaty relationship with the “State of Palestine.”

Achieving a real peace requires the courage to sit down at the table, and make compromises. This initiative is the opposite. We therefore ask that all delegations vote “no” on this resolution.

We also urge Palestinian leaders to do the right thing for their people, and re-engage in peace talks. When they are ready, rest assured, the United States will be too.

Thank you, Madam President.