

and to explore the possibility of an international atomic energy agency (Documents 167 to 207) resulted in “more sweetness and light ... than at any time since the first General Assembly met in London nine years ago.” (Document 210) With Pearson tied up in Europe with NATO, Paul Martin, the Minister of Health and Welfare and vice-chairman of the Canadian delegation to the General Assembly, emerged as Canada’s foremost spokesman at the United Nations. As the principal negotiator for the Western powers with the Soviet Union on the disarmament resolution, Martin’s persistence in search of compromise — his greatest strength as a diplomat — was well rewarded. Nevertheless, it prompted concern in Ottawa and caused Pearson to warn his colleague that “I do not think that the effort should be continued to a point where it would cause trouble between us and the United States.” (Document 163)

The Prime Minister, Louis St. Laurent, also ventured onto the diplomatic circuit in 1954, undertaking an extended world tour during the first few months of the year to meet his counterparts in Europe and Asia. The visit was poorly documented and few records, apart from those chronicling St. Laurent’s meetings with the Indian prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, survive. These, however, offer the reader a hint of the difficulties that faced St. Laurent and Pearson as Canada tried to bridge the growing divisions between New Delhi and Washington over Asian affairs (Documents 435 to 442). Similar impulses are reflected in the documentation on American military aid to Pakistan (Documents 431 to 434). More generally, Canada’s desire to maintain the economic and political stability of Asia as a bulwark against Communist expansion in the Far East underpins the lengthy series of documents on the Colombo Plan (Documents 390 to 430).

Asia bulked large in Canada’s external relations in 1954. At their Berlin meeting in February, the foreign ministers of France, Great Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union agreed to convene a conference in Geneva to find a solution to the Korean problem. All of the combatants, including the People’s Republic of China, North Korea and South Korea, were invited, and all but South Africa agreed to attend. The atmosphere was electric. A Canadian delegate later recalled that “Geneva in that spring and early summer was an extraordinary place ... the centre of attention of the whole world.”² The conference, however, was quickly deadlocked over how best to supervise the elections in North and South Korea, which all agreed were a necessary prelude to unification. In drafting a declaration to explain their decision to break off the talks, the sixteen-member United Nations coalition was torn apart by Washington’s determination to yield no ground even at the cost of losing the battle, increasingly important in the Cold War context, for world opinion. Pearson and the Canadian delegation fought to maintain the coalition’s unity (Documents 19 to 87). The stalemate in Geneva and the armistice in Korea, though hardly a satisfactory ending to an experiment in collective security that cost Canada 1,642 casualties, at least allowed Ottawa to begin withdrawing its troops from Asia (Documents 88 to 91).

² John Holmes, “Geneva 1954,” *International Journal*, Volume XXII, No. 3 (Summer 1967), p. 463.