

External Affairs  
Supplementary Paper

No. 57/14 STATEMENT ON DEFINITION OF AGGRESSION

Statement by Mr. D. Jung, M.P., Canadian Representative,  
in the Sixth Committee of the United Nations General  
Assembly, on October 29, 1957.

On previous occasions, when the definition of aggression has been discussed in this Committee, the Canadian Delegation has voiced its doubts concerning the possibility of general agreement being reached on any one definition and it has questioned the desirability, in the present international atmosphere at least, of defining aggression.

In saying this I am fully aware that a majority of delegations have in the past favoured defining aggression. I need hardly remind this Committee, however, of the long and detailed consideration which has been given this question, without any real progress, in this Committee and elsewhere, being made in the direction of any one definition. This unhappy experience, I think, points to the conclusion that it probably is not possible, at least in immediate circumstances, to define aggression -- possible, that is, in the sense of drafting one definition which would be generally acceptable to members of the Organization. In this connection it would seem beyond question that any definition, to have any meaning at all, would have to be agreed to by the permanent members of the Security Council and by at least a two-thirds majority of the General Assembly. Let us review the question in this light.

Mr. Chairman, as we all know, this question first came before this Organization in 1950 when it was introduced by the U.S.S.R. The General Assembly that year passed the question to the International Law Commission which dealt with it in 1951 and reported back to the General Assembly that same year that it could not agree on any one definition. The report of the International Law Commission was discussed in this Committee for the first time that year. During 17 meetings at which the Committee discussed the question of defining aggression, a measure of disagreement was evident concerning the possibility and desirability of defining aggression. It was decided to request the Secretary-General to submit a report to the next following Session of the General Assembly, at which time it was intended that the question of defining aggression should be thoroughly discussed in the light of the views expressed in this Committee. At the Seventh Session of the General Assembly in 1952, the Secretary-General's report was discussed for a period of 18 meetings, at the end of which it was decided that a special committee should be set up. The special committee was to submit, to the Ninth Session in 1954, draft definitions of aggression or draft statements of the notion of aggression, and was to study the various problems related to the question of defining aggression. This Committee, comprising 15 member states, met for four weeks in 1953. Four definitions of aggression were appended to the Committee's report, but it