

Excerpt from CANADA AND THE UNITED NATIONS 1950, Department of External Affairs, pages 2 - 10

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Because of the unstable situation in the artificially divided peninsula, it had been realized that Korea constituted a potential threat to peace in the area. Nevertheless, the news of the North Korean attack on June 25 came as a profound shock. On the initiative of the United States Government, however, the Security Council was called into session on the same day. The United Nations Commission on Korea having provided authoritative confirmation that aggression had occurred, the Council adopted a resolution calling for the cessation of hostilities and the withdrawal of North Korean forces to the 38th parallel. The Soviet Delegation, which had been boycotting the Council over the problem of Chinese representation, was not able to veto this resolution. The resolution also urged members to render every assistance to the United Nations, and to refrain from giving assistance to the North Korean authorities. Two days later, as the North Koreans still advanced, President Truman again took the lead and announced that he was ordering United States air and sea forces to give cover and support to the troops of the Government of the Republic of Korea. Later on the same day, June 27, the Security Council, noting that the North Koreans had ignored its previous resolution, approved a second resolution recommending that "members of the United Nations furnish such assistance to the Republic of Korea as may be necessary to repel the armed attack and to restore international peace and security within the area". Naval and air support were promptly offered by member governments with units available in the vicinity, and by June 30 authorization had been given General MacArthur to employ ground forces under his command if the situation required. The fifty-three members of the United Nations which approved the Security Council's stand declared their willingness to comply, in accordance with their individual capacities, with the Council's recommendations. On July 7, the Security Council passed a third resolution recommending that all members providing military forces and other assistance should make them available to "a Unified Command under the United States", and authorizing the use of the United Nations flag in operations against the North Korean forces.

In Canada official and public opinion strongly supported the measures taken by the United Nations to meet the crisis. Government approval was recorded in the House of Commons on June 28 by the Secretary of State for External Affairs who stated that the decisions taken by the Security Council represented "collective action through the United Nations for peace". On June 30, the Prime Minister, Mr. St. Laurent, told the House that "if a Canadian contribution..... under a United Nations Commander, would be important to achieve the ends of peace.....then the Government wishes Parliament to know that it would immediately consider making such a contribution". This support soon assumed concrete form. On July 12, Canada made available three destroyers; on July 21 an air transport squadron; and on August 11, in co-operation with the Canadian Pacific Airlines, passenger transport facilities between Vancouver and Tokyo. On August 7, the Government authorized recruitment of a Canadian Army Special Force, which, subject to Parliamentary approval, would be available for service in Korea. To this end the Canadian Forces Act was passed by Parliament and became law on September 9. An advance unit was despatched in October, and by December 19 a battalion had arrived in Korea to complete its advance training.