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DEA/50069-A-40

*Note du sous-secrétaire d'État aux Affaires extérieures
pour le secrétaire d'État aux Affaires extérieures*

*Memorandum from Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs
to Secretary of State for External Affairs*

TOP SECRET

Ottawa, July 18, 1950

KOREA: THE U.N. SECRETARY-GENERAL'S LETTER OF JULY 14

Attached is a copy of the Secretary-General's letter of July 14 urging further assistance.† It is felt you may wish to have some comments.

2. Serious as is the Korean situation, and important as it is that we should not fail in our responsibility as a member of the United Nations, it would seem, at least as yet, that Korea is but a "side show" in the over-all struggle between the U.S.S.R. and the Western world. There is no reason to believe that Western Europe is not still the main theatre, and it would be unfortunate if our attention should be diverted from Europe by reason of Korea. It is suggested therefore that any Canadian contribution should not be at the expense of our capacity to fulfil our responsibilities for the direct defence of Canada and under the North Atlantic Treaty. Indeed, the Korean incident stresses the need for stepping up Canadian defence preparations and the whole North Atlantic programme. It is suggested therefore that in any public statement about the Secretary-General's request an effort should be made to place the Korean incident in this wider setting.

3. It will be observed that the Secretary-General's letter notes "there is immediate need for additional effective assistance," and requests that the Government "examine its capacity to provide an increased volume of combat forces, particularly ground forces." Although "additional effective assistance" might include assistance other than combat forces, this distinction probably will not be evident to the general public, whether in this country or elsewhere. It would seem difficult therefore for the Government to avoid answering the request for combat forces in a communication which can be made public.

4. The Minister of National Defence will report to Cabinet on the availability of Canadian combat forces for Korea. His report will take into account the needs for the direct defence of Canada and our responsibilities under the North Atlantic Treaty. It is assumed that even if the Government were willing to despatch ground forces there are none presently available.

5. It would, however, seem undesirable to give a flat refusal to the Secretary-General's request, since such a reply would inevitably react unfavourably on U.S. opinion and probably on opinion throughout most of Canada. The Government, therefore, will probably wish to consider what assistance other than ground forces might be provided. The following courses might be considered as possible alternatives or in combination:

(1) The provision of other than ground forces; e.g., additional naval units or combat air units. The report from National Defence will no doubt examine this possibil-