

No. 63/7 Friendly Relations and Co-operation Among States

Statement by Mr. James E. Brown, M.P.,
Canadian Representative on the Sixth Committee
of the United Nations, November 20, 1963.

...My Delegation had not planned on intervening at this stage of the debate on Agenda Item 71, which has turned out to be procedural to a large extent. The Canadian Government, in its written comments transmitted to the Secretary-General of the United Nations on July 4, 1963, contributed some views and suggestions on Resolution 1815, adopted at the seventeenth session, whereby the Sixth Committee was given the important task of considering the principles of international law concerning friendly relations and co-operation among states in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. Moreover, this Delegation, along with several others, submitted at this session, in Working Paper A/C.6/L.531, some further suggestions as to the handling of this item.

It has become apparent to us, however, that we should speak briefly in reply to various questions and doubts which have been raised concerning these suggestions.

My Delegation read with great interest the comments contributed by other governments and has listened to the many interesting suggestions which have been made so far in the course of this general debate. The wealth and diversity of approaches which have been proposed point to the wisdom of keeping an open mind about the nature of the study being undertaken, about its pace, and about its eventual results. The debate in itself tends to confirm that only the test of experience will reveal whether this study is to be a short or a long term proposition, and whether it will be self-liquidating or may lead to the adoption of resolutions on specific points, or to elaborating draft conventions, or to other documents, or to all these results. Accordingly, we can only at this stage treat with great reserve any predetermined solutions or prefabricated declarations.

...References were made in the course of this debate to a document tabled in this Committee at the seventeenth session - namely, to Draft Resolution A/C.6/L.505, submitted on October 26, 1962, by the Delegation of Czechoslovakia and consisting of a proposed Draft Declaration of Principles of International Law. As reflected in the official records of the seventeenth session, that document, together with two other draft resolutions, moved respectively by the Delegations of Yugoslavia and of Canada, were withdrawn by their respective co-sponsors in favour of compromise Resolution 1815, which constitutes the item before the Sixth Committee at its current session.

Therefore, this Delegation takes exception to certain statements made at this session, which, if we understood them correctly, would tend to indicate that Draft Resolution A/C.6/L.505 may be considered as still before this Committee. Such attempts to reopen the terms of Resolution 1815, which was unanimously agreed to last year after a lengthy debate and difficult negotiations, we can only interpret as attempts to flout the express wishes of the General Assembly.

On the question of timing, we regret that various proponents of a target date have striven to change the list of topics laid out in Resolution 1815, thus provoking some time-wasting discussions. We fail to understand how they reconcile urging speed with their own efforts to bring back under the priority topics proposals which were discarded from Resolution 1815. Some of these proposals are better discussed and are being discussed in other forums; others might