

It appears certain that the United Kingdom had similarly let the State Department know that it would not be committed by the Canberra Conference to any single Commonwealth approach to the Pacific Settlement. The most likely explanation for the United States action of suggesting the date of August 19th is that it did not wish to have the initiative for the settlement taken out of United States hands.

55. The United Kingdom response to the United States proposal was an acceptance in principle of the suggestion for an early meeting to discuss the Japanese Peace Settlement but at a date which would not conflict with the meeting at Canberra. It was explained that the practice of a mutual exchange of views by the members of the British Commonwealth in advance of international conferences was quite customary, and that it was considered that the Canberra discussions would facilitate procedure when the proposed international conference was summoned to discuss the Japanese Peace Treaty. No immediate observations were made by the United Kingdom authorities on the details of the United States plan except to express the opinion that questions of policy and principle should be determined first at the Ministerial level before Deputies and experts proceeded to examine the substance of the Treaty in detail. The Australian reaction to the proposal was to welcome the principle that the eleven Countries represented on the Far Eastern Commission should take part in the preliminary stage of the Japanese Peace Conference while reserving comment on the level of representation and other procedural matters. The Australians suggested, however, in their communications to other Commonwealth Governments that a prior meeting at the highest governmental level should precede the setting-up of a deputy or committee system. In replying to the United States invitation the Australian Government indicated the impracticability of August 19th, because of the Canberra Conference, and suggested an initial meeting of the eleven governments immediately prior to, or after the General Assembly of the United Nations. In informing the other Commonwealths of its views, the Australian Government expressed its hope that joint representation could be made to the United States with the object of postponing the date of the United States Conference. The United Kingdom authorities considered, however, that joint representations would strengthen any fears held by the United States Government that a Commonwealth Bloc approach was being taken to the Japanese Settlement, and the Australian suggestion was not implemented. The New Zealand reply to the United States was to the effect that New Zealand was favourably disposed to the convening of a Peace Conference with membership similar of the F.E.C. and which could make its decisions without the impediment of the veto. As was the case with Australia, New Zealand informed the United States that the suggested timing of the conference was inconvenient. China notified the United States of its approval of the holding of the conference and of the August 19th date. The Chinese Government concurred in the suggestion that a two-thirds rule should apply in voting at the conference, but proposed that the two-thirds should always include a majority of the Big Four present and voting. This would, in effect, give China the controlling vote on matters in which the Soviet Union was in disagreement with the United Kingdom