

"This Government further suggests a tentative date of August 19, 1947 for convening an initial Peace Conference. In view of the various commitments of the Foreign Ministers of the Governments concerned, it does not appear practicable to the Government of the United States to propose that such a conference be on the Foreign Minister level so that it is envisaged that it would initially be composed of Deputies and experts. The Government of the United States should be pleased to be host for such a conference in or near Washington or at San Francisco as preferred by other interested powers.

"With regard to voting procedure to be adopted at such a conference, this Government is disposed to favour decision by a simple two-thirds majority.

"....."

In his supplementary remarks, General Hilldring made it clear that the United States wished to have full consultation with all eleven Countries with regard to the suggested Conference, with the intention of settling all procedural questions before it convened. He elaborated the United States views on procedure and indicated that as a first step the Deputies and experts would proceed to work out a draft treaty, and that as a second step the Foreign Ministers would give this draft their approval. Finally, a formal peace conference could be called of all States at war with Japan.

53. With respect to the proposal that States other than the eleven Nations to be represented at the conference should be given an opportunity to express their views while the treaty was being drafted, General Hilldring stated that while no definite conclusion had been reached it was not anticipated that these other Powers would be associated until the draft had reached a relatively advanced stage.

54. Of immediate interest to Canada and the other Commonwealth Governments, was the suggested date for the initial conference of August 19th which conflicted with arrangements already made to attend the Canberra Conference on August 26th. It is possible to interpret this move by the United States as an indication of their concern to forestall development of a Commonwealth Bloc for purposes of the Japanese settlement. State Department officials indicated, however, that proposals for the conference had been developed over a considerable time and that the convening of the Canberra Conference had not been allowed to interfere with agreed plans. In this connection it should be noted that the United States authorities were informed, prior to General Hilldring's announcement, of the Canadian view that the Canberra Conference would have the sole purpose of an exchange of views with other members of the Commonwealth, and that there was no intention as far as Canada was concerned of producing at Canberra an agreed Commonwealth policy, much less a Commonwealth draft of the Japanese Peace Treaty.