

KOREA:

But the threat to peace is a global threat, as the world learned on June 25, 1950, when the forces of aggression were unleashed in Korea. This was the major challenge to the United Nations, and the response was swift. Because of the happy accident that the Soviet Delegate was not present in the Security Council to exercise the veto power, a decision was made to take collective action against aggression in Korea. This action was made possible by the agreement of an overwhelming majority of the United Nations members to support the decision to resist aggression, and the determination of sixteen of these nations, under the leadership of the United States, to back up their decision with armed forces.

The United Nations met its responsibility promptly and squarely when the North Korean aggression occurred. In determining to take collective action against the aggressor, the nations concerned accepted the fact that aggression in one part of the world constitutes a threat to every other part. Failure to face up to this issue would have made a mockery of the whole collective-security principle and would have been an open invitation to international lawlessness.

Canada's role in Korea has been an honourable one. Our country contributed to the Unified Command the third largest number of armed forces from outside. We helped out with transport planes and destroyers, and our cash contribution to Korean relief and rehabilitation ranked third among the member nations. In every stage of the difficult negotiations that finally led to an armistice, our role has been that of a country with a responsible recognition of the duties of United Nations membership. The significance of the Korean action was described in the Canadian statement in the Political Committee of the General Assembly at the historic special meeting of the United Nations called last August:

"The United Nations forces have done all they were ever asked to do by force of arms. It has been the first major application of the principle of collective security by an international organization, and it has been successful. We are thereby marking certainly one of the greatest achievements in human history. Had the United Nations failed to act, or had it acted and failed, not only would a brave and ancient people have lost their freedom, but the United Nations itself would, I fear, already have become the dead husk of another great idea unrealized, not for lack of resolutions but of resolution." (1)

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Statement by the Hon. Paul Martin, Acting Chairman of the Canadian Delegation, to the resumed Seventh Session of the U.N. General Assembly made in the Political Committee on August 19, 1953. External Affairs Monthly Bulletin--September, 1953, p.282.