

46. Again with regard to the situation in Indonesia, the Australian representative in London protested the United Kingdom decision to propose to the United States a joint offer of good offices in Indonesia. It would appear from the tenor of Mr. Beasley's remarks on this occasion the Australian Government hold the view that the United Kingdom should not only inform and discuss with Australia, but also have the latter's prior consent, before taking any important step in a matter in which Australia is either directly or even indirectly concerned. Canada does not consider it incumbent on the United Kingdom to formally obtain Commonwealth consent before a determining United Kingdom policy. In the Canadian view each of the Commonwealth Governments must remain free to conduct its own external affairs. No objection is taken to informal consultation between Commonwealth members but the policy of enforced consultation and "prior consent" is seen as endangering Canadian independence of action and being unsound in principle for the best interests of the Commonwealth. While there are certain cases in which we feel that the United Kingdom should consult with us before taking positive action, it is considered that it is not possible or desirable to define the principle of consultation except on an ad hoc basis.

47. There are two possible developments in the procedure for a settlement with Japan which may give Dr. Evatt an opportunity to propose the "one voice" principle for acceptance by other members of the Commonwealth.

48. If the United States proposals for an eleven nation conference to prepare the peace settlement under a 2/3ds majority voting rule are implemented, the five commonwealth votes taken as a bloc would be decisive in the conference. This eventuality has no doubt been foreseen by Dr. Evatt and he may endeavour at the Canberra conference to secure advance support of other Commonwealth governments for the Australian view on aspects of the settlement which he considers of particular importance for Australia. In particular he may try to obtain agreement from other Commonwealth Governments, especially Great Britain, that prior Australian consent should be obtained before advancing substantive proposals at the eleven-nation conference suggested by the United States for the preparation of the Japanese settlement.

49. If on the other hand, because of Soviet insistence, and in order to secure Russian participation in the treaty preparation, it is decided by the United States and other governments concerned to proceed by some procedure which would give special status to the Great Powers, it is highly probable that Dr. Evatt will seek to obtain similar status for Australia. Failing agreement on Australian participation at the Big Four level it would not be surprising if Australia endeavours to take the place of Great Britain in the Big Four as the Commonwealth representative on grounds of the inability of the United Kingdom to continue any heavy military responsibility in the occupation of Japan. Something along this line may be discussed at Canberra and the Australian foreign minister may advocate the Australian right to speak for the Commonwealth if participation on an equal basis with the larger powers is not achieved. In this connection Dr. Evatt will no doubt refer to the precedent of the appointment of an Australian to represent four members of the British Commonwealth on the Allied Council for Japan of