



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 50/34

Statement by Mr. L.B. Pearson, Secretary of State for External Affairs and Chairman of the Canadian Delegation to the United Nations General Assembly, made in the Plenary Session on September 27, 1950.

During its brief history, the United Nations has existed under a shadow of fear, the fear that the problems arising out of one great war would resolve themselves, not in a peace, but in a new war. As the Fifth Session of the Assembly opens, this danger has been brought nearer to us by the reality of warfare in Korea. Indeed, as we debate the issues of peace and war in this Assembly, men are fighting and dying in Korea for the cause of the United Nations. We pay tribute to their gallantry and to their devotion.

This war in Korea is but the continuation by armed and open aggression of the policies which communist imperialism has been pursuing by other means in other states. It is part of the theory of communism that the disruptions and dislocations of a post-war period give to a communist minority its best chance to seize power by force, and maintain it by the terror and repression of the police state. Systematically the forces of communist imperialism, in these last years, have been trying out these theories in the four corners of the world. In countries where they have been able to depend upon the direct support of the Soviet army, they have been successful. Only one country in which Soviet forces were actually present in the post-war period has been able to throw off the control of the Kremlin, and even that country now feels itself to be gravely menaced. Whether or not continental China will be brought into the orbit of this international conspiracy remains to be seen. We may hope, however, that the Chinese people, with their own age-old civilization, with their traditional wisdom and patience, will not walk into the trap. The consciousness of their own great undeveloped resources and the strength of their national feeling will we hope make them justly apprehensive of being exploited by Soviet imperialism.

In Korea, where the Soviet army had been present in force and where a communist minority was established in power in part of the country, conditions seemed admirably suited for communist seizure of the whole country. This time, however, the attempt was more open and violent than usual, and this time it met with collective United Nations resistance. This is what makes the aggression in Korea stand out. Despite all propaganda camouflage, the fact that North Koreans invaded the Republic of Korea was clear. This was not a coup d'état engineered by a minority as in Czechoslovakia, nor a regime

imposed by an occupying force as in Roumania. This was armed invasion. As such, it came as a shock to peace-loving nations. But it also acted as a stimulus to them. A swift and sudden assault on a peaceful nation had an obvious meaning for us all. Hence the speed and determination with which many of the free democracies, my own country included, have applied themselves to the task of jointly building up our defences against aggression. The countries which have felt obliged to take these steps in self defence and to preserve the peace will not be deflected from their purpose by any specious manoeuvres designed to weaken and divide them, or to put them once again off guard.

The effect of the North Korean aggression within the United Nations itself has been to give overwhelming support to the organization in this crisis of its existence. It has, however, demonstrated that, with very few exceptions, the members were not in a position to make that support immediately effective. They were caught by surprise and unprepared to meet at once the demands of the situation. We have, I hope, learned the lesson of this experience. We have also learned, however, that the United Nations can act in response to a challenge; that it is no longer remote from reality, a mere international talking-shop. A new impetus has been given to our world organization and a new atmosphere is generated in this Assembly of which we are all, I think, conscious.

Events - and United States and British soldiers - are rapidly demonstrating in Korea that aggression does not pay. It will soon be necessary for the United Nations to show with equal vigour and resourcefulness that it can deal with the problems of the post-aggression period in Korea. The political and economic life of that country must be established on a basis which will enable the Korean people to fulfil the destiny that has been promised them. As hostilities draw to a close in Korea, and the Assembly takes up its new responsibilities there, it seems to our delegation that certain specific principles should govern its decisions and that we should embody these principles at once in an Assembly resolution.

In the first place, the general objective as we see it of the United Nations in Korea should be to fulfil now the purposes which have repeatedly been stated at previous Assemblies - a united Korea, a free Korea, a Korea which the Korean people themselves govern without interference from outside. This should be achieved by United Nations action and not through decisions reached by certain of its members.

Secondly, the United Nations must assist the people of Korea to establish peace and order throughout their territory as the firm foundation for democratic institutions and free self-government. It is our hope that the people of Northern Korea, having been forced into a perilous and disastrous venture by their communist rulers, will now themselves repudiate these rulers and co-operate with the United Nations in bringing to Korea the peace and unity which its people desire. This is the time for the aggressors to cease fire, to admit defeat. If they do, it may not be necessary for United Nations forces in Korean territory to advance far beyond their present positions. The United Nations must, however, leave its forces free to

do whatever is practicable to make certain that the communist aggressors of North Korea are not permitted to re-establish some new base in the peninsula from which they could sally forth again upon a peaceful people.

Third, the Korean people - once peace has been restored - must be assured that no nation will exploit the present situation in Korea for its own particular advantage. This of course means a Korea without foreign bases and free of foreign military domination; it means a Korea which will be responsible for its own defence within the framework of our collective security system. Above all, it means a Korea which will not be divided and disturbed by subversive communist elements directed from outside Korea.

The fourth principle should be that nothing shall be done in the establishment of a united, free Korea which carries any menace to Korea's neighbours. There have been comments in the press and elsewhere about the role which the Korean peninsula has played in invasions of the Asiatic mainland. Nothing must be done in Korea, as indeed nothing will be done, which holds the least suggestion that any member of the United Nations has any purpose whatever in Korea; other than to establish that country under the full sovereignty of its own people. Korea does not menace any of its neighbours, though in recent years it has had reason to fear the menace of at least one of those neighbours.

My fifth principle is that the free governments of Asia should take a major share of the responsibility for advising the Korean people upon methods of government which they should adopt and procedures which they should follow in establishing these methods of government. The countries of Asia and of the Western Pacific have made an outstanding contribution to the work of the United Nations. I think we should now make sure that we gain full advantage of the judgment of these states in charting a course for the future in Korea in the difficult days ahead.

Meanwhile, the destruction of the homes of the Korean people and the inevitable casualties to the civilian population which occur when hand to hand fighting is going on in a city, as it is in Seoul, are bringing terrible hardships upon that unhappy country. At this very time, the Soviet Delegation has the effrontery to produce in the Security Council resolutions condemning the United States Government for destruction and loss of life in Korea, when the Soviet Delegation must be well aware that, at a nod from the Kremlin, the North Korean aggressors would cease fighting and that the bloodshed and suffering would be brought to an end. If the Soviet Government were really concerned about the sufferings of the Korean people, they have all along had it in their power, as they have at this moment, to bring these sufferings to an end, which were caused in the first place by this communist adventure in aggression.

Those who fomented the Korean aggression must know now - if they did not know before - that their actions are running counter to the deepest and strongest trends of the age in which we are living. Today the peoples of the world, above all things, long for peace and security. I know that this is true of the populations of our free

democracies and I have little doubt that it is true also of the peoples of the Soviet Union and its associated states. The Soviet rulers are well aware of this sentiment. It is one of the ironic tragedies of the present world situation that the Soviet Government, while pursuing policies of aggression, should be advertising itself as the champion of peace. It has been said that hypocrisy is the tribute of vice to virtue. The present Soviet sponsored peace propaganda is a tribute to the universal desire for peace which they would exploit for their own purposes. This is a dangerous course, dangerous even to those who hope to profit by it. For people, even the Russian people deprived as they are of access to the truth about political events, cannot be deceived forever. The game of pinning the name of aggressor on the victims of aggression cannot continue indefinitely and the disillusionment of people who, in their political simplicity, are signing the so-called Stockholm Peace Appeal, will, in the end, act as a boomerang against communist imperialism itself. For sooner or later it will become clear to all, as it is clear to most of us now, what kind of peace the Cominform has in mind. It is the peace that prevails in a state dominated by one party, one political faith, one group of self-perpetuating rulers, one political prophet; the peace of the policeman and the gaol.

We want peace but not that kind of peace. Nor will we be led by any number of plausible answers to manufactured questions, or by superficially impressive resolutions about the prevention of war, reduction of armaments, the banning of weapons, to put ourselves in a position again where this kind of dead peace can be imposed on us by dictators. It is for genuine peace, based on the absence of fear and the presence of friendship and co-operation that we long. Furthermore, we are anxious not only to talk about peace and to pass resolutions about it but to do something about it. It seems to us that the first practical step which we can take for peace is to put the security factor into the disarmament equation. We can disarm if - and only if - we are sure that in doing so we are not exposing our people to dangers from others who say they are disarming but are not doing so. If we are going to disarm ourselves, we must know - by seeing for ourselves and not merely by being told - that other people are disarming as well. We have in fact, the right of continuous reassurance that the olive branch does not conceal 175 divisions. It is with these considerations in mind that we are bound to examine the resolution which the Soviet Government has introduced into this Assembly on the subject of peace and disarmament. We should approach it with an open mind and a constructive spirit. This, I confess, would be easier if we had not had a painfully disillusioning experience with a whole series of Soviet resolutions in the past, couched in the most pacific terms, purporting to be contributions to the cause of peace which, on closer examination, have proven to be something else indeed. Nevertheless, the issues of the present time are too grave and the dangers are too acute for us to brush aside any proposal put forward in the name of peace. So we must apply to the Soviet proposal some touchstone which will enable us to see whether this is merely an echo of past performances or whether, within it, is to be found some firm ground for a step forward. For if we see the promise of even a short step in the direction of peace, we must not fail to take it.

The Soviet resolution covers a lot of ground, a good deal of which we have been over before in previous Assemblies. It speaks of the desirability of concluding a five-power peace pact, of reducing the present armed forces of these five great powers by one-third during 1950, that is during the next three months - a transparently insincere and meaningless proposal. The resolution also urges the Assembly to declare itself "in favour of the unconditional prohibition of atomic weapons and the establishment of strict international control for the unconditional implementation of this prohibition".

My delegation is first of all interested in establishing what precisely is meant by these far-flung proposals, and we think that there is one very simple and direct test of the sincerity of those who have made them. There is one clear question which, if it could be answered by the Soviet Delegate, would go far to resolve our doubts. What does he mean when he says he is in favour of strict international control of atomic energy, or, indeed, of armaments generally? He used that phrase - strict international control - several times in the course of his very interesting statement to the General Assembly in introducing the resolution. He spoke at some length to the last session of the Assembly on the same subject. The Canadian delegation have studied his remarks with the care which they deserve, no doubt other delegations also, but we are quite unable to determine whether the Soviet view of international control differs in the slightest degree from what has been previously put forward by the Soviet representative, and which have been shown to be quite inadequate and unsatisfactory. Therefore, before the Soviet resolution on disarmament comes to a vote at this Assembly, we have the right to ask for a clarification of the Soviet concept of international inspection and control as applied to the problem of atomic energy - and indeed to disarmament measures generally.

One method of securing such clarification, a very simple method would be to introduce an amendment to the Soviet resolution by including the following words at the appropriate place:

"By 'strict international control' is understood a system in which the inspection rights of the international control authority would include:

- (a) the right of free access at all times to every atomic energy installation or plant of any kind whatever; and
- (b) the right to search for undeclared atomic energy facilities wherever there can be reasonable grounds for believing, in the opinion of the international control authority, that they may exist."

Now an amendment to the Soviet resolution, I suggest would act as the touchstone of its sincerity. If the Soviet delegation indicate by the readiness to accept it, that atomic energy and disarmament negotiations might profitably be resumed then I think that we should try once again to negotiate an agreement in this field that would be effective and would give us something more on which to base our common security than empty phrases or hypocritical gestures.

If, however, the Soviet delegation refuses to accept some such definition of international control, then their resolution on peace and disarmament will be exposed for what it would be - a propaganda manoeuvre designed for purposes far removed from ensuring peace and security.

Another important step which we can take at this Assembly has already been suggested by the United States Delegation in their valuable proposal for the strengthening of the Assembly. It has always been the view of our delegation that the Assembly should be a second line of defence for the security of members of the United Nations when the Security Council is able to act. Fortunately, when the crisis came in Korea, the Security Council was able to act - with speed and force. This decisiveness, made possible because of the fortuitous and temporary absence of the Soviet member, forced the Soviet Government into a hasty reconsideration of its determination never to sit in on the Security Council with any Chinese representative except the one which it had chosen. On the first of August, there was an end to dramatic walk-outs, and in their place we had a walk-back which was equally dramatic because it showed how the United Nations had come to be regarded as a powerful instrument for peace, even by those who disliked the peace that it was enforcing. But now the spectre of the irresponsible and unprincipled use of the veto hangs over us once more - together with all the other devices for delay and frustration which have been used by communists all over the world to disrupt the activities of democratic bodies. In these circumstances the Canadian delegation welcomes the United States proposals which will make it possible, in appropriate circumstances, to fall back upon the General Assembly as an instrument to express the determination of free people to resist aggression.

We are particularly interested in that part of the United States proposal which would call upon member states to hold forces in readiness for the use of the United Nations. Certainly the need for such measures was demonstrated by the emergency in Korea. Our own experience is a case in point. As early as 1946, the Canadian Delegate at the United Nations said that we were prepared to establish our Article 43 forces immediately, and that we would like the United Nations to tell us what military preparations we should make to fulfil our obligations under the Charter. The Military Staff Committee, however, was never permitted to function because of the obstructive tactics of the Soviet representative, and as a result there was never any plan into which we could fit our collective security plans. Consequently, when the call came for help in Korea, my country - and other countries - did not have at hand land forces, earmarked and trained for United Nations use, which could be quickly thrown into that area. Canada was able, however, to send without delay naval and air help and we then set about determining how best we could contribute to United Nations forces on the ground. We felt that this was exactly the kind of situation which members of the United Nations were supposed to prepare for under Article 43. So we decided, therefore, that we would take this occasion to put ourselves in readiness not only to meet the appeal in Korea but to fulfil similar commitments under the Charter in the future. For that purpose we have recruited in Canada a special force: a brigade group, trained and equipped by the Canadian Government

for use on occasions when a United Nations appeal has been made to which Canada must respond.

Our interests, clearly, in the United States proposal for establishing a United Nations force of national components is an obvious and immediate one. We accept that idea and hope that it can be worked out in practice. But if this is to be done effectively, then every loyal member of the United Nations must make its appropriate contribution to this new and great effort to put force behind peace and security.

The communist aggression in Korea was a blow struck at the very heart of the United Nations. That blow has been warded off by the heroic actions of the South Koreans, U.S. and British forces and the aggressor has been met on his own ground and on his own terms. Even from evil there may sometimes come good, and the good that has come out of this aggression is the new vitality which has been given to the United Nations. Because of the way in which the challenge has been met, we may now begin to walk the road toward collective security, a road upon which we first set out foot in 1945, a road upon which we may now for the first time advance with vigour and with confidence; the only road which can lead to peace.
