

No. 53/37 CHARGES OF USE BY UNITED NATIONS FORCES OF
BACTERIOLOGICAL WARFARE

Text of statement delivered on October 28, 1953 by the Acting Chairman of the Canadian Delegation, in the First Committee of the eighth session of the United Nations Mr. Alcide Coté, M.P., General Assembly. (Agenda item 24)

Now that an armistice has brought the fighting in Korea to an end, we hope for good, we might perhaps have passed over in silence the final chapter in the bacteriological warfare story. We might, I suppose, have let all the infected fleas, feathers and flies concocted by the imaginations of the Communist psychological warriors return in peace to the limbo of the brains that bore them. After all, even the most tortured minds sometimes benefit from a rest; and there has been every indication in recent weeks and months that the notorious germ warfare charges are being given a rest by their inventors. In these circumstances, to have let sleeping dogs lie would have been the easiest way of disposing of the matter.

With the return home of the United States marines and airmen whose so-called "confessions" were presented to this Assembly by the Soviet delegation last spring, however, a new side of the picture emerges. The case histories presented to us by Dr. Mayo, and their implications, are indeed sobering. They should be faced. For the story these men have to tell of what they endured at the hands of the Communists who were determined to secure their "confessions" at any price reveals some of the finer points in the most up-to-date techniques of brain washing. It is a story that makes the previous practitioners of this ugly trade look like crude amateurs.

The communist technique involves a minimum of physical violence. Playing on the subtler mechanisms of man's mind, their brain laundry has developed a scientifically advanced process of dry cleaning. It is a process of which anyone who puts the political objectives of an all-powerful and all-embracing State first, and the values of the individual human nowhere might well be proud.

The fact is that if there were the slightest substance to the Communist allegations that bacteriological warfare had in any form at any time been used in the Korean War, the Communists would have welcomed an impartial investigation of the facts. That is what they have been offered in varying forms on four separate occasions. The Assembly's offer was, as we all know, to send an impartial commission composed of competent scientists from countries not involved in the Korean fighting. In their investigation of the facts, these men would have been bound only by their professional consciences as scientists, and would not have been subject to any form of reprisal if their conclusions were embarrassing to the governments or political parties to which they belonged. We cannot

say the same of the so-called scientific commissions which were engineered by the Communists to prove their case.

The distinguished representative of the Soviet Union said here on Monday that the impartial commission, proposed by the Assembly to investigate the charges, was set up on "an improper basis" and could only have presented conclusions "dictated by the United States." Mr. Malik's researches are usually thorough, but it seems to me he must have forgotten that the Assembly proposed that the countries to be represented on the commission would be Brazil, Egypt, Pakistan, Sweden, and Uruguay. If he has not forgotten, as the distinguished representative of Brazil pointed out to him this morning, his references to these independent states provide us with one more indication of the distorted vision which Soviet eyes seem to have of the outside world.

If the impartiality and objectivity of the proposed commission is conceded, then the only other argument left for the refusal of the Communists to admit them, is the equally transparent excuse that the Chinese Communists and North Koreans were not present at our proceedings when we decided that an attempt should be made to have an impartial investigation of the facts. This argument was used by the distinguished representative of the Soviet Union on Monday and by the distinguished representative of Czechoslovakia this morning. It pre-supposes that we, in this Committee, were going to conduct our own investigations of the facts, hear evidence on both sides, and sit in judgment on this matter. But nothing of the kind was ever proposed. No one can pretend that the members of this Committee, whatever our other merits, would be competent to set ourselves up as such a court of inquiry. No, our proposal was to have that inquiry conducted, not in New York, but on the spot, where presumably, if anywhere, there was evidence to back up the charges; and not by political representatives who might have been partial to one side or the other, but by scientists from neutral countries. The fact that such an inquiry was turned down flat is, to my mind, conclusive evidence that there was never any substance behind these charges whatsoever. As the leader of my delegation, Mr. Pearson, said in the Canadian House of Commons on May 12, 1952, "the charges are in fact so false, so fantastic, that it would normally be unwise to dignify them by official denials."

The United States delegation has, if I may say so, acted with great restraint in not demanding an outright condemnation of those who, having repeatedly made false charges and broadcast them from the roof-tops for many months, refuse any and every attempt to secure an impartial investigation of the facts. It would, I suppose, have been too much to hope that the Soviet delegation would, for its part, have refrained from submitting a resolution. But the temptation to try to distract the Committee's attention to a subject less embarrassing to the Soviet Union was too great. We therefore have before us a resolution asking all governments that have not already acceded to or ratified the Geneva Protocol to do so.

This quite gratuitous piece of advice is proposed some twenty-eight years after the event. It comes before this Committee when we are considering certain specific charges, and not the general question

of prohibiting bacteriological weapons. That question is before the United Nations in the Disarmament Commission. Canada acceded to and ratified the Geneva Protocol, which we believe was and is of value, but we do not wish to see it used as a political football in an attempt to confuse the clear issue before us. These are, I think, sufficient reasons why this red herring should be referred to the proper place — the Disarmament Commission.

Finally may I express the hope in which I am sure we can all join, that we have now heard the last of this germ warfare business and, drawing such conclusions as we must, move on without undue delay to more congenial and fruitful items on our agenda.

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NOTE: On October 31, 1953 the First Committee, by a vote of 47 in favor (including Canada), none against, and 13 abstentions, approved the following resolution sponsored by the United Kingdom, Colombia, France, New Zealand and Canada:

"The General Assembly

Refers to the Disarmament Commission the draft resolution of the U.S.S.R. contained in Document A/C.1/L.67 for such consideration as deemed appropriate under its plan of work and pursuant to the terms of reference of that Commission as set forth in the General Assembly resolutions 502 (VI) of 11 January 1952 and 704 (VII) of 8 April 1953.

Decides also to transmit to the Disarmament Commission for its information the records of the First Committee in which this item was discussed."



of prohibiting bacteriological weapons. That question is before the United Nations in the Disarmament Commission. Canada acceded to and ratified the Geneva Protocol, which we believe was and is of value, but we do not wish to see it used as a political football in an attempt to confuse the great issue before us. These are, I think, sufficient reasons why this red herring should be referred to the appropriate — the Disarmament Commission.

Finally may I express the hope in which I am sure we can all join, that we have now heard the last of this gentleman's business and, drawing such conclusions as we must move on without undue delay to more congenial and profitable items on our agenda.

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