

Addendum for  
External Affairs  
Supplementary Paper No. 54/29/UN9/6

(Please attach to original)

COLLECTIVE MEASURES

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Text of a statement delivered on October 29, 1954, by Mr. David M. Johnson, Canadian Representative in the First Committee of the ninth session of the United Nations General Assembly, New York, on agenda item 19 - Methods which might be used to maintain and strengthen international peace and security in accordance with the Purposes and Principles of the Charter: Report of the Collective Measures Committee.

Note: The text of the resolution adopted by the Committee and the results of the voting are included at the end of the statement.

We are now, in point of time, half way through the present session of the General Assembly. Yet, as you have been reminding us, Mr. Chairman, we are far behind in our work, having completed only two items on the First Committee's agenda. I do not think any of us begrudge the time we gave to the full discussion of the disarmament question. At the same time, we must all recognize that where we can expedite our business, we should make every effort to do so.

Without belittling the importance of the present item on the report of the Collective Measures Committee, I do agree with those who have preceded me that this is one item which can reasonably be disposed of this year quickly and, I would sincerely hope, without controversy. For the fact is that nothing is being proposed at this session which has not been amply discussed and approved by the great majority at previous sessions. Indeed, a number of the points which had given rise to debate at past sessions have not been included either in the resolution of the 12 Powers or in the report of the Collective Measures Committee on which that resolution is based.

In keeping with what I have said, Mr. Chairman, I shall endeavour to save the Committee's time and my intervention will be brief.

It is true, as others have pointed out, that this year's resolution which the Canadian Delegation has been happy to co-sponsor does ask the Assembly to "note with approval" the third report of the Collective Measures Committee, whereas, in the past, Assembly resolutions (No. 703 of the Seventh Session for example) have simply taken note of the current report of the Collective Measures Committee. On the face of it, it seems as if the sponsors were asking the Assembly to go further this year than they have in the past.

However, if this year's report of the Collective Measures Committee is compared with the second and third reports, it will, I think, be obvious at once that this year's report is nothing more than a convenient summary of the highlights - and I would say in general the least controversial highlights - of previous Committee reports and Assembly resolutions on this subject. These previous reports and resolutions number a great many pages comprising literally hundreds of complex technical suggestions concerning procedures and lines of action which might be followed in case of emergency, together with a great many recommendations concerning collective measures of a political, economic, financial and military nature. Two years ago, when the Assembly noted this substantial compilation of material, it recommended to member states that they continue and intensify their efforts in the field of United Nations collective measures. At the same time the Assembly directed the Collective Measures Committee to pursue such studies as it may deem desirable to strengthen the capability of the United Nations to maintain peace, taking into account the various Assembly resolutions since the Uniting for Peace resolution of 1950. At the same time the Assembly directed the Collective Measures Committee to report to the Security Council and the General Assembly not later than the ninth session.

In the intervening two years the Collective Measures Committee has met only three times, in August of this year, to prepare and approve its present report. As the seventh session of the Assembly recognized when it directed the Collective Measures Committee to report to the Ninth rather than the Eighth Session, most of the exploratory and preparatory work in this field had been done by the end of 1952. Since then the danger has been that this earlier and thorough work might be lost sight of and forgotten. As I see it, our present object is to lift from the mass of United Nations material on this subject the essential features of United Nations collective measures which we should all keep before us. This was done by the Collective Measures Committee this summer and the purpose of our resolution is to seek Assembly approval for this convenient summary of United Nations doctrine on the subject.

It is, I think, characteristic of the highly tentative and preliminary stage of international co-operation which has so far been reached that the principles for which we seek your approval are expressed in terms that cannot really be said to enlarge the commitments of any of our governments beyond those we undertook, directly or indirectly, when we signed the Charter of the United Nations. Every conceivable allowance has been made to leave members freedom of choice in the application of these principles. The principles are, as the Committee's third report says, intended merely to serve as a guide to the United Nations in undertaking collective measures. In applying these principles in any concrete situation, each state is asked, in the wording of the first principle recommended by the Committee, to make contributions "in accordance with its constitutional processes and to the extent to which in its own judgment its capacity and resources

permit, having regard to the requirements of individual and collective self-defence and internal security and to the total burden and sacrifice assumed by it in support of the Charter."

None of us would contend that it is possible in the present state of the world to undertake, on a universal basis, extensive commitments against hypothetical contingencies. On a regional basis some of us have gone a good deal further, again in accordance with the principles of the Charter, and specifically under Articles 51 and 52. As the third report of the Collective Measures Committee recognizes, one of the most important questions which we must face is the inter-relationship between our regional agreements and arrangements and our universal objectives in keeping the peace and maintaining ourselves in readiness to resist aggression from whatever quarter. There is, I believe, a genuinely reciprocal and mutually sustaining relationship between arrangements for regional or collective self-defence and United Nations collective security. Until we reach a stage when it may be possible to implement all the procedures on which the Founding Fathers at San Francisco expected the collective security of members of the United Nations to be based, this mutual support between the regional and the universal systems will have to continue.

That this is only a second best we would freely admit; but that it is in any way contrary to Charter principles or objectives we categorically deny. For whatever misrepresentations of Western motives, the record is, I think, sufficiently clear that the regional arrangements with which my Government has been associated have been, are, and will be purely defensive, directed against no country or group of countries but solely against aggression itself. Our object in building up the collective strength we consider essential for our survival has been, is, and will be to deter and to prevent war in accordance with both the letter and the spirit of the Charter.

To keep alive the principles of United Nations collective security and to pursue such further studies as the Committee may deem appropriate in accordance with the past directives of the Assembly, my Delegation believes the Collective Measures Committee should be continued. In continuing the Committee on this basis, the Assembly would, so to speak, be paying its fire insurance. A fire insurance policy is a good thing to have; for none of us these days can, I believe, pretend that we live in a fire-proof house. The time was, not so many years ago, when many Canadians thought that we lived in a fire-proof house and that we did not need to pay the premium of international co-operation in the field of collective measures. Events of the past fifteen years, however, have convinced most of those who held this view, in Canada and elsewhere, that they were wrong - that the absence of effective collective measures in the thirties led not to peace but to war, and that the achievement of effective collective security now would lead not to war but to peace.

Voting

Results

The following resolution (U.N. Doc. A/C.1/757) co-sponsored by twelve nations (including Canada) was adopted by the First Committee on November 2, 1954, by 50 votes in favour (including Canada) to 5 against with 2 abstentions (India and Indonesia).

Text of Resolution:

The General Assembly;

Having received the third report of the Collective Measures Committee submitted in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 4 of resolution 703 (VII),

Bearing in mind that the reports of the Collective Measures Committee represent a useful examination of ways and means of strengthening the collective security system of the United Nations,

1. Notes with approval the third report of the Collective Measures Committee, and in particular the principles of collective security contained in that report;

2. Directs the Collective Measures Committee to remain in a position to pursue such further studies as it may deem desirable, taking into account the "Uniting for Peace" resolution (377 A (V)), resolution 503 (VI), resolution 703 (VII), and the present resolution;

3. Requests the Collective Measures Committee to report to the Security Council and to the General Assembly as appropriate.

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