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No. 54/28 CANADIAN STATEMENT AT GENEVA CONFERENCE

Statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L.B. Pearson, made at Geneva on May 4, 1954, at the conference on Korea and Indo-China.

If I venture to take part in this debate, it is because I do not wish my silence to be interpreted as indicating any weakening or slackening of the strong support that my country has steadily given to United Nations policy on Korea; or as indicating, even by omission, approval of the distortions in some previous speeches on Korean and Asian developments; or indifference to the false charges that have been levelled, particularly at the United States of America, in respect of these developments.

Canada is represented at this Korean Peace Conference because she is a member of the United Nations and, as such, has participated, on land, water and in the air, in United Nations operations against aggression in Korea. Similarly, our responsibilities here derive solely from the decisions taken by the United Nations on the Korean question.

These decisions were concerned with, first, the determination of the fact of aggression in Korea; second, the repulse of this aggression, something that has been accomplished by the United Nations forces under the resolute and unselfish leadership of the United States, and by the heavy and gallant sacrifices of the Korean people themselves; and, third, with the establishment, under the auspices of the United Nations, of a free, united and democratic Korea, rising from the tragedy and devastation of that unhappy land.

Every one of these United Nations decisions was accepted by the vast majority of the members of that organization, including - we should not forget this - many who have often declared their intention of remaining outside what has been called the "cold war", and whose foreign policies could not be remotely considered as aimed against the communist powers.

The Canadian Government has supported and remains bound by these United Nations decisions. Therefore, we cannot support any proposal which denies their validity, or which would equate at this conference the moral and political status of the United Nations in respect of the Korean question, with those governments which have broken the United

Nations Charter by taking aggressive military action against the Republic of Korea.

The leader of the Soviet delegation in his one-sided and unconvincing analysis of recent Asian history stated that the Western countries, and the United States in particular, were "incapable of understanding the historic changes that have taken place in the countries of Asia". He added that, instead of trying to understand these changes, we were prepared to find "communist intrigues" and "agents of the Kremlin" everywhere.

Leaving aside the fact that fear of "communist intrigues" and of "agents of the Kremlin" is, for many free states, something that has grown out of hard and unhappy experience, Mr. Molotov is completely wrong in his charge that we do not recognize the significance of what has taken place in Asia in recent years, in the march of the peoples of that great continent to national freedom and greater human welfare. On the contrary, we do understand and fully accept the significance of these developments, and the fact that this march cannot and should not be reversed.

Mr. Molotov also said in his speech, "We cannot conceal our warm sympathy with the movements of the peoples, including the peoples of Asia, for national freedom". We can all echo that expression of sympathy while insisting, at the same time, that this freedom should be more real than that, to mention a few examples, of Lithuania or Bulgaria or the Mongolian People's Republic; or, indeed, of those members of the United Nations who belong to a bloc so tightly controlled that no member in all the years of its existence has ever publicly disagreed with or voted against a proposal of the leader of that bloc.

We, therefore, hope that all the Asian peoples in their forward march will secure for themselves, as India, Pakistan and Ceylon, for instance, have already done, a better kind of national freedom than that which is a mere facade to conceal imperialist and aggressive domination by any power, whether Asian or European.

The right to be free does not include the obligation to be communist; and "Asia for the Asians" is not the same as - indeed is the opposite of - "Asia for the Cominform". It would be no contribution either to Asian peace or prosperity, independence or dignity, if the Japanese East Asian co-prosperity sphere were exchanged for the Chinese East Asian co-communist empire.

In their speeches to this conference the leaders of the delegations of the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China have attacked the United States for a policy of aggressive imperialism in Asia, which, they allege, stands in the way of freedom for the Asian peoples. As the leader of the delegation of a country which is a neighbour of the most powerful state in the world, I can say with a conviction based on our national experience that the people of the United States are neither aggressive nor imperialist; and it is the people of the United States that freely elect their governments.

If, indeed, the United States did not respect the rights and interests of others, Canada would not today be an

independent power, but merely a satellite of her great neighbour. Her representatives would not be able, as they certainly are able, to speak their own minds and stand up for their own views in conferences of the nations, even if this means, as it has more than once meant, disagreeing with some aspect of the policy of the United States of America.

I hope that the fact that we have on occasion so disagreed (indeed, we differed on the composition of the United Nations Korean Political Conference) will be taken as convincing evidence, not only of our own independence, but also of the respect which the United States has for smaller countries, and of the value which it attaches to co-operation and support based on free will, and not imposed from above. Our own experience of free partnership and co-operation shows the rest of the world how little it has to fear from this so-called "aggressive imperialism" of the United States.

What kind of "aggressive imperialism" was it that brought about, after World War II, the quick and virtually complete dismantling by the United States, and the other Western allies, of the greatest military machine in history in the hope that arms would now no longer be necessary for security?

What kind of "aggressive imperialism" was it that caused the United States, at a time when it alone possessed atomic weapons, to agree that those weapons and the materials from which they were manufactured should be put under the exclusive jurisdiction and control of an international authority?

It is also strange to the point of phantasy that, if the United States was following in Korea "colonial policies of imperialism", as Mr. Chou En-lai described them, she should, in 1949, have withdrawn all of her armed forces from that country. And when United States troops returned to Korea, they did so under United Nations auspices to repel the aggression launched on the ROK from across the 38th parallel.

Ignoring all this, and in support of his charges of imperialist aggression, the head of the Chinese Communist delegation brought up once again the old accusation that "in June 1950 the United States launched its war of intervention against Korea".

This false charge has long since been disproved; not merely on the evidence produced by one government, but by the unanimous verdict of a United Nations Commission which, as has already been pointed out by the Delegate of Australia, was on the spot in Korea, and which included among its seven members the representative of India.

These unfounded accusations and arguments about American aggression against Korea are strikingly similar to those which came out of Moscow and Berlin in September 1939, to prove that peace-loving Nazi Germany had been the innocent victim of aggression by Poland.

No amount of distorted or false or manufactured evidence, however, can alter the truth. This is as true of

June 1950, in Korea, as it was of September 1939, in Berlin. Facts are facts, and they can be left to history to record and confirm.

There was another observation of the leader of the Chinese Communist delegation which invites comment. He stated that all foreign military bases in Asia should be removed and foreign armed forces stationed in Asian countries withdrawn. It would be interesting to know whether he includes in this sweeping generalization the Russians in Port Arthur.

In his second statement, made yesterday, Mr. Chou En-lai brought up the question of prisoners-of-war. It is difficult to understand why, if he is sincere in his desire to press forward with a peaceful solution of the Korean problems.

We all know of the efforts made last winter at Panmunjom, under the skilful and impartial administration of Indian representatives, and the direction of the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission, to give all prisoners the opportunity of making up their own minds whether to return to communism or not. We know also that this question has now been settled - and to reopen it at this Conference would serve no useful purpose.

If the Geneva Convention is cited by the leader of the Chinese delegation, I would remind him of the thousands of South Korean prisoners who disappeared without a trace shortly after capture; of the failure to account for many United Nations prisoners, of the refusal to allow the Red Cross to visit them, or to give information concerning them, of the cruel treatment and torturing interrogations to which many of them were subjected.

Certainly, if this question were raised for discussion at this Conference, there would be much to talk about. But the net result would be merely to delay, and possibly to prevent the work we have come here to accomplish, namely to bring peace and freedom to a united Korea. Any delegation which introduces proposals for such a purpose, or which would have such a result, would bear a heavy responsibility indeed.

While, Mr. Chairman, the questions I have been raising are all important, our primary concern at this conference is a peace settlement for Korea. On that subject the leader of the North Korean delegation has presented a number of proposals which have been endorsed by the delegations of the People's Republic of China and the U.S.S.R. Those proposals have not, however, been adequately defined or explained. My delegation is not alone in its suspicion that they include words or phrases designed to camouflage a scheme which would bring to Korea the reverse of freedom and independence.

The first point concerns the method of selection and operation of the proposed All-Korean Commission. The question on this point which I had intended to ask was answered yesterday by the leader of the delegation from North Korea. He said that his proposed All-Korean Commission must be simple in its organization and function in all matters, procedural and otherwise, by agreement on "both sides". This resolves any ambiguity arising out of the scope of representation of North and South Korea, and over how decisions

should be reached. It is now clear that even if North Korea had only ten representatives in a Commission of 100, they would have a veto over the activities and decisions of that Commission which is to be given such far-reaching responsibilities. We know from long and bitter experience what this means. It means that the All-Korean Commission would operate as the Communist members wished, or not at all. This device of "agreement on both sides", irrespective of the number of members or the number of people represented, would make, if nothing else made, the All-Korean Commission completely unworkable, unfair and unacceptable; and that Commission seems to be a central and vital part of the North Korean proposals.

There are one or two other questions about these proposals that occur to one.

What is meant by "the largest democratic social organizations in South and North Korea"? Does the word "democratic" exclude anti-communist or non-communist organizations?

How would the representatives of these "democratic social organizations" be chosen for the All-Korean Commission, and would there be an equal number from North and South Korea?

Does the phrase "terror groups" mean anti-communist political parties?

Furthermore, if no United Nations or other impartial international supervision of Korean elections to ensure that they will be free is permissible, as Mr. Nam Il states, how can this freedom be guaranteed in districts where bitter animosities and fears and local tyrannies would make impartial Korean supervision quite impossible?

If the Government of the Republic of Korea is really guilty, as charged yesterday by the Foreign Minister of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, of tyrannical and savage repression of freedom in elections, how can he expect us to take seriously his proposal for elections which he says will be free because they will be conducted under arrangements which must be agreed to by the representatives of this government which he so viciously attacks? Does Mr. Nam Il really wish us to believe that representatives of North Korea feel that they can work amicably and constructively on the All-Korean Commission with the representatives of what he contemptuously calls the "Syngman Rhee clique"?

It is clear, Mr. Chairman, that the most superficial examination of the North Korean proposals, with its veto provisions for the All-Korean Commission, with its rejection of free elections, guaranteed by impartial and effective outside international supervision, with the voters in North Korea, for instance, left to the tender mercies of the communist governmental machinery in expressing their views, it is clear that such an examination of these proposals shows that they provide no hope for bringing about a free, united and democratic Korea.

Such hope lies in the acceptance by this conference of the principles laid down by United Nations resolutions for the solution of this problem; principles accepted by the vast

majority of the nations of the world. These provide for a union of all the Korean people, under a government chosen by those people.

This united Korea will need some international guarantee against aggression. It will also require, and be entitled to, economic assistance from other countries to repair the cruel devastation and destruction of war.

Along these lines, a solution can be found for the problem with which we are faced.

The other day Mr. Molotov said, "Here we can listen to different points of view". We must do more than listen to them. We must try to reconcile them, so that the armistice which now exists in Korea can be converted into an enduring and honourable peace.

My delegation pledges its best endeavours to that high purpose.

Before concluding, Mr. Chairman, I would like to refer briefly to the interesting and significant communication which we have received from the conference of Asian Prime Ministers which has just met in Colombo. This represents an important and constructive effort by a group of free Asian states to assist in, and I hope take some responsibility for, the peaceful settlement of Asian problems in their part of the world.

As the communication deals primarily with the question of Indo-China, I do not wish to make any detailed appraisal of the recommendations it contains. I would, however, like to call attention to the importance attached by these Asian leaders to the role of the United Nations in furthering the peaceful purposes of this conference, particularly in respect of Indo-China.

If these peaceful purposes are not achieved by a just, honourable and negotiated settlement, the consequences will be bad, and probably far-reaching. Failure here may well necessitate further collective consideration by those who, as a result of such failure, will feel increasingly threatened, of further ways and means to meet that threat. This, in its turn, may harden and make more dangerous the great and tragic division in the world which now exists.

The reward for success at Geneva will be great in terms of peaceful progress; but the penalty of failure may be even greater in terms of increasing tensions and the risk of a war which would engulf and destroy us all.

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