



CANADA

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 68/5 THE "PUEBLO" INCIDENT - THE CANADIAN POSITION

Statement in the House of Commons on January 29, 1968, by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Paul Martin.

On Friday last a number of questions were raised with regard to the serious situation which has developed as a result of the seizure of the United States ship known as *Pueblo* by North Korea and their continued detention of that United States naval vessel and its crew....

I am sure all Hon. Members will understand that the fullest possible statement cannot be made at the present time because of the important discussions and consultations that are now still under way at the United Nations. The United States authorities have stated categorically that, at the time of its seizure on the evening of January 21, the vessel in question was in international waters. We accept the United States statement with regard to the ship's co-ordinates at that time. The information available to us strongly indicates that this point does lie in international waters and not in territorial waters. North Korea has alleged otherwise but so far has not put forward any evidence in support of its contention.

The ship in question was under United States command and not under the command of the United Nations in Korea. The dispute, therefore, is essentially one between the United States and North Korea. We do not consider it to be a violation of the Korean armistice of 1953. Canada, therefore, on that account is not involved. However, we are concerned with the potential danger to international peace which this incident involves. We have a particular responsibility as a member of the Security Council to make every effort to find a peaceful solution.

On Thursday last, when I was not in the House, questions were asked about our obligations to Korea under the declaration made by the 16 contributing countries in the United Nations force. Canada's present obligations to Korea derive from the 16-nation declaration on Korea issued at Washington on July 27, 1953, immediately following the signing of the Korean armistice agreement. That declaration includes this statement:

"We affirm, in the interests of world peace, that, if there is a renewal of the armed attack, challenging again the principles of the United Nations, we should again be united and prompt to resist."

The United Nations Command remains in Korea with the full sanction and authority of the Security Council. Canada still has a liaison officer attached to the United Nations Command, but the last of the Canadian contingent, which was the third largest national force sent to Korea as a result of the Security Council's appeal in 1950, was withdrawn in 1957, four years after the conclusion of the Korean armistice agreement.

There is not at this time any specific Canadian commitment to supply military forces or equipment. Should the situation in Korea develop adversely (and I sincerely hope it will not -- it is certainly a matter of concern that there has been in recent months a marked increase in the number of incidents investigated by North Korea), it would be for the Canadian Government and Parliament, in the absence of a new United Nations resolution, to decide whether the situation fell within the meaning of the 16-nation declaration of which this country is a signatory. In any event, the matter would have to be referred to the Security Council before any action could be taken by the United Nations.

The Security Council met on January 26 at the request of the United States. The Canadian representative, noting the Council's primary responsibility for international peace and security, supported inscription of an item on the increase of tension in the area of Korea and welcomed the decision of the United States to seek the assistance of the United Nations to help it solve a difficult problem through diplomatic channels. Our Ambassador suggested that one possible way of bringing about a speedy and equitable solution might be an arrangement for an intermediary or intermediaries.

At a second meeting of the Council on Saturday, there was unanimous support for the further Canadian suggestion that progress might best be achieved by private consultations, which would enable members of the Council to consider and develop any ideas or suggestions they might have. This seemed to be the best way of dealing with the immediate problem of the *Pueblo*.

Those consultations, in which all members of the Council have been participating, have been proceeding over the weekend in New York and in a number of national capitals. They proceeded this morning, and they are taking place again at this very moment. A number of ideas have been explored, I think, in a useful and constructive fashion. I am encouraged to date by the sense of responsibility and restraint, as well as by the sense of urgency, which have marked these consultations. I must say that the Government of the United States has displayed moderation and a commendable desire to seek a solution through diplomatic means. I hope all countries which may be involved in the consequences of failure to resolve the controversy will show an equal determination to seek a settlement through peaceful means.

Furthermore, members of the Security Council -- and this includes Canada -- have a special responsibility to seek a reasonable and early solution. I can assure the House that the Government is following this matter very closely, is in continuous contact with the parties concerned, and I hope the end result of these consultations will be the resolving of this matter in a way which will not add to the dangers in the situation.