

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
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CANADIAN POSITION ON KOREA

As expressed by the Canadian Representative to the United Nations General Assembly, Mr. Paul Martin, in the Political Committee, August 19, 1953.

With the end of the fighting in Korea we can at last turn our attention to the more constructive task of peace-making. At this resumed session I think it is now generally agreed that questions of substance are not our present concern and that they should be left to the Political Conference. Our sole responsibility is to see that the Political Conference recommended in the armistice agreement gets off to as good a start as it is humanly possible to achieve. This is our new challenge, as Mr. Lodge has called it. We may indeed have reached a turning point, as Mr. Selwyn Lloyd put it yesterday morning, not only in Korean affairs, but in a much larger sense. It is our duty not only to effect the most practical arrangements for the Conference we can contrive, but at the same time to do our best, in so far as it lies within our power, to create the most favourable atmosphere for these important negotiations.

If we fail, or achieve anything less, our efforts will have been unworthy of those who served and died so that the United Nations might live.

I add here my tribute to the dead of many lands who fought for freedom. We begin our work of peace-making in the shadow of the sorrow and loss of those in Canada and in other lands who have been bereaved. History will also acknowledge the special debt that the Korean people and the United Nations itself owes to the United States, who of all the members of the United Nations led the way in providing the Korean armed forces with prompt and effective assistance and throughout bore, together with the gallant forces of South Korea, the brunt of the fighting. The courage of the United States Government in its initial reaction to the aggression of June 25, 1950, and its patience and persistence throughout the interminable armistice negotiations is renewed proof of the strength and greatness of this country we know as friend and neighbour.

Mr. Chairman, all that the United Nations ever undertook to do by armed force has been accomplished. The aggression has been repelled. But our success remains partial, for we also set ourselves the aim of achieving by peaceful means an independent, unified and democratic Korea. This has not yet been accomplished. But this fact does not mean that the armistice agreement is conditional, this period is not war's respite, but the necessary interval between the signing of the armistice and the commencement of the Political Conference provided for in the armistice agreement.

On the basis of the resolutions before the Committee the principle issue we face at this time is the composition of the Political Conference. My Delegation's approach to this problem is a practical one. I agree with Mr. Schumann, who advised us yesterday not to put too literal an interpretation upon Paragraph 60 of the armistice agreement. That document is a recommendation of the military commanders to their respective sides. When Paragraph 60 was first discussed, Admiral Joy made the following statement for the record concerning the United Nations Command's understanding of this proposal:

"First", he said, "we desire to point out that this recommendation will be made by the Commander-in-Chief, United Nations Command, to the United Nations as well as to the Republic of Korea."

So far as my Delegation is concerned, therefore, our understanding of the position is as stated by Admiral Joy on behalf of the United Nations Command, that our "side" in this conflict is the United Nations itself. The central problem before us is the question of which countries should participate in the Political Conference. The resolution we have co-sponsored makes it clear that we feel that each member of the United Nations who has contributed forces to the Unified Command has earned its right to a place at the Conference table, should its government wish to exercise that right

Our objective is to make sure - and how we do this is not the important point - that we get to the Conference those countries who should be there if the Conference is to have its best chance of achieving successful results in terms of the future peace and security of the area. As a matter of convenience we are proposing to do this by means of three resolutions rather than one.

So far as my Delegation is concerned, we do not so much care whether you call it a round table or a cross table conference or a polygonal conference; the important thing is to get those who must be there around a table. The composition of the Conference is all the more important, in our view, because we now have, it seems to me, a unique opportunity not only for settling an issue which for the past three years has threatened at any moment to touch off a general conflagration, but for reducing, as a direct consequence of any success in Korea, dangerous tensions in Asia and other parts of the world.

It goes without saying, therefore, that my Government thinks the U.S.S.R. should participate in the Political Conference because it would be quite unrealistic to hold a conference such as we have in mind without the Soviet Union which should take her full share of responsibility not only for peace-making but for peace-keeping.

My Government also believes that the great and growing importance of India in Asian affairs and the leading role which she has played in and out of this Assembly in efforts of conciliation, which have greatly facilitated the achievement of the armistice we are now celebrating, entitle her to participate in the Political Conference. I have no doubt that others were impressed, as I was, by the restraint of Mr. Nehru's statement reported in the press yesterday. As I understand the position, India, far from seeking to participate in the Conference, would only be willing to serve if the major parties concerned desire her assistance and if it is clear that she can perform some useful function in the interests of peace.

We think it would be a mistake if Mr. Nehru's condition were not met - a mistake from the point of view of the success of the Conference.

My Delegation will therefore vote for the participation of India. Without belabouring the point, however, I would earnestly appeal to, as the saying goes "absent friends" not to block the participation of any state whose presence is essential for the holding of an effective Conference. It is the responsibility of everyone of us to consider and urge the interests of our own government and people, but no one leader or nation today can, in this inter-dependent world, legitimately frustrate the will of most of its friends on an issue of not merely local but world-wide importance.

The rights and the position of every government which will be represented at the Political Conference are surely sufficiently protected by the flat statement in the terms of the resolution which we are co-sponsoring that governments "shall be bound only by decisions or agreements to which they adhere". In my opinion that is an iron-clad and unequivocal guarantee to any of the participants that there is no question of their rights and interests being disregarded, nor for that matter any question of the Conference, as we see it, becoming involved in procedural difficulties over voting. There will either be agreement or there will be no agreement. No government is going to be bound by decisions to which it does not adhere. The language I have just quoted seems to me to give full protection not only to the Government of the Republic of Korea but for that matter to the other side. I can understand the Chinese Communists and North Koreans having some misgivings at the prospect of entering a conference in which their side might be numerically inferior to ourselves. It looks on the face of it as if there was a risk of being outvoted by the majority. I do not know, whether or not these misgivings are present in the minds of the Chinese, the North Koreans and their friends, but if they are I hope that they will read carefully the language of Paragraph 5 (I) of our resolution.

Turning now to the Soviet resolution which Mr. Vyshinsky presented yesterday morning, I see that he has agreed with us on at least 7 of the participants of the Political Conference: United States, United Kingdom, France, U.S.S.R., Communist China, North and South Korea. That is already a modest step in the right direction. I would hope that as a result of our deliberations here, it might be possible to secure general agreement among all principally concerned that an eighth country, India, could also participate, in addition to those other members of the 16, not mentioned in the Soviet resolution, who may wish to come.

I find at least two major difficulties in the Soviet resolution in its present form and for these reasons, among others, I cannot accept it. The first major difficulty is that the final paragraph of the Soviet draft would seem to exclude the Republic of Korea from those whose consent must be given to all agreements reached at the Conference. As this is to be a Korean Political Conference, it is, I think, essential that the rights of the Republic of Korea should be protected and I have already shown how we on our side propose that this should be done.

My second objection is - if I may say so - that Canada is not included on Mr. Vyshinsky's invitation list. I should have thought that it was consistent with what has already been

agreed by the Military Commanders and presumably, therefore, not unacceptable to the U.S.S.R., if it were admitted by the other side that any belligerent in Korea has the right to participate in the conference. Canada's role in Korea, on any yardstick of comparison, entitles us, I believe, to participate in the Political Conference. Allow me to remind the Committee, that Canada has contributed to the Unified Command the fourth largest number of armed forces including Koreans and that we have made the third largest cash contribution to Korean relief and rehabilitation. If it is suggested that Canada is a long way away from Korea, let me say only that I never heard that argument used when the United Nations was appealing to all member states to help the hard-pressed Republic of Korea.

One more word and I have finished. In our proper and natural preoccupation with the immediate problems ahead, let us not lose sight of, nor allow anyone to obscure, the measure of the achievement marked by the armistice in Korea. The United Nations forces have done all they were ever asked to do by force of arms. It has been the first major application of the principle of collective security by an international organization, and it has been successful. We are thereby marking certainly one of the greatest achievements in human history.

Had the United Nations failed to act, or had it acted and failed, not only would a brave and ancient people have lost their freedom but the United Nations itself would, I fear, already have become the dead husk of another great idea unrealized, not for lack of resolutions but of resolution.

In the same spirit let us go forward to make peace.

S/C