

Delegation from the Dominion of Canada, represented by the Right Honourable William Lyon Mackenzie King

Position Paper for the Historical Committee

I. The San Francisco Conference, Envisioning the Postwar World Order

The primary objective of the United Nations Conference on International Organization (UNCIO) is the establishment of a charter for world security. One which is informed by, and accounts for the errors of conventions that attempted the same in the past. Canada's experience in the Second World War demonstrates both the unprecedented human cost of global conflict and the necessity of effective collective security mechanisms to prevent such devastation in the future. Over one million Canadians and Newfoundlanders served, more than 45,000 gave their lives, and the nation expended over \$9.5 billion in industrial production. The Canadian delegation recognizes that the Dumbarton Oaks Proposals provide a solid and pragmatic foundation for negotiation, building upon earlier commitments also endorsed by our country, including the Declaration of St. James's Palace, the Atlantic Charter, and the subsequent Declaration by the United Nations. Canada is committed to the construction of an institutional framework capable of preventing future conflicts through effective collective security mechanisms, equitable representation, and binding consultation requirements that ensure no nation bears the burden of enforcement without a voice in the decision-making process.

Canada's engagement with multilateral security mechanisms is grounded in established international precedent, parliamentary autonomy, and its national commitment to independent foreign policy. The Balfour Declaration (1926), which formally recognized dominions as "autonomous communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs", is the cornerstone of Canadian domestic and foreign policy. This declaration was subsequently codified through the Statute of Westminster (1931), which transferred full legislative authority from the British Parliament to Canada. This precedent is the cornerstone upon which Canada's demand for an independent voice at San Francisco rests. Canada has already demonstrated its autonomy before, through its independent signature of the Treaty of Versailles (1919), despite the signature appearing indented under "British Empire," and through insistence on separate League of Nations membership, signaling that dominion status warranted distinct international standing. Internationally, Canada's foundational commitments include endorsement of the Declaration of St. James's Palace (1941), the Atlantic Charter (1941), and the Declaration by the United Nations (1942). While Canada has been a part of, and continues to support the values advanced by the League of Nations, it should be noted that its framework has been found lacking in critical respects. The League's collective security provisions proved dangerously expansive, missing meaningful consultation mechanisms for contributing states, and critically, the League's fatal omission of the United States undermined its legitimacy and efficacy. Domestically, Canada's extraordinary military mobilization, deploying over one million service personnel and directing substantial productive capacity to the Allied war effort, and its participation in specialized agencies including the International Labour Organization (1919) and the founding conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization (1944) established functional capacity across diverse issue-areas. The Dumbarton Oaks Proposals (1944), while providing a pragmatic foundation, reflect great-power dominance that Canada views as insufficiently attentive to middle-power participation and consultation rights. These precedents establish both Canada's commitment to multilateral cooperation and institutional independence, and the practical basis for its expectation of meaningful participation in decision-making structures where its contribution and interests are substantive.

Canada proposes amendments to the Dumbarton Oaks Proposals that establish institutional mechanisms that strengthen accountability and equitable participation within the United Nations. The mandatory submission of annual and special Security Council reports to the General Assembly ensures ongoing oversight of security operations. We posit that requirements that member states contributing military forces be consulted and represented in relevant Security Council deliberations could prevent unilateral decision-making in enforcement actions. Canada is concerned that the unrestricted use of the veto could hinder the peaceful settlement of disputes. Therefore, we support efforts to limit the veto so that

permanent members cannot block procedural steps intended to encourage negotiation or prevent conflict. The General Assembly's role should be enhanced, giving it authority to recommend action when the Security Council is deadlocked would provide an alternative mechanism for addressing threats to international peace. We propose expanding ECOSOC powers to also coordinate specialized agencies, receive reports from member states and organizations on the implementation of Assembly recommendations, and demonstrate our preference that instructions from the Assembly on social and economic issues should be authoritative rather than merely advisory to establish clearer channels for economic and social cooperation. Additionally, we support public transparency in General Assembly sessions and the establishment of a convention defining the privileges and immunities of the United Nations and its personnel, as this would ensure institutional independence and legitimacy. Collectively, these amendments create an organizational structure that prevents the institutional paralysis that characterized the League of Nations while maintaining the essential participation of all member states in the maintenance of international peace and security.