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C O N T E N T S

Question of impartial investigation of charges of use by
United Nations forces of bacterial warfare (*continued*) 125

Chairman: Mr. F. VAN LANGENHOVE (Belgium).

**Question of impartial investigation of charges of
use by United Nations forces of bacterial war-
fare (A/2426, A/C.1/L.66, A/C.1/L.67, A/C.1/
L.68) (*continued*)**

[Item 24]*

1. Mr. KYROU (Greece) stressed the wisdom and necessity of approaching such an explosive item with moderation. Citing the hopes voiced during the current session of the General Assembly that a new era of really peaceful relations between East and West might be impending, he stated that it would be unbecoming for representatives of small countries, particularly in the case of one which had suffered from the cold war, to indulge in expressions which could disturb the existing lull, however strong their feelings might be.

2. On the other hand, the question of impartial investigation of the charges under discussion could provide the acid test of the peaceful intentions of the USSR. A shift of attitude by that delegation and by those supporting it would greatly improve the international climate and would deprive those who doubted the sincerity of their intentions of a serious argument. Charges as grave as those of mass murder could never be left unchallenged, particularly if made against those who had been fighting for the restoration of peace and in defence of the United Nations ideals. A genuine betterment of international relations could not be based on a tissue of lies. If the distinguished record of the valiant soldiers who had been defending the purposes of the United Nations in Korea was to be soiled by calumnies, the whole system of collective security would be gravely shaken. Moreover, recantation of the slanders would be the easiest and most effective means of creating an atmosphere of international co-operation in which the notion of collective measures might become meaningless. The aim of General Assembly resolution 706 (VII) which had been adopted by an overwhelming majority had thus been the restoration of friendly international relations by bringing to an end through an impartial investigation a campaign of hatred which had reached such proportions that it had appeared to tie the hands of its own instigators and had threatened to thwart any genuine desire for peace and mutual confidence. Reviewing the provisions of

that resolution, Mr. Kyrour recalled that the USSR objections to it were based on the argument that it had been adopted without a hearing being given to the representatives of the People's Republic of China and of the North Korean People's Democratic Republic. The answer to that objection was that the Political Committee was neither a laboratory nor a body of inquiry which could investigate the veracity of the charges. Such an investigation, if it was to show respect for the facts, should be carried out on the spot by small committees made up of specialists of recognized authority and of unimpeachable impartiality. He pointed out that the Assembly resolution had been adopted only after rejection by the Communists of the United Nations offer for an investigation by the International Committee of the Red Cross.

3. The report (A/2426) of the President of the previous session of the General Assembly indicated that the Governments of the United States, the Republic of Korea and Japan had accepted the proposed investigation, while the People's Republic of China and the North Korean People's Democratic Republic had not deigned to give an answer. In the light of those facts, the course proposed by the representative of the United States was pertinent and appropriate.

4. Turning to the sworn statements filed by United States officers regarding the so-called confessions extorted from them by physical and moral torture (A/C.1/L.66), Mr. Kyrour expressed his deepest sympathy for the tragic situation in which those men had been placed.

5. As for the USSR draft resolution (A/C.1/L.67), he pointed out that it had been submitted, in the same form, to the Security Council in June 1952. Although, for the sake of moderation, he would not repeat what he had said at that time¹, he wished to point out that Greece was one of the countries which had become Parties to the Geneva Protocol of 1925 either by accession or ratification. It had done so without conditions or reservations. The USSR, however, had ratified the Protocol subject to the proviso that it was binding on the USSR only in relation to States which had acceded to the Protocol, and that it would cease to be binding on the USSR in regard to all enemy States whose armed forces or whose allies did not respect the restrictions of the Protocol. That proviso, which at the time of its formulation could have been regarded as a justifiable reservation similar to those made by other States, might be turned into a Trojan horse by a government which persistently refused to retract the unfounded charges under discussion. The government which did not hesitate to level such unfounded accusations would have very little difficulty in relieving itself, whenever it deemed expedient, of its obligations under the Protocol. In those circum-

* Indicates the item number on the agenda of the General Assembly.

¹ See *Official Records of the Security Council, Seventh Year, 578th meeting.*

stances, the position of States which had not acceded to or ratified the Protocol because of their lack of illusions as to its effectiveness was justifiable. Only if the USSR recognized the fallacy of its charges could its appeal be received without suspicion.

6. Mr. COTE (Canada) said that the final chapter in the bacterial warfare story might perhaps have been passed over in silence once the Armistice had brought the fighting in Korea to an end. Indeed, there had been every indication, in recent weeks and months, that the notorious germ warfare charges were being given a rest by their inventors. A new side of the picture was emerging, however, from the case histories of those whose so-called confessions had been presented to the Assembly by the USSR delegation. Those case histories, and their implications, should be faced. The story they told made the previous practitioners of the ugly trade of brain-washing look like crude amateurs. The communist technique was one of which those who put the political objectives of an all-powerful State first, and the values of the individual human nowhere, might well be proud.

7. Had there been the slightest substance to the allegations, the Communists would have welcomed the impartial investigation of the facts which had been offered in varying forms on four separate occasions. The Assembly's offer, he recalled, was to send a commission composed of competent scientists from countries not involved in the Korean fighting. Those men would have been bound only by their professional consciences as scientists, and would not have been subject to any form of reprisal, if their conclusions had been embarrassing to the governments or political parties to which they belonged. The same could not be said of the so-called scientific commissions engineered by the Communists to prove their case.

8. The USSR representative's contention that the proposed commission could only have presented conclusions dictated by the United States must have overlooked the fact that the countries represented on the commission would be Brazil, Egypt, Pakistan, Sweden and Uruguay. If Mr. Y. Malik had not forgotten that fact, the contention provided one more indication of the distorted vision which Soviet eyes seemed to have of the outside world.

9. If the impartiality of the commission was conceded, the only other argument for the communist refusal was the equally transparent excuse that the Chinese Communists and North Koreans had not been heard prior to the Assembly's decision. There had been no suggestion, however, that the Committee was to conduct its own investigation of the facts or regard itself as competent to judge the matter as a court of inquiry. The fact that an impartial inquiry by scientists from neutral countries had been flatly rejected was conclusive evidence that there had never been any substance behind the charges.

10. The United States delegation had acted with great restraint in not demanding an outright condemnation of those who, having repeatedly made and broadcast false charges, had turned down all attempts to secure an impartial investigation of the facts. Instead of demonstrating restraint, the USSR, for its part, had yielded to the temptation of attempting to distract the Committee's attention to a less embarrassing subject. The gratuitous advice in the USSR proposal had been before the Committee when it had considered certain

specific charges, and not the general question of prohibiting bacterial weapons, a question of which the Disarmament Commission was seized. Canada had acceded to and had ratified the Geneva Protocol of 1925, which it believed to be of value; but the Canadian delegation did not wish to see it used to confuse the clear issue. He therefore supported the proposal that the USSR draft resolution should be referred to the Disarmament Commission.

11. Mr. MUNRO (New Zealand) said that no one could fail to be impressed by the speech delivered by the United States representative (648th meeting). The world had become accustomed over the last thirty years to acts of oppression and intimidation, and some were apt to regard such accounts as remote and even exaggerated. Some might even cease to draw the appropriate lessons. Such accounts, however, were a reminder that in large areas there were rulers who employed, in order to maintain their power, methods undreamed of in the dark ages. The examples were too many to be effectively denied.

12. It was to be hoped that the debate would end a most unpleasant chapter in international relations. The New Zealand delegation, however, wished to record its anger: first that such charges should have been made as they reflected on the honour of all countries which had taken part in the United Nations action; secondly, that an impartial investigation had been refused; and thirdly, that the charges had not been withdrawn but rather maintained. It was particularly shocking that the Communists had continued their extortion of confessions even after the conclusion of the Armistice. Mr. Munro asked whether that represented the new communist policy of peaceful co-existence.

13. In the opinion of the New Zealand delegation, the course proposed by the United States was an example of restraint. It represented the least that could be done and New Zealand would support it.

14. The Soviet Union draft resolution (A/C.1/L.67) was a red herring designed to divert attention from the failure of those who had made the charges to accept an impartial investigation. New Zealand had acceded to the Geneva Protocol which the draft resolution commended, and respected its undertakings. However, it had been learned that the practice was not universal. The debates on atomic energy showed that a vast majority were convinced that a pledge not to use certain weapons, unaccompanied by ironclad safeguards, was a delusion. Accordingly, the New Zealand delegation had joined in sponsoring a proposal to refer that draft resolution to the Disarmament Commission. If, however, the Soviet Union draft resolution were to come to a vote, New Zealand would not lend its support to a cynical manoeuvre by voting for it.

15. Mr. KATZ-SUCHY (Poland) said that when the United States had proposed that the seventh session of the General Assembly consider the question of impartial investigation of the charges of the use of bacterial warfare, it had been clear that the United States was not interested in an impartial or serious consideration of the matter. The United States had only wanted to use the United Nations to cover its barbarous interventionist activities. No serious arguments or proofs had been offered to refute the charges which were based upon the facts presented by the Chinese People's Republic and the Korean People's Democratic Republic. The United States had sought only to divert world

public opinion from its anxiety over the charge made regarding the use of bacterial weapons.

16. The United States had never denied that it was preparing bacterial weapons or that it was ready to use them. Nor was it ready to undertake obligations which would protect mankind against such use. It had merely issued denials and countercharges in an orgy of slander.

17. Since the beginning of the seventh session of the Assembly, the United States had proved its unwillingness to have any impartial consideration of the question. It had opposed an invitation to the representatives of the Chinese People's Republic and the Korean People's Democratic Republic, which were the nations most concerned, to participate in the discussion. Under pressure, the majority of the Members of the General Assembly had ignored the elementary requirements of an impartial investigation as well as the accepted procedures. Likewise under pressure, the majority had adopted a resolution prejudging the matter. The declaration of the United States representative showed that no results had been expected from the Commission which had been intended only as a propaganda instrument. Accordingly, the Governments of the Chinese People's Republic and the Korean People's Democratic Republic, not having been able to present their case to the United Nations, had had no alternative but to refuse to comply with the resolution. Thus, it had been the action of the majority which had made an impartial investigation impossible.

18. The statement of the United States representative (648th meeting) was a further attempt at slanderous propaganda and reflected no willingness to discuss the facts and the evidence. It had even tried to show that the charges of the use of bacterial warfare were based only on the depositions of prisoners of war. All material proofs presented with the aid of scientists and experts and corroborated by impartial international commissions had been ignored. The whole speech had tried to show that the statements of the pilots in confirmation of the charges had been extorted under duress.

19. The United States had long been engaged in a campaign to prove mistreatment of prisoners of war by the Chinese and North Koreans. Such allegations had been advanced whenever the United States wished to cover its actions in Korea. In November 1951, when the United States had wished to break off the armistice discussions, it had asserted such mistreatment. The charges had been renewed when the agreement on the exchange of sick and wounded prisoners had been reached and an armistice seemed to be in sight. At the present time, on the eve of the Political Conference, an attempt was being made to create an unfavourable atmosphere for a peaceful solution. It was also intended to weaken the impressions made on public opinion by the statements of the prisoners of war, and eradicate the impact on the world of the slaughter of the North Korean and Chinese prisoners.

20. The United States, however, had not succeeded in hiding the truth that the treatment of prisoners of war in North Korea had been in conformity with international conventions. Mr. Katz-Suchy quoted a statement in *The New York Times* of 24 April 1953 by a released American soldier to the effect that he had seen no atrocities and that the camp conditions were similar to those experienced by the local populace.

He (Mr. Katz-Suchy) also quoted a statement of General Dean made at Panmunjom on 4 September concerning the good and considerate treatment he had received. British, Australian and other prisoners also had emphasized on several occasions the good treatment they had received. The United States military authorities had then taken steps to isolate the returning prisoners of war and secure false statements from them. Those who had spoken favourably of their treatment were described as victims of communist propaganda and placed in hospitals as mental cases to have their "brains washed". A directive issued in April by the Department of Defense at the very beginning of the exchange of sick and wounded had stated that all who had been subjected to communist indoctrination required special treatment. *The New York Times* of 12 October had reported that even those prisoners of war who had been released from the services continued to be under official surveillance. By such measures, the United States had succeeded in securing repudiations.

21. The depositions which had been made during their captivity merited a closer examination. The captured officers, including high staff officers, had unanimously emphasized that all matters relating to the use of bacterial warfare had been conducted in the strictest secrecy. However, when confronted by the evidence of the Chinese and North Korean authorities, the officers had been unable to remain silent. Now they feared the consequences of their acts and had repudiated their statements with plausible arguments of breaking down under pressure. The United States representative had quoted only from the declarations of certain officers whose names had been mentioned for the first time but he had passed over those who had previously been quoted. That attitude was understandable in view of the contents of the statements of the latter officers. The United States representative had spoken of torture but Colonel Schwable had denied that he had been threatened with bodily violence. The United States representative had charged that medical care had been withheld but thousands of prisoners would certainly condemn such allegations, and even one of the six officers, Major Bley, had stated that he had been hospitalized for his wounds. As to the methods allegedly used to secure confessions, Colonel Schwable had said that there had been difficulties about washing and shaving, but it was quite obvious in war-time conditions that the prisoners could not expect special treatment or better accommodation than the local populace. Indeed Colonel Schwable had admitted that conditions could be regarded as normal in the circumstances. The United States representative had even been so cynical as to state that American prisoners of war had been reduced to the level of animals and that to them survival had been more important than moral principles. Apparently he could not recognize the heroic attitude of the Chinese and North Korean prisoners of war who had preferred to die in the American camps rather than repudiate their cause.

22. The activities of the United States military authorities in securing the repudiations were too obvious to undermine the evidence submitted by the Chinese and North Korean authorities and the various international commissions. Those repudiations had found little response in the American Press. The film which had been made had also found little success. The reporters who had seen it could see that the officers

testifying before the international commission were in good physical condition. The film served to confirm the conclusion of the Commission that there was no reason to doubt the honesty of the testimony of the officers. The International Scientific Commission had accordingly taken the testimony of the officers as confirmation of their scientific evidence and investigations on the spot. Mr. Katz-Suchy drew attention to the impartial character of the Commission which had included scientists from Sweden, France, Great Britain, Italy, Brazil and the Soviet Union.

23. In the opinion of the Polish delegation, the situation was clear. Since the North Korean Government had first drawn attention in December 1951 to the use of bacterial warfare, a vast amount of material and evidence had been submitted of which the depositions of the prisoners of war were only a supplementary element. Their validity had not been lessened by the extorted repudiations. On the one hand there were the facts and the evidence and on the other hand were the propaganda activities of the United States to evade its responsibilities. The repudiations were no more than a reflection on the morale of the United States forces and the attitude of the officers towards honour and truth.

24. The question went beyond the limits set by the United States. A solution for the future was needed. With the appearance of weapons of mass destruction, the peoples of the world had striven to avoid their use, particularly bacterial weapons which had been condemned by the Hague Convention and the Geneva Protocol. Such weapons had been used in the Second World War and the use of bacterial weapons by the Japanese had been exposed in the war crimes trials. Much progress had been made since that time in the United States in the field of research and production. Bacterial warfare was now an element of the United States policy of intimidation. The threat of bacterial warfare was a fact which did not admit of indifference.

25. Many delegations had stressed the possibility of an improvement in international relations; they also understood the threat of bacterial warfare. A first step towards improving the situation and easing international tension would be the elimination of that threat. The best way would be to denounce bacterial warfare and to pledge not to use it by signing and ratifying the Geneva Protocol. That was the solution proposed by

the Soviet Union draft resolution. By voting in favour of that draft, the Committee would condemn weapons of mass destruction.

26. It had been argued against the draft resolution that it had been submitted once the depositions of the United States officers had been repudiated. However, delegations would recall that the proposal had been submitted earlier in the Security Council. It had also been argued that the Geneva Protocol of 1925 was out of date and lacking in substance. However, the Protocol was the only existing instrument for the struggle against the use of bacterial warfare. The implementation of the Protocol could protect the world against that threat. The importance of the Protocol had been recognized by the great majority of States including all the great Powers except the United States. If the United States wished to calm public opinion and to clear itself of the charge that it was preparing and intended to use bacterial weapons, the best course would be the immediate ratification of the Geneva Protocol. Such action would show that the United States wished to co-operate in the field of weapons of mass destruction. The adoption of the Soviet Union draft resolution would be an important step towards easing international tension and removing the threat of a new war.

27. Mr. ORDONNEAU (France), intervening on a point of order, requested that documents containing proposals be distributed to all delegations in all working languages. He observed that sometimes the texts differed somewhat in the translations and it would be useful if it were possible to compare them.

28. The CHAIRMAN stated that the matter raised by the representative of France would be brought to the attention of the appropriate services. In accordance with the decision to close the last of speakers at the end of the present meeting, he asked whether any other delegations wished to be inscribed. The final list included the following: Cuba, France, Dominican Republic, Philippines, Thailand, Colombia, Turkey, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Venezuela, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and the United States of America.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.