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FIRST COMMITTEE, 620th

MEETING

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Chairman: Mr. João Carlos MUNIZ (Brazil).

The Korean question (A/2431, A/L.151/Rev.1, A/L.152/Rev.2, A/L.153, A/L.154/Rev.1, A/C.1/L.48) (continued)

[Item 16]*

1. Mr. ROBLES TOLEDANO (Dominican Republic) said that all nations had expressed their genuine happiness at the cessation of hostilities in Korea, particularly small nations like the Dominican Republic. The triumph of the force of law over might created a firm feeling of security and led to the belief in the United Nations as the forerunner of liberty. One could not conceal, however, the fact that that happy spirit was not entirely optimistic in view of the divergencies of opinion, which, in the opinion of his delegation, were accidental. The most delicate and urgent task of the Committee was to smooth the path towards the rapid organization of the political conference. However, the USSR representative and others had clearly shown that their purpose was to obstruct the rapid achievement of an agreement as evidenced by Mr. Vyshinsky's request to invite communist China and North Korea, his interpretation of the Panmunjom Agreement and his efforts to bring out contradictions in the treaty concluded between the United States and South Korea.

2. One of the points which had been discussed in detail was the interpretation of paragraph 60 of the Armistice Agreement (A/2431). In the circumstances, his delegation felt that the interpretation given by the United States to that paragraph was the correct and appropriate one; nobody seemed to be more qualified to interpret the Agreement than those very parties which had signed it. Indeed, it had become clear that that paragraph had been proposed by the communist side and that they had understood it along the same lines as had been explained by Mr. Lodge, namely, that it would have been out of place to submit recommendations to the United Nations since not all Member States had actually taken part in the military operations in Korea. The fact that the political conference constituted something real and actual also moved his delegation to

support an invitation to be given by the other side to the USSR. Without the USSR, the way might be open to the frustration of the purposes of the conference itself. One could even say that, just as the USSR was able to promote the war, it was also able to facilitate and guarantee the ensuing peace.

3. The excellent services rendered by India on behalf of universal pacification led his delegation to hope to see India present at the conference. However, that wish was thwarted by the clear provisions of paragraph 60 and the well-founded belief that the expected spirit of harmony would be very much weakened in view of the feeling of the South Korean people and Government towards India at the moment. The same idea of peace which had been the constant preoccupation of India prevented his delegation in that circumstance from supporting her presence at the political conference.

4. Mr. FOUCHE (Haiti) said that his delegation had hoped the Committee would reach a vote on the various draft resolutions without Haiti being compelled to prolong the debate by its intervention. The praise with which the original Indian resolution (A/C.1/734/Rev.2) on Korea had been received had indicated the spirit of understanding and self-denial of the Indian delegation. It was in the spirit of that resolution that his delegation wished to make another appeal.

5. Despite the numerous difficulties that had arisen in Panmunjom, an armistice had been signed on 27 July 1953 and the representatives of the group of nations which, on behalf of the Organization, had resisted aggression in Korea by force of arms had submitted draft resolutions appearing in documents A/L.151/Rev.1, A/L.152/Rev.2, A/L.153 and A/L.154/Rev.1. His delegation hoped that no objection would be made to the second fifteen-Power draft resolution in document A/L.154/Rev.1. Indeed, justice and gratitude obliged those who did not fight in Korea to pay homage to those who had defended the principles of the Charter by sacrificing their lives.

6. His delegation did not believe that much discussion was required as to the participation of the Soviet

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

Union in the forthcoming conference. Realism actually demanded that the USSR be present at the deliberations. Though much importance had been attached to the manner in which the USSR was to be invited to the conference, some representatives seemed to overlook the fact that, regardless of the side of the table on which they were seated, it was the spirit in which the members of the conference confronted one another that counted. His delegation hoped that the draft resolution submitted by Australia, Denmark, New Zealand and Norway (A/L.152/Rev.2) would command the necessary number of votes.

7. The participation of India in the conference was recommended in the draft resolution submitted by Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom (A/L.153). It was regrettable that the motives for such recommendation were not given. Thus, it was difficult for his delegation to see how the Committee could call upon India to participate under the terms of the first fifteen-Power draft resolution in document A/L.151/Rev.1, which does not seem to call for the inclusion of India. Nobody would, therefore, have any objection to the view that effective participation in the war in Korea should be the fundamental criterion for the choice of participants in the forthcoming conference. Should the Committee, however, depart from that principle it would incur the risk of having many other nations invoke respectable interests with a view to justifying their participation. The Committee could not, without injuring their self-esteem, prevent them from participation and such a course would jeopardize the objective of the conference.

8. The delegation of Haiti fully realized India's role in the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission and its spontaneous initiative for the restoration of international peace and security. However, that fact had been made possible only by India's position of independence from the very beginning of the conflict. India should, therefore, continue such policy of independence, thereby enhancing its prestige. It seemed to his delegation that the Committee's action should be in line with the statement made by Prime Minister Nehru who had made his country's position entirely clear.

9. Mr. LE GALLAIS (Luxembourg) said that his delegation attributed the greatest importance to the fact that military aggression had been thrown back by the collective action of the United Nations and that his country was aware of its debts not only to its own troops but also to those of its allies which had fought so valiantly in Korea. He wished to seize that occasion to inform the Committee that Luxembourg did not wish to participate in the political conference.

10. As regards the participation of India in the proposed conference, his delegation believed that the two opposing views, as had been eloquently demonstrated, could very well be defended each on its own merits. However, in order that his delegation would not favour one side over the other, it would simply abstain from voting. Nevertheless, it expressed the hope that in case India did not obtain the required majority, it would be possible to find a formula permitting that great Asian country, which had already rendered the most important services to the cause of the United Nations, to have its voice duly heard.

11. Mr. BARANOVSKY (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) recalled that the Government of the Ukrainian SSR, expressing the will of its people, had at various stages of the consideration of the Korean question in the United Nations resolutely campaigned in favour of the cessation of the war imposed upon the Korean people and in favour of a peaceful settlement in Korea leading to its unification by the efforts of the Koreans themselves. Since an armistice in Korea was regarded as the first step towards that end, it was with profound satisfaction that the Ukrainian people had welcomed the cessation of hostilities, which for more than three years had devastated Korea and brought destruction to the Korean people.

12. He also recalled that the successful conclusion of the negotiations had been achieved as a result of the tremendous efforts made by the peace-loving peoples as well as the heroic fighters of the Korean People's Army and the Chinese People's Volunteers who had fought against American imperialism, bolstered by the armed forces of sixteen other countries. The conclusion of the armistice was not only a victory for the principle of pacific solution to international problems by negotiations, but a grave defeat to the policy of force in international relations. Moreover, the peaceful initiative and the extraordinary forbearance of the Governments of the Korean and Chinese People's Democratic Republics, supported by the Government of the Soviet Union, had played a great role in the successful conclusion of the armistice. The Korean people faced the task of restoring their national unity and reconstructing the national economy of their devastated land. Such a task was linked, without doubt, with the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Korea, including the Chinese volunteers, as well as with the institution of a lasting democratic peace. Those questions constituted the task of the proposed political conference.

13. The Soviet Union, true to its policy of solving international questions by friendly agreements between the States concerned, had proposed that the conference should be based on the round-table principle, with eleven States included, comprising not only States representing the parties that had signed the Agreement, but also other neutral countries interested in a peaceful settlement in Korea, provided the decisions were considered to have been adopted if the parties signatory to the Agreement would signify their acceptance of their respective provisions.

14. The representative of the United States, however, had criticized the USSR draft resolution (A/C.1/L.48) on the ground that it had discriminated against some countries which had not been included in the proposal. But a number of representatives had already pointed out correctly that paragraph 60 of the Agreement did not eliminate the participation of any State Member of the Organization. Moreover, his delegation believed that the Assembly's task was the practical organization of the conference and the selection of a membership that would ensure the maximum possibility of adopting practical decisions concerning the withdrawal of all foreign troops, a peaceful settlement of the question, etc.

15. The representative of the United States had contended (615th meeting) that General Nam Il had declared that the political conference should be composed

of North Korea and the Chinese volunteers on one side and the governments having troops under the Unified Command, on the other. But Mr. Lodge had distorted the general sense of that statement made by General Nam Il on 11 January 1952 (S/2605). What General Nam Il stated at that time was that the question of withdrawal of foreign troops from Korea and the peaceful settlement of the Korean problem had to be referred for consideration and solution to a political conference of a higher level, consisting of representatives of governments of various interested countries of both sides. Thus, General Nam Il had indicated clearly which countries were to be regarded as interested ones, and who were thus to participate in the political conference; he had not touched upon the question of the structure and membership of the conference, nor was such a question within the scope of the armistice negotiations. The coincidence of the views expressed by the Soviet Union representative with those of the Chinese and Korean People's Democratic Republics on foreign political questions had erroneously led Mr. Lodge to imagine that the relations between the Soviet Union and the people's democracies were similar to those between the United States and other countries, relations which were based on *diktat*.

16. The membership proposed by the Soviet Union draft resolution (A/C.1/L.48) was to ensure the reasonable and fair representation at the conference of various States, keeping in mind their political and geographic situation. Thus, the great Powers on whose shoulders lay the main responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security would be represented. There would also be the representatives of the sides that had signed the Agreement as well as some neutral States. The United States proposal, on the contrary, based on an arbitrary interpretation of paragraph 60 of the Armistice Agreement (A/2431), championed the principle of two opposing sides. By opposing the round-table principle, the United States proposal would eliminate all Member States from participation and would grant that right only to those who had participated in the war in Korea on the American side. In the circumstances, the Ukrainian SSR delegation felt that the views expressed by the representatives of France (613th meeting), the United Kingdom (616th meeting), Canada (615th meeting) and Australia (613th meeting) concerning the form of the conference were well founded. It was inconceivable how agreement could be reached without the participation of peace-loving countries whose geographical and political situation accounted for their particular interest in the Korean question. It would be all the more inconceivable to have a political conference for the settlement of the question of withdrawal of all foreign troops as well as the peaceful settlement of the Korean question without the participation of the Soviet Union. The peaceful foreign policy adopted by the Soviet Union had strengthened that country's role in the solution of international problems. Thus, the attempt to represent the United States proposal as the democratic path toward the formulation of the political conference was absurd.

17. The General Assembly was considering the question of the structure of the conference not because some Member States had sent their armed forces to fight in Korea, thereby acquiring the right to act on

behalf of the United Nations. On the contrary, the Assembly was bound by the Charter, which called upon the Organization to foster the strengthening of peace and to ensure international security. Indeed, a solution to the abnormal situation in the Far East would doubtless bring a lessening of international tension in general. In that connexion, the Ukrainian SSR delegation was glad to note that the position adopted by the United States regarding the basis and principles upon which the proposed conference would be based had, with a few exceptions, not commanded the support even of the States whose armed forces had fought in Korea. It wished also to support the Soviet Union draft resolution (A/C.1/L.48) and was unable to support the first fifteen-Power draft resolution (A/L.151/Rev.1) and would vote against it because it would deny participation to the majority of the Members of the United Nations who had not participated in the war in Korea.

18. Mr. DE SOUZA GOMEZ (Brazil) wished to associate himself with the various representatives in expressing his delegation's satisfaction concerning the conclusion of the armistice in Korea. Though the Korean war had ended without a military victory, a more noble and greater victory had been achieved—the victory of the principle of collective security. History furnished innumerable examples of military alliances for the purpose of achieving territorial concessions or fully justified alliances for legitimate purposes of a defensive nature such as the democratic alliance against the Axis powers. The Korean war was, however, a collective action of an entirely new type. Those countries which had been able to reply to the appeal of the United Nations had done so with the sole aim of ensuring respect for the principles of the Organization and not with the desire of territorial gain or the fulfilment of national ambitions.

19. Thus, the Korean campaign and the armistice had made a powerful contribution to the strengthening of the principle of collective security and there was reason to hope that a future aggression of the Korean type might not again take place because it would run the risk of a new failure. As regards the situation in Korea itself, a clear-cut decision had been taken by the representatives of the sixteen countries whose forces had participated in the Korean military action, indicating their readiness to face a new armed attack in violation of the Armistice Agreement. That was not, as certain representatives had contended, an aggressive statement but one designed purely to reaffirm the will of those countries to ensure the respect of an armistice obtained at the price of enormous sacrifices and long and delicate negotiations.

20. The present task of the Assembly was to draw up recommendations permitting the governments of the Powers concerned to organize effectively the political conference referred to in paragraph 60 of the Agreement (A/2431). Should the procedure recommended be followed strictly, the participating representatives would be appointed by the two sides, respectively. Thus, the representatives of the countries which had provided troops to fight in Korea had submitted a draft resolution (A/L.151/Rev.1). In that connexion, the Brazilian representative wished to note that the world was going through a transitional phase, passing from

the system of classic international law to a more universal system in which the United Nations could fully carry out its law of guaranteeing the maintenance of international peace and security. The military action in Korea had been the first experiment in collective action undertaken by an international organization against an aggressor. That action had taken place before the system of collective security established by the Charter had been completed by the adoption of special agreements provided in Article 43. Thus, the fifteen-Power draft resolution (A/L.151/Rev.1) possessed certain imperfections arising from the application of a system which had not yet reached full development; on the one hand, the draft resolution modelled on paragraph 60 of the Agreement, laid down, in accordance with the classic concept of international law, that only the belligerent countries would take part in the political conference. On the other hand, the conference constituted the completion of a collective action undertaken by the United Nations. That contradiction, like others which might be found in the text of the fifteen-Power draft resolution, was however derived from actual circumstances and from the imperfections of an experience which had been applied in the absence of a perfect system of collective security.

21. Despite those circumstances, his delegation would, in principle, be favourable to a draft resolution representing the collective action of the United Nations. In order that that condition might be fulfilled, it would be necessary for non-combatant countries to participate in the work of the conference. Therefore, his delegation favoured the presence of India. Actually, as one of the democratic forces of Asia, India had engaged in international activities leading towards the consolidation of peace. Nevertheless, considerations of another nature led his delegation to oppose broadening the composition of the conference as, in principle, it might have wished

to broaden it. His delegation was well aware that when dealing with political matters the question was not finding ideal solutions, but possible ones. The conference should, therefore, be formed in a manner likely to lead to the maximum of success. The first condition necessary for success obviously was the presence of all the countries most directly concerned with the problem. However, one particular country, namely, the Republic of Korea, was formally opposed to the presence of India at the Conference. Thus, the inclusion of India would signify the exclusion of the Republic of Korea, the abandonment of the conference, and the failure of the United Nations effort.

22. His delegation would vote in favour of the fifteen-Power draft resolution in document A/L.151/Rev.1 which would give the governments that had furnished military contingents to the Unified Command the possibility of choosing, from among themselves, the representatives who would take part on the United Nations side in the political conference. In that connexion, his delegation considered that Colombia, in addition to the contribution which it had made to the military efforts of the United Nations, was fully qualified to participate both on its own merits and as an interpreter of the legal tradition and the spirit of conciliation which marked Latin-American countries. Moreover, for reasons of consistency with its realistic and objective attitude, his delegation considered it necessary that the Soviet Union should also participate, since that country could not evade its share of responsibility in the final settlement of the Korean question. Finally, the preliminary remarks of the Brazilian delegation on the heroism of the soldiers who had fought for the cause of the United Nations in Korea would lead his delegation to subscribe to the draft resolution paying tribute to them (A/L.154/Rev.1).

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.