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Agenda item 17

THE PROBLEM OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF KOREA

Letter dated 25 December 1951 to the President of
the General Assembly from the Chairman of the
delegation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Paris, 25 December 1951

As stated in the Press, American and British prisoners of war in Korea have sent the following message from Pyongyang to the Security Council of the United Nations:-

"Mr. President,

"On 30 June last, a plenary meeting was held of the Central Committee of the Peace Organizations of American and British Prisoners of War at which were adopted a joint declaration and a joint appeal expressing our views and ideas in the fight for peace against the aggressive war in Korea which is being waged by the United States. The texts of these two documents were cabled to the President of the Security Council of the United Nations on 7 July 1951, and a request was made in the declaration for confirmation of the receipt of the two documents. Though a hundred days have since elapsed, no reply has yet been received.

"In the declaration and appeal sent to you at that time, it was pointed out that the United States had trampled on the United Nations Charter and transformed the Korean civil war into a large-scale war. The majority of the members of the Security Council sanctioned the illegal invasion of Korea by United States troops. It was also pointed out that you should make every effort

to settle the Korean question peacefully by withdrawing all foreign troops from Korea. We, who are captives of the Korean war which is a most unjust and illegal act, are absolutely convinced that our points of view and proposals deserve attention and impartial examination. Our messages also stated that your Organization should be particularly concerned with international peace, the defence of peace and of national interests, including, therefore, the opinions and interests of many thousands of captives of the Korean war. It is quite clear to us prisoners of war that the inability of the United Nations to recognize our points of view and our interests shows that your Organization is not being true to its original aims and is opposed to the views and interests of all progressive humanity. We, representatives of the peace organizations of American and British prisoners of war, urgently request that the receipt of our messages be acknowledged. We also ask that the United Nations should return to its principles and aims and should make sincere efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement of the Korean question. We would ask you to support our fight for a lasting international peace and against the criminal aggressive instigators of a new war and to make that fight widely known to the peoples of the whole world.

"We repeat our request for confirmation of the receipt of our documents and remain,

Yours sincerely,

The Central Committee of the Peace Organizations of
American and British Prisoners of War

(Signed)

Ambrose Nugent (President)
Donald A. Cox (Vice-President)
Leroy Carter (Secretary)

Members:

Jeff. D. Erwin
Edward F. Spencer
John R. Porter
Harold L. Kaschko
Robert H. Chyers
Haydar Oztury"

/In bringing

In bringing to your notice the above text of the message of American and British prisoners of war in Korea and in view of the fact that the Korean question is included in the agenda of the sixth session of the General Assembly, I would request you to have that message issued as a General Assembly document and distributed to all delegations.

The message also refers to a declaration and appeal sent to the United Nations by the Committee of American and British Prisoners of War on 7 July 1951^{1/}. I would request that those two documents should also be issued as General Assembly documents and distributed to delegations.

(Signed) A. VYSHINSKY.

Chairman of the delegation of the Union of
Soviet Socialist Republics.

ANNEX/

ANNEX
DECLARATION AND APPEAL FROM THE CENTRAL
COMMITTEE OF THE PEACE ORGANIZATIONS OF
AMERICAN AND BRITISH PRISONERS OF WAR

Pyongyang, 6 July 1951

At the request of the Central Committee of the Peace Organizations of American and British Prisoners of War, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Democratic Republic of Korea transmits to you hereunder a declaration and appeal by the Committee. DON TSO, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Democratic Republic of Korea. 7 July 1951.

North Korea 30 June 1951, declaration to the President of the World Peace Council, the President of the United Nations General Assembly, the President of the United Nations Security Council, we, the Central Committee, United States British War Prisoners Peace Organizations, being indignant at the inglorious policy of the ruling circles of our countries in connexion with the freedom-loving people of Korea, and desiring an immediate peaceful settlement of the Korean problem, hereby declare to the President of the World Peace Council, the President of the United Nations General Assembly, the President of the United Nations Security Council, that we have organized the Central Committee, United States British War Prisoners Peace Organizations. The Central Headquarters of the Korean People's Army met the desire of the prisoners of war and allowed them to organize local peace committees on democratic principles and to send delegates to form the Central Committee. The appeals adopted at each camp had been entrusted to the Central Committee for transmission to the President of the World Peace Council, the President of the United Nations General Assembly and the President of the United Nations Security Council, on perusal. The Central

/Committee

Committee found the main and common points of the appeals from the local peace committees upon which a unified and comprehensive appeal was to be based were the following: (1) the Korean war was instigated by the Syngman Rhee clique under the instructions of the United States imperialists; (2) the United States trampled down the United Nations Charter with the result that it has expanded the Korean war into a full scale war; (3) 93 per cent of all the United States British war prisoners demand that the legal representatives of the People's Republic of China be admitted to the United Nations. In addition to this, the prisoners denounce the United States imperialists for committing an act of aggression by stationing armed forces in, and naval units around, the island of Taiwan, (Formosa); (4) that the inhuman bombing of Korean cities, towns and villages, with the resultant slaughter of over one million innocent civilians, besides the tremendous number of casualties suffered by the soldiers of the (United Nations forces) and the Syngman Rhee puppet army (598,567 during the period of one year from 25 June 1950 to 25 June 1951) be exposed to the peoples of the world so that they will fight to end this useless but savage aggressive war in Korea; (5) the United States British war prisoners have arisen en masse and organized peace committees opposing the continuous expansion and prolongation of this war and desiring to end the war at the earliest possible time. Thus the request made by the local peace committees has been fulfilled. The unified appeal was composed, examined, passed unanimously and signed by all members of the Central Committee, United States British War Prisoners Peace Organizations at the plenary meeting of the Central Committee held on 30 June 1951. In sending you this appeal, the Central Committee, United States British War Prisoners Peace Organizations expects that its voice will not be disregarded and that it will receive a reply to the question brought forward by it. Central Committee of the United States British War Prisoners Peace Organizations: President, Ambrose Nugent, Captain, 52nd Field Artillery Battalion, 24th Infantry Division; Vice-President, Donald A. Cox, Royal Ulster Rifles, 29th Brigade; Secretary, Leroy Carter, Jr., Corporal, Headquarters Battery, 303 Field Artillery Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division; Members: Edward P. Spencer, Rifleman, Company (W), 1st Battalion, Royal Ulster Rifles, 29th Brigade; Harold L. Kaschko, Captain, Battery (C), 38th Field Artillery Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division;

/John R. Forter,

John R. Porter, Master-Sergeant, Company (C), 24th Regiment, 25th Infantry Division; Jeff D. Erwin, 2nd Lieutenant, 38th Field Artillery Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division; Robert H. Chyers, Private, Headquarters Company, 63 Field Artillery Battalion, 24th Infantry Division; Haydar Oztury, Sergeant, 15th Company, Turkish Brigade.

Appeal for cessation of the Korean war and for the preservation of peace throughout the world from the Central Committee, United States British War Prisoners Peace Organizations, North Korea, 30 June 1951, to the President of the World Peace Council, the President of the United Nations General Assembly, the President of the United Nations Security Council, we, the Central Committee, United States British War Prisoners Peace Organizations, representing the combined voices of the great majority of all American and British prisoners of war in Korea, hereby appeal to the World Peace Council, the United Nations General Assembly and the United Nations Security Council with the following statement.

Before coming to Korea, many of us believed in the assertions of the ruling circles of our countries on the so-called Korean problem, sending us to the Korean war. They convinced us that we were being sent for the realization of police measures in the interest of peace. Many of us thought that the United Nations stood for peace, that we were not obliged to fight. It seemed to us that the events in Korea would be brought to an end quickly, and we would be sent home to our loved ones. However, it is now over a year since the outbreak of hostilities in Korea, and war still rages in this devastated land. During this time, tens of thousands of our compatriots have suffered death in a remote alien country, all major cities and vast numbers of towns and villages in Korea have been destroyed and burned down, under the wreckage of their dwellings and in the fires of incendiary bombs more than a million Korean civilians, men, women and children, have perished. For what purpose does this cruel, bitter war continue? For what purpose have hundred of thousands of wives, children, sisters, brothers, fathers and mothers been deprived of their loved ones and forever become unhappy and suffered indescribable sorrow? Each of us has asked

/these questions

these questions of himself. Now we want to ask them of all who will listen to us. At the same time, as participants and witnesses of the terrible bloodshed in Korea, we want to give our opinions on these questions. It is well known that the American troops, on the orders of Truman, President of the United States, started military operations in Korea prior to the resolution of the Security Council. Later, the majority of the Security Council members sanctioned the invasion of Korea by United States troops, calling them the "United Nations Force". We will not dwell upon the order of Truman and the resolution of the Security Council, because they are illegal. This is a well known and evident fact. Truman had no right to order the invasion of Korea without the consent of the Congress of the United States. The Security Council had no right to pass a resolution on the Korean problem without the concurring vote of all the permanent members. The United Nations Charter clearly states that the Security Council must take all measures to settle peacefully every dispute which arises. Therefore, all the Governments of the United Nations Member Countries should abide by this principle. Why then did not Truman and the Security Council try to settle the Korean civil war peacefully, instead of passing instantly a resolution to enlarge the struggle into an international conflict, in violation of the United Nations Charter? Why have they rejected all proposals for peaceful settlement of the Korean problem since the very outbreak of war and only want to disregard the opinions of the peoples of the world, who all protest indignantly against the intervention of our troops in the internal affairs of Korea?

We have seen copies of the documents found by the Korean People's Army in the archives of the Syngman Rhee Government in Seoul, exposing the plot of the American imperialists and Syngman Rhee to invade the People's Democratic Republic of Korea. It was extremely interesting to learn how Syngman Rhee obtained arms from the United States to build his army precisely for undertaking the expedition against the North. On 10 April 1949, Syngman Rhee wrote his Ambassador Extraordinary in Washington, Cho Byung Ok: "I think you should frankly discuss the situation in fullest confidence with the high officials of both the United Nations and the United States in a strictly confidential manner; tell them what plans we have for the unification of North and South. As a matter of fact, we are ready for the unification now in every respect but one, namely, we lack arms and ammunition". We were amazed at how a trial attack was launched

/in the summer

in the summer of 1949 by Syngman Rhee, only to be repulsed by the Korean People's Constabulary and to bring the censure of Brigadier General Roberts, Chief of the American Advisory Group, because the puppet army was so poorly prepared and wasted so much ammunition in the premature fiasco. At this time Roberts ordered no more attacks to be made against the North without his specific approval. Again, on 30 September 1949 Syngman Rhee wrote to an American University Professor, Dr. Robert Oliver, who had contacts in high United States Government circles: "I feel strongly that now is the most psychological moment when we should take an aggressive measure. We will all quietly work together, you in Washington and we here in Seoul and Tokyo". From the testimony of Jin Myo Suk, ex Home Minister of Rhee's Government, we learned that the guerillas were suppressed during the winter of 1949 so as to provide a firm and healthy rear from which to launch a real invasion the following summer.

The facts all came out, how John Foster Dulles, Supreme Adviser to the Secretary of State, United States, arrived in Korea on 17 June 1950 and — ordered Syngman Rhee to mount an immediate attack against the North, followed by a counter propaganda that the North invaded the South first. He promised that if Syngman Rhee could hold out but for two weeks, all would go well, for the United States would compel the United Nations to mobilize land, sea and air forces, and send them to Korea. We saw the photograph of Mr. Dulles inspecting puppet troops on the 38th Parallel, we saw copies of the letters Dulles wrote to Byung C. Limb, South Korean Foreign Minister, on the eve of the outbreak of war, advising him that the time had come for a "bold decision" to be made. We read Dulles' letter to Syngman Rhee written 20 June 1950, saying that Korea was to "play a decisive role in the great drama now unfolding". We saw the battle plans which the puppet army used for its all fated invasion of the North, on 25 June 1950.

All this proved to us who instigated the Korean war, who is responsible for this crime against the Korean people. All this exposed to us the plots of the American capitalists and imperialists, and their tools the United States politicians and the Syngman Rhee clique. In spite of all this evidence, is it possible to assert that the North Korean Communist troops, as we called them, committed aggression? We saw to our cost how bravely the soldiers of the

Korean People's Army fought. Each of us asked himself: what should be the explanation for their unprecedented courage and persistence in fighting against us who were armed with the most up-to-date military technique? It seems to us that only those people who are safeguarding their own vital interests, loved ones and things most valuable can fight as the Koreans do. We think that it has nothing to do with the "North Korean Communists". What matters here is that Korean people have realized sooner and better than anybody else that they are in danger of being deprived of their freedom and national independence. We have often heard how bitterly the Koreans condemn Syngman Rhee who is isolated from the people, and with what admiration they speak of General Kim Il Sung. They call the latter the embodiment of their expectations and hopes. Now we frankly say we do not believe that Truman and Attlee stand for peace, indeed how can anyone believe it? If they stood for peace, all the working people of our countries who eagerly desire peace would support them. Such however is not the case. Everybody wonders how on earth President Truman and Prime Minister Attlee can stand for peace (Garbled) fighters for peace UN our own (Garbled) are hopelessly persecuted on their instructions. For example, why is it that today in England the representative of the Fact Finding Commission of the International Women's League who came to Korea, upon her return home is being treated little better than a hunted criminal? She has done nothing that could possibly cause inconvenience to anyone. All that she has done has been to exert her main influence in the fulfilment of a cause of peace which is demanded by the majority of the peoples of the world. Similar actions are to be used, we hear, against the Canadian delegate to the Fact Finding Commission of the International Women's League by the Canadian authorities. We all know how often wars have broken out in the history of our peoples. But have they bettered the lives of the overwhelming majority of the peoples in our countries? No, we are confident that the vast majority of the people on our globe do not want war. Who then wants war? War is necessary for those, we are convinced of this, whose factories and mills work for war, and who seek foreign markets for their high priced and therefore long laid (Garbled) commodities. We consider that most of the higher ranking government officials in our countries are inseparably connected with such people and their underlings. They try to seize

everything" in their own hands. In South Korea, for instance, they took possession of land, mills and factories, gold and graphite mines, all of which belonged to the Korean people. Those persons want to keep all these things at the cost of a sea of blood, shed by their poor countrymen and the poor peoples of other countries. By now we have clearly realised for what purpose the blood of hundreds of thousands of men, women and children is being shed in rivers in Korea, and for what purpose are being levelled the houses of the Koreans who desire to build their life independently without benefaction of American imperialism. No, we do not want any more deceit. No, we do not want to watch any longer how the imperialists and their agents build up their welfare, and make fabulous profits at the cost of misfortune, sorrow and blood of the peoples. It is fitting here to enumerate some of the barbarous acts committed by some of the so-called "United Nations Army" here in Korea.

Sgt. Clifford L. Noel, Company (C) 65th Engineer Combat Battalion, 25th Infantry Division, states: "I have seen hundreds of towns and cities completely destroyed by the United States aircraft and many bombs aimlessly dropped on fields, rice paddies, etc., where there could possibly be no military targets. I distinctly recall one instance that happened during the first week of March. A group of United States prisoners of war were being marched through the city of Pyongyang when a flight of bombers flew over. They released their bombs and flew on. Later the All Clear sounded and we continued our march. We passed through the area where the bombs had fallen. I saw one woman who had been cut squarely in half by shrapnel and an old lady with her leg blown off; she was nearly dead, it was a terrible sight. The city of Pyongyang itself was in ruins. Churches, schools, buildings, theatres etc. were laid flat by bombs, everything of value had long since been destroyed, yet they continue to bomb and strafe every day".

Pfc. William F. Sher, Company (F), 38th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division says: "I must admit I didn't know the full facts as to what was really going on until my arrival in Korea, as world events hadn't interested me much as a civilian. But upon my arrival in Seoul and seeing the terrible destruction caused by the bombing, the misery caused to the little children and the aged people, it depressed and hurt me to think that once again I must witness

unnecessary destruction and suffering".

Some interesting light is also shed on this barbarous indiscriminate bombing by figures published in the New Times magazine No. 31951: "The following figures are indicative of the destruction caused by United States forces. In the town of Hwang Joo, less than 500 buildings remain out of 8,000; in Sinijoo about 1,500 buildings have survived out of 12,000; in Man Phojin only some 200 buildings are left out of 15,000. In North Korea alone American planes have wrecked or burned out approximately 7,500 villages and hamlets".

These eye-witness accounts and indisputable figures from the New Times magazine prove that the Hague and Geneva Conventions have been broken time and time again by the aggressive forces in Korea. The rules established at the Hague in 1923, Article 22, reads: "Aerial bombardment for the purpose of terrorizing the civilian population and destroying or damaging private property not of a military nature or of injuring non combatants is prohibited". The military forces which are waging war against the Korean people are not the "United Nations Army" but the very aggressive army of the American imperialists. We can't call such a force a United Nations force. Were it really the instrument of the United Nations, would it dare commit the indescribable atrocities which have just been described, could it sanction the dropping of time bombs into the streets of Pyongyang as we have witnessed with our own eyes. Well do we remember how indignant the American people became when the Hitlerites used time bombs against London. The headquarters of this aggressive army which is directed by the ruling circles of the United States have committed all these outrageous crimes and are still committing them. But it must be remembered however that not all the Members of the United Nations are bent on instigating a third world war, for as recently as 23 June 1951 Jacob Malik, the Soviet delegate, stated on the radio programme "Value for Peace": "The Soviet people are convinced that the belligerent countries should negotiate a cease fire armistice, with the simultaneous withdrawal, as their first measure, of their troops from the 38th Parallel".

As for us we no longer want to fight and shed our blood for the imperialists of Wall Street and the City. We hate war. We want peace and a free and happy life. We were fortunate enough to be taken prisoner by the Korean People's Army. If the war goes on, however, many of our friends in the United States and British forces will die a meaningless death on the battlefield and innocent Koreans too will lose their lives. We therefore will fight for the cause of peace even though our Governments are against it. We, the Central Committee, United States British War Prisoners Peace Organizations, representing the great majority of the United States and British prisoners of war in Korea, appeal to you to exert your utmost to accomplish the following: (1) the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Korea and to allow the Korean people to effect settlement of their internal affairs; (2) the conclusion of a Five Power Peace Pact as urged by the World Peace Council; (3) that the inhuman bombing of Korean cities, towns and villages, with the slaughter of over one million innocent civilians, besides the enormous number of casualties suffered by the soldiers of the "United Nations Forces" and Syngman Rhee's puppet army (598567 from 25 June 1950 to 25 June 1951) be exposed to the peoples of the world so that they will fight to end this useless but savage aggressive war in Korea; (4) the withdrawal of all United States military forces from the island of Taiwan (Formosa) and let the Chinese people settle their own domestic affairs; (5) admitting the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations Organization.

We, the Central Committee, United States British War Prisoners Peace Organization in Korea, request that our voices shall not be disregarded and that we prisoners of war shall receive a reply to the proposals brought in this appeal, entrusted by the overwhelming majority of the foreign prisoners of war banded together in the United States British War Prisoners Peace Committees Nos. 5, 7 and 12, the Central Committee, United States British War Prisoners Peace Organizations: President, Ambrose H. Nugent, Captain, 52nd Field Artillery Battalion, 24th Infantry Division; Vice-President, Ronald A. Cox, Royal Ulster Rifles, 29th Brigade; Secretary, Leroy Carter, Jr., Corporal, Headquarters Battery, 503 Field Artillery Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division; Members:

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