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**Chairman: Sir Leslie MUNRO (New Zealand).**

**AGENDA ITEM 19**

**The Korean question (A/2641, A/2941 and Add.1, A/2947, A/C.1/769, A/C.1/L.145, A/C.1/L.146) (*continued*):**

- (a) Report of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea;**
- (b) Reports of the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission in Korea;**
- (c) Problem of ex-prisoners of the Korean war**

1. Sir Percy SPENDER (Australia) said that the Korean question, perhaps more than any other, was a United Nations matter. With the passage of time, there might be a tendency to forget the objectives of the United Nations in Korea, and that tendency would undoubtedly please those who had supported the aggressors and would be only too happy to arrive at some kind of a bargain allowing them to achieve their objectives in Korea.

2. The Armistice Agreement,<sup>1</sup> which had come into force on 27 July 1953, represented a fair way of meeting the requirements of both sides. It would probably have worked well enough provided both sides had abided by its terms in good faith. In practice, however, its meaning had been distorted by the Communists, which was a very apt illustration of the sort of danger to be guarded against. The Armistice Agreement dealt with United Nations objectives in Korea only to the extent that its article 60 provided that a political conference should be held to settle through negotiation the questions of the withdrawal of foreign forces from Korea, the peaceful settlement of the Korean question, and the like.

3. As shown in the report<sup>2</sup> of the fifteen Governments of Member States which had taken part in the conference, the proposals put forward by the three Com-

munist delegations on the subject of the elections to be held in Korea had been merely designed to implement the standard form of Communist policy, which was to take over divided States by political penetration. Moreover, the Communist proposals repudiated the competence of the United Nations and were unworkable.

4. On the other hand, the United Nations delegations had sought to reach agreement with the Communists on the basis of the fundamental principle of genuinely free elections held under United Nations supervision with the purpose of electing representatives to the National Assembly, representation to be in direct proportion to the indigenous population of the various parts of Korea. That principle was based on the aims which the United Nations, with a very large majority, had maintained from the outset of its concern with the Korean problem.

5. The Korean Political Conference at Geneva had been a complete failure. It had made clear to the world the position which the Communists would take on the question, and had confirmed the solidarity of the United Nations delegations in support of the principles of the Charter.

6. In his last statement (787th meeting), the representative of the Soviet Union had repeated the demand made by the Communists at Geneva for free elections in Korea under the supervision of an unbiased international organ. It would be interesting to know what "unbiased" meant. From what the USSR representative had said, it appeared that the Soviet Union had not altered its position in any respect. It was still proposing that the North and South Koreans should get together to arrange for all-Korean elections under the usual Communist formula for a supervisory body which would be international in name only and wholly ineffective in practice because its membership would be equally divided between Communist and non-Communist representatives. But the world had learned by now how elections organized in that way could be rigged to produce the results the Communists desired. That was a road which Australia would certainly not follow.

7. No one would blame the United Nations Governments which had had forces in Korea for being cautious in their approach to any agreement secured from the Communist side. There had been many demonstrations of how Communist ingenuity had been used to nullify arrangements which might have worked satisfactorily if they had been carried out in good faith. The Armistice Agreement was a striking example. Not only had the Communists frustrated the activities of the bodies set up by the Agreement, but also, in flagrant violation of its terms, they had increased the combat strength and combat potential of their forces, at the same time refusing to allow the supervisory organs to carry out inspections, as agreed, in North Korea. Thus the Communists had cynically and deliberately disregarded and violated the Agreement. So far as they were concerned,

<sup>1</sup> Official Records of the Security Council, Eighth Year, Supplement for July, August and September 1953, document S/3079.

<sup>2</sup> Official Records of the General Assembly, Ninth Session, Annexes, agenda item 17, document A/2786.

an agreement was to be honoured only if it helped them achieve their purpose: in any divided country that purpose was the swamping of the non-Communist majority by the Communist minority in a unified State under full Communist control. In the circumstances, who could blame the United Nations for insisting, before committing itself to further negotiations, that the Communists should first abide by the provisions of the Armistice Agreement? For its part, Australia maintained the position set out in the Declaration by the Sixteen (A/2786, annex) on 15 June 1954, and would maintain that position until there was a movement towards it on the other side. That did not mean that Australia was irrevocably bound by the precise terms of that Declaration. While recognizing that a settlement in Korea could be achieved only through negotiations, Australia was determined not to make any concessions unless the other party also made concessions and showed itself willing to abide by its undertakings.

8. If the Communists accepted the principles laid down by the United Nations for a settlement in Korea—reunification of the country by genuinely free elections—Australia would not be inflexible in discussing ways and means of applying those principles. The draft resolution submitted by the United States (A/C.1/L.145) gave expression to its attitude. It contained all the essential requirements of the present time and reaffirmed the fundamental principles by which Australia abided. The Australian delegation would support it unreservedly.

9. With regard to sub-item (c) of the agenda item, the Australian delegation had been glad to note that a speedy solution of the problem appeared to be near. It realized the difficulties confronting the Government of India and was highly gratified by the generous attitude of Brazil and other Latin American countries with regard to the exiles under discussion.

10. Mr. VAN LANGENHOVE (Belgium) said that, while he thought there was general agreement on the statement of the aim to be achieved in Korea, namely, a peaceful settlement ensuring the establishment of a unified, independent and democratic Korea, the aim as thus worded contained some serious ambiguities, particularly with regard to the meaning of "an independent and democratic Korea". Furthermore, there had been complete disagreement as to the means of attaining that aim. That disagreement involved fundamental principles: on the one hand, the authority of the United Nations in the matter of collective security and, on the other hand, the principle of self-determination.

11. For the vast majority of Member States of the United Nations, the first of those principles was agreed. As to the reunification of Korea, the Belgian delegation was of the opinion that it could be achieved only by genuinely free elections under effective and impartial supervision. Under an imposed régime, the right of self-determination would be a mere caricature.

12. The Korean question affected another problem with which the United Nations was dealing, that of the limitation of armaments. Paragraph 13, sub-paragraphs (c) and (d), of the Armistice Agreement prohibited any increase in combat forces and weapons, it being understood that rotation forces and replacement supplies could be introduced only through specified ports of entry. There had been international supervision of that prohibition, and thus, some of the fundamental provisions envisaged and discussed with reference to general disarmament had been put to a test. The least that

could be said about such an experiment was that supervision as thus understood was largely illusory.

13. The United Nations must nevertheless persevere in the aim for which it had assumed responsibility—that of the reunification of Korea. That was the idea expressed in the draft resolution submitted to the Committee, which the Belgian delegation fully supported.

14. The disappointments and trials the Korean question had brought had not been without their compensations. The examples of devotion and solidarity displayed during the military operations were a matter of pride to the Belgians, who had taken part in them. India, Sweden, Switzerland and Brazil had also displayed their readiness to engage in international co-operation by assuming thankless tasks, and the Belgian delegation associated itself with the tribute which had so rightly been paid to them.

15. Mr. BLAUSTEIN (United States of America) said he was sorry the USSR had not changed its attitude on the Korean question. The representative of the Soviet Union had repeated his country's view that it was essential to achieve the unification of Korea by means of free elections throughout the territory of Korea on the basis of an agreement between North Korea and South Korea and without any foreign intervention or any kind of pressure on the voters. He had added that the elections should be prepared by the Koreans themselves under the supervision of an unbiased international organ.

16. Those suggestions, the real meaning of which was now known, were not new. They had already been made at Geneva and repeated since. They had already been considered and rejected. Their purpose was to prolong the discussion, to mislead people into thinking there was agreement when in fact there was none and, above all, to prevent the people of Korea from having a genuinely free choice in the matter of their representation in, and the nature of, the Government which was to administer a unified Korea.

17. The aim of the Communist proposals was not to achieve a free, unified and independent Korea under a democratic form of government, but to impose Communist domination on the whole of the country. Since that aim could not be achieved so long as the Republic of Korea and the United Nations were opposed to it, the Communists hoped by making their suggestions to give the impression that they were working towards the objectives of the United Nations, while they were actually sabotaging them.

18. The North Korean authorities had never dared to face free elections. The 1948 elections, under Soviet control, had been held on the basis of a single list of candidates. The present Communist proposals suggested that the "Supreme People's Council", which was the outcome of the elections and which represented only a minority of the people, should discuss matters on a footing of equality with the freely-elected representatives of the three-quarters of the Korean people administered by the Republic of Korea, and on that footing determine jointly with them the procedure to be followed in preparing elections throughout the country. The free world had some experience of methods of that kind and of the Governments which resulted from them.

19. The representative of the USSR had stated that the realities of the situation must be recognized. But that was no reason for abandoning such a fundamental principle as the freedom and independence of a whole

people. The fact that the Soviet Union was not for the time being prepared to entertain any other conditions than those which it proposed was no reason why those proposals should be discussed. The United Nations had already proclaimed just and proper objectives for a Korean settlement. That was why there must be no deviation from them.

20. The vast majority of the Korean people refused to consider the Soviet Union proposals. The Government of the Republic of Korea had agreed to submit to free elections under United Nations supervision. Consequently, there was no reason why the Government and people of the Republic of Korea should be expected to give the voice of communism a position disproportionate to its importance, and even a right of veto, when the future of the Korean people was at stake.

21. The Soviet Union representative had moreover asserted that the need to convene a conference of the interested States on the Korean question was becoming increasingly apparent. Since, however, there had been no change in the Communist position, he failed to see what purpose such a conference would serve.

22. Finally, the Soviet Union representative had referred to the "complicated calculations" of the United States delegation with respect to the reduction of foreign troops in North and South Korea, as if there were some mystery about the figures. Yet they were quite clear and simple. They showed that the United Nations Command had withdrawn a much larger proportion of personnel from Korea than had the Chinese Communists. The United Nations Command had reported that reduction in the non-Korean strength of its forces to the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission. Thus, it was not surprising that the Soviet representative was unable to dispute the figures which he found so complicated. The same representative had gone on to say that the increase in the army of the Republic of Korea prevented "normalization" of the situation in Korea. The increase, which, in any case, was a moderate one, was merely evidence of an understandable effort by the Republic of Korea to avoid a repetition of the nearly disastrous situation of June 1950. The Communist side, moreover, had substantially enhanced its material effectiveness by violating several provisions of the Armistice Agreement. Finally, there was a vast difference in military potential between Chinese Communist forces withdrawn from Korea but poised just across the Yalu river and United Nations personnel withdrawn to their home territories, some ten thousand miles away. Common prudence dictated some increase in the forces of the Republic of Korea. It was, nonetheless, a fact that the equipment furnished to the Republic of Korea was provided from stocks formerly held by United Nations troops or from replacement of those stocks in strict accordance with the provisions of the Armistice Agreement.

23. The United Nations, for its part, must see that its aims and purposes were achieved. The Assembly's attitude on the operation had been consistently governed by fundamental principles. It could not now abandon those principles and engage in negotiations merely to demonstrate its willingness to negotiate, at a time when it was clear from the start that the discussions could bear no fruit. That was why the United States delegation had submitted a draft resolution (A/C.1/L.145) which sought to reflect the views of the great majority of delegations, recalled the principles essential to a Korean settlement and reaffirmed the intention of the

United Nations to continue to seek an early solution of the problem in accordance with its objectives.

24. In the last paragraph of the draft resolution in question he would like to change the words "this item" to "the Korean question", in view of the fact that the main Korean item that year comprised several sub-items and that a separate draft resolution dealt with one of those sub-items.

25. Mr. BELAUNDE (Peru) said that, whenever the United Nations had to deal with a serious matter, it had to make a difficult choice between the old policy of the balance of power and the new policy no longer based on a purely mechanical balance, but on justice and respect for law.

26. The Korean question was a typical example of the conflict between those two policies. Perpetuating the division of the country would mean the triumph of the old policy, based on an unjust and precarious equilibrium. That was a policy which should be condemned since it ignored the sacred interests of the people.

27. The transition from the old system of the balance of power to what might be called the policy of full international participation was no easy one. That made the problem under discussion all the more important. It ceased to be a policy matter for the great Powers alone and became a problem of general concern. If only economic interests had been involved, it might have been possible to talk of reconciling points of view and of compromise, but the principle involved was that of national unity, the personality of a nation, which was born of a combination of historical, geographical and sociological factors and must be regarded as sacred.

28. That was why it was legitimate to insist that all steps should be taken to ensure the unity of Korea and that its people's freedom of expression should be safeguarded. The right of peoples to self-determination sprang from a historic urge which had left its stamp upon the Charter. The United Nations could not ignore that trend without betraying the very principles on which it was founded.

29. There were two sides to the problem: the human, moral and legal side, of which the decisive factor was an indivisible Korean people; and the political side, namely the universal desire of peoples throughout the world to further a principle that was basic to their lives.

30. In the face of the facts, there could be no question of taking up an adamant position, nor yet of giving in to the facts. They must be adapted and if possible improved upon, so that the best way might be found of reaching the appointed goal. Korea must be given the maximum measure of freedom to work out its own destiny through elections. There was only one way to accomplish that, namely by establishing a neutral body with the moral authority of the United Nations behind it. That was the way to reconcile practical needs, vital political principles and the dictates of justice. The case of Korea would afford final proof of the ability of the United Nations to vindicate the right of a nation to self-determination.

31. The Peruvian delegation would vote in favour of the United States draft resolution (A/C.1/L.145), which would affirm once more the moral authority of the United Nations and make it patently clear that the United Nations was the proper body to settle disputes between nations.

32. A tribute must be paid to the generosity of Brazil and to the efforts made by a number of delegations, including those of Colombia and Mexico, to make a real contribution to the solution of the problem.

33. Mr. SCHIFF (Netherlands) said that the debate on the Korean question so far had dashed all hopes that the tenth session of the General Assembly would bring the problem nearer to a solution. While those countries which had supported the United Nations action maintained that a unified, independent and democratic Korea could be established only on the basis of free elections under impartial United Nations supervision, the methods proposed by other countries professing to be seeking the same result would make a mockery of the concepts of democracy and freedom. Their conditions were such that the United Nations could not accept them without sacrificing the basic principles of the Charter. The Netherlands delegation agreed with the views put forward by the representative of Canada (787th meeting) to the effect that the United Nations, having refused to impose unification of Korea by military means, could not now presume to impose it by peaceful means. Indeed, it would be better not to have a solution at all than to impose one which could give rise to further disputes.

34. Nevertheless, the hope must not be abandoned of one day achieving the high purposes sought by the United Nations in Korea, even though there was nothing in the present situation which would seem to justify that hope. The discussion of the problem each year was important if only because it helped to keep in the foreground the basic principles on which a stand must be maintained.

35. The Soviet Union representative's suggestion (787th meeting) that a second conference might be held between the parties concerned was worth considering if it meant that North Korea was prepared to make a sincere attempt to reach an agreement com-

patible with the principles which the United Nations was pledged to uphold. However, in the absence of any such indication, the Netherlands delegation remained opposed to the convening of such a conference, since it would merely submit one of the parties to renewed pressure to abandon its principles.

36. At the moment, it was some consolation that the Armistice Agreement was still observed by both sides, even though the sincerity of one of the sides could be questioned.

37. The military situation in Korea as described by the representative of the United States was not calculated to allay anxiety. The United Nations and the Republic of Korea would certainly do well to maintain their vigilance while continuing to comply with the Armistice Agreement. Conditions generally did not of course facilitate the work of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea. But the Commission must remain on the spot ready to perform any service that might be required of it. The committee which it had decided to set up to act on its behalf when it was not meeting would be perfectly able to carry out its important task of representing the United Nations.

38. With regard to sub-item (c) of the agenda item, a tribute must be paid to the Government of India for the contribution it had made to the solution of the problem. The persistent efforts made by the Indian representative in the United Nations had also culminated in the generous offers by the Governments of Brazil and other countries, which would help to solve the problem of the ex-prisoners of the Korean war.

39. In the hope that the unification of Korea would be achieved one day, the Netherlands delegation would support the United States draft resolution, which clearly expressed that important objective.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.