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VERBATIM RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND TWENTIETH MEETING
Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 8 January 1957, at 3 p.m.

Chairman:

Mr. BELAUNDE

(Peru)

The Korean question [21] (continued)

Note: The Official Record of this meeting, i.e., the summary record, will appear in mimeographed form under the symbol A/C.1/SR.820. Delegations may submit corrections to the summary record for incorporation in the final version which will appear in a printed volume.

THE KOREAN QUESTION [Agenda item 21] (continued)

- (a) REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION FOR THE UNIFICATION AND REHABILITATION OF KOREA
- (b) PROBLEM OF EX-PRISONERS OF THE KOREAN WAR: REPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

Mr. JARRING (Sweden): In the course of the debate certain statements have been made concerning the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission which make it necessary for me to state the position of my Government.

When the Korean question was discussed in this Committee during the ninth session of the General Assembly, the Swedish representative made it clear that the Swedish Government could not feel entirely satisfied with the Swedish membership on the Commission and that Sweden might have to reconsider its participation. In explaining the reasons for this stand the Swedish representative pointed out among other things that it did not seem very satisfactory to man an extensive control machinery with a large number of qualified personnel when in fact there was no possibility that it would accomplish the task that naturally would be expected of such a body. The position we had taken was confirmed during the debate on the Korean question during the tenth session of the General Assembly.

Nevertheless, the Swedish Government decided to continue for the time being Swedish membership in the Commission but it was made clear to the parties to the Armistice Agreement that a considerable reduction in the personnel of the Commission should be made. To this end the Swedish Government and the Swiss Government made various proposals. After a partial reduction had been carried out in September 1955 with the consent of the parties, the Swedish Government in March 1956 proposed a temporary withdrawal of the inspection teams stationed at the designated ports of entry, the Commission retaining its right however to despatch its teams to the said ports of entry should the need arise.

This proposal was accepted by the parties and as a consequence the inspection teams were withdrawn. This led to a very considerable reduction in the personnel of the Commission. Although the wishes of the Swedish Government have thus been partially met, I wish to state that the position of my Government remains as set forth on earlier occasions, namely, that we are not satisfied that the Commission is in a position to accomplish the task entrusted to it.

Mr. Krishna MENON (India): My delegation would like to express its appreciation to the sponsors of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/L.159 on the problem of ex-prisoners of the Korean war: report of the Government of India.

I have already reported to the Committee the position that exists; there are still a small number of prisoners who have to be repatriated or resettled. So far they have expressed their options in regard to neutral countries and we are happy therefore that the present text before us includes an expression of the hope that these ex-prisoners who are still in India will be resettled in the near future with the co-operation of Member States; and I would like to express on behalf of my Government a hope that this hope will soon be fruitful.

I am sorry to note that views have been expressed with regard to this particular resolution which seek to cast a reflection on the handling of these ex-prisoners in India by the Government of India. I have no desire to argue this question at length because I am confident that the Members of the United Nations, with perhaps one exception, are satisfied that the Government of India has conducted itself in this matter with integrity and objectivity. If we felt otherwise, we would have reason to argue this case.

The former prisoners, when they expressed their desire to return to their homeland -- I have forgotten the exact number of them -- said that they wanted to go to North Korea. If they had said they wanted to go somewhere else, they would have been sent somewhere else -- that was one of the functions of the Repatriation Committee.

It may be remembered that I said that my delegation desires to do everything it can not to introduce any recriminations or acrimony into this debate, but since this point has been made I must speak for the record and say that the Government of India stands completely convinced and is quite confident that the action it has taken in ascertaining the views of these ex-prisoners and in sending them where they wanted to go will bear examination and we have nothing further to add except this repudiation.

(Mr. Krishna Menon, India)

In regard to the main proposition, I see from the notes that the representative of Colombia did me the honour of saying that I have made some interesting observations, but no suggestions or words to that effect. If that were so, that would indeed be a sad situation. I feel that I expressed myself very badly or it may be that the translation into Spanish does not convey the same meaning.

What I had intended to convey on behalf of my delegation yesterday was that the path set out in this draft resolution is not likely to accomplish the objectives on which there is common agreement. We tried to obtain modifications in this regard by private discussions and persuasion. That we have failed to do so at this session does not mean that we shall fail forever. We believe that the pursuit of those objectives is best gained by not seeking to amend or to add to the draft resolution, accentuating the differences that might arise.

I then went on to point out that what had to be attained in Korea was unification. De facto, there are two units, whether you call them States, administrations or anything else. It is the common concern of all of us that there should be only one, namely, a unified Korea. I referred yesterday to the various proposals put forward by members of the United Nations Command at the Geneva Conference, which were not all of one character, but suggested that there must be more than one way of dealing with the question. Therefore, in urging the views of my delegation in this matter for the consideration particularly of the United States Government as representing the United Nations Command, as the sponsor of this draft resolution and as the country that would have a greater share of the responsibility for taking the initiative in this matter, I pointed out that there should be no insurmountable difficulties if the matter were pursued on the basis of unifying Korea by free elections, where such elements were laid down as secret ballot, freedom of campaigning, time for organization and international supervision. Those are things about which we could think.

There are two points with respect to which there seems to have been difficulties in the past, which difficulties continue at present. One is with regard to international supervision. The United Nations at the present moment -- in last year's resolution and no doubt in this year's draft resolution, which will be carried -- takes the view that this must be United Nations supervision. We pointed out that in the conditions it was impracticable, a view that was expressed

last year, I believe, by the representative of Sweden, that was implied to a certain extent in the speech of the representative of Canada and that was taken into account by a former Foreign Minister of France at Geneva. We are not alone in this. Therefore, it was possible to find a method with provision for the following conditions: on the one hand, the United Nations prestige and concern, on the other hand, the essentiality of the feature of international supervision and, most important of all, the agreement of both sides. There was international supervision which, if agreed to afterwards by the United Nations, would meet all points of view. If what is really wanted is to bring about an election of that character, this would be the way to proceed. This suggestion is one of those that we made.

Secondly, with regard to the difficulty that has been pointed out several times -- I heard my colleague from Australia referring to it yesterday -- about an all-Korean conference and the two sides in which one could veto the other and so on, we recognize it. We said that, in such an election, the composition of the body to which these people were being elected would have to be negotiated between the parties with or without outside assistance. It is quite obvious that you cannot just have an election without laying down to what they are being elected. They obviously cannot be elected to the South Korean Parliament or to the North Korean Assembly or whatever they have. Therefore, they must be elected to some body with respect to which there is agreement on both sides, and that agreement would have to be negotiated between the parties with or without outside assistance.

We suggested that every encouragement and every kind of persuasion should be exercised on both parties to enter into the preliminary negotiations in whatever form they wished, even if they were informal or without recognizing that things of that character were taking place. Once that is done, then the remaining problem stated by the representative of Australia arising from the insistence of North Korea at Geneva is this question of representation. Is it of two equal blocs? When a country is going to be unified into one State, what is being formed is not a confederation, not a kind of overall committee of two separate States but of one State. Therefore, it is quite obvious that the representation in it would in the main have to be according to population, also taking account as a weightage factor

(Mr. Krishna Menon, India)

and not as an overruling factor, respective areas. It would be possible by discussion between the two sides, again with or without outside assistance, to fix the number of seats that should go to these two different parts. In that way, that difficulty could also be overcome.

It is the belief of the Government of India that an approach on these lines can yield results; that is to say, that, first, encouragement should be given to the two parties by the United Nations and by those who are in a position to speak to them to engage in informal discussions progressively with a view to discovering to what body there should be elections, which body could make its own Constitution; secondly, there should be some arrangement with regard to North Korea accepting the position that its population is smaller and therefore nothing can make a minority into a majority, and South Korea, on the other hand, accepting the view that some consideration is to be given to the size of the two countries. If the United Nations agreed, the supervision must guarantee what is desired; namely, that the elections would be straightforward, that they would be properly and honestly conducted, that there would be freedom of campaigning and that there would be no pressurization either in the North or in the South. For that, the machinery need not necessarily be and, in our opinion, could not be the Commission that we have. It will have to be some machinery which is ad hoc for that purpose. If, of course, in the passage of time, a United Nations body selected by the Assembly is straightaway acceptable, so much the better. But if it is not, and it does not seem to be possible now, then we should insist upon the body being an international commission that commands the confidence of both sides and that is competent to carry out and will carry out the task with integrity.

These were the proposals that we made yesterday. They have not been formalized in the way of amendments for the simple reason that we do not want to encourage a division on this draft resolution. So far as we are concerned, we do not see a settlement coming in this way, and therefore we do not want to come in the way of those who still believe that this is possible. My delegation, therefore, will just sit back and not participate in the voting so that we do not thereby become responsible in any way for hindering what the majority regards to be a solution.

(Mr. Krishna Menon, India)

We do not regard it as such. We have no right to think that our view is imbued with great wisdom, but that is what we have to put forward.

Therefore, my delegation, in order to facilitate this business, will not participate in the voting on this draft resolution as a whole. We shall not ask for a vote by parts, but if paragraph 1, reaffirming the objectives of the United Nations, and the preambular paragraph, noting that the Armistice Agreement remains in effect, are going to be put separately, then we shall vote for them.

This is our position, and I thought I should explain it before the vote was taken. We are doing this in the hope that the contribution that we make by way of putting forward these suggestions and also by not introducing further acrimony into this debate will be noted by the United States Government with a view to making some progress in this direction in the twelve months before us.

Mr. BERNARDES (Brazil): I wish to express the gratitude of my delegation to those speakers who had words of praise for the small services that the Brazilian Government was able to render in connexion with the resettlement of the ex-prisoners of the Korean war. We are especially grateful to the representatives of Ecuador, El Salvador and Venezuela, who introduced the joint draft resolution that is before the Committee. Since this draft resolution expresses appreciation for the attitude taken by the Governments of India and Argentina, we shall be able to pass an affirmative vote for the whole of the draft resolution.

Mr. KIZYA (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): Mr. Chairman, taking into account the fact that the delegation of the Ukrainian SSR did not participate in the general debate on the question now under consideration, I should like, with your permission, to set forth briefly the motives that will guide us in voting on the United States draft resolution.

First of all, may I point out that the delegation of the Ukrainian SSR considers that a final peaceful solution of the Korean question should be achieved by the Korean people itself. What is most important in solving the Korean question is the establishment by the Koreans themselves of economic, cultural and political links between the two parts of Korea so as to facilitate a future decision concerning the unification of the country. Therefore we consider that a constructive approach

(Mr. Kizya, Ukrainian SSR)

to a solution of the Korean problem would not consist of proceeding along the path of continuing the activities of the so-called United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea and by imposing by force the social and political order of one part of Korea on the other part; it would consist of proceeding along the course of establishing contacts between both parts of the country for the purpose of creating pre-conditions for a peaceful settlement of the Korean question.

At the same time it should be pointed out that the countries concerned could render assistance in the creation of such pre-conditions, provided there were a just and fair approach to this matter.

However, the United States draft resolution proceeds from a different position: from an attempt to impose on North Korea a solution of the Korean question from outside. This draft resolution proposes to continue the activities of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea and, what is more, to expand its functions. The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR holds the view that this Commission was created for the purpose of expanding the regime existing in South Korea to the whole of Korea. Experience has shown that such one-sided and oversimplified approaches to a solution of the Korean problem cannot bring any positive results.

It is clear that this Commission should have been dissolved long ago.

In view of the above considerations, the delegation of the Ukrainian SSR cannot support the draft resolution submitted by the United States and will vote against it.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I have no further speakers on my list. If there is no objection, the Committee will now proceed to vote. I should like to draw the attention of the representatives to the fact that we have two draft resolutions before us. The first, submitted by the United States, is contained in document A/C.1/L.158. With regard to this draft resolution, a roll-call vote has been requested.

A vote was taken by roll-call.

Yemen, having been drawn by lot by the Chairman, was called upon to vote first.

In favour: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, France, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Iceland, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Laos, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Luxembourg, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela.

Against: Albania, Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Abstaining: Yemen, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Burma, Ceylon, Egypt, Finland, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria.

The draft resolution was adopted by 57 votes to 8, with 13 abstentions.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): We shall now vote on the joint draft resolution submitted by Ecuador, El Salvador and Venezuela (A/C.1/L.159/Rev.1).

The draft resolution was adopted by 69 votes to none, with 9 abstentions.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): We come now to the explanations of votes.

Mr. TRUJILLO (Ecuador) (interpretation from Spanish): My delegation did not participate in the general debate nor did we take part in the discussion on the two draft resolutions which have just been adopted. We voted in favour of the United States resolution because we felt that this was the only way in which to confront successfully the difficult and complex problem of Korea. Unfortunately this is not a question of the unification of the peoples of North and South Korea, as some members have stated; it is really a problem of the people of South Korea and a foreign Power that is now governing the people of North Korea. As long as this Power does not agree to unification, we cannot arrive at any favourable solution.

It is therefore necessary for the United Nations to maintain a watch over the situation and to have this question on its agenda so that our interest and universal interest in this question may eventually bring about a final settlement on the basis of justice, truth and equity.

I should like to point out that some delegations have taken the time of the United Nations to discuss ways in which we might arrive at a solution. Discussions have been held on the way in which free elections could take place, elections desired by only one of the parties and not by the other. We have had the experience following the Second World War of countries occupied by victorious Powers. The situation in Korea and in Germany as well has become increasingly acute. Fortunately special circumstances made it possible to solve the problem in Austria. If it is true that Austria had to pay a price for its signature on the peace treaty, this did not at any rate compromise the dignity, sovereignty or independence of Austria, and today we have the pleasure of having this new Member among us. The same applies to Japan. Despite the fact that a final peace treaty has not yet been signed, the agreement reached is satisfactory and has enabled that great Power to start anew

(Mr. Trujillo, Ecuador)

its independent and fully sovereign life. We are all very pleased to have Japan here among us in the United Nations. Let us hope that the time will come when we shall see the reunification of the peoples of Germany, Korea and Viet-Nam. This would be a useful lesson for the future in showing that we should not rely solely on the word given in time of war, because in time of peace powerful interests emerge which make difficult even the signing of a peace treaty.

The United Nations itself would not have been born at San Francisco if the vision of the President of the United States had not anticipated the meeting which gave rise to the birth of the Charter of the United Nations. If that conference had been called for at a later date when peace had been established, I am sure that then the United Nations would never have been as successful as it has been so far.

The delegation of Ecuador has voted in favour of the United States resolution because in these circumstances that is the only effective way for us to keep before the conscience of world humanity the very serious situation that exists in Korea.

Together with the delegations of El Salvador and Venezuela, we submitted the draft resolution which has also just been approved. In it we take note of the report of the Government of India on the problem of ex-prisoners of the Korean war and express our gratitude to the Governments of India, Argentina and Brazil for their valuable co-operation in the settlement of this problem. We felt that the question of Korea -- (a) the report of the Commission, and (b) the problem of ex-prisoners -- was not fully covered by the United States draft resolution, and for that reason we submitted our joint draft, which has obtained the approval of this Committee, with some delegations, of course, abstaining.

Mr. ALVAREZA AYBAR (Dominican Republic) (interpretation from Spanish):

The very special attention which we have given to the data submitted to us in the relevant documents on the question of Korea, and the various statements of the representatives who have spoken, particularly the delegations of the United States of America and Australia, have led us to strengthen once again, if that were possible, our conviction as to the need to maintain unassailable the principles of our Organization, upon which the objectives of the reconstruction and unification of Korea are based.

The question of Korea is a symbol of international morality which must resist every attack, and it explains why it is not the United Nations that must address itself to the authorities of North Korea, but rather the latter, which because of their conduct have become creditors with regard to deserving an invitation, until they have assumed sufficient moral quality to be recognized as a proper part. If there is a time when facts impose themselves on principles and require revision of morality, this is not the case now, in spite of the pressure which undoubtedly, with that view in mind, is being carried out in the territory of North Korea in violation of the Armistice Agreement of 19 July 1953, and which the report of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea, as well as some delegations, pointed out as constituting regrettable circumstances which, unfortunately, awaken suspicion and distrust of possible new and more serious violations of the status that ought to prevail in that area. In spite of such wide divergencies between the activities carried out in North Korea and in South Korea -- democracy and peace in the South, and Communism and the desire for domination in the North -- we nevertheless all understand the significant importance of unification on the basis of a free democratic action which is advocated by this Organization in accordance with the draft resolution which we have supported.

To the Republic of Korea, which is determined to maintain the highest standards of collective life and to which the Dominican Republic has rendered economic assistance, and apart from the fact that the Republic of Korea will always find in us the voice of hope and of friendship, we express our hope that they will soon enter the United Nations, and if they cannot do so

(Mr. Alvarezza Aybar, Dominican Republic)

simultaneously, we hope that their territory will be completely restored to them on the basis of common welfare, which will be an example of the regulating effect of our present community of nations.

As regards the joint draft resolution on the ex-prisoners of war in Korea, we have no explanation to offer other than to congratulate Ecuador, El Salvador and Venezuela for such a happy initiative in this matter, which has now been properly complemented by Ceylon.

U HLA PE (Burma): My delegation abstained in the vote on the resolution contained in document A/C.1/L.158, submitted by the United States of America. Abstention in this case in no way implies indifference or lack of concern for the Korean question. Quite the contrary. May I remind the members of the First Committee that my Government supported the Security Council's action of 27 June 1950. We believed then and we believe now that collective measures for peace and efforts to bar aggression against an interference in the affairs of any nation will always gain our support.

At the very time that my Government supported the Security Council's action in 1950, we Burmese people were bitterly engaged in suppressing an internal armed Communist rebellion. Yet we took time from that to record in a most modest way our physical as well as our moral support for the action of the United Nations in Korea. We shipped rice to Korea. Not much, it is true, but that was an evidence of our concern and our ability at that time.

May I also point out that my Government has recorded its affirmative votes on the resolutions affecting Korea; for example, the resolution establishing the Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea, whose report is here under discussion. It is now six years later. We are still faced with the insuperable fact of the 38th parallel.

I cannot help but agree with that portion of The New York Times editorial of 6 January which said the following:

"That the truce operation, however desirable as a quick stop to killing, has been futile in the long-range problem is obvious."
The question then becomes, how long do we in the United Nations continue in futility? Does it not seem reasonable that if certain measures have been tried

(Mr. Alvaraza Aybar, Dominican Republic)

for six years and have been found wanting, new measures should then be sought? Some representatives have said that we do not want the assistance of the aggressor to enable us to determine what we shall do. I have no quarrel with such a view provided that we show the flexibility and the ingenuity of finding solutions to these problems.

Would it not be unwise for us to return to these annual meetings of the General Assembly with unchanging adherence to previously fixed positions? I know that the Members of this Committee would answer this question in the negative, for otherwise no progress would be made. May I cite but one most important change. Witness the presence of Japan among us today, a presence which my Government argued for long before we had a reparations and treaty agreement with Japan.

In short, my delegation abstained on this resolution because it feels that we have not yet begun to apply the wisdom in the instant case that we have already applied in several others. My Government shares the reaffirmation of paragraph 1 of this resolution. We believe most firmly that the objectives of the United Nations are to bring about by peaceful means the establishment of a unified, independent and democratic Korea under a representative form of government and the full restoration of international peace and security in the area. We believe, finally, that if a Commission of this body, which we helped to bring into existence, has not been a successful vehicle for our purposes, then it is time for us to seek a new approach which may be more successful.

My delegation voted in favour of the resolution (A/C.1/L.159/Rev.1) submitted by the delegations of Ecuador, El Salvador and Venezuela. This is in great appreciation of the most delicate and complex problem well discharged by the Government of India and for the generous way that the Governments of Argentina and Brazil have co-operated in the solution of the problem of ex-prisoners of the Korean war.

Mr. WINKLER (Czechoslovakia): The Czechoslovak delegation abstained in the voting on the joint draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/L.159/Rev.1. I should like to state clearly that this abstention by my delegation does not mean that we do not appreciate the role played by India and other countries in connexion with the problem of prisoners of war. On the contrary, we fully appreciate that role, the more so because we, as a member of the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission, witnessed most closely and shared the difficulties India was facing in carrying out its task in Korea.

We abstained from voting on the draft resolution for reasons of principle. Our position on the question of the prisoners of the Korean war and in particular on their transfer to the United Nations Command -- the illegality of which was confirmed in a resolution of the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission of 21 January 1954 -- has been made sufficiently clear, both in the Repatriation Commission and in the General Assembly, and certainly will be explained in detail when the time comes for the consideration of the reports of the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission. We, therefore, could not vote for the draft resolution because we felt that such a vote might imply recognition of the fait accompli carried out in respect of the status of the prisoners formerly held in the custody of the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission.

The reasons for our negative vote on the United States draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/L.158 are, I think, sufficiently obvious from the statement I made yesterday.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): The Committee will note with satisfaction that we have concluded the first item on our agenda. We should go on to the second, which is disarmament. However, representatives are undoubtedly aware of the fact that the Assembly has been called for tomorrow, and therefore we cannot deal with this subject until the Committee is called to another meeting, notice of which will be found in the programme of meetings.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.

