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Tenth Session  
FIRST COMMITTEE  
VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-EIGHTH MEETING  
Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Tuesday, 15 November 1955, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Sir Leslie MUNRO (New Zealand)

The Korean question [19] (continued)

A statement was made in the general debate on the item by:

Mr. de Freitas-Valle (Brazil)

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THE KOREAN QUESTION [Agenda item 19] (continued)

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

The CHAIRMAN: There are no names on the list of speakers. The Committee is aware that the debate on the present item began last week. We heard two speakers yesterday morning, following, I would have hoped, a period of deliberation over the week-end. The Committee does have a heavy agenda. I need hardly remind representatives that we shall be dealing with the question of disarmament, with the Moroccan and Algerian items, with the question of West Irian, and with the item proposed by the Soviet Union. This session of the General Assembly ends on 10 December. I do not wish members to be exposed to the inconvenience of night meetings, but I think that such meetings will be inevitable. It is my duty as Chairman to ensure, so far as it lies in my hands, that we are able to proceed with the debates as expeditiously as possible, in conformity with the importance of the matters before us.

I would remind the Committee that the list of speakers on the present item will close at 1 o'clock today. Representatives will be called on to speak strictly in the order in which their names are inscribed on the list of speakers; this procedure is in accordance with our rules and is, I think, the only one by which we can conduct our debates.

I see now that the representative of Brazil has offered to speak, and I therefore call on him.

Mr. de FREITAS-VALLE (Brazil): Now that consideration of paragraph (b) of the Korean item has been deferred until the eleventh session of the General Assembly, there remain **for** study by the Committee the question of the unification and rehabilitation of Korea and the problem created by the presence in India of those ex-prisoners of war whose final disposition has not as yet been settled.

(Mr. de Freitas-Valle, Brazil)

On the first question, I should like to recall that Brazil's position has been made abundantly clear during the statements of its representatives in the many and lengthy discussions held in the General Assembly since the problem of Korea first appeared on the agenda. In the light of the events that have occurred since last year, we can only say that we are more firmly convinced than ever of the need to reach a peaceful settlement of this question in the shortest possible time.

I would only state now that there is considerable cause for apprehension in the fact that the North Korean authorities, in open violation of the Armistice Agreement, are bringing new equipment to reinforce their military units. I shall say no more about this particular problem at this stage of our deliberations, and shall confine my remarks to paragraph (c) of this item -- that is, the problem of the ex-prisoners of the Korean war.

I should like to thank the representatives of the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, and India for their kind words concerning the position that the Government of Brazil has taken on this question. In the speech that I had the honour to deliver before the General Assembly, I stated that the Government of Brazil had decided to receive those prisoners of the Korean war who were still under the custody of the Indian authorities, subject to the fulfilment of minimum immigration requirements and the prisoners' willingness to live among our people. In making this offer, my Government was prompted by two main reasons: first, and foremost, the sincere wish to contribute to the final settlement of the question of the Korean ex-prisoners of war, and, second, the hope that our action might lighten the burden which India has been bearing for so long in connexion with the problem. As regards our first motive, we are guided by a sense of duty towards the United Nations, and, as regards the second, by my Government's determination to strengthen the close ties of friendship that have always existed between Brazil and the Indian nation.

(Mr. de Freitas-Valle, Brazil)

We in Brazil have the highest regard for the services rendered by India in relation to the repatriation and resettlement of the ex-prisoners of the Korean war. We are convinced that these services have contributed substantially to bringing about the lessening of international tension prevailing in that area of the world.

Following my statement in the General Assembly, I officially informed the Secretary-General on 27 September of the offer of the Brazilian Government concerning the ex-prisoners of the Korean war, and it is my understanding that that communication was forwarded by Mr. Hammarskjöld to the Indian authorities. Furthermore, I asked him to inform the Indian delegation to the United Nations on the question of the minimum immigration requirements which I mentioned in my statement. These requirements are a collective passport that can be issued by the Indian authorities themselves, a vaccination certificate and a health certificate. I am happy to say that, as far as I can see, these prerequisites can be easily met by the ex-prisoners and will in no way delay their final disposition. It seems to me that we, for our part, have done everything that was in our power to do.

On 18 October last the Secretary-General forwarded to me a list compiled "from information provided by the permanent mission of India giving names and pertinent data concerning thirty-eight ex-prisoners of the Korean war who have opted for Brazil". Once again, may I state that we are ready to receive those ex-prisoners of war who have expressed the desire to go to Brazil. It now falls upon the local authorities to take the necessary steps in order that the ex-ex-prisoners may sail for Brazil in the shortest possible time. When that has been done, however, there will still remain in India a number of ex-prisoners of war, since our offer could apply only to those who were willing to settle in Brazil.

As we have learned lately, the Government of Argentina has also shown interest in this question and offered to receive a limited number of the ex-prisoners. It is our understanding, furthermore, that the Argentine Government is now willing to consider the possibility of expanding its offer. According to the communication

(Mr. de Freitas-Valle, Brazil)

circulated by the General Assembly on 11 April 1955, there were at that time eighty-seven ex-prisoners of war under the custody of the Indian Government. A large percentage of these prisoners chose to remain in India, a fact which speaks highly of Indian hospitality. A smaller percentage, but not at all a negligible number, opted for Argentina.

Assuming that both India and Argentina would be willing, as we are, to accept the ex-prisoners who expressed the wish to settle in those countries, there is an excellent prospect for a prompt and final solution of this problem.

Concerning the draft resolution on sub-item (c) tabled by the delegation of India, I ask your permission, Mr. Chairman, to make a few comments in the hope that its wording might be altered to express the facts more accurately. In the second paragraph of the preamble it is said that the General Assembly "Notes with appreciation that the Governments of Argentina and Brazil have generously offered to resettle a number" of the ex-prisoners. I very respectfully submit that, in our offer, we made no limitation as to the number of ex-prisoners whom we would accept. If we now speak of receiving thirty-eight, it is because this is the number who declared their desire to avail themselves of our offer. Therefore, in my opinion, it is not correct to say that the Government of Brazil has offered to accept "a number of them". It would express the facts more accurately if the words "a number of" were deleted, so that the paragraph would then read: "Notes with appreciation that the Governments of Argentina and Brazil have generously offered to resettle them..."

For similar reasons, in the first operative paragraph the words "not covered by the present offers" seem to me to be somewhat inappropriate. I should prefer to have this phrase altered to read "those who did not choose to avail themselves of the present offers", or words to that effect.

We are also in doubt as to the advisability of requesting the Government of India to report to the eleventh session of the General Assembly. All indications point to an early solution of this problem. It would perhaps be a better procedure to follow if the Indian Government were to inform the Secretary-General on the developments which may take place without necessarily inscribing this item on the eleventh session of the Assembly as, it seems to us, is the purpose of this provision.

(Mr. de Freitas-Valle, Brazil)

These are suggestions which, I hope, the delegation of India may itself introduce in the draft resolution without the necessity of any formal action on my part.

In concluding my remarks, I wish to stress again that the Brazilian Government is ready to receive the ex-prisoners of the Korean war who expressed the wish to settle in our country, and we trust that this problem will be resolved satisfactorily as soon as possible.

The CHAIRMAN: Since no other representative wishes to speak at this meeting, the Committee will meet again this afternoon at 3 o'clock.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.