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Chairman: Mr. Leopoldo BENITES (Ecuador).

AGENDA ITEMS 31 AND 93

The Korean question: report of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (continued) (A/6312, A/6370, A/6375, A/6416, A/6417, A/C.1/934-937, A/C.1/942, A/C.1/943, A/C.1/L.392)

Withdrawal of all United States and other foreign forces occupying South Korea under the flag of the United Nations and dissolution of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (continued) (A/6394, A/C.1/935-937, A/C.1/942, A/C.1/943, A/C.1/L.389)

1. Mr. TONG WON LEE (Republic of Korea) thanked all those representatives who had supported the resolution inviting a representative of the Republic of Korea to take part in the discussion (A/C.1/942).

2. The Republic of Korea had been established in 1948 as a result of free elections held under United Nations supervision. Since that time, the Government and people of Korea had made major advances in every sector of national life, and the United Nations had contributed to that progress by providing moral and material aid. The Government and National Assembly of the Republic of Korea had been established on the basis of general elections held in 1963 under the supervision of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (UNCURK).

3. At the 1485th meeting, the Soviet representative had accused the Government of the Republic of Korea of being a puppet government. That unfounded accusation was an attack not only on the integrity of the Korean people but also on the integrity and authority of the United Nations. The Soviet representative would have been better advised to direct his accusations at the North Korean régime, which had been imposed by a foreign Power.

4. The Government and people of the Republic of Korea were pleased at the economic and social progress they had achieved in the difficult aftermath of the war forced upon them in 1950. The first five-year plan of economic development, launched in 1962, had resulted in a substantial increase in productivity. Korea's present annual growth rate of 8 per cent was one of the highest in the world, and the country expected to be self-sufficient in food by 1970.

5. In the matter of international co-operation, the Republic of Korea already maintained or had decided to establish diplomatic relations with seventy-eight States, including seventy-one Members of the United Nations. It had joined with other Asian countries in establishing the Asian Development Bank, and a Ministerial Meeting for Asian and Pacific co-operation had been held at Seoul in June 1966, on the initiative of the Government of the Republic of Korea, to discuss the possibility of strengthening regional co-operation.

6. Despite those successes, the efforts of the Republic of Korea had proved fruitless in one respect, i.e., in so far as the unification of Korea was concerned. It was in the hope of achieving unification that the Government and people of the Republic of Korea continued to turn to the United Nations. For almost twenty years, the United Nations had sought to unify Korea through the exercise of the principle of self-determination on the basis of free, universal, democratic elections. Responsibility for the continued failure to achieve that aim rested with the communist authorities in North Korea, who had consistently denied the competence and authority of the United Nations with regard to the Korean question. Those authorities had refused to take part in carrying out the United Nations programme and had called for the revocation of the resolutions adopted by the Organization. In the face of the intransigence of the North Korean communist régime, UNCURK had pressed its efforts to unify the country. In carrying out that mandate, the Commission had always had the full co-operation of the Government and people of the Republic of Korea which wished it to continue its efforts. The Republic of Korea and the United Nations were confident that, through perseverance and firmness, the world community would eventually convince the North Korean extremists that they would be serving the interests of the Korean people if they agreed to a formula for unifying the country in conditions of peace and freedom and in conformity with the wishes of the people.

7. The responsibilities of the United Nations in Korea also included that of restoring peace and security, and it was able to accomplish that owing to the presence of the United Nations forces. The Government and people of the Republic of Korea wished those forces

to remain in their country until peace and security were safeguarded throughout the entire region.

8. Some countries called for the withdrawal of the United Nations forces and the dissolution of UNCURK, since they regarded those forces and the Commission as an obstacle to the unification of Korea. It should be emphasized that the United Nations forces were in Korea as a result of decisions taken by the United Nations and at the request of the Government of the Republic of Korea. It was inconceivable that the United Nations would permit them to engage in activities that threatened the North Korean régime or its allies. The United Nations forces were not an obstacle to the unification of Korea but rather to the communist ambition to conquer the Republic of Korea by force. The Republic of Korea was most anxious for them to remain until they discharged the function assigned to them. The memory of the aggression committed in 1950 and the continuing tension under a precarious armistice made their maintenance essential. The fortification of the demarcation line by the North Korean régime and the latter's flagrant violations of the Armistice Agreement were constant threats to the security of the Republic of Korea, as were the Chinese communist armed forces, equipped with nuclear weapons and stationed a few hundred meters away on the other side of the Yalu River in Manchuria. Withdrawal of the United Nations forces would imperil the security of the Republic of Korea and the peace of the Far East.

9. At the 1485th meeting, the Soviet representative had referred to an incident caused by a Republic of Korea soldier who had displayed a United Nations flag in Viet-Nam. The incident had resulted from an unintentional error on the part of the soldier, and steps had been taken to ensure that nothing of the kind happened again. He would refer the Committee, in that connexion, to the letter he had addressed to the Secretary-General on 12 December 1966 (A/C.1/943).

10. The question at issue was which party was truly sincere and wished to unify Korea by peaceful means. The fact that North Korea denied the right of the United Nations to play any role and continued to reject the Organization's competence and authority was sufficient proof that it did not seek peaceful, democratic unification.

11. It was essential to continue the present efforts and to give new force to the conviction that the United Nations would, by unifying Korea, make a contribution to peace and to the happiness of 40 million Koreans. As Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, he wished to express the gratitude of his Government and people to the United Nations and the hope that the Organization would, in the future, continue to support their desire for peace and freedom in a unified, independent, democratic Korea.

12. Mr. HAYMAN (United Kingdom) recalled the objectives of the United Nations in Korea, as set out by the General Assembly in resolution 112 (II) and, more recently, in resolution 2132 (XX). He noted that the Government of the Republic of Korea had always accepted the United Nations decisions and had, in its recent memoranda on the question of Korea

(A/C.1/934 and A/C.1/936), reaffirmed its endorsement of the Organization's objectives.

13. North Korea, on the other hand, had rejected the authority of the United Nations, which was founded on a series of General Assembly resolutions adopted by impressive majorities. In their memorandum of 21 July 1966 (A/6370), the North Korean authorities had stated that "the United Nations was not entitled from the outset to deal with the Korean question even in the light of its Charter, which provides for the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of other States". They had further asserted that, having been reduced to the status of a belligerent in the Korean war by the United States, the United Nations had even lost the moral authority to concern itself with the Korean question. In an effort to justify their attitude, the North Korean authorities had charged that the United Nations was allowing itself to be used as an instrument for United States aggression against Korea. They had contended that the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea had been "rigged up" by the United States in violation of the Charter and that the Commission's annual reports were concocted for the purpose of justifying the occupation of South Korea by United States troops.

14. All those charges were without foundation. The United Nations forces were in Korea under Security Council resolution 83 (1950) of 27 June 1950, by which the Council, after determining that the armed attack on the Republic of Korea by forces from North Korea constituted a breach of the peace, had recommended that the Members of the United Nations should furnish such assistance to the Republic of Korea as might be necessary to repel the armed attack and to restore international peace and security in the area. Fifty-one Member States had expressed support for the stand taken by the Security Council, while only five had dissented. Sixteen Governments, including his own, had acted upon the Council's recommendation by contributing military forces. Many other Governments had provided non-military assistance. The fact that the United States had contributed the greater part of the forces made available to the United Nations had been due to the proximity of United States forces in Japan and did not affect the character of the forces in Korea as United Nations forces.

15. In view of those facts, the North Korean authorities could not seriously contend that the United Nations had no legal basis for its presence in the Republic of Korea. Their attitude would be more understandable, even if not necessarily more justified if they were objecting to a United Nations presence in North Korea. Why, however, should they be so concerned over United Nations forces in the Republic of Korea when the latter's Government welcomed the presence of those forces? It was clear from the recent reports of UNCURK that democratic institutions and the system of representative government in the Republic of Korea had continued to develop and to gain strength. By-elections held in November 1965 had provided an opportunity for free expression of the popular will. The Assembly was functioning normally, and the judiciary had remained independent. His delegation therefore could not agree that, in

supporting the continued presence of United Nations forces in the Republic of Korea, the latter's Government was not acting in accordance with the wishes of the majority of the population.

16. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, in its memorandum of 7 October 1966 (A/C.1/934), said that the United Nations forces were in the country to guarantee the security and peace of the region. That statement was borne out by the report of UNCURK, which described the activities of North Korean terrorists against the Republic of Korea. Although those activities were at present on a small scale, it might be asked whether that would remain the case if the United Nations presence was ended.

17. His delegation could therefore find no justification for the arguments advanced in favour of withdrawing the United Nations forces from Korea and dissolving UNCURK. Agreeing to the North Korean demands would be tantamount to acknowledging that the United Nations had no business in Korea and that its duty to maintain international peace and security and to take collective measures for the prevention and elimination of threats to the peace was conditional

upon the agreement of all the parties concerned. It would also mean agreeing that, having set about a task, the United Nations should withdraw from that task because it had proved difficult. It was the duty of the United Nations to continue to strive for the achievement of the aims which it had set for itself in its resolutions, namely, the peaceful reunification of Korea and the restoration of peace and security in the area. What was most needed in order to attain that goal was a change in the attitude of the North Korean authorities, i.e., a decision on their part to accept the authority of the United Nations and to co-operate with UNCURK. By maintaining their present attitude, they showed that they were not truly interested in reunification through free, democratic elections throughout all of Korea and that they wished, instead, to impose their will by means that would not bear the scrutiny of impartial United Nations observers. The Committee must therefore not give way, for if it did the cost not only to the 26 million people of South Korea and the 12 million people of North Korea, but also to the United Nations and the entire world, would be incalculable.

The meeting rose at 12.5 p.m.