

GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY

SEVENTH SESSION

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FIRST COMMITTEE, 559th

MEETING

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## CONTENTS

Page

Korea (A/2354) ( <i>continued</i> ): (a) Reports of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (A/1881, A/2187, A/2298); (b) Reports of the Agent General for Korean Reconstruction (A/2222 and Add.1 and 2) .....	355
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Chairman: Mr. João Carlos MUNIZ (Brazil).

**Korea (A/2354) (*continued*): (a) Reports of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (A/1881, A/2187, A/2298); (b) Reports of the Agent General for Korean Reconstruction (A/2222 and Add.1 and 2)**

[Item 16]\*

1. Sir Percy SPENDER (Australia) remarked that all delegations were agreed in recognizing the importance of the Korean question. Heavy fighting had, indeed, been taking place in Korea since June 1950. The distinction currently made between cold wars and hot wars was wrong. The sufferings caused by the "local" war in Korea proved that the distinction was artificial. They placed upon the Members of the United Nations the obligation to seek a means of putting an end to the war on honourable terms and as soon as possible.

2. It was two months since the First Committee had adopted by an overwhelming majority the draft resolution submitted by the Indian delegation (A/C.1/734/Rev.2), which had embodied a solution of the prisoner-of-war question. That resolution (610 (VII)) had been transmitted by the President of the Assembly to the Governments of China and North Korea (A/2354, annex I). A reply had been awaited not only by governments but by all the nations of the world. The Chinese and North Korean authorities, however, had flatly rejected the proposals, requesting that the resolution, which they regarded as illegal, should be annulled. In addition, the replies (A/2354, annexes II and III) had contained false charges and misleading propaganda.

3. He quoted certain passages from point 3 of the reply of the Government of the People's Republic of China, and pointed out that the kind of lying propaganda contained in that reply left no doubt as to the arguments which would have been advanced in the First Committee by the representatives of China and

North Korea if the draft resolution (A/C.1/L.19) suggesting that they should be invited to take part in the discussions had been adopted. The reply also illustrated the belligerent and aggressive nature of the régimes which were in power in China and in North Korea.

4. In the circumstances, it was obviously the duty of Members who at the time had supported the Indian draft resolution to stand firm in support of a just and honourable solution with a view to achieving an armistice in Korea. It was essential for the United Nations clearly to demonstrate that communist intransigence would be matched by United Nations determination to persist in a course which it was convinced was right. It was above all important that, while entertaining the hope of achieving an early end to hostilities, it should not betray the principles of collective resistance to aggression the application of which in Korea had given the world new grounds for hope.

5. The overriding aim of the Australian delegation and of the majority of the Members of the United Nations was the restoration of peace. Such a peace, however, must be in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter and must not be bought at the price of dishonour or in violation of the principle of human dignity and freedom, as it would be if the repatriation of prisoners of war against their will were permitted. So long as the principle of the voluntary repatriation of prisoners of war was respected, the Australian delegation was prepared to consider any proposal for bringing the hostilities in Korea to an end.

6. Australia had contributed to the negotiations which had been in progress for two years with a view to a solution. It had supported the numerous concessions that had been made either at Panmunjom or in the First Committee of the Assembly by the Members of the United Nations which had forces in Korea or which supported the attitude of the United Nations in Korea. Obviously, however, it was impossible to agree to a settlement which would mean abandoning human beings and human values to communist totali-

\* Indicates the item number on the agenda of the General Assembly.

tarianism. It was important that the authorities in China and North Korea should know that on that point no compromise was possible. Peace could not be accepted at the price of the surrender of the Korean people to communist dictatorship. Nor could procedures be accepted or concessions made which would leave communist China and the Soviet Union in a stronger position to continue their aggressive activities.

7. It was clear that the USSR and China could end the war by accepting the principles which the great majority of the United Nations had proposed. Their rejection of those proposals showed that they did not want peace except on their own terms. The grounds which the communist authorities had disclosed for their rejection of the United Nations proposals were exclusively legal, whereas the issue at stake was primarily humanitarian, the problem being to put an end to the bloody conflict that was in progress. The true motives of the refusal, however, were to be found in the fact that in the communist view the human being had no rights against the State. That was the essential difference between the democratic and totalitarian States. The problem of the prisoners of war in Korea represented, in microcosm, the fundamental cleavage between two conceptions of the place of the State in human affairs. The peace which the Communists would like to impose would involve an abandonment of the principle of the dignity of man. Peace on those terms would clearly be unacceptable.

8. The Communists' disregard for human values was illustrated by their attitude to their own prisoners. In the first place, they insisted that they should all be repatriated, even by force. In addition, the prisoners received instructions to provoke incidents in the camps, to the detriment of their welfare and with the sole aim of furthering communist propaganda. With regard to the United Nations prisoners whom they held, their intention was to use such prisoners as hostages so as to have at their disposal a means of exerting pressure during the armistice negotiations.

9. Thus it appeared that the immediate purpose of the communist authorities was to break the will of the United Nations to resist aggression and achieve an honourable peace. It was the hope of those régimes that the democratic States would weary of continued resistance and accept conditions of peace, no matter of what kind. The only way of thwarting the desire of the aggressors was to show them that the United Nations was determined to resist aggression and discharge its obligations according to the Charter, while remaining ever ready to consider any proposals such as might bring the hostilities in Korea to an end on honourable terms.

10. The purpose of the Soviet Union was to prolong the conflict in Korea in the hope of weakening the will of the United Nations to resist aggression, and exposing to dangerous strains the economies of the States of the free world.

11. None of the proposals put forward by the United Nations had been accepted. The Indian draft resolution adopted on 3 December 1952, which had become resolution 610 (VII), represented the most that could be done to achieve a reasonable solution. The resolution had, however, been flatly rejected by the Soviet Union and the Chinese and North Korean authorities. They must understand that they could obtain peace if

they abandoned their unyielding attitude, but that they could not impose their terms on the United Nations.

12. The tragedy of the situation in Korea was obvious to all. Already the task of reconstruction was looming in all its vastness, and all those who opposed aggression in Korea had no more ardent desire than to achieve a cessation of hostilities which would enable the rehabilitation of Korea to be undertaken. It could only be hoped that the Soviet Union would make good its oft-repeated protestations of peace by abandoning its unyielding attitude. Otherwise, the only conclusion must be that it did not want peace and that its protestations were only a kind of hypocrisy. The free world was not frightened by all the forms which USSR propaganda assumed, but it was tired of the constant repetition of spurious arguments, and would be only too happy to see a change in favour of constructive proposals.

13. Mr. DE SOUZA GOMES (Brazil) pointed out that the Assembly had adjourned in December 1952 in the hope of resuming its work in a less tense atmosphere. No effort had then been spared to obtain a hearing for the voice of reason. The Korean question had been examined from its every angle and it had become clear that there was a divergence of opinion between the majority of Members, who were desirous both of repelling aggression and putting an end to hostilities, and a small group of representatives who had adopted an attitude favourable to the aggressor.

14. The reply of the Chinese and North Korean authorities to the United Nations resolution transmitted to them by the President of the Assembly left little hope of finding a favourable solution. As the United States representative had said at the 557th meeting, peace did not depend solely upon the application of collective security; it must also be based on the humane treatment of human beings. The system of collective security envisaged in the United Nations Charter could not operate in face of mutual distrust. The United States representative had laid upon the Soviet Union the blame for aiding the aggressors against the Republic of Korea. In the circumstances, it was obviously necessary that the USSR representative should give some explanation. If such explanations were not forthcoming, it must then be deduced that the USSR was deliberately obstructing the United Nations in the accomplishment of its work of maintaining peace.

15. The CHAIRMAN, noting that no speakers had asked for the floor, suggested that the meeting might be adjourned.

16. Mr. MARTIN (Canada) wondered whether, in order to avoid wasting time, it would not be possible to pass on to the second item on the agenda, until it was possible to make some progress in connexion with the Korean question.

17. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the Committee, despite its heavy agenda, was slow in starting its work. The Korean question was extremely important and probably required time for reflection. It might be useful to suspend examination of the question if long periods of delay were found to be necessary. It might accordingly be possible to start consideration of other items. He was not, however, making any formal proposal. He wished simply to draw the Committee's

attention to the anomalies in the situation, and hoped that he would not have to cancel any meetings.

18. Mr. LODGE (United States of America) asked the Chairman if he knew when the USSR representative intended to speak.

19. The CHAIRMAN replied that he had no information on the subject.

20. Mr. BELAUNDE (Peru) pointed out that, in view of the accusations brought against the Soviet Union by the United States representative, it would be difficult for other delegations to speak in the debate until Mr. Vyshinsky had made a reply concerning the USSR's responsibility for the continuation of the war in Korea.

21. For his own part, he thought that the reply of the Chinese and North Korean authorities to General Assembly resolution 610 (VII) constituted a flat rejection. The United Nations proposals had not been rejected on the basis of considerations of international law or with reference to the special interests of China and North Korea. They had been rejected simply because those authorities were firmly determined to continue the war.

22. During the first part of the session, various members of the majority in the United Nations had made continual efforts to reach a solution. His delegation, by submitting a draft resolution (A/C.1/732), had tried to find some ground of reconciliation. Later, by accepting the Indian draft resolution, it had, in common with fifty-three other delegations, made a far-sighted approach to the problem by referring the question of prisoners of war to a commission of four members in all of whom the USSR could have had confidence. The rejection of that proposal was in reality not only a check to negotiations, but also a reflection of the cynical policy pursued by the Chinese and North Korean authorities in favour of continuing the war and exhausting the strength of those who were defending the principles of justice, freedom, and democracy.

23. Mr. MUNRO (New Zealand) thought that, in view of the contempt with which the USSR representative was treating the First Committee, the latter should not waste any more time waiting for Mr. Vyshinsky to reply to the charges brought by the United States representative, and should speedily reach a decision re-stating the principles which had previously guided it.

24. The CHAIRMAN asked representatives to inform him if they were prepared to take the floor on the following day or the day after that. In the absence of speakers, he suggested that the meetings arranged for 27 and 28 February should be cancelled.

25. Mr. ENTEZAM (Iran) formally proposed that, in the absence of speakers on the Korean question, the First Committee should suspend its examination of the question and take up the next item on its agenda.

26. Mr. SARPEN (Turkey) thought that, in view of the fact that no new elements had arisen since the adoption of the Indian draft resolution in December 1952, the First Committee's silence was eloquent. That draft resolution incontestably revealed a desire to find an honourable solution. It had been brutally rejected by the authorities of China and North Korea and no alternative proposal had been put forward. In the

circumstances, the First Committee should state that General Assembly resolution 610 (VII) was still valid. It should express its concern at the unconditional rejection of that proposal by the authorities of China and North Korea, and pass on to the next items on its agenda.

27. Mr. PALAR (Indonesia) supported the proposal put forward by the representative of Iran, which would allow delegations further opportunity for reflection on a serious matter, and would avoid waste of time.

28. Sir Gladwyn JEBB (United Kingdom) agreed that it might be advisable to pass on to the next item on the agenda, leaving the Committee free to return to the Korean question when a certain number of speakers had put down their names.

29. Mr. SKRZESZEWSKI (Poland) said that it would be illogical to go on to consider another item of the agenda after admitting that the Korean question was the most important. Of course, it had been alleged that the debate had been delayed by waiting for Mr. Vyshinsky to speak. But all delegations had the same right to speak and, if none of them had yet put down their names, it was because the study of the documents, some of which were very lengthy, was a heavy task, particularly for small delegations. An effort should therefore be made to avoid creating tension by laying on one delegation alone the entire blame for holding up a debate which, even as matters stood, was sufficiently complex.

30. The CHAIRMAN said that if the Iranian representative did not insist on his proposal, the Committee would meet on Monday, 2 March, at 10.30 a.m. It would then be in a position to take up the next item on the agenda if no speakers had put down their names.

31. Mr. ENTEZAM (Iran) said that he had only wished to avoid wasting the Committee's time. The procedure which he had proposed, while keeping the important Korean question as the first item on the agenda, would have enabled the Committee to deal with some other problem until other speakers had put their names down on the list. He wondered whether it was quite logical, after admitting the urgency of a question, to defer examining it for several days. He did not wish, however, to insist on the adoption of any solution different from that envisaged by the Chairman of the Committee.

32. Mr. LODGE (United States of America), while admitting the importance and the extreme delicacy of the problem, thought that he should make known his intention, if no speakers put themselves down on the list, of proposing at the following meeting a formula which would enable the Committee to continue its work.

33. Mr. KYROU (Greece) said that his delegation might possibly be prepared to consider the next item on the agenda. He proposed, however, that the various delegations should be asked whether they were ready to speak on point (b) of the Korean item, which concerned the reports of the Agent General for Korean Reconstruction.

34. The CHAIRMAN explained that his questions to Committee members had referred to the Korean item as a whole.

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.