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Chairman: Mr. Francisco URRUTIA (Colombia).

AGENDA ITEM 17

The Korean question:

(a) Report of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (A/2711, A/2786, A/C.1/L.116, A/C.1/L.117, A/C.1/L.118, A/C.1/L.119) (continued)

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Y. T. Pyun, representative of the Republic of Korea, took a place at the Committee table.

1. Mr. QUIROGA GALDO (Bolivia) said that the report of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (A/2711) and the results of the current debate were alike most discouraging. Both sides had adamantly maintained their positions at a time when only mutual concessions could bring the parties any closer together.

2. Since 27 July 1953, when the Armistice Agreement had been signed, the Commission's activities had been in abeyance. The Korea Political Conference at Geneva had not changed the situation. The Communist delegations to the Conference had rejected the principle of the authority and competence of the United Nations in Korea and the principle of really free elections. In its report the Commission said that it was unable to contribute to the realization of the unification of Korea, and hence that it could only help to consider the problem of the administration of the area north of the 38th parallel which had been transferred from the control of the United Nations Command to that of the Seoul Government.

3. The report reflected the Commission's achievements in Korea and it should therefore be approved by the Committee. On the other hand, it was disquieting to note from it that there was no prospect of a final agreement.

4. The Government of the Republic of Korea had repeatedly stated that the negotiations with the Communists were foredoomed to failure and that the unification of Korea could be achieved only by the threat of force. It had also indicated that direct military action might be considered, an idea which it had voiced again after the Conference; it had even spoken of "pushing up to the Yalu River". The representatives of the Communist Governments concerned left no doubt, for their part, that the idea of launching a new large-scale attack by Chinese Forces across the 38th parallel had not yet been abandoned.

5. There were only two possible solutions in the face of such diametrically opposed positions: either to consider the provisional situation created by the Panmunjom Armistice final or to accept the inevitability of a new battle which might lead to a third world war. In the face of such a terrifying dilemma every effort had to be made to find a new compromise solution.

6. An analysis of events in Korea showed that the 38th parallel had assumed dramatic significance. While the former defenders of Stalingrad had used their skill in vain in their effort to unify Korea under a Communist régime, illustrious American generals too had been unable to achieve a politically and ideologically unified and democratic Korea.

7. On both sides of the 38th parallel the political situation, like the military situation, had crystallized; that seemingly uncrossable line cut in two a Korea, the North of which was part of the Communist world and the South part of the free world. The arguments of the South Korean representatives, who maintained that the unification of Korea could be achieved by force, would therefore convince no one.

8. In the opinion of the Bolivian delegation, the aim of the United Nations, to achieve that unification by means of free elections, was equally unattainable in the near future.

9. The immediate problem was to provide a common life for the millions of human beings belonging to a nation divided into two States. That being a very special situation, a confederation of States might provide the basis for agreement and union. The classical concept of a confederation was a group of States each of which retained its internal autonomy and its external sovereignty in all matters except those entrusted by the covenant of confederation to a joint body composed of representatives of the confederated countries.

10. A system along those lines would ensure peace to the two parts of that divided nation and the restoration of normal trade. Once the confederation had been set up, a conference of the parties concerned would guarantee the neutralization of the peninsula, so that the armed forces which absorbed so much of the national income, both in the North and the South, could be disbanded.

11. After those preliminary steps, which might be taken simultaneously, would come a new stage, an experiment in coexistence by two régimes, one based on the Communist doctrine and the other on private enterprise. The resulting synthesis might prove very useful by showing the world that a formula for coexistence could be worked out to prevent its total destruction. If the experiment proved satisfactory it might be repeated in Germany where the problem was somewhat similar. In that event, in view of its importance as a highly industrialized country, the new Germanic confederation would constitute a conclusive experiment to test the possibility of the coexistence of States based on different ideologies.

12. Even if such an effort did not lead to any immediate solution of two problems of the utmost gravity for the peace of the world, it would provide the common ground for an understanding which might progressively extend to Asia and to the whole of Europe.

13. The recent history of Bolivia provided a striking example of the union of two violently conflicting parties. It had been achieved through magnanimity and had won his country universal esteem. It was in the same spirit which had enabled it to maintain its threatened unity and its spiritual and ideological freedom that Bolivia was now making its modest contribution to the Committee in the hope that it might provide the starting point for a new study of the formidable Korean problem.

14. Mr. MENON (India) said that on seven occasions and during five General Assembly sessions the United Nations had been discussing the Korean problem. The aim of the United Nations—the unification of Korea by peaceful means—had remained unchanged throughout, in spite of pressures from outside the General Assembly.

15. Among the documents before the Committee were the reports of the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission (A/2641) which, regrettably, had hardly been mentioned so far. Yet the Commission had contributed to the efforts of the United Nations to bring about the cessation of hostilities in Korea. It was generally recognized that the stubborn problem of the repatriation of prisoners had been solved through the good offices of the Commission. When the Indian representative on the Commission, as its Chairman, had asked by a communication, dated 10 January 1954 (A/2634), at the conclusion of the 120-day period provided for under General Assembly resolution 610 (VII), that the Assembly should be convened so that he could submit the Commission's report to it, the majority of the Member States had refused his request, as appeared from document A/2635. The decision had been unfortunate, particularly as it was known to have been taken on the initiative of the more powerful nations, the very nations which, during the resumed seventh session of the General Assembly in August 1953, had practically promised that a request to reconvene the Assembly would be received favourably. His delegation would not start a discussion of the subject so as not to raise some controversial issues which might make both parties even more inflexible, but it reserved the right to request the General Assembly to study the reports in question, if necessary.

16. The Committee also had before it a note by the Secretary-General on the question of the prisoners

of war (A/2809). In that connexion, the Indian delegation invited particularly those States which had voted for General Assembly resolution 610 (VII) of 3 December 1952 to read paragraph XVII of the proposals appended to that resolution; it stated that if there were any prisoners of war who had not been repatriated and whose future had not been provided for by the political conference, the responsibility for their care would be transferred to the United Nations; he also drew attention to paragraphs 7 and 8 of document A/2809. The Indian Government still had on its hands 87 or 88 prisoners of war who had not opted or had not expressed the desire to live in India. The Fifth Committee would in due course be asked to take appropriate financial action, and the Member States which had maintained that prisoners of war should be allowed to settle in the country of their choice, would have to respond accordingly when approached.

17. The next document was the report of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (A/2711). He drew special attention to the part of the report dealing with the bellicose attitude of President Syngman Rhee. Although it was not always appropriate to quote statements made by politicians and statesmen in the heat of the moment, the statements in question had been reiterated on 7 December of that month in Seoul, and they were dangerous. They were in complete contradiction with the stand taken by the powerful nations which had a direct military alliance with the Republic of Korea and which had been stressing the need for a peaceful settlement of the problem of the unification of Korea. There could be no doubt that in taking decisions which directly or indirectly gave strength to such statements, the General Assembly would be taking a dangerous attitude.

18. The following document was the report of the fifteen Powers dealing with the Korean Political Conference at Geneva (A/2786). It was merely a report on the conference; but since it appeared from the document that the Secretary-General had received a copy of the records of the meetings, those documents should be regarded as being implicitly part of the record. In view of the subjective nature of document A/2786, it was important to refer to the original records of the meetings for a comparison of the different views.

19. The Geneva Conference could not be said to have no connexion with the United Nations. In fact, it had grown out of General Assembly resolution 711 (VII). In operative paragraph 5 of the resolution, the General Assembly had stipulated that the United Nations should be informed if agreement was reached and that it should be kept informed at other appropriate times. Consequently the report in document A/2786 should be treated as an interim report of the proceedings of the Conference. Agreement had not been reached, but the situation should not be regarded as final, and it was for the First Committee to seek common ground between the views of the two parties.

20. On 13 May 1954, Sir Anthony Eden, United Kingdom representative at the Conference, had spoken of certain principles as essential to agreement. The first principle was that elections should be held for the formation of an all-Korean Government. The second that the elections should truly reflect the people's will,

taking account of the distribution of the population between North and South. Thirdly, the elections should be based on universal suffrage, secret ballot, and should take place as soon as possible and in conditions of genuine freedom. Fourthly, the elections had to be internationally supervised, under the auspices of the United Nations. The countries selected did not necessarily have to be those which had taken part in the Korean war; there could be a panel of countries acceptable to the Conference. Fifthly, any plan for a settlement of the Korean question had to provide the conditions in which foreign troops could be withdrawn in conformity with General Assembly resolution 376 (V) of 7 October 1950.

21. Mr. Molotov, who had represented the Soviet Union at Geneva, for his part, had stressed the following points on 5 June: First, elections on the basis of universal suffrage, a secret ballot and proportional representation would make it possible to set up an all-Korean legislative body. Secondly, the Geneva Conference should approve in principle the creation of a supervisory body to watch over those elections throughout Korea. The composition and functions of that body and the principles on which it should base its activities would be considered additionally. No party had expressed a categorical wish concerning the system to be adopted in that proportional representation, nor had any particular method of voting been advocated. Mr. Molotov's third principle related to the question of foreign troops, whose withdrawal he had suggested. Fourthly, all the participants of the Conference were to agree that the all-Korean elections should be held under the supervision of an international body.

22. A simple comparison of the two approaches, limited to those specific points, showed that there was no real discrepancy between them.

23. The French representative at Geneva had said that Korea should be unified within its historical frontiers as a free, independent and democratic State. He had added that elections should be held throughout Korea to set up a single and truly representative Government for the whole of Korea. Those elections should be carried out in conditions of genuine freedom under international supervision. Furthermore, the French representative had said that the settlement of the Korean question should provide for the withdrawal of foreign troops. Once unification had been achieved under proper conditions, the United Nations should be called upon to approve the settlement reached.

24. At the Geneva Conference, the only suggestion at variance with the principles he had just outlined had come from the South Korean representative. Definite progress had, then, in his delegation's opinion, been made at Geneva, and it was for that reason that, in one form or another, the efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement of the Korean question in conformity with the objectives of the United Nations should be continued.

25. As the United Kingdom representative had said (738th meeting), the commission which supervised the elections, however composed, should be truly impartial and should be so composed as to command the authority necessary for its decisions to be carried out. That had also been the Canadian representative's position (740th meeting).

26. His delegation felt strongly that the United Nations should not subscribe to any hard and fast view

on international supervision. With regard to Korea, it had a dual role to play; first, through the United Nations Command, which was concerned with the military operations, and, secondly, through the world organization itself.

27. As the Swedish representative had said, any peaceful settlement presupposed an attempt to settle in a practical and realistic manner the problems that arose. While in the specific case it was true that China did not recognize the authority of the United Nations, it should not be overlooked that the United Nations did not recognize China. That country could not be expected to feel bound by the Charter of an Organization that did not recognize it as a Member.

28. The question of international supervision could, however, be settled in a manner acceptable to all parties. It was possible to hold impartially supervised elections in Korea on the basis of the secret ballot and proportional representation. "Proportion" did not mean "equal proportion", and there was no reason to think that elections in South Korea would all result in the triumph of one party. Elections on the basis of proportional representation would therefore be likely to make a compromise possible.

29. The Korean Political Conference at Geneva had proceeded from General Assembly resolution 711 (VII) which, adopted by an overwhelming majority, had ratified the Armistice Agreement. That resolution had formally embodied the idea, which had long existed, that a peaceful settlement in Korea should be secured by negotiation. The fifteen-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.119) likewise referred to the Armistice Agreement. It was common ground, therefore, that the Agreement was still valid, and the settlement should be achieved by negotiation. That did not mean that the conditions essential for a resumption of negotiation existed at the moment, but it would be unwise and contrary to the principles of the United Nations to inject into any decision that the Committee took approval in advance of a particular form of settlement. When, therefore, the fifteen Powers, in their report (A/2786), took the view that the supervision of the elections should be under the authority and auspices of the United Nations, that could not constitute more than a view put forward by one party, and it would not be wise to commit the First Committee to it.

30. The similarity of views on a large number of points that existed between the Indian draft resolution and the fifteen-Power draft resolution was, admittedly, encouraging. The main difference resided in the fact that the fifteen-Power draft resolution called upon the General Assembly to approve the report on the Conference. While it was true that such approval could not mean much so long as the Armistice Agreement remained in force, it could not fail to add to the general confusion. It would therefore be better to adopt his delegation's draft, under which the Assembly would merely take note of the report.

31. At all events, the unification of Korea continued to be the aim. North and South Korea complemented one another economically, and it was important to achieve unification, although not by coercion, by ill-considered measures or by war. History had shown that problems that seemed insoluble could ultimately be solved in a manner acceptable to both parties. It was in that spirit that his delegation had proposed its draft resolution, in which it felt that it had defined

what should be the United Nations position. It was the duty of the United Nations to strive to reconcile conflicting interests. A study of the records of the Korean Conference at Geneva supported the hope that negotiations would be resumed which would ultimately lead to the implementation of the Armistice Agreement.

32. Although the General Assembly had not thought fit, in August 1953, to accept the draft resolution submitted by Canada, Australia and New Zealand (A/L.153) that India should be invited to send representatives to the Conference—the object of the proposal being that countries not fully committed to either side should be represented and act as conciliators at that Conference—his delegation had no national pride in the matter. It merely hoped that the United States representative would support its efforts to avoid a further deadlock.

33. It was owing to its concern to avoid any element of division that his delegation would not be able to vote for the USSR draft resolution (A/C.1/L.116), for it was unlikely that the General Assembly would at the moment agree to the calling of another conference. That was also the reason why his delegation had put forward a moderate draft resolution that simply took note of the situation and referred to resolution 711 (VII). The reference in the fifteen-Power draft resolution to resolution 712 (VII), paying a tribute to the troops that had fought in Korea, seemed, however, out of place. It was particularly desirable to bind up the wounds and not to hamper progress.

34. Mr. SOURDIS (Colombia) said that in co-sponsoring the joint draft resolution, the Colombian delegation had already made clear its position.

35. After the Second World War, Korea had been divided into two zones. It had been decided to re-constitute the unity and independence of the country by means of free elections. However, while such elections had been possible south of the 38th parallel, the situation north of that parallel had prevented all contact. Thus, a Republic of Korea had been established in the south and the People's Republic of Korea in the north had had to be accepted.

36. The great Powers responsible for the settlement of the problem of the unification and independence of Korea had brought that question before the United Nations. While the United Nations had been seeking a solution the aggression of June 1950 had occurred. Pursuant to a unanimous decision of the Security Council, the United Nations had come to the assistance of the Republic of Korea. That decision had been confirmed by the General Assembly and Colombia had taken part in the collective action to repulse aggression by dispatching a battalion and a frigate to Korea.

37. It might be useful to recall that the armistice negotiations had been delayed on account of a controversy over the question of the war prisoners. The North Koreans had never supplied a detailed list of those prisoners and the sudden reduction of their number from 60,000 to 11,000 had reportedly been due to their re-education.

38. Finally, an armistice had been signed and the Armistice Agreement had provided for the convening of the political conference. Such had been the origin of the Korean Political Conference at Geneva which had also been in keeping with resolution 711 (VII) of the General Assembly.

39. Everyone agreed on the principle of the unification of the country by means of free elections guaranteeing the independence and democratic character of the elected system of government. It was only over the application of those principles that opinions differed. It seems that the Powers which had not been able to agree with the United Nations were employing carefully thought-out tactics. Instead of elections organized by the United Nations, those Powers proposed elections organized by an all-Korean commission composed of an equal number of North and South Korean representatives. Apart from the fact that that proposal affected the authority of the United Nations it was likely to lead to a deadlock since each party was to be given the right of veto. Similarly, the neutral nations supervisory commission proposed by those Powers was not a commission of neutral countries selected by the United Nations, but a commission which would be composed of an equal number of representatives of the Western Powers and the Communist Powers. Clearly that kind of procedure, intended to prevent the application of the principles on which there was apparent agreement, could not be accepted.

40. The Colombian delegation would vote in favour of the joint draft resolution for, having taken part in the struggle for the defence of certain principles, it considered that the draft resolution reaffirmed those principles without preventing negotiations at a later date.

41. The failure of the Conference had largely been due to an inability to agree on concrete measures. The Communist Powers had refused to recognize that the Conference had met in pursuance of resolution 711 (VII) of the General Assembly and had proposed procedures which would virtually have stultified the principles he had mentioned. Nevertheless, that Conference had not been a complete failure. The participants had agreed that, pending a final settlement, no action likely to endanger the maintenance of peace in Korea should be taken. The question of the withdrawal of armed forces had also been discussed at Geneva and that problem was gradually being solved. Colombia had withdrawn its battalion.

42. On essential points the two draft resolutions before the Committee coincided; the only remaining difference related to the acceptance of the report on the Conference. That report was fully in keeping with the principles defended by the United Nations in Korea. Accordingly, there was no reason why it should not be approved. The fifteen-Power draft resolution expressed the hope that it would be possible to make fresh progress towards the achievement of the United Nations aim in Korea. But that the Conference should be regarded as still being in session was unacceptable. Its mandate had been a limited one and there was no reason why it should meet again, for it would inevitably end in the same disagreement. That did not however, rule out the possibility of an agreement being concluded at a later stage, and such a possibility was provided for in the fifteen-Power draft resolution.

43. The collective security of nations was at stake in the Korean conflict. Hence, it was necessary to uphold the authority of the United Nations so as to reaffirm the principles it defended. For a small country like Colombia the only hope lay in the effective implementation of the just settlement of conflicts. Colombia had fought in Korea on behalf of those principles and

would therefore vote in favour of any draft resolution reaffirming them. He hoped that a solution would be found before the tenth session of the General Assembly.

44. Mr. HANIFAH (Indonesia) said that the Geneva Conference on Korea had not succeeded in settling the problem and had not been able to agree even on the wording of a report, or even on the objectives of the Conference. One side claimed that the Conference had been convened in virtue of paragraph 60 of the Armistice Agreement, while the other claimed that such was not the case and that the political conference contemplated by that paragraph was still to be convened.

45. Nevertheless, the parties concerned acknowledged that the objective was the establishment of a unified, independent and democratic Korea. In addition, the urgent need to restore international peace and security in that area of the world was universally recognized. Nevertheless, the two sides were at odds over the interpretation of their common objective. On one point, there was complete agreement. Everyone wanted a peaceful solution of the Korean question, and nobody wanted a resumption of hostilities. That could only mean the repudiation of any use of force and the affirmation of the need for continued endeavours to reach agreement through negotiations or by any other peaceful means.

46. Despite that flicker of hope, the Indonesian delegation shared the anxiety expressed by the United Kingdom representative with regard to the Korean situation. It was essentially a fluid situation. The fighting had stopped, but armed forces were still facing each other, and statements were being made which were not conducive to relieving international tensions in the area. There was always the fear that some incident might lead to a fresh outbreak of hostilities. The combined efforts of the Members of the United Nations could and should obviate that danger. A passive attitude on the part of the Organization could only make the solution of the problem more difficult. The United Nations could not fail in the task of establishing a united, independent and democratic Korea. The General Assembly should therefore adopt a draft resolution reaffirming its interest in the attainment of a peaceful solution of the Korean question.

47. In that respect, it should promote a meeting of minds between the parties. While unification might not be attainable immediately, at least the division of the country should not be allowed to become permanent. It would be useful, for instance, to foster contacts between the parties principally concerned on specific points. That method would generate a favourable atmosphere in which more extensive negotiations could then be undertaken.

48. That objective could best be attained by the adoption of the Indian draft resolution, inasmuch as it reaffirmed the Assembly's concern that the parties should move forward in the direction of a peaceful settlement of the question, without requiring them to follow any set pattern in their endeavours.

49. The fifteen-Power draft resolution contained certain provisions which were not in the Indian draft; perhaps the two drafts might be merged into a single text.

50. The discussions had shown that it would be difficult at the moment to achieve a solution of the Korean

problem. The Assembly should, however, express the hope that all parties concerned would make progress towards a settlement. Korea was not an isolated issue. The question of Korea had wide repercussions which were felt especially in Asia. The United Nations was under a duty to continue to exert every effort towards a peaceful solution which would restore peace and security in Asia.

Order of consideration of items on the agenda

51. Mr. ENTEZAM (Iran), speaking on a point of order, said that the Arab-Asian group, which had requested the inclusion of the Tunisian question in the agenda, had instructed him, as a token of goodwill, to move that the question should be postponed until the end of the agenda.

52. For some months, talks had been going on between the French Government and the authorized representatives of the Tunisian Government. He took that opportunity to congratulate the French Government upon its initiative, and added that if the negotiations had already proved successful, the States which had secured inclusion of the Tunisian question in the agenda would have asked that it be withdrawn. If they failed, the question would have to be discussed immediately. As things stood, the path of wisdom seemed to be to postpone debate so as not to inhibit the negotiations under way.

53. The CHAIRMAN proposed that the Committee put the Tunisian question at the end of the agenda.

It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 17

The Korean question:

(a) Report of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (A/2711, A/2786, A/C.1/L.116, A/C.1/L.117, A/C.1/L.118, A/C.1/L.119) (continued)

54. Mr. SARPER (Turkey) recalled that the interest of the Turkish delegation in the unification and independence of Korea was not new: Turkey had taken part in the debate on the Korean question from the outset. As a result of its sincere desire to ensure the establishment of a free, independent and democratic Korea, Turkey had been elected a member of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea and was still taking part in the Commission's work.

55. Turkey's interest in a unified, independent and democratic Korea was still as keen as it had been on the day when Turkey responded to the appeal of the Security Council by sending a combat force to Korea to repel aggression. Collective security was not a vague concept, but a practical living reality, the only alternative to total disaster.

56. The Turkish delegation fully supported the two principles enunciated by the sixteen Powers in their declaration (A/2786, annex). The statements made in Geneva by the delegations of the USSR, China and North Korea were hardly in harmony with those principles. Mr. Chou En-lai had said, for instance, that as the United Nations had been a belligerent it

had lost its competence to deal impartially with the question. It was clear that there had been an unbridgeable gap between the views of the sixteen Powers and those of their opponents at the Korean Political Conference at Geneva. That gap had not been bridged during the debate in the First Committee. That being so, no useful purpose would be served by convening another conference which would surely prove to be yet another disappointment for world public opinion. For that reason, the Turkish delegation could not vote for the USSR draft resolution (A/C.1/L.116). It also could not vote for the Soviet Union draft resolution (A/C.1/L.117) which would discontinue the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea.

57. Some representatives had suggested that, as the Indian draft resolution and the fifteen-Power draft had many features in common, they might be amalgamated. The Turkish delegation could not agree with that suggestion. The fact that they were similar in substance was a sound reason for adopting the better of the two. Moreover, the Indian delegation might have been better advised to propose an amendment, even though the Turkish delegation would not have supported it.

58. The Turkish delegation would vote for the draft resolution which it had co-sponsored, and formally moved, in accordance with rule 132 of the rules of procedure, that it should have priority in the voting.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.