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Chairman: Mr. Franz MATSCH (Austria).

**AGENDA ITEM 26**

**The Korean question: report of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (A/4187, A/C.1/822, A/C.1/823, A/C.1/L.245) (continued)**

**GENERAL DEBATE AND CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/C.1/L.245) (continued)**

1. Mr. CHO (Republic of Korea), thanking the Committee for its invitation to participate in the discussion, said that one of his country's deepest regrets was that it did not yet have full United Nations membership. When the communist forces had unjustly launched a surprise attack against the Republic of Korea on 25 June 1950, the United Nations had denounced the aggression and had come to its support, and on 7 October 1950 the General Assembly, in resolution 376 (V), had recommended that all appropriate steps be taken to ensure conditions of stability throughout Korea. At the Korean Political Conference, which had been held at Geneva in 1954 following the conclusion of the armistice, the sixteen nations representing the United Nations had agreed, first, that the United Nations was fully warranted under its Charter in using its good offices to effect a peaceful settlement in Korea, and secondly, that in order to establish a unified, independent and democratic Korea, genuinely free elections should be held, under United Nations supervision, for representatives in the National Assembly, their number to be in direct proportion to the indigenous population of Korea (A/2786, annex).

2. In July 1948, the Republic of Korea had adopted a constitution based upon the principle of free, fair and equal representation of the entire population, and had ever since reserved a due proportion of seats in the National Assembly for the chosen representatives of the northern provinces as soon as their election could be effected. The United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea had always been welcome in the Republic of Korea and the Government had co-operated with it in every way, although unfortunately no practical solution for the enforced disunity of the country had yet been found. The whole world was wondering whether the efforts of the United Nations to try for the twelfth consecutive year to find a solution would finally be successful.

3. The Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union had declared in the United States that his country advocated the peaceful settlement of international disputes and healthy competition between States with differing political and economic views. If only the Soviet Union were to co-operate with the United Nations on the basis of the principles already set forth for a unified Korea, the division of the peninsula could soon be brought to an end. Because of its geographical position, Korea had frequently been the subject of rivalry among the great Powers, although the country itself had never waged an aggressive war in more than 4,000 years of national existence. The Soviet Union was so powerful that it obviously had no reason to fear Korea, which asked no more than to be permitted to live its own national life. Korea had differences with the Soviet Union, of course, but that should not preclude the country's reunification any more than it prevented the independent existence of other neighbouring countries of the Soviet Union.

4. As was well known, Korea would have continued to be united in 1945 if the Soviet Government had co-operated with the United States Government. Unity could have been achieved subsequently if the General Assembly resolutions on Korea had been respected. If the Soviet Union was sincere in advocating peaceful competition, his Government asked only that it apply that policy in the northern part of Korea and permit free and fair elections so that the people there should enjoy the same political rights and privileges that had long been enjoyed in the South.

5. In northern Korea, young people now in their fifteenth year had spent all their lives under communist domination. Their thinking had been conditioned by the communist misrepresentation of world events as well as of events in Korea and the Far East. Older people in the North, who had been subjected to communist rule immediately following an entire generation of Japanese colonial domination, had never had an opportunity in their lifetime to enjoy the blessings of freedom. If the Communists were willing to submit their cause to the free competition of fair discussion, multiple party nomination and the secret ballot, they should not shrink from putting it to the test in northern Korea.

6. The progress made during the past ten years in the Republic of Korea in strengthening the foundations of democracy was amply confirmed by the report of UNCURK (A/4187). His people enjoyed as much freedom as any country in the world. They were free to learn, to study, and to acquire information from any source. Foreign newspapers, magazines and radio programmes were freely available to all; besides freedom of the Press and public discussion, his country also had freedom of political campaigning and freedom of person and property. Great progress had been made in education: when the southern provinces were freed from foreign colonial domination in 1945,

more than 77 per cent of the population had been illiterate, but illiteracy had now been reduced to less than 4 per cent of all persons over the age of six. Under his country's Constitution, women had been given full political equality with men, and safeguards had been provided for children and workers. A sweeping system of land reform had been introduced and those who tilled the soil had now become its owners.

7. Korea was basically a rich country, but its natural resources were greatly overstrained by the fact that 23 million people out of its total population of 30 million were crowded into the area south of the truce line. The division of the country had inevitably led to inflation, but it had gradually been brought under control, and the standard of living had been raised to a level that was at least endurable. That had been particularly due to the generous economic assistance furnished by the United States and other States Members of the United Nations. Lasting contributions to the development of the economy had also been made by the United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, which unfortunately was now coming to an end.

8. References had been made by communist representatives at the preceding meeting to the continuing presence of United States and United Nations troops in Korea. He wished to state that the forces were there at the request of the sovereign Government of the Republic of Korea for the purpose of defending Korean freedom against the ever-present danger of alien aggression. The usual propaganda had been uttered about the puppet régime in the northern part of Korea, but that régime had been forced upon the people by the Soviet Union and had never dared to submit to fair and free elections under United Nations supervision. The ruling party in northern Korea was so unsure of itself that it absolutely refused to permit a duly authorized United Nations commission to enter and observe conditions for itself. The Republic of Korea, on the other hand, was open to all legitimate observers, so that the whole world was aware of the falsity of the slanderous allegations made about conditions there. A conclusive answer to the falsehoods was to be found in the UNCURK report.

9. The position of his Government remained clear and unchanged: the Republic of Korea demanded the unconditional withdrawal from its territory of all invading troops from Communist China and insisted that the people of northern Korea should be allowed the same basic rights of freedom and fair elections, under United Nations supervision, that were already enjoyed by the people of the Republic.

10. Mr. DIALLO Alpha (Guinea) explained that his delegation had abstained in the vote on draft resolutions A/C.1/L.243 and A/C.1/L.244 because it had not had sufficient time to give them proper consideration. If it had to vote over again, it would abstain on draft resolution A/C.1/L.244 and vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/L.243. His delegation's only concern was that the question of Korea should be solved under United Nations auspices so that the country could be reunited and enjoy the benefits of peace. There were two ways of approaching the Korean question; the first, which had already been followed for over ten years, was for the General Assembly to adopt a resolution each year, confirming the resolution of the preceding year and requesting that the item be included in the agenda of the next session. The second and more realistic procedure,

however, would be to weigh all the obstacles objectively and settle the matter solely in the interests of the Korean people, who would not be relieved of the misery caused by their enforced division by impassioned statements.

11. His delegation would therefore abstain in the vote on draft resolution A/C.1/L.245 and would support any measure aimed at settling the matter for the benefit of both sides in Korea.

12. Mr. SHANAHAN (New Zealand) observed that, while the United Nations had seen the emergence of many new sovereignties, three countries, of which Korea was one, had been the victims of an arbitrary division and their peoples were still denied the right to assert their national dignity. Korea was a particular concern of the United Nations, and New Zealand had been associated with the United Nations effort to repel aggression against the young Republic.

13. The basis of New Zealand's approach to the question of the reunification of Korea had remained unchanged over the years. It could not accept any challenge to the United Nations authority to deal with the question or any departure from the twofold objective that had been laid down. However, the Assembly's goal of a unified, independent and democratic Korea and the restoration of international peace and security in the area could not begin to be realized until the people of Korea as a whole were able to choose their destiny by means of elections free from interference from any quarter. Some form of impartial and effective international supervision of all stages of the electoral process was therefore essential.

14. Regrettably, the communist side had shown no readiness to comply, and the correspondence exchanged between the Governments contributing to the United Nations forces in Korea and the Government of the People's Republic of China had revealed no inclination on the part of the latter to enter into negotiations. Requests for clarification on electoral arrangements and guarantees had gone unheeded and there was still no assurance that the North Korean authorities would co-operate in giving the people of North Korea and the majority in the South the right to choose in freedom their own form of Government.

15. The demand for the withdrawal of all United Nations forces before elections could be held took no account of the reasons for the presence of those forces in Korea—though actually the great majority had in any case been withdrawn. In the light of past events in Korea the Assembly could hardly be expected to contemplate a return to a situation in which a solution by force might again be attempted. In spite of the discouraging response to the questions put by the sixteen Governments of the United Nations Command, the New Zealand delegation felt that an agreement on both the arrangements for the preliminaries and the elections themselves could be sought through negotiation: there was no suggestion that only one set of electoral procedures should be followed. It did insist, however, that the right of free choice should in no way be infringed. Far from being an ultimatum designed to impose a solution on the Korean people, the intention was to secure conditions in which reunification might be achieved in accordance with the freely expressed wishes of the Korean people themselves.

16. The New Zealand Government was confident that the Assembly would not be unwilling to explore any bona fide proposal which offered some prospect of genuine progress, provided that it did not call for the abandonment of the fundamental objectives of a united, independent and democratic Korea. While the New Zealand delegation had no illusions that a further resolution restating the basic aims of the United Nations would be respected any more than those adopted in the past had been, it would nevertheless vote in favour of such a resolution as a declaration of faith in the ultimate restoration of Korea's unity as a free and democratic nation.

17. Mr. BROVKA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) expressed surprise at the allegations made by the representative of the Republic of Korea; they seemed to take no account of the true situation in Korea.

18. In view of the General Assembly's one-sided approach to the problem of Korea it was scarcely to be wondered that after so many years no progress had been made towards a real solution. The Western Powers were unwilling to invite both parties concerned to participate in the discussions; at the same time they arbitrarily laid the blame for the continued division of Korea on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Regrettably, that tendency was reflected in the report of UNCURK. The Commission drew no conclusions concerning the factors which prevented the unification of Korea—namely the presence of United States and other Western troops in South Korea. The Government of the People's Republic of China, in its note of 10 December 1958 (A/4187, paras. 8 and 9), had made it clear that there could be no free expression of the will of the Korean people in the presence of foreign troops.

19. Any objective observer would find it hard to disagree with that view especially as the United States, far from ensuring conditions conducive to free elections in Korea, was actually engaged in strengthening the South Korean army, which was now equipped with the most up-to-date weapons.

20. The report stated that the Government of the Republic of Korea still did not officially approve of the Armistice Agreement, but maintained that free elections should be held in North Korea only to fill the seats reserved in the National Assembly and considered that elections supervised by the United Nations were unnecessary in the Republic since they had already taken place there (A/4187, paras. 13 and 15). Clearly the South Korean Government had no intention of recognizing the legitimate rights of the Korean people and was deliberately preventing their unification. Free elections could hardly be considered to have been held under United Nations supervision if South Korea was still occupied by foreign troops. The Commission seemed singularly unobservant of events that were actually taking place in Korea and of the strange concept which the Syngman Rhee Government had of freedom of election. According to a South Korean source, on 13 April 1959 a cabinet minister had ordered government employees and their families to support Syngman Rhee as a candidate for the presidency at the next elections, threatening those who failed to comply with dismissal. There had been numerous instances of police repression of critics of the existing régime and of violations of freedom of the Press. Yet UNCURK had no objection to holding so-called free elections in such circumstances, and

its bias was apparent from inconsistencies in its own report. Thus, while one passage contained an enthusiastic statement about increased efficiency in the civil service and improved economic conditions, it was reported elsewhere that the National Assembly's revision of the National Security Law had provoked sharp protests on the grounds that the Government's action infringed personal liberties. Notwithstanding the Commission's reticence about many of the less promising aspects of life in South Korea it had been compelled, after its positive evaluation of the rise in the economy, to acknowledge later on in the report that the agricultural population, which comprised some 68 per cent of the labour force, received only about 38 per cent of the national income, that industrial production had been reduced, and that there were large deficits in the balance of payments and the balance of trade.

21. As reported in April 1959 in the Japanese monthly periodical Chuo-Koron, the purchasing power of the South Korean population had been reduced by one-third as compared with the period of Japanese occupation. The workers had to contend with long working hours and low wages while harsh conditions and inadequate safeguards exposed them to health and safety hazards. A South Korean newspaper had, moreover, stated that in April 1959 the number of unemployed in South Korea totalled 28 per cent of the population. The South Korean Government was proposing forcibly to resettle many surplus workers in Latin-American countries, yet at the same time it had rejected the proposal of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to provide South Korean workers with employment and material assistance. Even worse was the plight of the agricultural population, a large proportion of which had been obliged to leave home for lack of food and seek means of subsistence elsewhere.

22. In North Korea, on the other hand, both industry and agriculture were developing rapidly. The number of engineers and technicians was 4.1 times higher and wages were 1.6 what they had been, while educational and health services had been raised to a high standard.

23. If UNCURK approached its task in a spirit of objectivity, it would be bound to conclude that the unification of Korea would be impossible until all Western armed forces were withdrawn from South Korea, leaving the Korean people free to determine their own future. Certain representatives of Western countries had contended that it was easier for the Chinese People's Republic to withdraw its troops since only a short distance was entailed, whereas the United States would have to withdraw its troops thousands of miles. Yet, being a neighbour of Korea, the Chinese People's Republic could hardly be expected to withdraw its troops to a comparable distance and there could be no solution to the problem without a modicum of confidence on which to base an international agreement. It was thus to be hoped that the United Nations would respond to the reasonable appeal of the Supreme National Assembly of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which had indicated that the withdrawal of American troops would be in harmony with the new international tendency towards easing tensions and with the idea of general and complete disarmament.

24. Mr. MOREAU DE MELEN (Belgium) observed that the representative of Australia had placed the

situation in its true perspective in recalling that the victim of aggression had been South Korea. That fact had been confirmed by the presence of a United Nations commission which had been able directly to ascertain the source of the aggression and by the speed with which the North Korean troops had progressed towards the South, taking advantage of the unpreparedness of their victims. Similarly, the representative of Liberia had pointed out (1062nd meeting) the disinterested nature of the intervention undertaken by a number of countries at the cost of heavy losses.

25. Such sober appraisals of the situation were to be welcomed when the claim was advanced that the United Nations was no more than a belligerent in Korea and, as such, not competent to deal with the problem. To claim that, in responding to the appeal of a threatened nation, the United Nations had played the part of a belligerent was tantamount to claiming that a State had no right to arrest and try malefactors.

26. Actually, the United Nations troops were carrying out an unprecedented role for the fulfilment of a true ideal. Never before in history had an international army been recruited to enforce the decisions of a supreme authority representing all nations. Young soldiers from distant countries, to whom Korea was merely a name, had sacrificed themselves to defend that nation's freedom. Viewed in that light, they could hardly be regarded as foreign troops occupying a country by force.

27. Mention had been made of free elections. Such elections had been advocated as far back as 1950,

even before the Korean war. Yet now it was claimed that elections should be subject to the complete withdrawal of troops. Apart from the fact that practically all those troops had already been withdrawn, the United Nations should not be unmindful of the events that had taken place after the withdrawal of American troops in 1950. Moreover, there was no certainty that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would agree to the holding of elections under United Nations supervision, and in the view of the Belgian delegation that was an essential condition.

28. On the other hand, unification was just as essential as free elections. The inhabitants of North and South Korea were of the same race and the economies of the two parts of Korea were complementary. An early solution to the problem was not foreseeable. The United Nations was committed to peaceful measures, and having restored order, could not contemplate imposing a solution by force. It could only be hoped that the North Korean authorities would eventually accept the Organization's proposals, and in the meantime no course remained but to vote for the draft resolution which reaffirmed the principles and objectives which the United Nations had so consistently upheld. The Belgian delegation did not believe that it was incompatible with the aims of peaceful coexistence—to which it strongly adhered—to point out that the Republic of Korea had been the victim of aggression and that the action taken by the United Nations was beyond reproach. He urged all the members of the Committee not to forget that fact.

The meeting rose at 6.5 p.m.