

convene the present Session to resume consideration of the Korean question (a) upon notification by the Unified Command to the Security Council of the signing of an armistice agreement in Korea; or (b) when, in the view of a majority of Members, other developments in Korea require consideration of this question." The states of the Soviet bloc voted in favour of this resolution both in the Committee and in plenary session, and it was accordingly adopted unanimously - the first time for many years that this has happened on a major political issue at the United Nations. Five days later the Assembly recessed.

The resumed armistice negotiations at Panmunjom continued with new hope of success. Two main points of disagreement emerged - the question of what country should be the "neutral state" referred to in Chou En-Lai's proposal, and the procedure to be followed in disposing of those prisoners who did not wish to be repatriated. After over a month of negotiation the United Nations Command on May 25 presented further proposals. These proposals, which the Canadian Government fully supported as a basis for negotiations, led, after further consideration, to the initialling of an agreement on the repatriation of prisoners by the two sides at a meeting on June 7 (June 8 Korean time).

In essence the agreement reached on June 7 closely followed the main provisions of the General Assembly's resolution of December 3, 1952. Within two months after the armistice agreement became effective both sides would hand over in groups all those prisoners in their custody, who insisted on repatriation, to the side to which they belonged at the time of capture. Both sides also agreed to hand over within 60 days of an armistice those prisoners who had not exercised their right of repatriation, to a Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission. Poland, Czechoslovakia, Sweden, Switzerland and India were to be asked to serve on this Commission (and later agreed to do so). India would be chairman of the Commission with casting vote and, as its executive agent, would provide "exclusively" the armed forces and any other operating personnel required to assist the Commission to carry out its duties. While in the custody of the Commission any prisoner might apply for repatriation and have his request granted. Ninety days after the prisoners had been transferred to the Commission, the question of the disposition of those who had not been repatriated would be submitted to the political conference provided for in the draft armistice agreement which would endeavour to settle the question within 30 days, during which time the Commission would continue to retain custody of such prisoners. Those who after 90 days had not elected repatriation and for whom, after a further 30 days, no other disposition had been agreed upon by the political conference, would be released by the Commission "from prisoner of war status to civilian status". After release, according to the application of each individual, those who elected to go to neutral nations would be assisted by the Commission and by the Red Cross Society of India. This operation was to be completed within 30 days and the Commission then dissolved. After such dissolution, whenever and wherever any of these civilians who had been released from their prisoner of war status desired to be returned to their fatherlands, the authorities of the localities where they then were would be responsible for assisting them. The understanding regarding prisoners of war which was thus reached, was duly incorporated in the existing draft armistice agreement.