

In an effort to achieve some progress towards the establishment of an independent Korean State, the United States proposed the convening of a four-power conference to discuss proposals for implementing the Moscow Agreement. The Soviet Union, however, declined this invitation. The United States then proposed that the agenda of the Second Session of the General Assembly should include an item entitled "The Problem of the Independence of Korea". In his opening speech before the plenary session of the General Assembly on September 17, 1947, the United States representative stated:

"Although we shall be prepared to submit suggestions as to how the early attainment of Korean independence might be effected, we believe that this is a matter which now requires the impartial judgment of the other Members. We do not wish to have the inability of two Powers to reach agreement delay any further the urgent and rightful claims of the Korean people to independence".

In the First Committee of the General Assembly, the United States representative introduced a resolution which proposed that elections should be held in North and South Korea, not later than March 31, 1948, under the control of the United Nations, as an initial step towards the creation of a National Assembly and the establishment of a National Government in Korea. It was proposed to set up a United Nations Temporary Commission, to be present in Korea during the elections and to be available for such consultations as were appropriate in connection with the elections, the subsequent organization of a National Assembly and the formation of a Government.

The Soviet representative responded to the United States initiative on the subject of Korea by himself proposing a resolution which called for the withdrawal of all Soviet and other occupation troops in Korea at the beginning of 1948, in order that the Korean people might establish a National Government without foreign interference. This proposal was not acceptable to a majority of the Members of United Nations.

At this juncture a procedural issue was introduced into the debate by the Soviet representative, who requested the Committee to invite elected Korean representatives to attend the Committee's discussions of the problem and present their views. As no elected Korean representative was available, this proposal obviously was designed merely to delay the consideration of the question in the United Nations. On these grounds, the majority of the Committee, including Canada, objected to the Soviet suggestion, although subscribing to the principle that Korean representatives should eventually be heard.

The United States thereupon introduced an amendment to the Soviet resolution which affirmed the principle of consultation with elected Korean representatives and proposed the setting up of a Temporary United Nations Commission, similar to that proposed in the original United States resolution, to go to Korea to ensure that the representatives elected in Korea, were, in fact, duly elected and not the mere appointees of military authorities. Against Soviet opposition this amendment was finally adopted by a large majority. The Soviet Union and the other eastern European States refused to participate in the voting and thereafter announced that they would take no part in the United Nations Temporary Commission which had been proposed in the resolution.