

APPENDIX

TELEGRAMS DATED 5 DECEMBER 1952 ADDRESSED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO THE MINISTERS FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE PEKING GOVERNMENT AND OF NORTH KOREA; KOREAN RESOLUTIONS; RESOLUTIONS ON RACE CONFLICT IN SOUTH AFRICA

December 5, 1952

Sir,

The General Assembly of the United Nations, at its 399th plenary meeting on December 3, 1952, adopted a resolution under item 16 (a) of its agenda—Korea: Reports of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea. Under the terms of that resolution, originally sponsored by the Government of India, the President of the General Assembly is requested "to communicate the following proposals to the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China and to the North Korean authorities as forming a just and reasonable basis for an agreement so that an immediate cease-fire would result and be effected; to invite their acceptance of these proposals and to make a report to the General Assembly during its present session and as soon as appropriate". In discharge of the duty placed upon me by the terms of that resolution, I have the honour to transmit to you the text of the resolution and to invite your acceptance of the proposals contained therein.

2. I send this message to you against the background of the casualties, the sufferings, and the destruction in Korea which are the inevitable consequence of war, and I add my personal appeal that you should give it your most thoughtful and sympathetic consideration. When the First Committee of the General Assembly, by an unanimous decision, agreed to treat the Korean question as a matter of urgency, its decision reflected the concern of all members of the United Nations, a concern which I am sure is shared by the peoples of the world, over the tragedy of war and devastation in Korea, and their deep desire to bring this war to an end on terms acceptable to both sides. To this end negotiations have been proceeding for some sixteen months at Panmunjom, in the course of which a wide measure of agreement on the terms of an armistice has been reached. The sole remaining issue which has not been settled in the course of these armistice negotiations concerns the principles and procedures by which the repatriation of prisoners-of-war can be effected.

3. In itself, the prisoners-of-war issue is a challenge to the fundamental humanitarian instincts which are shared by all mankind and urgently calls for solution. In camps on both sides, human beings have been kept for long months under military detention while the lengthy negotiations concerning their fate have been continuing. There is an inescapable moral obligation on both sides in the Korean conflict to make every possible effort to ensure that these prisoners-of-war shall be free to return to their homelands, and their speedy return facilitated.

4. The discussion of this matter in the first committee of this assembly has made clear the general agreement in the United Nations that this problem should be dealt with and the repatriation of prisoners-of-war should be effected under the terms of the Geneva Convention relative to the treatment of prisoners-of-war of August 12, 1949, under the well-established principles and practice of international law, and under the relevant provisions of the draft armistice agreement. It was also generally agreed that prisoners-of-war should be released from the custody of the detaining powers to a repatriation commission so that they can be free to exercise their undoubted right with respect to repatriation,