

II POLITICAL AND SECURITY

Korea

After the Korean Armistice Agreement was signed on July 27, 1953, the seventh session of the General Assembly reconvened on August 17, under the presidency of Mr. L. B. Pearson, to discuss the establishment of the political conference which paragraph 60 of the armistice had recommended should be called within three months to negotiate a settlement of the Korean problem. As had been provided in the armistice, the custody of the prisoners of war who had refused repatriation was in the hands of a Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission consisting of India, Sweden, Switzerland, Poland and Czechoslovakia, and the question of the disposition of these prisoners did not immediately arise.¹

Having rejected Soviet motions that the Peking and North Korean regimes be represented in the discussions, the reconvened seventh session turned to its principal task, which was to determine the composition of the political conference. The United States position was that the Armistice Agreement was based on the concept of two sides and that the conference should therefore consist of the belligerents and be "cross-table"; the Soviet Union, which could participate neither as a neutral nor on the United Nations side, should be present on the other side so that the country could take its proper share of responsibility for peace. The United Kingdom and France did not endorse this strict interpretation of the agreement, but held that all countries which could usefully contribute to the negotiations should be invited. The Canadian view, which was similar, was stated in committee on August 19 by the Vice-Chairman of the Delegation. He said that the objective was to get to the conference the countries which should be there to give the best chance of achieving results. It would be unrealistic to hold the conference without the Soviet Union, and India too was entitled to participate because of its importance in Asian affairs and its leading role in the efforts at conciliation which had greatly facilitated the achievement of the armistice.

The Soviet Delegation held that nothing in paragraph 60 denied the right of the General Assembly to invite non-belligerents and that the conference could succeed only if based on the round-table principle. This view received support from Mr. Chou En-lai, who in a cable to the President stated that the Government of Communist China would consider recommendations of the General Assembly only if they were in accord with certain principles, one of them being that the conference should take the form of joint negotiation of both sides of the armistice "with the participation of other nations concerned".

Four draft resolutions on the composition of the political conference were tabled. The first, intended to implement paragraph 60

¹See *Canada and the United Nations 1952-53*, pp. 1-7.