

Meanwhile, the sixth session of the General Assembly which had met in Paris decided to defer consideration of its two items on Korea in view of the continuation of the armistice negotiations in Korea. On January 3, the Soviet Delegate attempted to secure approval for a resolution which would have required the Security Council to hold one of the periodic meetings provided for in the Charter and "to examine at the periodic meeting in the first place the measures which the Security Council should take to help to bring to a successful conclusion the negotiations taking place in Korea for the cessation of hostilities". This was voted down as being likely to interfere with the negotiations rather than to bring them to a successful conclusion, because it would have involved the infusion of political questions into what had hitherto been a purely military negotiation. This could only have resulted in a delay in achieving an armistice. The procedural resolution deferring consideration of the two agenda items on Korea - "The Problem of the Independence of Korea" and "Relief and Rehabilitation of Korea" - was adopted by the Assembly on February 5, 1952 by a vote of 51 in favour (including Canada), 5 against (the Soviet bloc) and 2 abstentions (Chile and Yemen).

Excerpt from CANADA AND THE UNITED NATIONS 1952-1953, pages

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The cease-fire negotiations had by the summer of 1952 resulted in the drawing up of a draft armistice agreement complete except for the provisions relating to the disposition of prisoners of war. On this issue there was deadlock. The United Nations negotiators held fast to the basic position that they would not accept an obligation to force North Korean and Chinese prisoners in their hands to accept repatriation against their will, while the communist negotiators would not agree that prisoners were free to refuse to return to their own countries if they so wished. Finally, on September 28, General Harrison, on behalf of the United Nations Command (UNC), offered three new alternative proposals each of which, although designed to break the deadlock on the question, preserved the principle that there should be no forcible repatriation. The first was that all prisoners from both sides would be delivered to a demilitarized zone and there given the choice of <sup>either</sup> going home or returning to the side on which they were detained. The second and third alternatives both provided that all prisoners willing to go home would be exchanged at once, the remainder would be taken in small groups to the demilitarized zone and there freed from military control. Under the second alternative they would then be interviewed by neutral representatives agreed upon by both sides and thereafter be free to go to the side of their choice. Under the third alternative they would be permitted to go to the side of their choice without interviewing or screening. Any one of these procedures could, if desired, be supervised by the International Red Cross, by joint Red Cross teams, or by military observers from both sides.

On October 8, 1952, the communist negotiators rejected these proposals and introduced counter-proposals which reflected no change in their position that, in accordance with the Geneva Convention of 1949 as they interpreted it, all prisoners of war should be repatriated and that no prisoner might renounce his right to be repatriated. Thereupon General Harrison informed them that the United Nations Command did not wish any further meetings until they were ready to