

It was in an attempt to find some way out of the impasse which had developed on this issue at Panmunjom and in New York that the Government of India empowered its delegation to the U.N. to put forward a resolution which was finally adopted by an overwhelming majority of the General Assembly and was opposed only by members of the Soviet bloc. No single resolution on Korea in the U.N. ever received such overwhelming support.

That resolution contained a clear statement of the principle that force should not be used against prisoners-of-war to effect or prevent their return to their homelands. It also contained an expression of the anxiety of the General Assembly "to expedite and facilitate convening of the Political Conference as provided in Article 60 of the draft Armistice Agreement."

The Indian resolution was clearly directed towards achieving a cessation of hostilities as soon as possible and in a context to ensure that a lasting armistice would ensure. It provided against any possibility that prisoners-of-war should become pawns in the settlement of the political issues to be faced later. Finally it provided a blueprint for the machinery of repatriation.

The Government of the United States, as the government to which the U.N. gave responsibility for the setting up of the Unified Command, clearly indicated its real desire to achieve an armistice. While not fully convinced of the value of every provision of the resolution, the U.S. Secretary of State nevertheless accepted the resolution, affirming that, if we worked in harmony and goodwill, a solution to the prisoner-of-war issue could be found.

In blunt and depressing contrast to this attitude was the intransigence of the Soviet Union and its satellites who, in spite of all their pietistical propaganda for peace, made every effort to slam the door on the prospect of achieving peace in Korea.

Following its passage by an overwhelming majority in the General Assembly, the Indian resolution was forwarded by Mr. Pearson, as President of the Assembly, to the North Korean and Chinese Communist authorities. The Chinese Government at Peking rejected the President's appeal on December 14 and the North Koreans took the same action a week later. Although an armistice has not been achieved, the sincerity of the attempt, which had the backing of 54 member nations, leaves the world in no doubt as to where the responsibility for the continuation of the fighting lies.

That the Soviet Government itself recognized the vote on the Indian resolution as a major defeat and felt its impact is indicated by their last-minute propaganda manoeuvre of introducing a resolution accusing the United States of "mass murder" of Korean prisoners-of-war at Pongam. The true measure of this charge is seen in the fact that it did not gain a single favourable vote from outside the Soviet bloc.

I have dealt at some length with the Korean prisoner-of-war issue because, better than anything else, it has shown the world who is for war and who for peace. It has revealed the ugly face of war behind the false face of Communist concern for peace.