



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 57/4

REUNIFICATION OF KOREA

Statement by Dr. R.A. MacKay, Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations, in the First Committee of the General Assembly, New York, January 4, 1957.

It is a matter of regret to us all, I have no doubt, that the prospect of the unification of Korea into a single free and peaceful state is not much closer this year than when we last discussed the subject. As we have said before, however, we must recognize that it will take time to reduce the tensions and allay the passions which are the inevitable result of so bitter and tragic a conflict. We should not relax our efforts to promote a settlement, but we should not despair because this has not yet been achieved. We may rejoice in fact that the armistice has been maintained and that the Korean people have been able to devote their remarkable energies to the economic rehabilitation and development of their country and - in the South - to hold elections, the results of which prove that there was a vigorous exercise of the right to vote freely. We only wish that it were possible to note with satisfaction economic and political progress in the North as well or even some reflection of the restless hunger for independence which has been a notable feature of many other Communist regimes during the past year. Unfortunately, it is still very difficult to note anything at all about North Korea, but what little information does reach the light of day is not encouraging.

Last year the Canadian Representative made a plea in this Committee for a practical and flexible approach to the problem of unification of Korea. I do not wish to repeat what was said at that time in detail, but I would like to say that my Delegation is as much convinced as it was at that time that the United Nations must not allow any unreasonable stubbornness to stand in the way of negotiations which might lead to a settlement. Stubborn we must be in insisting on certain principles fundamental to unification. This must be a union freely entered into and must establish in the words of the United Nations objectives stated in Geneva, "a unified, independent, and democratic Korea under a representative form of government". The United Nations cannot under any circumstances agree to a union achieved by political

subterfuge or one in which the rights of the majority were less than that of a minority. On the means of achieving such a union, however, we need not be so rigid. It is the end result not the means of achieving it which matters.

To achieve the reunification we all so devoutly wish, it seems to us that we must recognize certain inescapable factors of the situation. The United Nations, as the Representative of India pointed out yesterday, did not fight in Korea to achieve unification by force; it fought there for the declared purpose of repelling aggression. We are not, therefore, faced with a situation in which we can impose a settlement. The settlement will have to be negotiated just as an armistice was negotiated. Such negotiations are inevitably prolonged and frustrating, but we have had a remarkable degree of success in hammering out under the aegis of the United Nations agreements which have provided a framework for peaceful adjustments and eventual settlements. This is the most honorable work of this United Nations, the process of conciliation and pacification, and we must not back away from it. If there is to be any hope of success, we must make it clear to all concerned that we shall seize any honorable opportunity of seeking a solution and that we are not forever bound by formulas which have been established in the past. Useful work was done at Geneva and some useful work has been done since, but we don't think we should forever stand on a position that the Geneva proposals are a final ultimatum. There are, as I said before, certain things on which we must never yield in any negotiations, the most important of which is that the government chosen for a united Korea truly represent the free choice of all citizens of Korea. However, we should not object if some one should produce new and satisfactory proposals which were not necessarily in strict accordance with what we thought to be the best procedure in 1954. It would certainly have to be a procedure acceptable to this Assembly, but we trust that this Assembly would welcome any procedure which would do the job safely and satisfactorily.

We cannot forget the crime that was committed in Korea by the Communist forces and we could not accept any implications that there is moral - or even substantial - equality between the Republic of Korea and the regime in North Korea. What we are now seeking to do, however, is not to pass an historical judgment but to repair the shattered state of Korea. This is the peacetime phase of the Korean question in which we must deal with the political realities as they exist. It was for these reasons that my delegation did not wish to oppose the Indian proposal yesterday to admit as observers representatives of North as well as South Korea. Although we remain duly sceptical of the good faith of the North Koreans, we consider that if there is to be unification we shall have to gather into the process of negotiations all those in Korea who must be a party to the settlement.

These are our views on the general principle of achieving a settlement. It seems to us that the resolution proposed by the United States is consistent with these principles. It urges us to continue looking for a means of achieving the objective of unification; it insists on those fundamental principles which, as I have stated, must be the basis of a settlement; and it does not preclude negotiations for a settlement which should satisfy the legitimate demands of all concerned.

S/C