

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
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No. 50/38 A statement on Korea made on October 3, 1950, by Mr. L.B. Pearson, Secretary of State for External Affairs, and representative of Canada on the First (Political) Committee of the United Nations General Assembly

I do not desire to detain the Committee long or to postpone action on these very important resolutions, because action is desirable. But I think it necessary briefly to explain the attitude of my delegation toward the resolutions, particularly since I represent a country which has subscribed to the United Nations resolutions on Korea and which has attempted to make an effective contribution to the implementation of these resolutions.

It is also difficult to pass by in silence some of the statements and arguments made yesterday by the representative of the U.S.S.R. when he spoke on this subject. If I may say so, his case did not seem to me to be a very impressive one, and it was not made more impressive by its repetition four times during the course of the day by other delegations that associated themselves with it. It was not impressive, of course, because the Soviet Union representative and those who supported him were attempting to make bricks without straw, but with a multitude of press clippings.

In building up the case which they attempted to make, they had, of course, to do their best to discredit the work of a Commission which the United Nations set up some time ago and which had been operating in Korea. They had to discredit the work of that Commission, if they could, because the Report of the Commission, when it is read in its entirety, and not by means of a careful selection of bits which can then be distorted, throws a pretty clear light on what has happened in Korea, and some of the facts reported by that Commission are naturally embarrassing to those who support the U.S.S.R. resolution.

We know, of course, that, in making its report, the Commission was able to move around South Korea and gather evidence -- something which it was not permitted to do, of course, in North Korea, as indeed it would not be permitted to do it in any Communist-controlled country.

What did this Commission report? It reported that the Government of the Republic of Korea, which had been elected there, did not command the one hundred per cent support of the Korean people. That is something that seems to be very astonishing to Mr. Vyshinsky -- but it would not, of course, be astonishing to the representative of any democratic country.

The Commission also reported that there had been steady development and progress in South Korea, even though much remained to be done and, indeed, much could be criticized.

But, above all, the United Nations Commission reported that an aggression had been committed on June 25 by the forces of North Korea, with tanks and heavy artillery, against the lightly-armed troops of the Republic of Korea.

Nevertheless, in the argument of Mr. Vyshinsky and those who support him, these troops of the Republic of Korea were themselves the aggressors in this case, notwithstanding the report of the United Nations Commission. That allegation is, of course, a ridiculous one -- as the representative of Australia and others have pointed out -- on the basis of the facts as we know them and as they have been reported to us by our Commission.

To charge the Republic of Korea with aggression in this matter is just as absurd, if I may quote -- and I think I am quoting it correctly -- the language of the Prime Minister of Australia when he said: "It is just as ridiculous as to say that a fist had been knocked out by a jaw". In fact, the aggression has been clearly proven and the United Nations -- 52 states -- has accepted the facts reported to it by the Commission. Of course the reputation of the Commission, and indeed the reputation of the 52 states, has been attacked because it is supposed to have consisted of "yes-men" presumably to the United States; "yes-men" who included the representative of that very well-known "yes-man"; Premier Nehru of India.

Insofar as the 52 states are concerned, they also have to accept the charge of being satellites, presumably of the United States, in this matter. My country is proud to have been included in those 52 states and we are very proud that we were able to make some contribution to operations under the United Nations in Korea, in the air, on the sea and through 10,000 men who have been recruited for this purpose and are now being trained for it.

Of course, Mr. Vyshinsky has pointed out to us that our participation in this campaign is due to pressure which has been brought to bear on us. As far as my country is concerned, the particular kind of pressure indicated, which was Marshall Aid pressure, hardly applies, because we are in the other camp there and are attempting to participate ourselves, by aid to other countries, where we can assist in their defence against aggression. I can assure the representative of the Soviet Union that in this matter -- and I know that other delegations are in the same position -- we have made up our own mind and no pressure of any kind was required, not even the mild kind of pressure once exercised by Mr. Vyshinsky himself in Bucharest.

The Committee now has two draft resolutions before it, one in the name of eight delegations, about which I should like to say a few words, and one in the name of five delegations headed by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The eight-power draft resolution now before the Committee is being discussed here, along with the other draft resolutions on this subject, at a moment when the victory of the United Nations forces has brought with it a new sense of hope and confidence to all those who supported the United Nations in this test of its authority and of its effectiveness. And yet, military victory in itself does not, of course, provide a solution of the wider political problems which are so closely related to the Korean war.

We must therefore strive to ensure that this victory for the United Nations over the forces of aggression will to the fullest possible extent serve the cause of future peace and security.

Thus, the Canadian delegation considers that the draft resolution now before the Committee in the name of eight Governments does point in the right direction. It is, we think, both moderate and constructive in its approach to the problem. We found the same moderation in the proclamation issued on Saturday last to the North Korean Forces by the United Nations Commander-in-Chief. There is, I think, a determination on all our parts at this time to avoid anything which might exacerbate the situation or prolong the struggle. That is certainly in great contrast to the rashness of those who provoked the struggle and of those who, behind them, instigated it. Those who refuse now to lay down their arms and cease fighting, or those who persuade them to take that course, must bear a heavy responsibility for what happens in the days ahead.

The eight-power draft resolution deals with two aspects of the three-sided problem of Korea. The third aspect -- which is that of military action -- is, I think, properly the responsibility of the Unified Command and the United Nations Commander-in-Chief, acting, however, within the terms of the Security Council resolutions which have been adopted or of other United Nations resolutions which may be adopted. Strategy and politics, however, though separable at times in theory, are rarely separable in practice. It seems obvious to us that no resolutions of this Assembly should interfere with military action which is considered essential to repel, extinguish and prevent the recurrence of aggression in Korea.

But political considerations enter in when we consider the objectives to be pursued by whatever military action is taken. These objectives, as understood, I think, by the great majority of this Committee, have been already clearly stated in this Committee -- particularly in the impressive statement last Saturday of the representative of the United States. Surely, therefore, there can now remain no doubt about the fact that United Nations Forces in Korea in their operations there, are and must be, restricted to the restoration of peace and security, which is the sole task allotted to them by the Security Council. No one contemplates or will contemplate, I am sure, using these Forces for any other purpose. At the same time, it seems to me that we should not prevent them, by anything we do here, from being used for that purpose.

The draft resolution which I am discussing states certain principles which I think may guide us at this stage of our deliberations. It proposes a programme of action. These principles, which have already been referred to by other members of the Committee, should command general agreement from all those who have the welfare of Korea at heart.

In the first place, the principle of the political unification of the country, to which the General Assembly of the United Nations has long been committed, is reaffirmed. Elections are to be held for setting up what we hope will be a stable and independent government for all of Korea. There was never really any hope at any time for either political or

economic stability in Korea so long as it remained divided. Yet it might never have been unified had it not been for the North Korean aggression. This is possibly a case in which evil may eventually bring about good.

In the second place, the resolution states the determination of the United Nations to prevent this unhappy, war-ravaged country from becoming a breeding ground for misery and disorder. On the contrary, it is intended, in the first instance, to bring emergency aid to its suffering people and, at a second stage, the United Nations, through its appropriate agencies, is to develop plans for the rehabilitation of the Korean economy. And yet, it seems to us to be abundantly clear that there is no thought of establishing anything in the nature of a continuing protectorate, or, indeed, a protectorate of any kind, over Korea, either by the United Nations or any of its members.

The Korean people are, of course, new to democratic political life. They may make mistakes. If they do, they will certainly not be the only people to do so. However, their fate must now be in their own hands. The United Nations commission, which is called for in this resolution, is to help them in working out their own destiny. I would say only this about that commission our delegation has long expressed the view that, in the political aspects of the peace settlement in Korea, the Asian members of the United Nations have an outstanding contribution to make, and we hope they will be given an opportunity to make that contribution in this commission.

Now I should like to say a few words about the resolution standing in the name of the five delegations. I would suggest that, if those delegations were to read objectively and sincerely the eight-power resolution, they would find in it that which they purport to desire - provision for a free and independent Korea and provision for achieving that in a manner which will ensure that it will happen. The Soviet resolution seems to us to fall very short of ensuring it and is designed - or, if it is not designed, it seems to us it is bound - to create chaos, confusion, uncertainty and trouble. And we know who benefits from a situation of that kind.

The first operative provision of the resolution asks the belligerents in Korea to cease hostilities immediately. Well, that has been done by the Security Council, and we know the result of the appeal made by the Security Council to the effect that hostilities should cease. I do not know whether Mr. Vishinsky has more confidence that this appeal would meet with an effective reception in the eyes of the aggressor now than it met with two or three months ago.

The second provision of the resolution recommends to:
". . . the Governments of the United States and the Governments of other States that they immediately withdraw their troops from Korea and thereby establish conditions which would secure for the Korean people the possibility of enjoying the inalienable sovereign right to settle freely the internal affairs of their State".

Immediate withdrawal of United Nations forces would not have that result, but might very well have the opposite result. This means that the United Nations forces are to be

withdrawn immediately across the sea, leaving North Korean troops, the troops of the aggressor, in North Korea close to their base of supply and help across a river. I can understand, of course, why those who put forward this resolution might support that course of action.

The Soviet resolution does, of course, make provision for the constitution of a free and united Government in Korea. But, how does it do that? It does it by recommending the establishment of a joint parity commission, as it is called in the resolution, composed of representatives of North Korea and South Korea. Parity is an interesting word in this connection. It probably means, though it seems somewhat vague, that this joint commission should consist of representatives of North and South Korea on a basis of equality, political equality and, indeed, mathematical equality. Political equality in this connection would mean that the defeated aggressor should now, after his defeat - and we hope that defeat is imminent - be placed on exactly the same basis as the attacked victim. Mathematical equality would also mean that 20 million Koreans would have the same representation on this commission as 10 million North Koreans.

It is this joint parity commission which is to organize and conduct the elections in Korea. Under the eight-power draft resolution, these elections are to be held under the auspices of a United Nations commission, and my delegation certainly prefers that latter course. Also pending election of an all-Korean National Assembly, a joint assembly would set up an interim committee to carry out the functions of government. Again, this would be composed of North Koreans and South Koreans, on the assumption, presumably that the North Korean aggressors are now willing to co-operate peacefully with those whom they attacked, it would also be composed on a basis of equality. We would have an interim government, presumably, in Korea, composed of two sections on a basis of equality, a communist section and a non-communist section. We know from experience in other parts of the world what happens when that kind of constitutional set-up is decided upon.

Then, of course, there is to be a United Nations commission set up, the one indispensable condition being the participation of the neighbours of Korea. Presumably that means the U.S.S.R. and China, and, presumably to the authors of this draft resolution, China means the Government in Peking, which immediately establishes a condition which would create difficulties for the majority of the members of this Committee.

On the whole, the view of our delegation in respect of those draft resolutions and for the moment I am saying nothing about the interesting amendment to the eight-power resolution suggested by the representative of India, is that while the U.S.S.R. resolution has some good points, all these good points can be found in the joint resolution of the eight powers. On the other hand, the U.S.S.R. resolution has, as we see it, some very bad points indeed, and for that reason we are unable to support it.

It has been suggested this morning that possibly the authors of these two draft resolutions might get together and try to hammer out a compromise. I have a feeling that "hammer out" probably is the right expression to use in this connection.

I would be more encouraged about the possibility of a successful result in this connection if the leader of the Soviet delegation had not said last night, or, at least, as he has been reported in the press as saying, that he saw no possible compromise between his own draft resolution and the proposal of the eight powers.
