

No. 54/38/UN9/15 THE KOREAN QUESTION

Text of a statement on December 3, 1954, by Mr. David M. Johnson, Canadian Representative in the First Committee at the ninth session of the United Nations General Assembly, New York, on agenda item 17(a) - Report of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea.

Note: The text of a resolution adopted by the Committee and the results of the voting are included at the end of the statement.

By resolution No. 711 of August 28 last year, the General Assembly recommended that those member states which would participate in the Political Conference on behalf of the United Nations should report back when agreement was reached or as appropriate. It is therefore appropriate that the Korean problem should again be under consideration here, though we have regretfully to report that no agreement was reached at Geneva on the Korean question. This problem remains a United Nations problem, and the concern of my Government remains that of a responsible member of the United Nations. Insofar as the United Nations has been seized of the Korean problem so has Canada.

Thus, when the United Nations decided that armed aggression should be repelled by collective military measures, Canadian servicemen went to Korea to fight and some to die. When the United Nations undertook a programme for relief and rehabilitation of a Korea devastated by the conflict foisted on it, Canada responded in cash and kind. When the Geneva Conference seemed to provide an opportunity to convert the Armistice Agreement into a lasting peace settlement which would ensure a free, united and democratic Korea in accordance with the objectives of the United Nations, Canada accepted an invitation to participate.

At Geneva the other side confronted us with a plan for the unification of Korea which, if we had accepted it would have required us to repudiate the objectives of the United Nations and to exclude this organization from any part in the substance and supervision of the settlement. Their unification plan was based on elections to be conducted throughout the peninsula by an all-Korean commission on which the aggressor and the victim of aggression were to have equal representation despite the very unequal numbers of people involved on both sides. It was all too clear that the purpose of this commission was not to assist the people of the whole of Korea to express their free will but to provide the North Koreans, after their failure to win control by force of arms, with another means for implementing their programme. The representatives of North Korea, Communist China and the Soviet Union

called also for an international commission to supervise the elections. This recognition of the principle of international supervision was welcome, but unfortunately the type of commission then proposed would have been inhibited by so many restrictions that it would have had little real power. Both the old Korean commission and the international elections commission would have been so composed as to ensure that there would be a permanent deadlock, a situation of which we have already had unfortunate experience in Korea, as our distinguished colleague, the representative of Sweden, told us yesterday in reporting on the difficulties of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission.

The Canadian Delegation at Geneva argued that if elections for the unification of Korea were to be free, they must be supervised by an international agency genuinely neutral and acceptable to the United Nations. This agency might consist of nations which did not belong to the Communist bloc and which did not participate in military operations in Korea. However, the other side were not disposed to accept a supervisory commission which would be truly impartial and capable of taking effective decisions and carrying them out.

When it was made abundantly clear that the other side were not prepared to see a Korea united in freedom, our delegations agreed that no useful purpose would be served by further meetings at Geneva.

My delegation regrets very much that it has been necessary for those member states represented at Geneva to report failure. The differences which existed between the proposals of the North Koreans and the minimum conditions which we consider necessary to protect the democratic rights of Koreans in the process of reunification were so broad that we had no alternative but to admit the failure of the negotiations. Certain concessions were made during the course of the Conference but the conditions on which the North Koreans insisted remained unacceptable. This being the case, the Canadian Delegation at Geneva agreed that it was far better to acknowledge our differences than to mislead the public of the world by merely suspending our discussions or by pretending that there had been agreements in principle. In our view, the Geneva negotiations lasted longer than the North Koreans had any good reason to expect or deserve. The democratic countries represented there showed infinite patience in considering all the proposals put forward by the North Koreans and by the Chinese and Soviet representatives. The Canadian Delegation among others did its utmost to explore all possible methods of conciliation and agreement in accordance with the responsibility we had accepted under the General Assembly resolution of August 28, 1953. As any objective analysis of the record will show, it was not the fault of our side that agreement could not be reached.

We and our associates have carried out our duties under the Assembly resolution. Nevertheless, my delegation does not consider that every effort to

achieve peaceful reunification has been exhausted. We ourselves are quite prepared to try again. We are quite prepared to see further negotiations of any kind which may have a possibility of success. We do not think, however, that any useful purpose would be served by resuming the Geneva Conference at this time and we are by no means certain that the best method of renewing negotiations is to reassemble that particular Conference at any future time.

The Soviet Delegation, however, now calls on us to support a resolution which would convene another conference, along the lines of the Geneva Conference, in the immediate future. However, there has been no indication whatsoever that those who were responsible for the failure of the Geneva Conference have moved from the position regarding freedom which caused that failure. If there had been any indication from the Communist side that their position had altered sufficiently to make a real negotiation possible, we should be only too happy to support immediate resumption of negotiations. At the present time, however, there is no indication of any change whatsoever from the positions established last June in Geneva. We earnestly hope that the opportunity may come soon.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize the sincerity with which the Canadian Government and people seek to help the long-suffering Korean people to peace and unity in a free and democratic state. Many Canadians have shed their blood to prevent the valiant Korean people from being once again submerged by a foreign aggressor. We are also doing our best to help in United Nations efforts to reconstruct their unfortunate country. The Canadian Government was the earliest and one of the largest contributors to the great work of the United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency. Some of our soldiers remain still on guard in that country. We have the strongest interest in making sure that this great effort has not been in vain and in bringing freedom and peace to the entire country.

I think I have said enough to explain our position on the Geneva Conference and the reasons which have led my delegation to join in co-sponsoring the draft resolution circulated as Document A/C.1/L.119.

I do not see how those countries which took up arms in defence of United Nations principles and under the flag of the United Nations could do less than ask the General Assembly to approve our report on the Korean political conference, to reaffirm United Nations objectives, and to express the hope that it will soon prove possible to make progress towards these objectives. Like the distinguished Representative of the United States, I sympathize with the desires which have been expressed by previous speakers to secure a marriage of the Indian resolution and the resolution of the Fifteen, since the texts are not far apart. Like Senator Smith I regret that it was not possible despite very strenuous and patient efforts on both sides to resolve these difference entirely. Since that is the case, and since as I have said, I do not see how the

Fifteen could ask less of the Assembly, we naturally stand by our resolution reserving our right to speak on the resolutions at a later date.

It is, however, quite clear from what I have said that my delegation regards the Geneva Conference as having ended in failure and in present circumstances will therefore oppose the Soviet resolution which would reconvene at an early date a conference of this type.

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Voting Results Following is the text of a resolution (U.N. Doc. A/C.1/L.119) adopted by the First Committee on December 8, 1954, by a vote of 50 in favour (including Canada) to 5 against (Soviet bloc), with 4 abstentions; and by the 38th plenary meeting on December 11, 1954, by a vote of 50 in favour (including Canada) to 5 against, with 4 abstentions (Burma, India, Saudi Arabia and Syria):

Text of Resolution

The General Assembly,

Having noted the report of the UNCURK (A/2711) signed at Seoul, Korea on 17 August 1954,

Having received the report (A/2786) on the Korean Political Conference held in Geneva from 26 April to 15 June 1954, in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 711 (VII) of 28 August 1953,

Noting that the negotiations in Geneva have not resulted in agreement on a final settlement of the Korean question in accordance with the United Nations objective in Korea,

Recognizing that this objective should be achieved by peaceful methods and constructive efforts on the part of the governments concerned,

Noting that article 62 of the Armistice Agreement of 27 July 1953 provides that the Agreement "shall remain in effect until expressly superseded either by mutually acceptable amendments and additions or by provision in an appropriate agreement for a peaceful settlement at a political level between both sides",

1. Approves the report on the Korean Political Conference (A/2786);
2. Reaffirms that the objectives of the United Nations remain the achievement by peaceful means of a unified, independent and democratic Korea under a representative form of government and the full restoration of international peace and security in the area;
3. Expresses the hope that it will soon prove possible to make progress toward these objectives;

4. Requests the Secretary-General to place this item on the provisional agenda of its tenth regular session.



