Chairman: Mr. Miguel Rafael URQUIA (El Salvador).

AGENDA ITEM 24

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. ZORIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that, despite the many discussions which the United Nations had held on the Korean question, that country remained divided and still constituted a threat to world peace. The realities of the situation should now be faced and a genuine solution found which would satisfy the interests and wishes of the Korean people. There could be no question of reverting to resolutions proposing a unilateral solution consisting of the organization throughout Korea of elections which would in reality be under the control of the United States and of the armed forces occupying the country.

2. The only aim of the resolutions which had been imposed on the General Assembly in the last few years had been the prevention of a genuine settlement of the question, for it could only be solved by the Koreans themselves. Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations, which laid down that one of the purposes of the United Nations was to "bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations", applied to the Korean question.

3. Korea was divided into two States, each of which possessed its own legislative and executive organs and was recognized by a certain number of other States. He compared the situation north and south of the 38th parallel.

4. In the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, industrial production at the end of 1957 was 2.8 times higher than before the war. Cereal production per inhabitant was 300 kilogrammes, compared with 163 in South Korea. There were good grounds for thinking that, within two or three years, cereal production in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would overtake that in South Korea, formerly regarded as the country's granary. The standard of living in the Democratic People's Republic was constantly rising.

5. On the other hand, in South Korea, according to the American Press, there were 1,135,000 unemployed and 3 million persons who did no productive work. The economic and financial situation was critical. The report of the Agent General of the United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency indicated for 1957 a balance-of-payments deficit of $388.1 million (A/3807, para. 102). Moreover, the Government was flouting the most elementary rights of the people as the recent elections to the National Assembly had shown. In that connexion, paragraphs 39 and 41 of the report of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (UNCURK) (A/3865) were significant. The Commission was silent on such events as the outlawing of the Progressive Party and the arrest of its leaders.

6. In any case, the Soviet Union had no intention of interfering in the domestic affairs of South Korea. It considered that the existence in Korea of two separate States, each having a different economic and social system, must be recognized.

7. To enable the Korean people to find its own solution to the problem, the foreign troops occupying the country must first of all be evacuated. That was what the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had proposed on 5 February 1958 (A/3865, para. 9). The People's Republic of China had immediately responded to that appeal, and the withdrawal of its Volunteers had been concluded in October 1958. That showed how "aggressive" were the intentions of the People's Republic of China, whose gesture could not but facilitate the peaceful settlement of the question and contribute to the relaxation of international tension. If the United States were to follow that example, the cause of peace would soon be consolidated in that part of the world. Why did the United States leave troops in Korea if it genuinely desired that country to become a unified, independent and democratic State?

8. In fact the United States was doing its best to perpetuate the division of Korea and make it a Far Eastern storm centre, which gave it an excuse for maintaining its troops there. The notes addressed by the United Kingdom Government to the Government of the People's Republic of China (A/3821, A/3845) made no reference to a withdrawal of the forces of the United States and its allies, although nobody had any intention of attacking South Korea, whose military strength was far greater than that of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The UNCURK report indicated that one-half of the budget of the Republic of Korea was devoted to military expenditure (A/3865, para. 56). In point of fact the expenditure allocated to the armed forces and to the police represented 66.4 per cent of
total expenditure in 1957, whereas north of the 38th parallel only 5.4 per cent of the budget was allocated to national defence.

9. It might well be considered that United States intentions endangered world peace and more especially the maintenance of peace in South Korea, which it was transforming into a strategic base for atomic warfare. What had occurred there should be considered in the light of its activities in the Taiwan Strait, where it was openly interfering in the domestic affairs of the People's Republic of China. The United States Secretary of the Air Force, Mr. James H. Douglas, had announced on 27 September 1958 that his country was prepared to use the rockets and nuclear weapons in South Korea against the People's Republic of China. At the same time Syngman Rhee, with the encouragement of his American protectors, was calling for a "march to the North", and all that was taking place close to the frontiers of the Soviet Union.

10. The United States representative had said that the presence of his country's armed forces in Korea was due to the need to unify Korea in accordance with the wishes of the United Nations (973rd meeting). That meant, in fact, that the United States wanted to extend the South Korean régime to the entire territory by force. The United States had succeeded in forcing the Korean question into a blind alley. The Neutral Nations Inspection Teams of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission had been arbitrarily turned away from South Korea, and a fundamental article of the Armistice Agreement (S/3078, appendix A), which prohibited the introduction of new types of weapons into Korea, had been unilaterally abrogated. According to United States sources, the South Korean army totalled 720,000 men at the present time, which allowed Syngman Rhee to boast that, in terms of manpower, the land forces under his command were the fourth largest in the world.

11. The authors of the UNCURK report, who were representatives of States members of aggressive blocs, had made every effort to encourage the militarisation of South Korea and to justify the continued occupation of that country until the objectives set out in paragraph 1 (a) and (b) of the operative section of General Assembly resolution 376 (V) had been attained—in other words, indefinitely, since South Korea would never extend its régime north of the 38th parallel. The report did not even refer to the withdrawal of the Volunteers of the People's Republic of China. A better name for the Commission would be "Commission for Maintaining the Partition of Korea".

12. Surely it was time to stop using the name and flag of the United Nations for purposes which were at variance with those of the United Nations. Mr. Dulles, United States Secretary of State, had stated at the Korean Political Conference, held at Geneva in 1954, that the United States did not want to leave its troops in Korea indefinitely. For his part, Syngman Rhee had said that he favoured the withdrawal of the United States and United Nations troops if the Chinese forces left North Korea. Since there were no longer any Chinese soldiers in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Western Powers had an opportunity to show by deeds that they did not intend to continue the occupation of South Korea indefinitely. So long as foreign troops remained in Korea, there would be danger of war and it would not be possible to solve the Korean question.

13. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea was pursuing a policy designed to ensure peace in the area. Thus, it had offered to enter into direct contact with the authorities of South Korea, to supply the cities of South Korea with electricity, to establish postal communications, to exchange information on epidemics, to grant South Korean fishermen complete freedom to fish along the coastline of North Korea, to permit the inhabitants of South Korea to travel freely in the North, and the like. In addition, the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was aware of the difficult economic situation in South Korea and had offered to provide free assistance in the form of food and clothing.

14. The offer by the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to undertake negotiations with representatives of South Korea on an equal basis, with a view to establishing economic and cultural relations between the two parts of the country, acquired special importance when one compared it with the opinions expressed in the United States Senate on 26 May 1958 by Mr. M. J. Mansfield, who had advocated the gradual razing of the social, economic and political barriers that divided the Korean people along the 38th parallel, so that a start could be made towards the peaceful unification of Korea. Mr. Mansfield had also said that only the Koreans themselves could provide the initial impetus towards unification. If the United States Government shared those ideas, it meant that a genuine basis for a reconciliation of views was emerging. The Soviet delegation saw an encouraging sign in the fact that Mr. Mansfield was among the members of the United States delegation at the thirteenth session of the General Assembly.

15. No reconciliation between the two parts of the country would be possible unless the two Governments renounced any future resort to force, agreed to reduce their military manpower, and refused to permit the installation on their territory of atomic and hydrogen weapons. It was regrettable that the South Korean authorities had not even seen fit to consider the proposals to that effect made by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The explanation for their intransigent attitude lay in Washington.

16. If it hoped to make progress towards a solution of the Korean problem, the United Nations would have to call upon those States which still had troops in Korea to evacuate them and would have to recommend to the Governments of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea that they should establish political, economic, cultural and trade relations between their territories.

17. As for UNCURK, it would never be able to solve the problem and should be abolished.

18. Mr. TINAUD (France) said that, although the Korean question appeared to assume a slightly different form this year, the United Nations efforts nevertheless continued, as in the past, to encounter an intransigent attitude on the part of the Pyongyang authorities and the Peking Government, which persisted in their desire to thwart the clearly expressed wishes of the majority of the Member States.

19. To be sure, the statements made in Pyongyang and Peking in February 1958 had seemed to offer hope that the stalemate would be broken and reunification achieved. It was obvious, however, from the exchanges
of notes referred to in the excellent report of UNCURK (A/3865), that the announcement of the withdrawal of the so-called Chinese Volunteers was merely another propaganda manoeuvre. One could scarcely consider a withdrawal of a few dozen kilometres beyond a river which had acquired a certain notoriety in 1950 equivalent to the return of the forces of the United Nations, already greatly reduced, to bases situated across the ocean. Moreover, such a comparison was likely to cause a further and most regrettable confusion between the troops of the aggressor and those of the United Nations. It was evident from the aggression committed in 1950 that the departure of the so-called Chinese Volunteers in no way threatened the security of the northern part of the country, whereas the departure of the United Nations contingent, on the other hand, might well place the Republic of Korea in grave danger. Nevertheless, the Powers which were maintaining the North Korean régime continued, in Korea as elsewhere, to make the withdrawal of foreign troops the alluring preliminary to acceptance on their part of the principle of a general election; they couched such acceptance, moreover, in vague terms which, far from providing the minimum safeguards rightly called for by the General Assembly, gave grounds for the gravest concern.

20. In conclusion, the French delegation felt that the United Nations should not repudiate its responsibilities to the Korean people and that it was the First Committee’s duty to reaffirm its principles and purposes, which were directed towards reunifying Korea on a democratic basis by means of elections accompanied by genuine controls. He hoped therefore that the Committee would adopt by the largest possible majority the draft resolution which France had submitted together with twelve other Powers (A/C.1/L.217).

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.