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

AGENDA ITEM 24

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. YANG (Republic of Korea) thanked the Committee for inviting him to participate in the discussion of the Korean question.

2. In the past ten years, the Republic of Korea had made steady progress. It had gradually developed a working two-party system and a free and responsible Press. Free elections had been held with results reflecting the normal diversity of opinion among free peoples. Social, educational and economic progress had also been made: women had been granted complete legal equality and were rapidly taking their place in the life of the nation; illiteracy had been reduced to less than 7 per cent of the population; over 95 per cent of all children between the ages of six and twelve were now enrolled in primary schools; the cost-of-living index had been held stable during the past year and the amount of currency in circulation reduced. Industrial development was also continuing. Those advances had been made, with the help of the United Nations, in spite of the devastation caused by the Korean war, the division of the country and the heavy burden of defence expenditures made necessary by the continuing threat of communist aggression. Many problems remained to be solved however, and the Korean people, deeply grateful to the United Nations, looked forward to its continued assistance and guidance.

3. The satisfaction of the Korean people at the great progress it had made was tempered by regret that half of the Republic was still under foreign domination and that the people of that area were forcibly kept from uniting with their brethren in the South.

4. The report of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (UNCURK) (A/3865) provided no specific information concerning North Korea, through no fault of the Commission, for no impartial examination of conditions was permitted there. But the 4 million people who had escaped from the North to the freedom of Southern Korea and the 34,600 prisoners of war who had chosen to remain in the South testified to conditions in North Korea with a clarity and authority that could not be gainsaid.

5. The view was sometimes expressed that the passage of eight years since the communist aggression in Korea might be sufficient reason for reconsideration of the United Nations attitude towards the Chinese and North Korean aggressors. During the past year, however, apart from their continued oppression of the population of the North, the communists had increasingly engaged in provocative and subversive activities against the Republic of Korea, had committed an act of piracy in seizing a civil aircraft on a routine flight and were still holding some 17,500 civilians kidnapped during the Korean war in flagrant violation of their fundamental human rights and of the Armistice Agreement of 27 July 1953 (S/3079, appendix A). A crime could not be expiated by the mere passage of time, and the Chinese and North Korean Communists had given no evidence whatsoever that they were prepared to change their ways. In the past they had denied the authority of the United Nations, committed aggression against the Republic of Korea and the United Nations itself, violated the Armistice Agreement, wrecked the machinery established to ensure its observance, and rejected the United Nations plan for the reunification of Korea (General Assembly resolution 112 (III)). The recent aggressive acts by the communists in the Taiwan Strait showed that they remained aggressors without respect for the principles of the United Nations.

6. The announced decision of the Chinese Communists to withdraw their forces from Korea might well remind the world of the similar decision of the Soviet Union in 1948, which had proved the prelude to aggression against the Republic of Korea. If the communists were sincere, they should allow UNCURK to inspect North Korea and testify to the facts regarding the withdrawal of those forces. It was only proper that the Swiss and Swedish members of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission should have declined the communist request for inspection as the Commission's inability to function because of its composition was well known.

7. The decision on the withdrawal of the Chinese Communist forces had been linked to a proposal by the North Korean puppet régime regarding the unification of Korea (A/3865, para. 9) which was merely a repetition of the proposal already rejected by the United Nations side at the Korean Political Conference, held at Geneva in 1954 (A/2833). However, the sixteen nations representing the United Nations side, in their sincere desire to explore every possibility for a solution of the question, had asked the Chinese Communists for clarification of whether the proposal made by the North Koreans envisaged United Nations supervision of the proposed elections and agreement that representation in the new National Assembly should be in proportion to the indigenous population (A/3865, 163 A/C.1/SR.975
In their reply, the Chinese Communists had said that the Governments of the United States and the other countries of the United Nations Command were attempting to confuse the issue and that the North Korean statement of 5 February 1958 clearly explained its position (A/3865, para. 14). But that statement had been decidedly unclear on the proposed election procedure. It was therefore obvious that the intention of the communists was merely to gain a propaganda advantage by coupling the withdrawal strategy with the repetition of an old and unsatisfactory proposal.

8. Replying to a request for clarification made at the 974th meeting by the Soviet representative, he pointed out that in the statement quoted by Mr. Zorin, the President of the Republic of Korea, Mr. Syngman Rhee, had said on 18 July 1957 that if there were no guarantee against further aggression the United Nations would have to remain in Korea for its own protection. It should be made quite clear that the mission of the United Nations forces in Korea had not been achieved and that they should remain until the objectives of the United Nations had been attained.

9. He had already challenged the Chinese Communists to permit UNCURK to testify to the true situation in North Korea. and would like the Soviet representative’s reply to that point. In his statement (974th meeting), the latter had conspicuously neglected the real issue, which was the holding of genuinely free elections in North Korea. As always, the crux of the matter was the continued communist refusal to permit United Nations inspection of actual conditions in North Korea.

10. The Republic of Korea was grateful for the support given by the peoples of the free world and for the increasingly sympathetic understanding of the Asian and African countries. That support was natural, for the cause of the Republic of Korea was just. It was that Republic which had complied with the resolutions of the United Nations and unfailingly co-operated with it and which upheld the principles of the Charter of the United Nations in deeds as well as words. The opposite was true of the North Korean and Chinese Communist. As the General Assembly itself had repeatedly determined, the Republic of Korea was fully qualified for membership in the United Nations, and that Republic earnestly hoped that a means would be found to surmount the present unreasonable obstacles to its membership.

11. The Korean people had no ambitions extending beyond the boundaries of its own country; it wished only to recover the territory lost to foreign aggression and be reunited with its brethren in the North. As the means to that objective it desired free elections in North Korea under United Nations supervision, as proposed by the United Nations side at the Korean Political Conference and approved in General Assembly resolution 811 (IX). But no one should imagine that peace in the Far East could be purchased by yielding to aggression and condoning its evil consequences. Without the unification of Korea in justice and freedom, there could be no peace in the Far East.

12. His Government did not regard the Korean problem as insoluble, for throughout history mankind had progressed towards greater freedom. The Korean people believed that its just demand for free and fair elections in order to reunite the nation as an independent and democratic republic was bound to prevail. It believed that its cause deserved the support of all self-respecting Governments and hoped that it would have their effective help until the problem of foreign aggression against it had been solved.

13. Mr. SHANAHAN (New Zealand), recalling the statement of the New Zealand Prime Minister that a more positive emphasis on the human element in the Korean question would help to promote a solution (770th plenary meeting), pointed out that Korea, like Germany and Viet-Nam, was an arbitrarily and artificially divided country whose people suffered from a denial of their national aspirations and their right to national unity and security and from a needless dispersion of their economic resources. Politically, all three divided countries were a cause of serious tension and a threat to international peace and security.

14. There had been little progress in the past decade towards the goal of re-unification. The North Korean régime and its communist supporters continued to disregard any steps which would lead to re-unification in conditions of freedom and justice. Their insincerity had been made clear in their recent exchange of correspondence with the Governments (including that of New Zealand) which had contributed forces to the United Nations Command (A/3865, paras. 13-15), and had been confirmed by the statement of the USSR representative in the Committee (974th meeting).

15. In view of the distortions heard recently in the Committee, it might be wise to recall that United Nations objectives in Korea were to bring about by peaceful means the establishment of a unified, independent and democratic Korea under a representative form of government, and to secure the full restoration of international peace and security in the area. Those objectives demanded the support of all parties involved in the Korean question, whether within or outside the United Nations. They could be attained only by genuinely free elections throughout Korea guaranteed by the impartial and effective supervision of an international body. The prescription for the "peaceful unification of Korea" given by the communist authorities in the announcement made on 5 February 1958 (A/3865, para. 0) and endorsed by the Peking Government called for all-Korea free elections to be held within a definite period after the complete withdrawal of foreign troops from North and South Korea, with emphasis on that withdrawal as a pre-condition. The elections, the announcement had added, might be conducted under the observation of a neutral nations organ. The United Kingdom Government, acting on behalf of the countries which had contributed forces to the United Nations Command, had requested clarification of the communist announcement; it had sought to ascertain from the North Korean authorities whether the reference to a "neutral nations organ" to supervise the elections meant that they accepted the holding of the elections under United Nations auspices with adequate supervision not only of the preliminaries, but also of the elections themselves (A/3865, para. 12). The North Korean authorities had then been asked whether they agreed that representation in the new National Assembly should be in proportion to the indigenous population. However, no clarification had been forthcoming. Instead, the communist authorities had commented that the request for clarification was a diversionary move and had repeated their demand for complete withdrawal of all foreign troops from Korea (A/3865, para. 14).
16. In the circumstances, there was little hope that the elections which the communist authorities professed to desire would enable the Korean people to make a free, democratic determination of their political future. The communist authorities' conception of the unification of Korea would not make for an independent and democratic country with a representative form of government and would not help to restore peace and security in the area.

17. With regard to troop withdrawals, New Zealand had welcomed the announcement that the Chinese People's Volunteers would be withdrawn from North Korea (A/3865, para. 11) and hoped that the announcement of completion of that withdrawal was accurate. It was now being asserted by the communist authorities that that long overdue withdrawal should be matched by the total withdrawal of United Nations forces from the Republic of Korea. The fact was that the greater part of those forces had already been withdrawn. However, unless the conditions for a lasting settlement of the Korean question laid down by the General Assembly in resolution 112 (III) were fulfilled, the further withdrawal of United Nations forces, as had been pointed out by the United Kingdom Government in a note to the Peking Government of 2 July 1958, would "remove one necessary guarantee which exists against further aggression in Korea pending a final settlement" (A/3865, para. 15). It would expose the Republic of Korea to the aggressive ambitions of those who had sought in 1950 by force of arms to bring about what they had been unable to accomplish by subversion. Bearing in mind the events following troop withdrawals in 1945, the General Assembly had good reason to attempt to prevent any further opportunity for North Korean aggression. United Nations forces could not be withdrawn until a genuinely free and democratic Korea had been established. That should remain the Assembly's irreducible demand. If the North Korean authorities sincerely wanted free elections they should be willing to say so in response to the United Kingdom request for clarification. Insistence on that objective did not indicate undue rigidity. The position of the Governments which had contributed forces to the United Nations force in Korea was inextricable only where a change in it would mean the abandonment of their aim to bring about the establishment of a free and united Korea. Indeed, those Governments had made it clear in their note of 2 July to Peking that they were at all times willing to further the consideration of measures designed to effect reunification in a manner which would secure that aim. A genuine offer from the communist side would meet with a genuine response and a readiness to negotiate practical details.

18. New Zealand's views were reflected in the thirteen-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.217) and New Zealand would vote for it. It had no illusion, however, that the adoption of another resolution was likely to evoke a positive response from the North Korean authorities. On the other hand, it did not consider that such a resolution was any the less necessary or its objectives any the less valid. Endorsement of the thirteen-Power draft would, if nothing else, reaffirm faith in the ultimate attainment of those objectives.

19. Mr. BUSNIAK (Czechoslovakia) said that for years the United States and its allies had been imposing on the General Assembly resolutions which, instead of contributing to the peaceful unification of Korea on a democratic basis, had served to frustrate the solution of the Korean problem and transform South Korea into a United States military base. The continued division of Korea had hampered that country's political, economic and cultural development and had brought great suffering to its people. The Korean Political Conference held in Geneva in 1954 under paragraph 60 of the Armistice Agreement (S/3079, appendix A) had, as a result of United States pressure, adopted a one-sided declaration, the "Declaration by the Sixteen" (A/2786, annex), which the General Assembly had unfortunately approved at its ninth session in 1954 (resolution 811 (IX)), and confirmed in subsequent years.

20. The constructive proposals submitted over a period of years by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea could have led to a solution of the Korean problem had they not been rejected by the United States and its South Korean puppet Government. On 5 February 1958, the Democratic People's Republic had proposed that, in accordance with the Armistice Agreement, all foreign troops should be withdrawn from Korea and that free, all-Korean elections should thereupon be held under the observation of a neutral nations organ. It had also proposed that negotiations should be held between representatives of North and South Korea concerning economic and cultural exchanges and the holding of all-Korean elections and that both sides should reduce their armed forces to the greatest possible extent. On 19 February 1958, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the People's Republic of China had announced that all Chinese People's Volunteers would be withdrawn from Korea before the end of the year. The Committee should give careful consideration to the proposals advanced by the Democratic People's Republic, and the General Assembly should make every effort to contribute to their rapid implementation.

21. The peaceful unification of Korea could be achieved only by the Korean people itself, not by outside intervention. Therefore, by preventing representatives of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from presenting their views before the United Nations, the United States was destroying in advance any hope of settling the Korean question.

22. In its statement of 26 October 1958, which had been transmitted to the Secretary-General on that date (A/C.1/810), the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had announced that all units of the Chinese People's Volunteers had been withdrawn from Korea. That peaceful move contrasted sharply with the actions of the United States, which was keeping its troops in Korea and bringing atomic weapons into the country while its puppet, Syngman Rhee, still spoke of a march to the North. In Korea, just as in the Middle East and the Taiwan region, it was the United States—not, as the United States representative had asserted, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the People's Republic of China—that was the aggressor. The United States was making every effort to maintain tension in the area, was transforming South Korea into an atomic and rocket base as part of its policy of threats and pressure against the countries of Asia, was blocking progress towards a solution of the Korean question, and was systematically violating the Armistice Agreement.

23. The Czechoslovak delegation had already pointed out, at the twelfth session of the General Assembly (900th meeting), that in June 1957, after having wrecked
the control and inspection functions of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission in Korea the year before, the United States Command in Korea had unilaterally repudiated paragraph 13 (d) of the Armistice Agreement, which prohibited both sides from bringing new military equipment into the country. The United States was now bringing in atomic artillery and guided missiles as well as new types of conventional armaments. United States aircraft were systematically violating the demilitarized zone of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and there had been attacks on the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission. Czechoslovakia, as a member of that Commission, demanded that such acts by the United States and South Korean forces should cease forthwith. That Commission must continue to function, for it was doing valuable work in safeguarding the armistice and contributing to the peaceful unification of Korea.

24. The attitude of the dictatorial, United States-dominated Government of South Korea, which refused to enter into contacts of any sort with North Korea and took a negative stand on the peaceful unification of Korea, was a major obstacle to a solution of the Korean problem. The South Korean authorities had suppressed the fundamental liberties of the people and had reduced South Korea to economic chaos by allocating almost half of its budget to military purposes. South Korea, formerly a grain-exporting area, was now forced to import one-sixth of its grain requirements; its foreign trade balance was chronically adverse, and 40 per cent of its labour force was unemployed. The South Korean régime maintained an army of 750,000 men with a view to reuniting the country ultimately by force. It had rejected the proposals of 5 February 1958 made by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for the peaceful unification of the country and the offer made by the Democratic People's Republic in August to provide food and clothing for South Korea's unemployed. By contrast, the Democratic People's Republic, in addition to fully observing the Armistice Agreement had repeatedly submitting proposals for the peaceful unification of Korea, had unilaterally reduced its armed forces by 80,000 men. A three-year plan carried out between 1954 and 1956 had completely healed the wounds inflicted on the North Korean economy by the war, and a five-year plan inaugurated in 1956 was to increase North Korean industrial production fivefold by comparison with the 1949 level and make the country self-sufficient in grain.

25. The report submitted to the current session of the General Assembly by UNCURK (A/3865) showed that the body was hampering rather than promoting the unification of Korea. The report made no mention of the withdrawal of the Chinese People's Volunteers from Korea and at the same time sought to justify the continued presence of United States troops in South Korea. Inasmuch as the Commission was unable to contribute to an equitable solution of the Korean problem, it might best be disbanded.

26. The draft resolution submitted by the United States and twelve other States (A/C.1/L.217) could not serve as the basis for a solution of the Korean problem since it merely restated the unacceptable principles set forth in the sixteen-Power declaration made at Geneva in 1954 and subsequently confirmed in various General Assembly resolutions. The Czechoslovakian delegation would therefore vote against it.

27. Sir Pierson Dixon (United Kingdom) reiterated the aims of his Government in the Korean question, namely, to ensure that the Armistice Agreement was maintained and followed by a general political settlement and to work for a unified, independent and democratic Korea by peaceful means.

28. The most important passages of the latest report of UNCURK were undoubtedly those relating to the exchange of correspondence between the United Kingdom Government's Chargé d'affaires in Peking, acting on behalf of the Government of the countries which contributed forces to the United Nations Command in Korea, and the Government of the People's Republic of China acting in its own name and that of the North Korean authorities. On the question of elections, the communist position was that no elections could be held until all troops had been withdrawn. The United Nations position was that free elections, in accordance with the principles endorsed by the General Assembly, should be held and that the forces could not be finally withdrawn until they had been held. Both sides, however, desired the peaceful unification of Korea. The United Kingdom regretted that, despite that expressed common objective, the people of Korea remained divided.

29. The argument that elections should be held only after the complete withdrawal of troops did not stand up to a closer examination of the facts. While the Governments which had contributed forces to the United Nations welcomed the evacuation of the forces of the People's Republic of China from Korea and the announcement of the communist authorities that they favoured free elections, they had some doubt as to the procedure for holding those elections envisaged by the North Korean authorities. They had therefore inquired whether those authorities would agree that the elections should be held under United Nations auspices with adequate supervision, not only of the preliminaries, but of the elections themselves. Unfortunately, they had had no clarification of the principles on which the North Korean authorities considered the elections should be based or the manner in which they should be held. Instead, those authorities had concentrated on the demand that United Nations forces should be immediately withdrawn.

30. The North Korean authorities, in pressing that demand, overlooked the fact that the vast majority of United Nations forces had already left Korea and that to ask United Nations forces to withdraw across the Pacific was hardly comparable to the withdrawal of the Chinese People's Volunteers across the Yalu river into Manchuria, whence their re-entry into Korea would present no problems at all. Moreover, it was unreasonable to ask the United Nations to withdraw its forces from South Korea in the absence of satisfactory arrangements for the elections, for that would mean exposing the Korean people once again to the distressing events which had followed the withdrawal of United States troops in 1948.

31. It was unrealistic to regard the Korean question as an ordinary international dispute which could be settled by the traditional method of bringing the two sides together for discussion. The Korean problem was one in which the United Nations was deeply engaged, on which it had come to grips with aggression, and on which it had laid down a policy for peaceful settlement when that aggression had been ended. The cornerstone of that policy was the holding of free elections
under United Nations auspices with adequate supervision. The North Korean authorities had not yet accepted that requirement; indeed, they had evaded the issue and obscured it by concentrating on the question of troop withdrawals. Before the North Korean authorities, who were involved in the aggression, could be admitted as a party with whom the unification of Korea could usefully be discussed, the United Nations had to have the assurance that they were prepared to act in good faith towards that end. Until that time, the General Assembly could admit to its debates only the representatives of the legitimate government of Korea, that of the Republic of Korea.

32. The position adopted by the United Nations, namely, that unification of Korea should be achieved in such a way as to ensure the future independence and freedom of the country was not an extreme position. On the other hand, agreement would not be facilitated by suggestions that the United Nations Command was an aggressor. The law-abiding did not make it a practice to describe the police as aggressors.

33. Progress could be made if the communist authorities were prepared to furnish the clarification they had been asked to make regarding their prescription for the peaceful unification of Korea, an objective on which both sides were agreed, and if they told the United Nations that they would agree to the properly supervised elections which could be the only basis for a unified, independent and democratic Korea. So long as they refused to provide that clarification, the United Nations was justified in refusing to expose the people of Korea to the dangers which had overcome them in the past.

34. In the circumstances, the United Kingdom Government hoped that the Committee would vote for the thirteen-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.217). It would form a useful basis for progress towards the peaceful unification of Korea in freedom.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.