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APPROVED FOR RELEASE DATE:
03-Mar-2010

Document No. _____

No Change In Class. ☒☐ Declassified

Class. Changed To: TS S C

Auth.: HR 70-2

Date: 2-0-JUN 1978

By: 023 29 July 1953

US OFFICIALS ONLY

Copy No. 18

Working draft

ISSUES OF THE KOREAN POST-ARMISTICE
POLITICAL CONFERENCE

Office of Current Intelligence

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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COMMUNIST, UNITED NATIONS, AND SOUTH KOREAN VIEWS ON
THE ISSUES OF THE KOREAN POSTARMISTICE POLITICAL CONFERENCE

1. Participants
2. Role of the United Nations
3. Scope of the political conference
4. Withdrawal of foreign troops
5. The unification of Korea
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Document No. _____
No Change in Class. ☒
☐ Declassified
Class. Changed To: TS S C
Auth.: WR 792
Date: 30 JUN 1978 By: 073

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ISSUES OF THE KOREN POSTARMISTICE
POLITICAL CONFERENCE

1. Participants

A. Communist position

The Soviet resolution of 3 December 1952, supported by Chou En-lai on 14 December 1952, called for 11-state participation comprising the United States, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, France, Communist China, North and South Korea, Czechoslovakia, India, Burma, and Switzerland. Decisions were to be reached by a two-thirds vote, giving the Communist nations a veto power over conference decisions.

Earlier at Panmunjom on 6 February 1952, the Communists suggested five participants from Communist China and North Korea and five from the "UN members concerned." Later they agreed to South Korea's inclusion on the UN side.

In general, the Communists seem to desire a multipartite Far Eastern conference with the participation of the Soviet Union. As early as January 1951 Chou called for a conference of the Big Four, Communist China, and India, but at that time he did not make any recommendations on voting procedure.

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1. Participants

B. UN views

Article 60 of the draft armistice agreement provides for a political conference to be held "on the higher level of both sides" within 90 days after a truce is signed, but does not define the participants. In the absence of firm Big Three expressions, three general categories of nations to be invited have been advanced: (1) those nations with fighting forces in Korea; (2) all nations "having an interest in Far Eastern affairs"; and (3) some or all of the nations on the Security Council, taking account of geographical distribution.

The UK, France, Canada, India, Australia, Belgium, the Philippines, and Turkey have all indicated a desire to attend. Canada believes that her participation, and that of India and Australia, is "indispensable." The press states that the UK desires to invite the Big Four plus Communist China and the two Koreas, [redacted]

[redacted] inviting India because of her importance in Asia and her contribution to the truce efforts. The Greek UN delegate has stated that if Canada, India, and Australia are invited, it would be difficult to exclude Japan and the Philippines because of geographic interest. [redacted]

[redacted]

Only Burma has indicated that it will not attend. Several nations, [redacted] oppose the participation of Nationalist China.

[redacted]

There is as yet no meeting of minds among UN members regarding whom should be invited from the Communist side.

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1. Participants

C. South Korean views

President Rhee will undoubtedly insist upon South Korean participation in view of his repeated demands for full ROK participation in any international conference which discusses Korean issues. While he might conceivably agree to an invitation to North Korea as a quid pro quo for his own, he will violently object to the participation of Communist China, one of the aggressors in Korea. He may demand the exclusion of India, whom he regards as pro-Communist, and the leading western European nations who, he believes, have influenced the US away from a hard policy in Korea and toward one of "appeasement" of the Communists.

It goes without saying that Rhee would like to exclude any Communist nation on grounds that political negotiation with them is fruitless, and may take an intransigent attitude toward the conference from the beginning if Communist nations are invited to participate. On the other hand, his pledge not to obstruct the armistice for 90 days may cause him to accept whatever nations the UN invites to the conference.

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2. Role of the UN

A. Communist position

While the Communists' view of the UN role is not clear, they may seek to limit UN efforts to expressions of support for a political conference called outside the UN. This probability stems from the fact that, although the Communists joined in support of the 18 April Brazilian resolution, they later rejected at Panmunjom a UN proposal that final disposition of the prisoner issue be referred to the General Assembly on the ground that the UN was one of the belligerents in the Korean war.

Although the Communists have often used the UN as a propaganda sounding board on other issues, and the Soviet Union has twice shown a willingness to give the UN some role in reaching a Korean settlement, they have sought primarily to limit the UN's effectiveness regarding Korea. The Soviet Union denounced the UN "intervention" in Korea from the beginning, has boycotted UN commissions set up to unify and rehabilitate Korea, and has charged the UN with being an instrument of US aggression. On the two occasions when the Soviet Union seemed willing to grant the UN some voice on Korean matters, one of which called for a Security Council settlement with Chinese Communist participation, and the other providing for a commission to supervise all-Korean elections, they added other stipulations which would have insured Communist domination of the peninsula.

It is not known whether the Soviet Union will press for Chinese Communist membership at the reconvened General Assembly session (see item 3 below), but they may seek a hearing for both Communist China and North Korea at the session.

A Soviet UN spokesman has indicated that Moscow will not press for a Security Council meeting now that a truce has been signed.

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2. Role of the UN

B. UN views

On 18 April the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted the Brazilian resolution calling, among other things, for reconvening the General Assembly after the signing of a truce. Assembly President Pearson has set 17 August as the date for reconvening the General Assembly.

Views on the Assembly's possible role when it reconvenes vary between a belief that the Assembly should merely fix the mechanical details of the conference, while staying as aloof as possible from substantive matters, and sentiment for the UN to directly influence the conference by ensuring the adoption of as broad agenda as possible.

The US believes that the sole business of the Assembly is to make appropriate arrangements for UN participation in the political conference. Secretary Dulles has said that it would be "totally inappropriate" for the Assembly to hear the Chinese Communists or the North Koreans and that the US will vote against any such proposal. This would be proper in view of the 7th Assembly's 25 October resolution deferring the question of Chinese Communist admission to the UN during the current Assembly session. However, because of the peculiar wording of article 60 of the draft armistice agreement, some UN members may press the Assembly to interpret the word "et cetera" to cover Chinese Communist admission and other issues. (See item 3 below)

Regarding a possible Security Council meeting after a truce, which the US favors, views appear divided between members who believe that a UN report on the conclusion of an armistice should be placed on the Council's agenda and noted, and those believing it sufficient merely to circulate a report to that effect. Thereupon, if no members asks for a Council meeting, it would merely be assumed that the Council had taken note of the truce.

2. Role of the UN

C. South Korean views

South Korea is not a member of the UN and hence cannot influence the international organization's possible role in a Korean settlement directly. Further, if the US view prevails, and the Assembly's role is limited to arranging for the UN's participation in the political conference, the South Korean government should have few objections. Rhee would, however, be expected to oppose Assembly efforts to fix a broad Far Eastern agenda since his only concern is the future of Korea. In case a wider agenda were adopted, he would doubtless remind the UN that he has agreed not to obstruct an armistice for 90 days and that the UN's involvement with extraneous issues would make even more doubtful successful negotiations in such a limited period as three months. He has noted that the UN efforts to solve Korea's problems and to effect economic rehabilitation in the past have been largely unsuccessful and that it was a UN decision in 1945 which first resulted in Korea's division.

Rhee deeply distrusts many UN members as he demonstrated during the Rhee-Robertson talks when he insisted that the US promise to aid him immediately and without consulting other UN members in case of a renewed attack against South Korea. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] His anti-UN attitudes may be further strengthened when he discovers that the UN decided not to publish the joint policy declaration coincidentally with the truce signing, largely because of British arguments that Rhee, not the Communists, was most likely to break the armistice.

At the same time, Rhee banks heavily on the fact that the UN has repeatedly designated the Republic of Korea as the only lawful government in Korea and may hesitate to take any action which would jeopardize continued UN backing of the Republic.

3. Scope of the Political Conference

A. Communist position

In view of their earlier insistence that Chinese Communist membership in the UN and the status of Formosa should be included on the conference agenda, the Communists almost certainly will raise these issues at the conference itself. (Their attitudes on specific conference issues, including POW's, unification, and troop withdrawals, are discussed separately below.)

Communist attitudes on the agenda will undoubtedly be tempered by the conference opening by such circumstances as Rhee's interim truce behavior, the treatment accorded to neutral supervisory personnel, UN assurances to South Korea in case of renewed aggression, the status of UN economic pressures on Communist China, and US assurances to Rhee, especially regarding a mutual defense pact.

In view of the known Communist objections to limiting the agenda to Korean issues, the following Communist indications seem significant:

(1) On 1 April Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov declared, in supporting Chou's truce proposal, that the UN could "naturally" do more toward securing a Korean peace if it comprised "lawful" Chinese and Korean representatives.

(2) Since the Vienna World Peace Congress of December 1952, the Communists have revived demands for Chinese Communist membership in the UN.

(3) A Pravda editorial of 25 April noted that in his 16 April address, President Eisenhower had failed to mention Communist China's "lawful territorial rights, including the Island of Taiwan."

(4) A Pravda article of 11 April denounced any suggestion that the Indochina problem be linked to a Korean truce, and subsequent Soviet statements have declared that, since the Indochina problem is of "local nationalist origin," it is not subject to international negotiation.

It is not clear, however, whether the Communists will link any of these references directly to a Korean settlement.

Earlier, before the truce talks began, the Soviet Union varied in its linkage of Korean issues to other postarmistice problems. On 17 July 1950 Stalin told Nehru that Communist China's admission to the UN was necessary for a Korean settlement, but Moscow's 4 August 1950 Security Council resolution simply called for a Communist Chinese-North Korean hearing by the UN. Except for Soviet sponsorship of Wu Hsiu-chan's resolution of 28 November 1950, calling for US "withdrawals" from Taiwan and Korea, the Soviet Union has always treated the Korean and Chinese issues separately.

3. Scope of the Political Conference

A. Communist position (Continued)

The Chinese Communists, however, after initially separating the two issues, have connected them since the Chinese Communist intervention. This was true of the 28 November 1950 resolution, noted above, and to Chou's 22 December 1950 linkage of Chinese Communist UN membership with the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Korea. Moreover, he stated twice in 1951 that the postarmistice political conference should discuss "other problems concerning the Far East."

Since that time, the Chinese Communists have dropped their references to these issues and have made a cease-fire contingent upon UN acceptance of political commitments.

3. Scope of the Political Conference

B. UN views

Article 60 of the draft armistice agreement provides that the political conference should "settle through negotiation the question of the withdrawal of foreign forces from Korea, the peaceful settlement of the Korean question, etc." The "et cetera" was inserted after the UN had refused at Panmunjom to include in the conference agenda such specific subjects as Chinese Communist admission to the UN and the permanent status of Formosa.

To date the UN views of the scope of the conference are clouded by the inability of the Big Three to hold the Bermuda conference, the lack of clarity about Communist attitudes toward the conference, and Rhee's antitruce attitudes. Broadly, however, the Western Big Three desire that Korean issues take precedence over any others, if need be, to the exclusion of collateral matters.

Secretary Dulles has, however, mentioned linking the Indochina problem with a Korean settlement. He told the recent foreign ministers meeting that the US hopes to maintain economic controls against mainland China and to negotiate withdrawal of foreign troops and Korean unification, while not allowing the Communists to use the conference for propaganda purposes. The US has also taken the lead in securing the signature of all the nations fighting in Korea to a joint policy declaration designed to restrain further Communist aggression in Korea. The US also intends to adhere to its present position regarding Chinese Communist membership in the UN.

The UK, after subscribing to the idea of a limited agenda, is coming increasingly to favor a wider latitude in the negotiations, but only after substantial progress has been made toward Korean political settlement. The UK is more cautious than the US toward Southeast Asia questions, and would relegate Indochinese discussions to after the Korean issue is disposed of.

The British acquiesced in French efforts to expand the joint policy declaration, but have secured a US promise not to publish this declaration now. Salisbury told the foreign ministers' meeting, on both the questions of Chinese economic controls and UN membership, that the existing arrangements should prevail for a while subject to later review in the light of Communist policies.

The French hope that a Korean settlement may also cover Indochina, agree "in principle" on steel and iron embargoes to China, and have secured approval of all the nations fighting in Korea to an addendum to the Greater Sanctions Statement covering aggression elsewhere in Asia.

Other UN nations have not signified their intentions on the agenda but some, notably India, will doubtless press for Chinese Communist entry into the UN, settlement of the Formosa question, discussion of "colonial" issues, and a broad Far Eastern settlement calculated to reduce East-West tensions.

3. Scope of the Political Conference

C. South Korean views

Rhee's only interest, as indicated in his talks with Robertson, is to secure the withdrawal of Chinese Communist forces from Korea and the unification of the entire peninsula under South Korean domination. Previously he had additionally requested that the UN disarm North Korean troops and prevent any aid to the North Korean regime by a third power.

Rhee would oppose any decision which was not based upon full South Korean representation or which he believed impaired his government's sovereignty. While he might not oppose the discussion of other issues, especially if he became convinced that this was a necessary prerequisite to obtaining his chief objectives, he would insist on the disposal of Korean issues first and appears convinced that even they cannot be settled within a 90-day period.

4. withdrawal of foreign troops

A. Communist position

The latest Communist position was expressed in the Polish General Assembly resolution of 17 October 1952 which called for the "withdrawal from Korea of foreign troops, among them also the Chinese volunteer units, within a period of two to three months"

This has been virtually a standard Communist demand since the Korean hostilities began. Before the Chinese Communist intervention, such demands applied, of course, to UN troops with the presumption that the North Korean army should be allowed to win the war. However, Communist resolutions before that of October 1952 stated that the Chinese Communists also would depart. While General Nam Il stated on 11 July 1951 that all foreign troops should withdraw "within the shortest possible time," the only other Communist reference to a time period was contained in a Soviet General Assembly resolution of 8 November 1951, providing for withdrawal 90 days after a cease-fire.

Peiping publicly stated in 1951 that some Chinese Communist troops would remain in Korea after a truce to assist in North Korean "economic reconstruction," and suggested the same thing as late as 27 July 1953.

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4. Withdrawal of foreign troops

B. UN views

On 25 June 1950 the UN Security Council, with the USSR absent, voted 9-1 (Yugoslavia) for an immediate cessation of hostilities and the withdrawal of North Korean forces. Several other UN resolutions implied the withdrawal of foreign forces by calling upon UN members to restore peace and security in the area. These included the Security Council resolution of 27 June 1950, the General Assembly resolution of 7 October 1950, the "Cease-Fire Group's" suggested program of 11 January 1951 (rejected by Communist China), and the Assembly resolution of 1 February 1951, which labelled Communist China an aggressor. Article 60 of the draft armistice agreement commits the UN to negotiate the question of withdrawal at the political conference.

UN members [redacted] have generally not made clear their negotiating positions regarding withdrawal,
[redacted]

The US has agreed to work shoulder to shoulder with South Korea in the political conference for the withdrawal of Chinese Communist troops from North Korea and, if all attempts to achieve this (and other) objectives prove fruitless because of Communist intransigence, the US would be prepared to withdraw and consult immediately with South Korea to determine the courses of action to be taken. In addition the US has agreed to meet with South Korean representatives prior to the conference to confer on all aspects of common objectives at the political conference. These assurances have not been officially approved by other UN members.

Assuming that the political conference reaches agreement on withdrawal, the UN will be unable to ascertain whether or not withdrawal is being implemented since it will not enjoy inspection rights in North Korea. The concrete cease-fire arrangements provide far less security on this matter than that now provided by the UN fighting forces. Air and naval superiority will be neutralized by the armistice agreement. Physical destruction of enemy installations has become impossible since the truce was signed, and truce provisions enable the Communists to rebuild installations destroyed in the fighting. Moreover, the Communists have already reorganized and strengthened the North Korean air force.

These disadvantages are only partially offset by the truce enforcement provisions. A mixed armistice commission is to supervise implementation and to check 5 points of entry behind each side's lines. It will not, however, have access to Manchurian supply bases.

A problem yet unsolved is whether or not the armistice troop freeze will block the planned South Korean army expansion without which the UN could scarcely afford to withdraw its troops.

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4. Withdrawal of foreign troops

C. South Korean views

This, together with unification, is a prime South Korean political objective and because of its intimate relationship with the South Korean security angle, it has formed part of every demand which Rhee has made since the truce talks began.

Rhee believes that polite discussion with the Communists, on the basis of past experience, will be protracted and without results, but he agreed in the conversations with Robertson to "hold in abeyance" his demand for the withdrawal of Chinese Communist troops "pending an effort to secure" this objective at the political conference. In his final note to Robertson he stated that he had given up on insisting that the Chinese be removed prior to a truce in order to cooperate with the US, but that it had been "agreed" that South Korean and US representatives would withdraw from the conference "90 days after its commencement." In saying this, he did not add the conditions for withdrawal which the US insisted upon during the Rhee-Robertson conversations. He further conditioned this ambiguous agreement upon US assurances of immediate and automatic military aid in case of a renewed external attack and moral and material support in case South Korea sought to eject invaders by itself -- assurances concerning which he still may not be entirely satisfied.

Presumably, Rhee's stand on this issue will have been clarified by the high-level US-South Korean talks which are to be held between now and the conference.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] he might welcome the simultaneous withdrawal of both UN and Chinese Communist troops if he believed that this would result in a settlement of Korean issues by the Koreans alone.

5. The Unification of Korea

A. Communist position

On 9 June the Peiping' People's Daily criticized President Eisenhower's proposal for a US-South Korean mutual defense pact, which it said would "run counter to the object of the political conference to bring about peaceful unification of Korea." It pointed out that both the Chinese Communists and the USSR believed that unification must be achieved by the Koreans themselves, but did not make explicit the machinery by which unification was to be achieved.

Previous Communist proposals for unification have all sought to ensure Communist domination of Korea. At various times during the war the Communists have proposed that the UN simply withdraw, although at the 1952 Assembly, the USSR added some references to supervisory machinery.

The only Communist resolution which has mentioned detailed unification plans was submitted in October 1950. At that time the USSR and four satellites called for the election of a National Assembly organized and conducted by a joint commission from North and South Korea formed at a joint meeting of the respective legislatures. This joint assembly would elect an interim government at elections supervised by a UN commission "necessarily" including Korea's "neighbors." This would obviously have ensured Communist control of both the joint assembly and the interim government.

Communist attitudes on the unification question, it must be recalled, are basically conditioned by the fact that both China and the USSR recognize only the North Korean regime and do not accord recognition to the Rhee government. Between the truce and the conference, and during the conference itself, these attitudes will be conditioned further by Rhee's actions and by the ability of the UN Command to implement the assurances given to the Communists recently at Panmunjom.

Moscow may be expected continuously to play up fears that no unification plan will succeed so long as Rhee remains at the head of the South Korean government, and may stimulate sentiment among UN members for the disarmament of the South Korean army and/or UN repudiation of Rhee as necessary prior steps to unification. The Communists will undoubtedly seek to relate a Korean settlement to the broader issues of German unification, withdrawal of US forces from European countries, expansion of East-West trade, UN admission of Communist China, and abandonment of US support for Chiang.

5. The Unification of Korea

B. UN views

On 27 June 1950 the UN Security Council by a 7-1-2 vote (USSR absent) recommended that the member states "furnish such assistance to (South) Korea as may be necessary to repel the armed attack and to restore international peace and security in the area." On 7 October the General Assembly recommended that "all appropriate steps be taken to insure conditions of stability throughout Korea," and invited both North and South Korea to "cooperate" in the work of rehabilitation. This resolution also asserted that the UN objective continued to be, as it had been since 1947, "the establishment of a unified, independent, and democratic" Korea. On 1 February 1951 the Assembly reaffirmed that the UN policy was "to bring about a cessation of hostilities . . . and the achievement of UN objectives in Korea by peaceful means."

In the recent Rhee-Robertson conversations, the US stated that the political conference should seek "promptly and vigorously" to obtain the "common objective" of a unified Korea and pledged that if, after 90 days the conference was being exploited by the Communists to "infiltrate, propagandize, or otherwise embarrass" South Korea, the US would be prepared to withdraw, along with South Korea, and consult about future courses of action.

Judging from press reports [redacted]

[redacted] most members believe that the UN has accomplished its original goal, namely, the repelling of aggression and that while the UN remains committed to unification, it is not obligated to achieve this purpose by the use of force. The UN members were not consulted regarding a possible 90-day time limit and, at the political conference, may press the US to abandon any such restriction on the ground that even the settlement of purely Korean issues will take a much longer period to solve.

Some UN members, [redacted] may seek US abandonment of its previous assurances to Rhee, notably the promised mutual security pact which India regards as the real stumbling block to profitable negotiations. There may be some sentiment for the US to withdraw its personal support from Rhee or to disarm the South Korean army if this seems to be the necessary price to pay for peaceful settlement of the unification question.

It seems almost certain that some formula looking toward all-Korean elections will be put forth as the first step toward accomplishing unification. If such a solution proves infeasible, some UN members may propose a UN trusteeship for Korea, and perhaps of Formosa as well. It is not yet clear whether, if unification cannot be accomplished short of it, all UN delegates will remain firm in the view that the present South Korean government is the only legitimate one authorized to govern the entire peninsula.

5. The Unification of Korea

C. South Korean views

As was noted with regard to withdrawal, Rhee has agreed to hold off on his demand for unification pending an effort by the conference to secure unification by political negotiation. His stipulations regarding a time limit on these discussions and US assurances, which were noted in item 4 above, also apply to this issue. Hence the same ambiguities noted there, plus the possibilities of unilateral South Korean action after 90 days of discussions, must be taken into account on unification.

Rhee will insist that any unification formula insure South Korean domination of the entire peninsula. He has repeatedly pointed to the fact that the UN recognizes his government as the only legitimate one for all of Korea and will oppose any suggestions which he deems to impair South Korean sovereignty. He is fearful that a formula for all-Korean elections may be adopted which would call for dissolution of the present South Korean government, and after President Eisenhower's 16 April call for "free elections in a united Korea," sought immediate clarification that this did not envisage such dissolution.

Rhee may prove particularly troublesome on the unification issue if and when the UN seeks to implement unification on whatever terms are eventually fixed. His adamant opposition to the entry of neutral nations repatriation personnel and indications of his growing worry over NNSC personnel coming to South Korea make it difficult to imagine his agreeing with alacrity to UN personnel entering South Korea to enforce unification on other than his terms.

6. The prisoner of war issue

A. Communist position

The Communists will undoubtedly seek, in the political conference, the return to their control of the maximum number of POW's possible, although their limited access to the POW's and the restricted time limit which the 8 June agreement imposes on them for "explanations" have apparently removed the basis for their earlier confidence that they would get most of the POW's to return.

Having been assured by General Harrison that no more POW's will be released, the Communists have taken a conciliatory line on other aspects of the POW issue. Rather than persisting in the demand that the 27,000 released North Korean ex-prisoners be recovered before a truce, they now state that, if the UN Command cannot recover them after a truce is signed, they "reserve the right" to submit the question to the political conference. Similarly, while noting that the Rhee-Robertson agreement to allow POW's who remain anti-Communist to remain in South Korea or go wherever they choose is contrary to the 8 June POW agreement, they "reserve the right" to ask for implementation of the 8 June agreement.

The Communists could seek to force the repatriation of all remaining prisoners and may seek to limit the neutral nations to which POW's might be sent to the five nations serving on the NNRC, but the UN retains the power to block either of these demands. The Communists may, however, use the ambiguities in the 8 June agreement to block settlement of this or other issues unfavorable to them, to foster conflict between the US and South Korea, or to stimulate differences among delegates on the UN side.

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6. The prisoner of war issue

B. UN views

The principal points of the 8 June POW agreement are:

- (1) Exchange within two months of a truce all POW's willing to be repatriated;
- (2) Transfer to the five-nation repatriation commission, also within two months, of all POW's unwilling to be repatriated;
- (3) The period of access for "explanations" to the POW's to be 90 days;
- (4) The ratio of "explaining representatives" to be 7 per 1000 POW's; hours of access to be fixed by the commission;
- (5) The fate of POW's who remain unwilling to return, after 90 days in neutral custody, to be submitted to the political conference;
- (6) If the political conference cannot agree on their fate within 30 days, the POW's shall be changed from POW status to civilian status;
- (7) Thereafter, ex-POW's who choose to go to neutral nations shall be assisted by the repatriation commission until its subsequent dissolution.

The US agreed in the Rhee-Robertson talks to move non-Communist POW's now in UN custody to the demilitarized zone and turn them over to the NNRC for questioning in the presence, among others, of UN and South Korean representatives. Korean POW's who desire to do so may return to South Korea. Other non-Communist POW's, following explanations, are to be released in accordance with the terms of reference and are free thereafter to proceed to any destination of their own choosing.

Other UN members have not made clear their position on ultimate disposition of the POW's, although except for Nationalist China, most have expressed approval of the 8 June agreement. Most states probably are not particularly concerned with the fate of the Communist prisoners or, as a matter of fact, with the non-Communist POW's either, except that the return of large numbers heretofore opposing repatriation to Communist control would reduce UN prestige and support the Communist argument that such POW's opposed repatriation because of UN "coercion."

One of the most difficult issues will be that of interpreting the terms of the 8 June agreement, particularly the "neutral nations" to which unwilling POW's are to be sent. The agreement as a whole contains sufficient ambiguities to make protracted negotiation likely, especially in view of the 30-day time limit under which the political conference must work to settle the POW issue. The UN collectively probably has not made up its mind on the interpretation of specific articles, but will almost certainly oppose any Communist attempt to limit the term "neutral nations" to the five members of the neutral custodial commission.

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6. The prisoner of war issue

B. UN views (continued)

UN attitudes might be seriously affected, to the detriment of the US, if the Communists were to allow relatively free NNRC access to North Korea while the UN, in line with Rhee's demands, must prevent such personnel from entering South Korean territory.

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6. The prisoner of war issue

C. South Korean views

Rhee agreed, in his talks with Robertson, to subject non-Communist POW's to three months of "explanation" as required by the 8 June POW agreement. He then demanded that, at the expiration of three months, all remaining unrepatriated Korean POW's who desired to remain in South Korea be released south of the neutral zone. He also demanded that all Chinese POW's who refused to return to Communist control be transported to Formosa "according to their will." The variance between his demand for 90 days of explanations followed by release, and the 8 June agreement calling for a further 30-day period of discussion of the POW issue by the political conference, was not clarified by the Rhee-Robertson talks, nor was that regarding the ultimate sending of Chinese POW's to Formosa.

Rhee retains the capability of releasing additional POW's, although this might be interpreted as violating his pledge not to obstruct an armistice. Here again, however, he is protected by the fact that he has reserved his "sovereign right" to prevent any measure or action which he regards as detrimental to his national survival.

7. Other issues

A. Communist position

The Polish resolution of 17 October 1952 called for the withdrawal of foreign troops "and" peaceful settlement of the Korean question, without making clear the Communist-desired relations between the two. Hence it is not certain whether the Communists will be inflexible on the wording of the draft armistice agreement which calls for withdrawal before a political settlement.

The Communists have, throughout the war, consistently followed a three-point formula on Korea: (a) a cease-fire; (b) withdrawal; and (c) a political settlement by the Koreans themselves. While this would raise the presumption that they would demand withdrawal prior to settlement, the Communists have not specifically expressed the matter this way since early 1951. The Soviet resolution of 2 October 1950 called for the UN immediately to withdraw its troops, whereupon conditions would be established for Korean settlement of internal affairs.

At the beginning of their intervention, the Chinese Communists made withdrawal a condition both of a cease-fire and a political settlement.

The Communists may be expected, as their recent propaganda does, to credit the Soviet peace offensive and Korean-Chinese sincerity and military might with forcing the UN to sue for an armistice. They will undoubtedly leave the door open for rationalizing future Communist military action on a self-defense pretext by continually voicing fears of Rhee's future aggressive actions and the effects of a US-South Korean mutual defense pact. The build-up of this theme suggests a possible Communist insistence in the political conference that South Korea be branded as the original aggressor.

7. Other issues

B. UN views

The UN has taken no stand on the specific relation of withdrawal to other issues, although the peaceful unification of Korea remains the chief UN objective. Presumably, the UN would not desire to remove its forces until Korea's ultimate status has been decided upon, but it might conceivably accept, or be forced to accept, withdrawal as a condition for negotiating the broader political settlement. Also, the UN may be pressed by some of its own members to release forces currently under UN operational control and to return them to their home jurisdictions, particularly if, as seems likely, protracted negotiations are necessary to reach a settlement in Korea.

While many UN members might be willing, as the Communists have proposed, to leave the determination of Korea's permanent status to Koreans, most doubtless appreciate that this would likely play into the hands of the Communists or result in an aggressive move by South Korea, and hence would not result in the real achievement of UN objectives in Korea.

While the attitudes of the Communists and South Korea will doubtless be the determining factor, the most probable UN position will be that some of the foreign forces from each side be withdrawn fairly soon after a truce as an earnest of good faith, and to proceed to the negotiation of a settlement, leaving some troops in Korea both to deter future Communist aggressive actions and to guard against Rhee's threat to renew the fighting after 90 days. Should considerable progress be registered at the political conference, and perhaps some formula agreed upon for Korea-wide elections, the UN would probably then agree to the removal of its remaining forces.

7. Other issues

C. South Korean views

Rhee will undoubtedly demand that the political conference take up first the question of withdrawal prior to discussing Korea's eventual status. This is of prime interest to him since he believes that the presence of a million Chinese Communist troops forty miles from Seoul imposes an intolerable barrier to South Korea's security. Moreover, the withdrawal of Chinese Communist troops would, he believes, make it more feasible for him to secure his objective of unification by unilateral action.

More important in assessing Rhee's position regarding the political conference are the numerous open and covert means which he has to impair, block, or undermine the effectiveness of the political conference. Conceding that he has agreed not to obstruct an armistice for 90 days after the commencement of the postarmistice political conference, he retains the capability of doing any of the following if he believes unification and withdrawal are being sacrificed to other issues:

- (1) withdrawing South Korean forces from the UNC;
- (2) attacking incoming NNSC personnel;
- (3) releasing additional POW's;
- (4) engaging in independent military action which he believes might force the US to come to his aid;
- (5) withdrawing Korean supply and dock workers from UN employment;
- (6) drafting Koreans employed by UN agencies;
- (7) crippling UN intelligence operations and installations;
- (8) seizing UN supply and ammunition dumps;
- (9) replacing key government personnel who oppose his antiarmistice stand;
- (10) developing further the potentialities of the internal security organization which carried out the mid-June POW release;
- (11) seeking some kind of a post-90 day understanding for assistance from Nationalist China;
- (12) building of a militia or national guard.

[redacted] which would give him a private army outside the control of the professional military hierarchy.