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CHAPTER - III

ROLE OF UNITED NATIONS ORGANISATION
IN KOREAN CRISIS

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ROLE OF UNITED NATIONS IN KOREAN CRISIS

In this Chapter it is attempted to bring on record the various developments which took place when the Korean war commenced. The Chapter at times is narrative, as various resolutions tabled at the United Nations have been quoted at length. This it is felt cannot be avoided, as it is important to understand the various stands taken by various nations on the Korean crisis. It is to be noted here that, it was on this issue the United Nations tried its best to be more effective in realising the concept of 'Collective Security'. The General Assembly passed a resolution known as 'Uniting for Peace Resolution', which is of course an important step. The efforts of the United Nations in Korean crisis are of course notable and hence this chapter tries to examine the various resolutions.

On June 25, 1950, the UNCOK transmitted to the Secretary General a cablegram informing him that " The Government of the Republic of Korea states that about 04.00 hours on 25th June, 1950 attacks were launched in strength by North Korean force all along the 36th parallel"¹. Further the same

1. UN Doc. S/1496 Fifth Year, No.15, p.2.

cablegram just stated that each side was accusing the other of aggression and suggested that the matter be referred to the Security Council². Thus the UNCOK mentioned the opinions of both sides without committing itself to any position.

Soon after the reported outbreak of hostilities the commission had by radio broadcast appealed to the North Koreans for an immediate cessation of hostilities and had expressed its readiness to meet the representatives of the North and South at any time and place to review the developing situation and to arrange for a ceasefire. The Commission " had assured North Koreans that United Nations stood for peaceful negotiations on the basis of justice and equity with unification of Korea as the final goal"³.

On 9th June, 1950, UNCOK had sent field observers who traveled along the 38th parallel till 24th June, 1950. These observers had returned to Seoul on 24th June, 1950. While war started on 25th June, 1950, they did not witness the beginning of the war and hence they did not find any 'Unusal activity' on the part of North Korean Forces that would indicate any impending change in general situation

2. Ref. U. N. Doc. S/1496 Sec. Security Council's Official Records, Year 5, 1950.

3. UNCOK, Report, UN Doc. A/1350, p. 3.

along the parallel. So, UNCOK had to rely entirely on the reports of South Koreans. While the South Koreans blamed North Koreans, the latter in their broadcasts accused the former of aggression.

Now as the actual witnesses were not there UN, had to rely upon the circumstantial evidences. The circumstantial evidence implicated North Korea. The rapidity with which the communists advanced across the parallel and the fact that they simultaneously launched four divisions and three brigades, seventy thousand men and seventy tanks from four different points would obviously prove that it could only be the result of a careful planning. It would be impracticable to think that such a large scale action, carried out with such a lightning speed could be brought about on a sudden short notice.

The General Assembly had already by its resolution 293 (iv) of 21st October, 1949, asked the UNCOK, to observe and report any developments which might lead to or otherwise involve military conflict in Korea⁴.

4. GAOR Session 4, Plenary Meetings, 1949 (A/1008).

The Secretary General emphasized that the military actions undertaken by North Korean force has violated the principles of the Charter. He further added that " the present situation is a serious one and is a threat to International Peace"⁵.

The representative of the Government of the Republic of Korea was invited at the request of the United State's representative. " The representative of US presented a draft resolution calling upon the authorities in North Korea to cease hostilities and to withdraw their armed forces to the border along 38th parallel requesting UNCOK to observe the withdrawal of North Korean forces and to keep security Council informed about the execution of the resolution"⁶. Draft also called upon all members of the UN to render every assistance to UN and to refrain from giving assistance to North Korean authorities"⁷.

The Yugoslav representative did not feel that the picture obtained from the various reports was sufficiently complete and balanced to enable the Council to assess the

5. SCOR, Fifth Year, No.15, p.3.

6. UN Doc.S/1497 (Ref.)

7. Ibid.

final and definite responsibility and guilt of either of the parties involved. He was of the opinion that an opportunity should be given to the representative of the Government of North Korea for a hearing. So he submitted a resolution proposing immediate cessation of hostilities and withdrawal of forces suggesting an opportunity for the North Korean Government to state its case before the Council"⁸. But this proposal was rejected by six votes to one with Egypt, India and Norway abstaining and the USSR being absent. (The Soviet Union boycotted the Security Council from January to August, 1950 as protest against the continued representation of China in the UN by the National Government).

The United States proposal was adopted by " Security Council " by a vote with one abstention i.e. Yugoslaviya and a member absent i.e. USSR"⁹.

The US resolution said, " Nothing with grave concern the armed attack upon the Republic of Korea by forces from North Korea determines that this action constitutes a breach of peace. And further the resolution -

8. UN Doc. S/1500.

9. UN Doc. S/1501.

- 1) Calls - for the immediate cessation of hostilities calls upon the authorities of North Korea to withdraw their armed forces to the 38th parallel.
- 2) Requests - the UN's commission on Korea.
 - a) To communicate its fully considered recommendations on the situation with the least possible delay.
 - b) To observe the withdrawal of North Korean forces to the 38th parallel, and,
 - c) To keep the Security Council informed on the execution of this resolution.
- 3) Calls upon all members to render every assistance to the UN in the execution of this resolution and to refrain from giving assistance to the North Korean authorities¹⁰.

India voted in favour of the United States draft resolution. The Security Council was able to act promptly as a result of the on-the spot information supplied byUNCOK. The UN passed its hasty verdict, condemning the North Korea as the aggressor.

10. United Nations Documents, S/1501.

President Truman issued a statement on 26th June, 1950 in stating the " US would vigorously support the efforts of the Council to terminate the serious breach of peace"¹¹.

Further on 27th June, 1950, the President announced that he has ordered " the US and sea forces to give cover and support to the South Korean troops. It is doubtful whether the June 25, resolution of the Security Council clearly provided for armed assistance to South Korea. UN had merely issued a cease-fire and had yet to act to executive the general purpose of the resolution if the call was not heeded.

On 27th June, 1950, the Security Council, met again to consider further action based on four cablegrams received between two meetings. The cables reported that the North Korean advances had created a dangerous situation. North Korea had refused to accept the UN resolution. The cablegram ~~to~~ further suggested to " Security Council to either invite both parties to agree on the neutral mediator ~~to~~ undertake immediate mediation"¹².

11. United States Policy in the Korean Crisis (US Deptt. of State), p.16-17.

12. SCOR, Yr, 5, 1950. S/1503.

The last cablegram stated the message based on the evidence of " UNCOK military observer's observation along the parallel, that Northern Regime is carrying out well planned, full scaled invasion on South Korea and South Korea's forces were deployed on wholly defensive basis shall sectors of the parallel"¹³.

After consideration of these reports once more the US delegation and the Yugoslaviya delegation presented a draft resolution each. The US recommended " the members of UN to furnish such assistance to the Republic of Korea as may be necessary to repel the armed attack and to restore international peace and Security in area "¹⁴. And Yugoslaviya again recommended a procedure of mediation which was rejected as before. US's resolution was adopted China (Taiwan) Cuba, Ecuador, France, Norway, UK and USA voting in favour, Yugoslavia naturally voted against, while Egypt and India did not vote they had not received any instruction from their respective governments and USSR remained absent. On 30th June India transmitted to the Security Council that it was in favour of the resolution of June 27th because it was against any international dispute being settled by aggression.

13. Ibid., S/1507.

14. SCOR Yr.5, 5/1508/ Rev.1.

B.N.Rau as the Indian representative at UN, had little time to consult his government and voted for this resolution on his own initiative. Delhi believed that Rau had been justified in condemning North Korea as an aggressor, but he was directed not to commit " India further without prior consultation, and hence he abstained from voting on the resolution of 27th June directing member states to furnish assistance as might be requested to South Korea to repeal the armed attack"¹⁵.

Once the Security Council passed a resolution calling upon the members of UN to furnish assistance to Republic of Korea, member nations started communicating their support to the Security Council. 53 UN members out of 59 who approved the resolution, 40 offered aid in one or other form, 16 sent armed forces, and 5 sent medical units "¹⁶. Among these nations it was chiefly US which fought this war with its men and arms. So it is doubted whether it was the UN peace keeping activity or it was a war declared by USA because of its active participation in the Korean war.

15. Nehru Jawaharlal, A Biography by Sarvepalli Gopal, p.100,

16. SCOR, Yr.5, 1950 (S/1513).

Other countries who made contribution were UK, Australia also decided to put its naval vessel, in the Far Eastern waters and its Royal Australian Air Force fighter squadron stationed in Japan and Canadian Navy proceeded into the waters of Western Pacific¹⁷.

President Truman authorized General MacArthur to use certain ground units as well. Thus UN provided Air, Naval and Ground forces to South Korea.

Now the next thing on the agenda of Security Council was the formation of a unified command to mobilize and coordinate these forces coming together from different lands. * Hence on 7th July, 1950, the French and British Government circulated their combined draft resolution providing for a unified command to control and organise the forces¹⁸.

* The US was given the command and it was asked to keep the Security Council informed about the effects of the actions taken. The resolution was adopted by 7 votes to non USSR being absent while Egypt, India and Yugoslavia abstained¹⁹.

17. Ibid.

18. SCOR, Yr.5, 1950 (3/1515).

19. Ibid.

On 24th July, 1950, UN, command was formed under the leadership of US General Douglas MacArthur, who was designated the Commander-in-Chief. Tokyo became the General Head Quarter of the Command.

India did not contributed any military forces to UN because Benegal Rau stated at 28th July, 1950, that Indian armed forces were 'designed for home defence' and the internal needs were such that India could not afford to send forces. In November, 1950 Government of India, decided to send a field ambulance and surgical unit to Korea to serve with the UN forces²⁰. The 60th India Field Ambulance Unit which had experience of many battles was chosen for this task. It consisted of 17 Officers, 9 JCO's, and 300 other ranks²¹. They all belonged to Army Medical Corps. The Unit arrived on the land on 20th November, 1950 under the command of Lieutenant Colonel A.G. Rangraj and it was put in action from very day of its landing in Korea. Its duty was to treat the sick and wounded.

Indian Unit reached Uijongdu on 14th December and started its work. Soon this high skilled performance in rendering treatment earned them higher reputation. This touch was said to be like 'tonic'²².

21. Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 6, Part I, 8th February, 1961, Cols. 1263.4.

22. Ibid.

The Korean war had followed its dreadful course. In the beginning American air force seemed doing well but soon North Korean soldiers dashed southwards. Only American navy could save the retreating forces. A brilliant counter attack was launched in September, 1950, under the command of General MacArthur. Inchon situated behind Seoul was the main theatre of operation where American marines won a dazzling victory. Seoul was freed soon. By the end of September 1950, the Korean people's Army was completely wiped out of South and on, 29th September; General MacArthur in a formal ceremony at Seoul handed-over the regime of the country to President Rhee.

Intoxicated with the victory General MacArthur planned to cross 38th parallel and rush into the capital of North Korea and did the same.

As the American's wanted to wipe out communists in North and establish a democracy under its own aegis, it was not ready to miss the favourable military situation.

Now sure of the United Korea under its auspices the UN created on 7th October, 1950, the Interim Committee of the UN Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (UNCURK) on 9th October. MacArthur demanded unconditional surrender of North Koreans which according to him was necessary to enforce the UN for Unification.

Complications arose on the above question. A political problem came up whether UN forces had authority to pursue war beyond 38th parallel. Because, after all UN had helped South Korea to repel the aggression and not to commit it. The goal of UN was complete elimination of the aggression²³. Such act would have constituted to an invasion. India was also against this move and against the way of unification of Korea with the help of force. America was worried seriously that by crossing 38th parallel she was taking risk of new world war.

But west block was not in the mood of listening and it decided to liquidate North Korean regime and set-up a democratic state of Korea. Even UN's Secretary General, Trygve Lie supported this action declaring that " The aim of UN is and must be a united and independent Korea and as such he was in favour of taking necessary action²³ .

India was certainly more realistic when Nehru declared on 3rd October that the Korean war contained " seeds of mighty conflict and wanted American Militia not to carry it 'too far"²⁴ .



23. New York Times, 9th September, 1950.

24. New York Times, 4th October, 1950.

When such stands were taken in opposition to US, Brazil, Cuba, Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Phillippines and UK sponsored a resolution stating that, " Since UN forces were authorized to function in any part of Korea " to ensure conditions of stability throughout Korea..." for the establishment of a unified, independent and democratic Government in Korea, it naturally implies the sanction given to these forces to enter North Korea²⁵. The resolution was adopted by 37 to 5 votes with eight abstentions, against the protest of Russia and China, and opposition of India, Yugoslavia and five arab State²⁶.

China at the initial stages remained a quite spectator watching the Republic of Korea retreat and the UN's intervention. However, by the end off August 1950 the dragon awoke. Many high levelled conferences were held between two big communist powers i.e. USSR and China. The decision was taken to supply Chinese man power and Russian arms to fight UN forces if they crossed the 38th parallel.

Accordingly on 1st October, the day on which Republic of Korea crossed the 38th parallel the Chinese Foreign Ministry informed K.M.Fannikar, the Indian Ambassador to Peking that if Americian troops crossed the 38th parallel China would intervene the war.

25. UN Doc.A/1422, pp.12.13.

26. Ibid.

In spite of these warnings, MacArthur heeded no attention, while UN did little to alter its decision. As they thought that China was making empty noises.

On 24th October, UN troops moved to the Yalu and continued this advance northwards. India and other neutral nations pointed out the strong possibility of Chinese intervention if American forces did not halt this advance. So it happens, on 5th November, 1950, China poured a sea of men at Yalu which joined North Koreans. Spreading southwards it soon washed away American UN troops. On 10th November, Chinese intervention was officially announced by North Korean Government.

China said that its objective was "to defend its homes and his fatherland opposing the American aggression and supporting the struggle of the Korean people"²⁷.

On 24th December, 1950 the American forces were pushed back across 38th Parallel and western world was shocked. These dreams of United Korea disappeared.

The first phase of war ended in Chinese victory; and war continued. UN patrol units despite Chinese countermoves

 27. New York Times, 11th November, 1950.

and pushed the UN line northwards and succeeded in advancing it beyond 38th parallel. During the period between February and April, the Chinese people's Voluntary Army (CPVA) had been on defensive. MacArthur now wanted to put an end to the influence of communism in Korean territory and take full advantage of the opportunity.

But by this time Americans were becoming aware of the dreadful effects of war and they disliked the idea of losing so many thousands of its young children on foreign soil especially so soon after the second world war. Still MacArthur neglecting the opinion of American and European people conducted the war which resulted in his dismissal.

By now both communists and Americans had realised that they could not advance without rising a full scale war. So the front line running across central Korea was stabilised and war seemed almost over.

Here, it needs to be mentioned that China intervened only after UN troops under MacArthur carried the war beyond the parallel. No serious efforts were made by Allies to cease the war. It was only India and a few non-aligned nations who made genuine efforts to restore peace. But their efforts were not given serious considerations.

On 14th April 1951 Lieutenant General James A. Van Fleet took over the Command³⁶. The Second phase of war started with two massive communist offensives one on 22nd April and second on 15th May which pushed again the UN, line southwards.

The west now wanted to end the war and both UN and US hoped that end in hostilities would create an atmosphere for ceasefire. Finally on 22nd June, 1951, the voice of America called upon the Soviet Union to halt the Korean war at near 38th parallel. Jacob Malik, the Russian delegate to UN responded by suggesting talks between the participants in Korea.

Thus, this is how events took place in the Korean crisis. Korean crisis contributed to various development of India's foreign policy. She had to learn various aspects to reassess her position namely in the context of her leadership in Asian politics.

Nehru in this direction tried his best to develop the concept of non-alignment and its relevance in international politics. In doing so he took his own stands because of which he was criticised both at home and abroad. This aspect can be a separate study for which the next chapter is devoted.
