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C H A P T E R -IV

ROLE OF INDIA IN KOREAN CRISIS

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## CHAPTER - IV

### ROLE OF INDIA IN THE KOREAN CRISIS

India took an active part in the Korean issue right from the beginning. India tried to play the role of a mediator as a peace keeping agent in the Korean crisis. She was genuinely interested in the welfare of Korea on humanitarian grounds. The ultimate objective of the Indian Foreign Policy being that of the " World Peace", she had no advantage to seek for herself, her attitude was more objective and impartial. Unification of Korea was India's prime concern. Moreover, not too long ago India herself has been a victim of similar sufferings. Indians could understand the Korean problem better than many others in the world and its concern for the unification of Korea was genuine. India's views in regard to the 'Korean Crisis' should be viewed with India's past experience which she had as a British Colony.

In fact, it was as early as in 1942, that " the Indian National Congress had expressed its desire to see a free and unified Korea"<sup>1</sup>. The Korean crisis came as an opportunity for young, and free India " to project its image of a non-aligned

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1. Sitaramya P., Ed.2, The History of Indian Congress, Bombay, pp.343-345.

country in the world. It was for the first time ' free India' actively and vigorously entered the area of international conflict.

In this chapter, I have tried to analyse how effective and successful India's role was in peace keeping activities of the United Nations in Korea, and I have also tried to make critical evaluation of India's stand on the various issues regarding Korea; which has contributed to the development of India's Foreign Policy. Besides this, the chapter has heavily quoted the Resolutions of the United Nations; without which the problem of Korea will not be understood.

India's active participation begins right from the beginning when the issue was brought before the International Forum for the first time. Bringing the issue before United Nations itself, became a controversy. When Russo-American Joint Commission, failed in its work of the unification and Independence of Korea, the only peaceful alternative left was to seek solution by taking the issue in the United Nation. On 17th September, 1947, the United States delegation to the United Nations requested that " the problem of the independence of Korea be included in the agenda of the Second Session of the General Assembly"<sup>2</sup>.

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2. UN Doc.A/Bur/85, GAOR Second Session, General Committee, Annex 1b, p.36.

U.S.S.R. took strong objection stating, " it was illegal to bring the question of Korea before the General Assembly of the United Nations because that would be in violation of the Moscow Agreement"<sup>3</sup>. U.S.S.R. urged that the proper procedure was to place the question before the Governments of the powers signatory to the 'Moscow Agreement'<sup>4</sup>.

Another contention of U.S.S.R., was that " Article 107; of the Charter prevented the competence of the United Nations to discuss the problem"<sup>5</sup>. The Charter ~~of~~ make's a clear " distinction between problems relating to the liquidation of the aftermath of the war and those connected with maintaining, peace and the distinction should be retained until the last traces of the war are finally eradicated "<sup>6</sup>.

India did not agree with any of the contentions of the Soviet delegate. Sir Fazal Ali of India pointed that under Article 14, the General Assembly was clearly empowered to take up any question or any matter within the scope of the " Charter and can make recommendations for the peaceful adjustment of any situation, regardless of origin, which it seems likely to impair the general welfare among nations"<sup>7</sup>.

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3. United Nations' General Assembly's Official Record, (Second Session), General Committee, pp.19-20 (herein after referred to GAOR).
  4. GAOR, IInd Session, Plenary Meetings, Vol. I, p.299.
  5. GAOR, IInd Session, General Committee, pp.19-20.
  6. See Statement of the Polish Delegate GAOR's IInd Session Plenary Meeting, Vol. I, p.27.
  7. GAOR, IInd Session, General Committee, p.20.

Another Soviet contention was that Articles 10 and 11 of the UN's charter empowers General Assembly to discuss any question relating to the maintenance of International Peace and accordingly a question like that of Korea could not be a matter of review by General Assembly<sup>8</sup>.

Sir Fazal Ali replied,

"... In the field of peaceful settlement of disputes the Charter does not make any water-tight division of responsibility between the General Assembly and the Security Council..."<sup>9</sup>.

It is true that any recommendation made by the General Assembly or the Security Council in the field of pacific settlement of disputes carries only a moral weight unless the Security Council acts after making a determination regarding the actual existence of a threat to the peace, a breach of the peace, or an act of aggression (Article 39 of UN Charter). These provisions in no way affect the competence to consider any issue which is clearly within the scope of the Charter.

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8. GAOR, Second Session, Plenary Meetings, Vol. I, p. 91.

9. See Articles, 10, 11, 12, 14 & Chapter VI, (Article 33-38) of the United Nations Charter.

In the First Committee, the Indian delegate, Mr. Sen said that Article 107 was not mandatory. It did not prevent Assembly from considering such matter. India supported this view all along.

On 28th October, 1947, the First Committee of the General Assembly began consideration of the Korean question. Two separate draft resolutions were submitted by the United States and Soviet Union, " respectively about Korea"<sup>10</sup>.

The United States draft resolution, provided for holding the elections before March, 31, 1948 by occupying powers in their respective zones in Korea, and for the constitution of the 'Korean National Security' forces. It further provided that the election and the formation of 'Korean National Assembly' and the withdrawal of the occupation troops must be carried out under the supervision of a "United Nations Temporary Commission having the power to travel and observe throughout Korea"<sup>11</sup>.

The Soviet Union proposed that occupation troops should be withdrawn from " Korea and Koreans should be given

10. GAOR, Session 2, Chapter 1, 1947, Meeting 87, pp. 248-82.

11. GAOR, Session 2, Chapter 2, Meeting 91, pp. 285, (A/c/1/237).

opportunity to form a government by themselves without the aid and participation of the Allies"<sup>12</sup>. The Soviet Union opposed the very idea of the United Nations involvement in Korea. Secondly Soviet proposal provided for inviting the elected representatives of the Korean people to take part in the discussions of Korean question"<sup>13</sup>.

To the second " Soviet Draft Resolution United Nations submitted an amendment"<sup>14</sup>, providing that a United Nations Temporary Commission be established to facilitate the participation of the representatives of the Korean people. This amendment meant that it would be the Commission rather than the First Committee, which would hear the views of the Korean representatives.

Finally, " at the 91st meeting of the First Committee, on 30th October, 1947, India expressed its view that while the Soviet proposal was likely to create some confusion, the United States proposal seemed unduly vague"<sup>15</sup>. The Indian Representative therefore, suggested that " the elections instead of being held on zonal basis, should be held on national basis under the supervision of the UNCTOC, thereby removing the political and moral barrier which had been created by the division of the country"<sup>16</sup>.

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12. GAOR, Session 2, Chapter I, 1947, Meeting 87, pp. 248-52.

13. GAOR, Session 2, Chapter I, p. 606 or UN Documents A/C.1/229, Annex-16-d.

14. Ibid.

15. GAOR, Session 2, Committee 1, Meeting 91, p. 285 (A/C.1/237).

16. Ibid.

" The United States then introduced a revised draft resolution, incorporating some of the Indian suggestions"<sup>17</sup>. But it still tried to get away with the election to be conducted by occupying powers. Once again India intervened and submitted an amendment omitting reference to the " Occupying Powers ", from the United States proposal. The 9th meeting of First Committee on 5th November, 1947 finally adopted this amendment by a vote of 34 to 0 with 4 absentions<sup>18</sup>.

The First Committee adopted the second Soviet draft proposed as amended by United States (according to the suggestions of India), The USSR and Eastern European countries (Yugoslavia, Ukrain, Czechoslovakia, Byelorussia, Poland) did not participate in voting.

India voted in favour of the amended draft resolution. India agreed with the principle underlying the Soviet draft proposal that Korean people should be consulted to the fullest extent in any matter affecting their welfare. Yet India was opposed to any step which would delay the establishment of the independence of Korea.

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17. UN Documents A/C 1/128, Rev.1.

18. GAOR, Session 2, Committee 1, 1947, Meeting 94, p.307.



India was opposed to the immediate withdrawal of the occupation forces as envisaged in the substantive USSR draft resolution. It apprehended that such a step would lead to confusion in the absence of Korean government<sup>19</sup>.

Since India was not very happy with the United States draft resolution, it made the following suggestions:

1. A general election should be held not on a zonal basis, but under the supervision and control of the UNICOM
2. Elections should be held on the basis of adult suffrage without any political discrimination and by secret ballot.
3. The Korean Assembly should meet immediately after it has been elected to form a national government.
4. The National Government, immediately upon its formation should constitute its own National Security Force and dissolve all military and semi-military formations not include therein, and;
5. A definite time limit should be fixed for the withdrawal of the occupation.<sup>20</sup>

19. GAOR, Second Session, Plenary Meetings, Vol. II, p. 858.

20. GAOR, Second Session, Plenary Meetings, Vol. II, p. 858.

The suggestions made by India were aimed at removing the mutual suspicions of the USA and USSR and ensuring that the division of Korea was not preferable. By making a specific reference to the liquidation of all military and semi-military formations and for setting a definite time limit for the withdrawal of the occupation forces, India attempted to meet the USSR suspicion that US was trying to convert Korea into a base directed against it. By expressing itself against elections conducted on zonal basis and suggesting that these be held under the control and supervision of a United Nation body, India attempted to avoid every possibility of perpetuating the division which could conceivably result under the plan envisaged by the United States resolution. India also apposed the Soviet contention in joint US-USSR Commission that those parties, which were apposed to the trusteeship idea should not be consulted. This was done by suggesting that elections be held on the basis of adult suffrage and without political discrimination.

These " suggestions made by India were accepted by United States and were incorporated in the revised draft resolution"<sup>21</sup>. The revised draft however, retained the

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21. UN Documents A/C/218 Rev.1, or GAOR Second Session, First Committee, Annex.16C, p.205.

provision that the elections would be conducted by the occupying powers India, therefore, introduced a formal amendment<sup>22</sup>, which sought to omit any reference to the occupying powers' and aimed at making the implementation of the US proposals more definite as regards the date of elections.

The United States revised draft resolution, provided that the commission was to arrange with the occupying powers for the withdrawal of their forces from Korea.

A Chinese amendment to this provision " sought to provide for the consultation by the commission with the powers party to Moscow Agreement"<sup>23</sup>. The Indian delegate pointed out that the Chinese amendment might lead to the difference of the opinion between signatures of the Moscow Agreement and might thereby delay the withdrawal of the forces from Korea. He expressed the hope that " Chinese delegate would not press his amendment"<sup>24</sup>. China acceded to this request"<sup>25</sup>. The Chinese delegate however, suggested that the Commission should consult the 'Korean National Government', before arranging the withdrawal of the occupation

22. UN Documents A/C 1/237, Ibid., Annex. 16D, p. 609.

23. UN Documents A/C 1/238, Ibid., Annex. 16M, p. 609.

24. GAOR, IInd Session, First Committee, p. 302.

25. Ibid., pp. 305-306.

forces. India expressed its agreement with this suggestion. Mr. Sen pointed out that such a provision should not be interpreted to mean that the commission could not arrange for the withdrawal of the occupation forces unless it received complete assurance about the ability of the Korean government to assume full responsibility<sup>26</sup>. Here again India aimed at meeting a possible criticism that the withdrawal might be indefinitely delayed under the cover of vague words.

The revised United State's draft resolution was adopted in the committee by 46 votes to none with four abstentions<sup>27</sup>.

United State had proposed to include India in the UNCTOK. It appears that it was a recognition of the active part played by India in shaping the resolution. There might have been also the consideration that India's presence in the commission might serve as a balancing factor. This had accepted by General Assembly.

The programme recommended by General Assembly was as follows:

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26. Ibid.

27. GAOR, IInd Session, First Committee, p.307.

1. Elections would be held under the observation of the UNICOM, not later than March 31, 1948, on the basis of the adult franchise, by secret ballot to choose the representatives with whom the commission may consult.
2. The representatives so elected would constitute the National Assembly of Korea which would form a National Government.
3. The National Government would in consultation with the commission constitute its own National Security Forces and dissolve all military and semi-military formation not included therein, and;
4. The National Government would take over the functions from the Military Commands and Civilian authorities of South and North Korea and would arrange with the occupying powers for the complete withdrawal from Korea of their armed forces as early as practicable and if possible within 90 days<sup>28</sup>.

This was virtually all that the United States has put forward incorporating India's suggestions.

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28. Resolution 112 (II) dated November 14, 1947, Year Book of UN, 1947, p.88.

What motivated India to take active part in the discussion of the Korean question ? It can well be explained in terms of its general policy. Korea was an Asian Country and the problem of Korea was intimately connected with that of restoring settled conditions in Asia and the South Pacific. India must have realised the truth of the statement of the Chinese delegate that Korea might easily become the Balkans of Asia<sup>29</sup> - India might have been motivated by the view that being an avowed neutral in the cold-war, it might by associating itself in the work of the commission help in 'narrowing down the differences'.<sup>30</sup> The unity and independence of Korea was undoubtedly a cause whose correctness could hardly be doubted. This India seems to have decided to offer steadfast and " whole hearted co-operation at whatever inconvenience, within the frame-work of the United Nation and in the spirit of the Charter"<sup>31</sup>.

On 14th November, 1947, the United Nation set-up a temporary commission on Korea (UNICOK). It was required to act as a neutral observer of the elections and troop withdrawal and report to General Assembly. The commission consisted of

29. GAOR, Second Session, Plenary Meetings, Vol. II, p. 840.

30. Statement of Mrs. Pandit, GAOR, Second Session, Plenary meeting.

31. GAOR, Second Session, Vol. II, p. 137.

the representatives from Australia, Canada, China, El Salvador, France, India, Philipnes, Syria and Ukraine. Ukrainian Government afterwards decided to participate. Mr.K.P.S.Menon of India was unanimously elected permanent Chairman of UNICO, afterwards the commission decided to rotate the Chairmanship.

In the begining the commission seemed to have been full of enthusiasm, sure of itself and confident of its ability to carry out its task successfully. This spirit of the commission was reflected in Menon's speech on 14th January, 1948, in which he said:

"... The Thirty Eighth parallel must be politically obliterated... We have come here with no political prejudices, no ideological predilections. The states which we represent do not constitute a block"<sup>32</sup>.

Menon further assured that the Commission was only interested in facilitating the independence and unity of Korea. Refering to the partition of India and its ill-effects, he expressed the hope that, unlike India, Korea

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32- UNICOK, Report, Part-I, Vol.II, p.6.

would be unified and that it would take that which suited her best from both the American and Russian systems and " evolve a system of her own in harmony with her own traditions and culture " <sup>33</sup>. Menon emphasised India's interests in Korea when he said:

"... Between India, Korea and China there is a spiritual bond for it was from India that Budhism travelled across the root of the world..."

Menon was indeed hopeful of a reconciliation and an eventual change of attitude on the part of the Soviet Union and North Korean authorities. " But his hopes were soon dashed. UNICOK when started its work, it was faced with determined opposition from North Korean authorities. The commission was not admitted into the Northern Zone" <sup>34</sup>. By 14th February, 1948, UNICOK was fully convinced that it could not break through the iron curtain and there was vast difference of opinions on the issue. So it was decided to consult the matter with the 'Interim Committee' of the General Assembly.

33. Ibid.

34. GAOR, Session 3, Suplt. 1948, Supplement No. 9. A/575, and 2 4, pp. 24-25.



There was possibility of Interim Committee suggesting to conduct elections in South Korea only. Such a recommendation would be welcomed by United State's Government, American military personnel in Seoul and such members of Commission as China, France, Phillipines. On the other hand South Korean leaders as Kim Soushik and Kim Koo were likely to oppose this suggestion for they believed that this would solidify the division and the two halves would never unite again<sup>35</sup>. Australia, Canada and India also shared this view and were therefore, against holding elections in the South alone. India felt that holding of elections would not help nationalism, integration to develop. Hence she was against holding elections because this would amount to partition of Korea.

Eventually the commission decided by four votes to three with one abstension to make a reference to the Interim Committee<sup>36</sup>. The commission left it to the Chairman, Mr.Menon to express the views of the members concerning the question of consultation before the Interim Committee<sup>37</sup>.

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35. UNICOK, Report, Part-I, Vol.III, p.57.

36. Second Information Report on the work of the UNICOK, UN Documents A/325, dated 17th February, 1948, p.3.

37. Third Information Report on the work of the UNICOK UN Documents A/527 dated 16th March, 1948, p.2.

In the statement before the Interim Committee Mr. Menon pointed, the commission was willing to observe elections if these could be held in a free atmosphere<sup>38</sup> and separate government in South Korea alone could not be a "National Government"<sup>39</sup>.

India in this situation was unable to come with definite stand and found itself pulled between two extremes. Mr. Pillai said before the "Interim Committee that, he was inclined to agree with the views both of those in favour of forming a National Government in Korea on the basis of elections in South alone and those who were opposed to the realization of such a plan"<sup>40</sup>. However, India did not want the commission to report failure. India apprehended that would injure not only the cause of the Koreans but also the prestige of the United Nations. Mr. Menon told the Interim Committee that the Koreans had been telling the commission that the United Nations was their last hope. If that last hope was shattered, Mr. Menon added, Korea might blow up and that might become the beginning of a war in Asia and the world<sup>41</sup>. He emphasised that though elections in South alone could not result in the immediate, establishment of a National Government, they

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38. UN Documents A/Ag 18/28, Feb. 19, 1948, pp. 14-16.

39. Ibid.

40. UN Interim Committee of G.A. Summary record of the 8th Meeting, Feb. 25, 1948, p. 2. UN Doc. A/AC/18, SR. 8.

41. UN Documents A/AC, 18/128, Feb. 19, 1948, p. 8.

could pave the way towards the establishment of such government.

There was lot of discussion in Interim Committee. In the end United States draft resolution was adopted by Interim Committee which said that " it was " incumbent on the UNTCOK.. to implement the programme... in such parts of Korea as are accessible to the Commission<sup>42</sup>.

It may be noted that the resolution was adopted in the absence of USSR and other Soviet block countries, who did not participate in work of Interim Committee on ground that it was an illegal body.

The Chairman of Interim Committee, Dr. Zulis Padilla Neryo, addressed a letter to the Chairman of UNICOK, which merely noted that the representatives constituting the Korean National Assembly will be free to consult with temporary committee and any Korean group. It expressed the confidence that all peaceful methods of persuasion would thus be used to the greatest possible extent for the attainment of Korean unity.

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42. UNTCOK Report, Part I, Vol-I, pp.26-27.

India supported this resolution in spite of the apprehension that it might solidify the division of Korea and further worsen the relations between North and South<sup>43</sup>. India was of the opinion, as expressed by its delegate Mr. Pillai, that the General Assembly had the intension that Korean people's just claim to independence should be encouraged<sup>44</sup>. Another reason for India's support appears to be its hope and confidence that the political leaders of South Korea would spare no efforts to initiate and enter into negotiations with the political leaders of North Korea with a view to securing their co-operation<sup>45</sup>.

Temporary commission unanimously decided to carry out the advice of the Interim Committee. In implementing the decisions to carry out election the Commission was faced with contradictory views. " Commission was expected to conduct elections in free atmosphere wherein the democratic right of freedom of speech, press and assembly would be respected"<sup>46</sup>. In order to determine whether such an atmosphere existed in Korea, the Commission conducted hearings.

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43. Summary Record of the 8th Meeting of Interim Committee, UN Documents A/Ac. 18/SR 8, p.1.

44. Summary Record of the 8th Meeting of Interim Committee, Un Documents A/Ac. 18/SR 8, p.1.

45. Ibid., p.2.

46. Fifth Information Report on the work of the UNICOM dated 1st April, 1948, UN Documents A/529, pp.3-5.

During the course of hearings at which Dr. Syngman Rhee was invited to present his views, Mr. Menon emphasized the need of making persistent efforts to enlist the co-operation of the other side. He asked Dr. Rhee as to how he expected to achieve the objective of an independent Korea. When Dr. Rhee outlined his plan, Mr. Menon said that it should not be ignored that "the Soviet Union is near and the United States is far away. Soviet Union has a definite policy while United States is subject to change of opinion. Soviet Russia is more interested in Korea than United States"<sup>47</sup>. This points out change in attitude of India. India started with the attitude that North Korean's would eventually extend co-operation. By now India had come to the realisation that the reconciliation of interests would not be possible unless positive efforts were made, by South Korea to win the co-operation of the North".

It was proved that there existed in South Korea a reasonable degree of free atmosphere for election<sup>48</sup>. So elections were held under the supervision of the Commission.

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47. UNCTOC Report Part-I, Vol. III, pp. 63-64.

48. 8th Information Report on the work of the UNCTOC dated 28th June, 1948, UN Documents A/548.

Syngman Rhee was proclaimed the first President of the new Republic<sup>49</sup>. This action in the South hastened the setting up of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, north of the 38th parallel under the leadership of Kim Il Sung on 9th September, 1948<sup>50</sup>.

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49. Gordenkar N.4, The United Nations and The Peaceful Unification of Korea, p.4.

50. Ibid., p.5.