

South Korean Demands for Withdrawal of Neutral Nations' Supervisory Commission. - Attacks on N.N.S.C. Compounds. - U.S. Support for Swedish and Swiss Proposals for Abolition of N.N.S.C. - Allegations of Collusion between Communist Members of Commission and North Koreans. - U.N. Allegations of Expansion of North Korean Air Force. - Air Incidents. - Withdrawal of Chinese Divisions. - South Korea rejects North Korean Proposal for Conference on Unification.

The South Korean Government announced on Aug. 2(a) that it would “demand” the withdrawal of the Neutral Nations' Supervisory Commission (N.N.S.C.) from Korea; and (b) that it would also demand “within a certain specified time” the withdrawal of Communist forces from those areas south of the 38th Parallel which had been left under Communist control by the armistice terms. The latter demand referred to the strip of territory at the western end of the truce demarcation line lying south of the 38th Parallel—see map, page 13078.

As regards the first demand, the South Korean Government alleged that the Communists were building up their military strength in North Korea in violation of the armistice agreement, and that the Polish and Czechoslovak members of the N.N.S.C. were engaging in “espionage activities” and had prevented the Commission from carrying out its duties under the truce terms.

With regard to the second demand, it was alleged that the Communists had prevented the dredging of the Han River which was urgently necessary to prevent flooding of the international airport at Seoul. Moreover, it was stated that the defence of South Korea made it essential that the Communists should withdraw from the area under their control at the western end of the armistice line. After recalling that the South Korean Government had agreed “not to obstruct the armistice for a period of three months, during which negotiations were to have been completed [for a Korean peace treaty],” the statement added: “We are no longer under any such obligation. Two years have already elapsed, not three months. . . . The Communists have blocked our main waterway and no longer have any right to occupy our land under the pretext of the ridiculous armistice terms.”

On Aug. 7 the South Korean Government announced that an “ultimatum” had been sent to the headquarters of the N.N.S.C. at Panmunjom calling upon the Commission to leave Korea by Aug. 13, and reiterating the allegation that the Communist (i.e. Polish and Czechoslovak) members of the N.N.S.C. had been engaged in espionage activities. During the following week large-scale demonstrations against the N.N.S.C. inspection teams occurred in Seoul, Pusan, and other centres, coupled with attempted attacks on the Communist members of the teams. Attempts to storm billets occupied by inspection teams were repulsed by American troops and military police, who used tear-gas and fire-hoses against the demonstrators and who frequently had to fire over the heads of the crowds. On Aug. 13, however, a few hours before the “deadline” set by the South Korean Government for the withdrawal of the N.N.S.C., President Syngman Rhee announced in a broadcast that the demand would be “postponed” and that the Commission would be given “time to leave Korea peacefully and voluntarily.” He subsequently declared that persons attempting to attack members of the N.N.S.C. inspection teams would be regarded as “creators of violence” and would be arrested and punished. President Rhee had had a meeting with General Lemnitzer (the U.S. and U.N. C.-in-C. in the Far East) before issuing his statement of Aug. 13.

The most serious incidents occurred on Wolmi Island, in Incheon harbour, where the causeway leading to the mainland was blocked by thousands of demonstrators. The demonstrators made a number of attempts to storm the compound housing the local N.N.S.C. inspection team, with the aim of attacking the Polish and

Czechoslovak members. All these attempts were repelled by strong forces of U.S. troops and military police, who drove off repeated attacks with tear-gas and fire-hoses and who opened fire over the heads of the mob from time to time. Seven U.S. soldiers and military policemen were injured by stones and rocks hurled by the crowds, whilst one Korean was shot dead and a number were injured.

Other demonstrations against the N.N.S.C. teams occurred in Seoul, where American troops drove off thousands of demonstrators (six of whom were wounded) with tear-gas, hoses, and rifle-butts; in Pusan, where two U.S. soldiers were wounded; and at Tacgu, Kunsan, Hangnung, and other places.

At a meeting of the Military Armistice Commission at Panmunjom, the senior U.N. delegate (Major-General Parks) assured the Communists on Aug. 12 that the N.N.S.C. would be given full protection and that the U.N. Command, "to the limit of its ability," would ensure that the armistice terms were observed. In reply to the senior Communist delegate, who described the attacks on the N.N.S.C. as a "grave violation of the armistice agreement." General Parks accused the Polish and Czechoslovak members of the Commission of "failing to deport themselves in accordance with the standards of conduct expected of accredited diplomatic personnel" and of conniving at armistice violations.

The Foreign Ministry of the Chinese People's Republic issued a statement on Aug. 11 (broadcast by Peking Radio) declaring that "the action which the Syngman Rhee clique threatens to take [against the N.N.S.C.] is a plot by certain international forces to upset the present situation." The statement continued:

"Acts aimed at sabotaging the Korean armistice agreements or threatening the N.N.S.C. are impermissible. The United States, which signed the armistice agreement on behalf of the U.N. Command, bears the unshakable responsibility. . . . of taking immediate and effective measures to stop the threatened action of the Syngman Rhee clique, and to give proper protection to all the staff of the N.N.S.C. stationed in South Korea. The Governments of all other countries concerned on the side of the U.N. Command also have the responsibility to see that the U.N. Command carries out the international obligations which it has undertaken.

"Although no agreement was reached at the 1954 Geneva conference on Korea, China has unremittingly continued its endeavours for the consolidation of the Korean armistice and for the peaceful unification of Korea. We have always maintained that all foreign troops should be withdrawn from Korea. . . . Contrary to the slanders of certain people, the Chinese People's Volunteers are ready to withdraw from Korea at any time, together with all other foreign troops. . . . We hold that the Korean armistice must be consolidated, and that nobody should be allowed to wreck it. The N.N.S.C. must be respected by both sides to the armistice, and no-one should be allowed to direct threats against it. . . ."

For some months previously the Polish and Czechoslovak members of the N.N.S.C. had been repeatedly accused, both by the U.N. Command and by the South Korean Government, of obstructing on-the-spot checks of reported armistice violations in North Korea, particularly with regard to the build-up of North Korean air forces (see below). On Jan. 27, 1955, the Swedish and Swiss Governments had sent *aide-mémoires* to the United States and China proposing that the Commission should be abolished, or, alternatively, that its staff should be curtailed by agreement among the nations which signed the Korean armistice. Both the Swedish and Swiss representatives on the N.N.S.C. had complained that it was virtually impossible to supervise the armistice effectively, and had drawn attention to the fact that the Commission had been trying to carry out its duties for 20 months—a much longer period than had been envisaged under the armistice agreement.

Under the Korean armistice agreement, the N.N.S.C., consisting of equal numbers of Swedish, Swiss, Polish, and Czechoslovak personnel, was given the task of ensuring that the armistice provisions were observed in both parts of Korea—i.e., that there was no military build-up, no reinforcement of troops or *matériel* beyond the limits specified in the armistice agreement, etc. In addition to a headquarters staff at Panmunjom, the Commission maintains five inspection teams at North Korean ports and five at South Korean ports, in addition to a number of mobile inspection teams.

The Chinese reply to the Swedish-Swiss representations said that the Commission had been useful but that "certain bellicose elements" were trying to destroy it. It opposed the disbanding of the Commission, but agreed that certain of its functions might be curtailed. The U.S. reply, published on March 3 after consultation with the 16 nations represented on the U.N. Command, upheld the Swedish-Swiss proposal that the Commission should be abolished. The text of the U.S. reply to the Swedish Government (that to the Swiss Government was in identical terms) was as follows:

"The U.S. Government appreciates the difficulties which Sweden is encountering in carrying out a task which the Swedish Government had undertaken on the condition that the Commission would last for only a limited time. Furthermore, it is aware that obstructionist activities on the part of the Communist side have

made it impossible for the N.N.S.C. to fulfil its responsibilities under the armistice agreement. The U.S. Government therefore agrees that the N.N.S.C. should be abolished. It is understood, however, that the Chinese reply to the Swedish *aide-mémoire* rejects the liquidation of the N.N.S.C., which is the solution preferred by Sweden, but accepts the less preferred alternative of a reduction in the Commission's personnel.

“Despite the current activities undertaken by the N.N.S.C. at the request of either the U.N. Command side or the Communist side, it is the view of the U.S. Government, primarily because of the consistent history of Communist obstruction, that it is doubtful that any useful purpose would be served by a continuation of the Commission.”

Other developments in Korea during recent months are summarized below under cross-headings:

Air Incidents. It was announced on Feb. 6 in Washington that two MIG-15 fighters had been shot down by U.S. *Sabre* jets on the previous day over the Yellow Sea. The announcement stated that eight MIG-15s had attacked an unspecified number of *Sabres* which were escorting a U.S. bomber carrying out a reconnaissance mission over “international waters west of Korea”; that two of the MIGs had been shot down; that the remainder had broken off the engagement and flown back towards “Communist territory” (whether Chinese or North Korean was not stated); and that the U.S. planes had returned to their base at Osan (South Korea) without loss. The nationality of the MIGs was not given.

On May 10 it was announced that U.S. *Sabres* had shot down two MIG-15s, and probably destroyed a third, after being attacked by 12-16 Communist fighters over international waters off North Korea. It was stated that the *Sabres* (all of which returned safely to base) were on patrol off the coast when the attack occurred. The New China News Agency alleged that the U.S. planes had flown over two Chinese Islands south-west of Antung (Manchuria); claimed that one of them had been shot down; and protested against “a grave military provocation” by the U.S. Air Force.

The U.N. Command made a strong protest on Aug. 18 at the shooting-down of an unarmed U.S. training plane over North Korea. It was stated that the plane, carrying an American pilot and an observer, was flying near the U.N. side of the demilitarized zone between North and South Korea when it was fired upon by North Korean anti-aircraft guns and crashed in North Korean territory. At a meeting of the Military Armistice Commission, Major-General Parks stressed that the training plane was unarmed and defenceless, accused the Communists of violating the spirit of the armistice agreement, and protested against the “wanton murders and acts of inhumanity” committed by the Communist side. After pointing out that the demarcation line was difficult to identify from the air, and that Communist aircraft had intruded over the line on 53 occasions without being fired upon from the U.N. side, General Parks declared: “In the past ten months alone there have been nine officially recorded instances in which U.N. Command aircraft have been fired upon by your (i.e. the Communist) trigger happy gunners. . .”

The North Korean authorities subsequently agreed to return to the U.N. Command the pilot of the training plane (who had been wounded and was in hospital with head injuries) and the body of the observer (who had been killed in the crash). They also agreed to return the wreckage of the aircraft.

Build-up of North Korean Air Force.—Allegations by U.N. Command. A 17-page statement alleging that North Korea had illegally built up her air forces since the armistice on June 27, 1953, was handed to General Lee Sang Cho (the senior Communist member of the Military Armistice Commission) by Major-General Parks at Panmunjom on July 15. The statement said *inter alia* (1) that at the time of the armistice the U.N. Command had evidence that North Korea did not possess a single jet aircraft, nor any airfields capable of taking such machines; (2) that, within a few months of the signing of the armistice agreement, “our radar surveillance detected continuously increasing jet aircraft” in North Korea; (3) that the U.N. Command now had “irrefutable proof of the illegal build-up of combat forces” by the North Koreans; (4) that collusion between the Communists and the Polish and Czechoslovak members of the N.N.S.C. had successfully thwarted “any realistic investigation” of North Korean military activities since the armistice; (5) that two North Korean pilots who had recently defeated to the U.N. Command with their machines' (of the Soviet *Yak* type) had revealed that the North Korean Air Force now possessed 580 combat planes, including 300 MIG-15 jets, and that many airfields had been built or were under construction. Lodging “the strongest and most serious protest since the signing of the armistice,” General Parks charged that the Communists, by their “wilful, deliberate, and illegal build-up of combat forces,” had “flagrantly violated every basic provision of the armistice agreement” with the intention of “acquiring a favourable military position over the forces of the United Nations Command.”

General Lee Sang Cho, in reply, denied the allegations *in toto*, and alleged that the two North Korean airmen mentioned by General Parks were in reality specially-trained South Korean agents.

Withdrawal of Six Chinese Divisions. Peking Radio announced on March 25 that six more Chinese divisions were being withdrawn from North Korea, bringing to 13 the number of Chinese divisions withdrawn since the armistice. It was simultaneously announced that General Yang Teh-chin, Commander of the “Chinese People's Volunteers,” had returned to China and had been succeeded by his deputy, General Yang Yung.

Withdrawal of Belgian and Filipino Forces. The last Belgian unit in Korea (a 216-man company) sailed from Pusan for Belgium on June 15. The last Filipino forces under the U.N. Command had left Korea in May.

Repatriation of U.N. Soldiers from China. The Chinese Red Cross announced on June 18 that five of the 22 U.N. soldiers who had refused repatriation after the Korean armistice (three Americans and two Belgians) had received permission to leave China at their own request. The three Americans crossed the Hong Kong border on July 10 and were handed over to the U.S. authorities, who warned them that they would be liable to prosecution on their return to America under U.S. military law. [The three men concerned, together with other American soldiers who refused repatriation, had previously been discharged from the U.S. Army with ignominy as deserters.] All three men made statements declaring that their experiences in China had completely disabused them of their former sympathy with Communism; that they were willing to face punishment on their return to the U.S.A.; and that China, as a country, was “ruled by fear” and characterized by “intimidation, terror, and the police State system.” They also said that the Chinese people hated both the Communist regime and the former regime of Chiang Kai-shek, which they regarded as “rotten”; of the two however, they would prefer to live under the Chiang regime.

The men stated that they had worked on a State farm and in a factory for making agricultural implements, after having been subjected to an intensive course of indoctrination. They disclosed that a number of the U.N. soldiers who had refused repatriation were studying at “people's universities” (including the one British non-repatriate, Marine Condron), whilst others were working on farms and in factories.

The Prime Minister of North Korea, Kim Il Sung, proposed on Aug. 15 that a meeting should be held between the North and South Korean Governments, together with a parallel conference between “countries interested in the Korean question,” with the aim of bringing about the peaceful unification of Korea. The South Korean Government, however, declared on the following day that it would only negotiate with the North Koreans after the withdrawal of all Chinese forces and the demobilization of the North Korean forces. When these two conditions had been fulfilled, “the people of North Korea can join with the people of South Korea in speaking freely, and we shall have peace and unification immediately without the loss of a single life.”—(New York Times - New York Herald Tribune - Times - Daily Telegraph - Manchester Guardian - Neue Zürcher Zeitung) (**Prev. rep. Korea, 13968 D; 13874 A; President Rhee, 13829 A.**)