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Meeting of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission¹

FIRST JOINT MEETING OF THE NNSC HELD AT PANMUNJOM
ON THE 1ST OF AUGUST 1953

Panmunjom, 1 August 1953

Maj. Gen. *Bryan*

introduces: on my left Maj. Gen. Gravstroem, on my right Maj. Gen. Rihner, on my far right Brig. Gen. Asper, on my far left Brig. Gen. Mohn, Behind to the right Col. Bossi, behind to the left Brig. Gen. Ingvarson, far behind right Maj. Jenny, far behind left Lt. Ekvall.

Maj. Gen. *Lee Sang Jo*

introduces: on my left Gen. Lt. Frantisek Bures, on my right Maj. Gen. Mieczyslaw Wagrowski, on my far left Col. Jiri Stary, on my far right Col. Ldislaw Bibrowski. I hope that the meetings of the NNSC will be successful.

Maj. Gen. *Bryan*:

I suggest that all with the exception of the NNSC Delegations will leave the room.

Czechoslovakia

asks whether the other Delegates have speeches ready too.

Sweden

We have not prepared any, please continue.

Czechoslovakia

We have prepared 4 copies and if you agree we shall begin with the address (see enclosure).²

Switzerland:

We are speaking in the name of Switzerland. Switzerland is glad to be able to participate in this action. We have pleasure in stating that we all want the same i. e. to cooperate seriously. We are glad that the agreement could be signed³ and

¹ CH-BAR#E2001E-01#1988/16#2719* (B.73.0.1). *The first NNSC-Meeting was held at the «Peace Pagoda» in Panmunjom. It was attended by the two Senior Members of the Military Armistice Commission (MAC), Major General Blackshear M. Bryan and Lieutenant General Lee Sang-jo. From the NNSC, the Head of the Czechoslovak delegation, Lieutenant General František Bureš, the Head of the Polish delegation, Major General Mieczysław Wąrowski, the Head of the Swedish delegation, Major General Sven Grafström, and the Head of the Swiss delegation, Major General Friedrich Rihner, attended the meeting, as did their alternates Colonel Jiří Stary, Colonel Władysław Bibrowski, Brigadier General Paul Mohn and Brigadier General Ernst Asper respectively and their accompanying staff. The meeting started at 3.05 pm. It is not known which staff members were responsible for preparing the minutes.*

² *The enclosure mentioned has not been filed in the reference dossier CH-BAR#E2001E-01#1988/16#2719* (B.73.0.1).*

³ *For the text of the Korean Armistice Agreement of 27 July 1953 see QdD 21, Annex 2, dodis.ch/60000.*



we only hope that we do not have to work too much, or, the less work we have, the better the agreement will be executed. We do hope that our mutual efforts will be successful.

Sweden:

The Swedish people as all other peoples are very happy that the armistice has been signed and that the bloodshed has come to an end. We are very glad to have met here to undertake a joint work. As you know we send our teams to North and South Korea. «Team» means full cooperation and teamwork and we do hope that work will be carried out in this sense. Thank you.

Poland:

We express our pleasure that we could meet here in Korea after silence has settled down over the country and that women and children can now live in peace. The Polish people too like peace and want to continue cultural construction and we have great pleasure in being here. Good will, objectivity and reasonability will be our aim. We hope that this is the aim of all parties concerned.

As a member of the NNSC and on behalf of the Polish Government and the Polish Nation, we would like to express our satisfaction that peace has come nearer and we all shall do our best in order to realize the results we all are wishing for. We rely upon the fact that our collaboration will prove to be satisfactory.

Sweden:

We would like to ask whether Czechoslovakia and Poland have received the message which has been sent by the Swiss and the Swedes.⁴

Poland:

We have received this message but our secretaries have not agreed to it as yet.

Sweden:

Which are your propositions?

Poland:

Our secretaries raised the question of the official language.

Sweden:

What are your propositions?

Poland:

Our people want to speak in their own language or in Russian or English. If anybody wants to speak another language, this has to be translated.

Switzerland:

The official languages have been put down in the armistice agreement: English, Korean and Chinese. Neither of us speaks Chinese or Korean. You propose that each of us could speak his own language, but we are afraid that this will complicate the matter. Why do you propose Russian? We all have our own language. Could we not leave out the Russian language?

For a report by the head of the Swiss delegation, Major General Rihner, on the day of the signing, see QdD 21, doc. 12, dodis.ch/66149.

⁴ *See the letter from the Swedish and Swiss NNSC delegations in Tokyo to the Czechoslovak and Polish NNSC delegations of 27 July 1953, dodis.ch/66656. For the preliminary discussion of the agenda of the first NNSC-Meeting between the Swedish and Swiss heads of delegation on 31 July 1953 in Panmunjom, see dodis.ch/66719. For the first meeting of the Swedish and Swiss heads of delegation with the Senior Member of the United Nations Command Military Armistice Commission (UNCMAC), General Bryan, on 30 July 1953, see dodis.ch/66718.*

Sweden:

The Swedish Delegate translated the sense of the Swiss Delegate's remarks into English and agreed to it.

Poland:

asks for a translation.

Sweden:

replies that this has just been done (all laughing)

Poland:

The agreement provides three official languages for the MAC, the agreement does not refer to any language which would have to be used by the NNSC. We do not know English. We do understand French but cannot speak this language, Russian has about the same importance to us as English for you. The Polish and Czech language are much alike but not the same. We are of opinion that Russian as a mutual language will do better service than the language of each delegation. There are probably some documents which have to be translated in Russian and therefore suggest the Russian language.

Sweden:

We are afraid that we cannot agree to the Polish proposal. The interpretation is that English is the official language in Europe. We do not want to complicate the technical side of our meetings and we are sorry to say that we cannot agree to the Russian language. On the other side it would be better not to have to translate from and into 4 languages. If you do not speak French we could use Polish or Czech and English. Personally we do not have any opposition against French or German being used. Paragraph 45 of the Agreement says clearly that there is only one European language i. e. English.

Czechoslovakia:

Please repeat the Swedish proposal. We are not quite clear whether Czech *and* Polish or Czech *or* Polish was meant.

Sweden:

regrets if they have not expressed themselves clearly and repeats their previous proposal.

Czechoslovakia:

If we have understood you correctly it will be thus that if anybody speaks Czech or Polish this will be translated into English and if anybody speaks Swedish or French, this will be translated into Czech or Polish.

Sweden:

We repeat that we agree to the Czechoslovakian proposal and that it would be the best to have only one translation done for each language.

Switzerland:

agrees to both.

Sweden:

If you agree and a Swiss member speaks French, this has only to be translated into Czech as we know the French language.

Poland:

We consider this a good proposal, but we think it better for our filing if everything is translated into English.

Sweden:

We could have these translations done later on. I propose that we speak four languages, Czech, Polish, English and French, and our secretaries will make the translations afterwards.

Poland:

We do not have any French shorthand typists.

Sweden:

We do not have any Czech or Polish shorthand typists. We must have confidence in our secretaries i. e. that the work will be carried out properly.

We seem to have reached an agreement, may we change the subject.

Poland:

agreed.

Sweden:

It is the question of chairmanship. We, Switzerland and Sweden propose, so as to facilitate our work, that a chairman is elected for a fortnight. Czechoslovakia shall start, followed by Sweden, Poland and Switzerland.

Czechoslovakia:

agrees to the Swedish and Swiss proposal in the meaning that this problem should be studied and fixed in the course of the next session.

Sweden:

We have proposed from our side that the teams should be put into action as soon as possible. We ask therefore at what date the teams should be sent out, how the organisation should be set.

Switzerland:

We too are of the opinion that the teams should take up their tasks as soon as possible, but beforehand we have to lay down their instructions, and in order to foster the discussions we have proposed to elect a chairman who will lead the meetings. Furthermore we have other urgent items to discuss.

Sweden:

We agree to the Swiss statement: we have many items to discuss, and for this reason we must fix an order for our work, and for this reason we have put the question of procedure at the top of our list. We ask the Czechoslovakian delegation to take the chairmanship tomorrow.

Poland:

The question of sending out the teams is very urgent. We agree to the fact that a chairmanship has to be elected, but the change of this seat has to take place more frequently. We propose a daily change and agree that Czechoslovakia will take over the first chairmanship.

Switzerland:

We make our proposal because we are of the opinion that the chairman should prepare the sessions beforehand, and because a daily change would have an unsatisfactory effect on his work. We therefore are of the opinion that a change should take place every week and not within shorter periods. But if you cannot accept this, we could probably agree to another proposal in order to expedite the further proceedings.

Czechoslovakia:

We all, Poles, Swedes and Swiss agree to elect a chairman. In order to study the Swiss, Swedish proposals more closely:

Procedure

Sending out of the teams

Composition of the teams

Security of the teams.

These four items should be enough for the next session which should take place on Monday at 1500 hours.

Switzerland:

The whole world is watching us and expects that we carry out our work as quickly as possible. We therefore propose that our next session should take place tomorrow afternoon.

Poland:

We agree to the Czechoslovakian proposal to send out the teams as soon as possible. We should like to have the sessions held at your earliest convenience. Our proposal is to accept the daily rotation in the chairmanship, but we are also ready to accept a longer duration of the presidium. As it is only 1650 hours, we propose to continue the procedure. The marking of the teams is an urgent question, and I suggest that this will be discussed at once by our secretaries. These secretaries would study the subject more closely. We would continue our procedure on Monday.

Switzerland:

We all agree to the fact that the teams should be sent out at once. Poland has stressed the urgency of the question of marking, but we still have other important items on hand: – Security, instructions, liaison, as Poland has already mentioned. These points should be agreed upon as soon as possible. The question of marking should in our opinion not be discussed by the secretaries, but by the alternates. The alternates should assemble tomorrow morning, and we subsequently at 1500 hours.

Poland:

It seems that we have understood each other in this question. I propose that the items should be discussed upon here and suggest too that the question of sending out the teams should be deliberated after a ten minutes interval.

Sweden:

We are in doubt and not quite clear whether we can take up this matter at once.

We are of the opinion that we should meet tomorrow at 1500 hours and our alternates at 1000 hours. Switzerland is celebrating her National Day today and we should like to honour the Swiss back in our camp.

Poland:

If Switzerland wished to break up, we agree, but Switzerland could celebrate their National Day in a very nice way by working during this very day for the ideal of peace, and for this reason we leave the decision on this subject to the Swiss.

Sweden:

Not the Swiss National Day is concerned but you, yourselves have suggested that you had not received our message, and for this reason you had not prepared

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the replies to our questions. We still insist on our proposal: Meeting of the alternates tomorrow 1000 hours, meeting of the NNSC tomorrow 1500 hours.

Czechoslovakia:

I request you to agree to the Swedish proposal that the alternates meet at 1000 hours in order to discuss the problem of marking and that the NNSC session will be held at 1500.

Poland:

We agree to the above times.⁵

Sweden:

Can we therefore close this session.

All agree.

Session closed at 1730 hours.⁶

⁵ For the minutes of the second NNSC-Meeting of 2 August 1953, see dodis.ch/66834.

⁶ For an assessment of the first NNSC-Meeting by the head of the Swiss delegation, Major General Rihner, see his letter to the head of the Federal Political Department, Federal Councillor Max Petitpierre, dated 3 August 1953, dodis.ch/66150.