

MRS. ROOSEVELT MEETS THE PUBLIC

October 1st, 1950

Description: Eleanor Roosevelt interviews her guests about The United Nations' role in Korea, plans for post-war Korea, and possible reforms within the UN. Her interview with Dean Acheson is recorded and plays before the rest of the discussion.

Participants: Unknown announcer, Eleanor Roosevelt, Dean Acheson, Benjamin Cohen, John Sherman Cooper, and Isador Lubin

(31:44)

[Theme music 31:44-32:05]

[Unknown Announcer:] [music continues softly] Ten days ago, the General Assembly of the United Nations reconvened in New York to consider the cause and cure of the troubles which beset the world. And the world hopefully watches its deliberations and waits to see what this session will bring forth in the promotion of enduring peace and the improvement of mankind's position within the nations of the Earth. To contribute to your understanding of the important world events of these days, this afternoon from the Colonial Room of the Park Sheraton Hotel in New York City, the National Broadcasting Company takes pleasure in presenting Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt in the first program of her new television series, generally entitled *Mrs. Roosevelt Meets the Public*. With today, an authoritative report to the American people of--on our government's plans for our future within the field of international relations. Now, to further introduce her program and present her distinguished guests, here is Mrs. Roosevelt. [music cuts] (33:09)

[ER:] Good afternoon to all of you. I'm very happy again to spend this short time with you on Sunday afternoons. This autumn, we're going to try to bring to you, the public, answers to questions which are of interest to all of us and which you, through your letters I hope, will express the desire to have clarified for you. I, for my part, will answer (coughing) as much as I can myself, but I hope to be able to bring you experts who know much more than I do and who are better qualified to answer the questions that you sent in--send in. So be sure and send them, and I hope that you will sometimes come yourselves with your questions and appear on the program.

Today, because it's the first program, um we have brought people onto the program that we felt could talk to us on a question or on questions that are of great importance to all of us. The rapidly changing picture in Korea, with its promise of a military victory for the United Nations forces, raises new questions for the future. The questions of reconstruction in the war-devastated areas of Korea. The question of what to do if similar strife breaks out in other areas of the world. The entire question of how best to promote the interests of people through a greatly strengthened United Nations. All of these questions must be uppermost in the minds of all Americans. For that reason, we're very fortunate to have on our program today our secretary of State, the honorable Dean Acheson and three representatives of the United States delegation to the United Nations: the honorable Benjamin Cohen, the honorable Senator John Sherman Cooper, and the honorable Isador Lubin.

Due to the fact that the secretary of state has been (someone coughs) participating in many conferences which have made his work very, very heavy, he's not able to be with us here this afternoon, but he graciously consented to come over and pay me a visit the day before yesterday in order that I might have the opportunity of asking him some questions um that he would answer. My first question to the

secretary was, "In your speech to the General Assembly, Mr. Secretary, you spoke of this session as a meeting of decision. Was it your thought that the special importance of this session arises chiefly out of the Korean issues?" (36:18)

(pre-recorded interview begins)

[Dean Acheson:] Yes, Mrs. Roosevelt. Uh, Korea both raises and illustrates the great decisions which have to be made by this General Assembly. Uh the first one, I think, is in the-in the area of collective security. When the aggression took place against Korea, the world held its breath for a moment, and then when the United Nations made that historic decision that it would throw all the force of its members against the aggression, I think the world turned upon it and peace became infinitely more possible. The task which we have in this General Assembly is to organize the collective security of those members who wish to maintain peace, and as you know, the United States delegation has put in proposals which are calculated to do just exactly that.

[ER:] You have said, Mr. Secretary, that the Korean problem involves several issues of importance before the United Nations. You had in mind, I suppose, also the problem of the reconstruction of Korea after the fighting has ended.

[Dean Acheson:] I had it very much in mind, Mrs. Roosevelt. The whole purpose of building collective security is so that, behind the shield of that security, we can go forward with the great constructive work of human life. And here is an ideal place in which to begin. Korea has been devastated by war. The United Nations have stopped that aggression, have brought that war, we hope very soon, to an end. Now the United Nations can demonstrate to the whole world how in one place it can bring together all the knowledge and all the power of its members to really create a life for the people of Korea with their own efforts, which will be an inspiration to everybody. We have learned a great deal in the last few years through the United Nations about working together on these common problems. In the field of health, in the field of agriculture, in industry, in building factories or schools, uh we have learned a vast amount as to how we can bring the technical skill through the United Nations to the aid of individual peoples. And all of this can be done in Korea, and all of this will be constructive and positive. Of course it doesn't make news, it makes more news for two delegates at the General Assembly to insult one another than it does for the Children's Fund to have inoculated against tuberculosis millions and millions of children throughout the world. But the latter is constructive and the former gets us nowhere. (39:09)

[ER:] These two problems, brought out by the Korean question, illustrate, do they not, the two lines of activity, which you said in your speech, the United Nations should be carrying out simultaneously? Don't--

[Dean Acheson:] They do very clearly indeed, Mrs. Roosevelt, and they bring out a third point. And that is that the reason why we do both of these things, the reason why we uh push forward with our collective security, the reason why we push forward with these constructive efforts, comes back to the individual human person, the importance of the individual human person. And that brings me to the great importance of the work that you are doing, Mrs. Roosevelt, on the Human Rights Commission. We must remember through all these difficult years, that we can never put off for the future the insistence upon the rights of the individual person, because it is the individual person that gives point and validity and worth to everything that we do.

(pre-recorded interview ends)

[ER:] Now, I would like to introduce again my three colleagues who are here this afternoon and who serve on your United States delegation to the United Nations General Assembly. First, the honorable

Benjamin Cohen. Next, Senator John Sherman Cooper. And next, the honorable Isador Lubin. Now, you've met these gentlemen and we're going to begin with our discussion. And the first question that I'm going to ask, I think, will be of Mr. Cohen. I wonder if you would tell us, what is the basis of the need for improving United Nations machinery for collective security?

[Benjamin Cohen:] Our experience with Korea has shown us, Mrs. Roosevelt, that the members of the United Nations are determined that the United Nations shall be effective in restoring peace and security, even when the great powers cannot agree among themselves. It was only by accident, in a way, that we were able uh to carry through the initial stages of the Korean uh work through the Security Council, owing to the absence of the Soviet delegation. We must face the fact, that in future cases of this sort, we must be able to act when, owing to lack of unanimity among the great powers, the Security Council is unable to function. And as we have seen in Korea, the members of the United Nations are willing to cooperate even though there may be differences among the great powers. Secretary Acheson has laid before the General Assembly proposals, which we have called "Uniting for Peace," which outline a procedure whereby we can effectively act under the charter of the li--of-of the United Nations, even when there is serious disagreement among the great powers.

[ER:] Well that, I think, is a wonderful step forward. Now I'd like to ask you, Senator Cooper, how does this United States proposal meet these needs for action?

[John Cooper:] Why, Mrs. Roosevelt, as Mr. Cohen as said, the circumstances of-of the last few months have indicated what the great needs are. As I see it, the proposal of Secretary Acheson, which is now embodied in a resolution before the General Assembly, is designed to meet and correct these defects, and also to give the opportunity for the United Nations to be as effective in the event of some future aggression as it has been in this aggression. I think it might be generally said, uh--I think--I hope Mr. Cohen will speak also to that subject that--and you too, Mrs. Roosevelt-- that uh generally it's purpose is to shift re--more and greater responsibility to the General Assembly from the Security Council. [Benjamin Cohen: I--] And also to give as you say uh greater influence on the part of all members, large and small.

[Benjamin Cohen:] I think that is true, Senator Cooper, although I might add that it doesn't bypass the Security Council at all, if the Security Council is able to act. It provides only for the functioning of the Assembly when the Security Council is unable to function, and indeed--

[ER:] It does allow it to come-- to be brought together quickly, doesn't it?

[Benjamin Cohen:] Yes.

[John Cooper:] I'll agree with that it does not bypass the Security Council at all. In fact, I think that the steps are entirely in harmony with the charter and with its provisions. Those steps are three. First, it provides that the General Assembly shall be brought quickly together to consider any action, if the Security Council does not or will not act. It just involves a change in procedure of the rules. Today, u--upon the call of the Security Council or a majority of the General Assembly, a special session can be called in fifteen days. Our proposal is that it shall be brought into session in twenty-four hours, just to change the rule of procedure. That is number one. The second step calls upon the member nations to provide forces within their national contingents which could be available upon the call of the United Nations and perhaps there can be more comment upon that. Uh I would again say that it does not involve any breach of the charter, in a way it-it-uh it would provide a more orderly way for uh action which we've just taken in Korea. And I would like to say also, I think it would give every member a chance to take part in that--in that sense could strength not only action, but strengthen the United Nations. Then third, it would uh institute a permanent peace uh commission which would be prepared to move quickly to any place in the world where peace is threatened and where there's danger of aggression, and report to

the United Nations. And again, that's no precedent because as you know so well of your experience here, we have already sent commissions to uh Korea, to Greece, and they've enjoyed success. And I think, uh as we were talking uh earlier that the uh the great strength of such a commission has been indicated by the commission we've had in Korea, at the very time of the aggression. The commission, or at least parts of it, or members were it, saw-they saw the aggression. They were able to report on June the twenty-fifth that there was such an aggression, and it's helped form opinion in the United Nations and around the world. So these three steps, uh I--we believe and our delegation believes and has had great support from the other members, will have effect on any future aggressions and will constitute a force for peace.

[silence 46:51-47:04]

(47:04)

(end of track A3)

(begin track A4)

[silence 47:15-47:31]

[ER:] Well, I've been interested, very much interested, to find that for certain people the provision of forces seems to create a great deal of anxiety as to how it's to be done. Curiously enough, as a layman, I had not been troubled so much by that because I had thought it would be within our own regular forces and they would be thoroughly trained wherever they were in the world, and therefore they would be prepared to act in any place uh where uh there was need. But uh I wonder um, Mr. Cohen, whether you have anything that you could say that would uh enlighten people on that subject.

[Benjamin Cohen:] It-it seems to me, Mrs. Roosevelt, that the resolution doesn't impose so much new obligations on the member states as it does uh impose uh a knowledge and understanding of what will be expected of them with uh their existing forces or with forces which they feel they should create. Not simply because of this resolution, but because of the condition generally. Now, take in our own case, this eh-eh-- we are merely asked to survey our resources to see what we could do, and so we think through the thing now leisurely when we had to think through our problems rather quickly when we were faced with the Korean incident. And naturally the problem is what troops have you in a given area, and what troops can you move from ano-another area? [ER: And are they trained?] So-- And are they trained? [ER clears throat] So it--while we do have problems eh of how much arms we need, they're not simply created by this resolution. They're created by the conditions that we face in the world, and this resolution merely asks us to be prepared in advance uh so that we can meet an emergency. And then the resolution also asks a collective measures committee appointed that will consult with the various states so that we can coordinate our plans and then possibly at other assemblies uh work out more definite plans for coordination for--so that each nation will know more as to what may be expected of them.

[ER:] Well that really covers collective security very well. Now, I'd like to move on and ask you, Mr. Lubin um questions that really arise uh now with victory almost in sight. What are [ER clears throat] the relief needs that we are going to face, and what is the scope and meaning of this problem of relief and reconstruction in Korea?

[Isador Lubin:] Well as you yourself have just stated, there are really two problems: one of relief and one of reconstruction. Uh after all, there has been a tremendous amount of destruction in Korea in the past several months. As the armies advanced, uh the civilian population found itself without homes, without food, without clothing, without blankets, without medicine. Now all those needs must be taken care of immediately, and they are being taken care of by the Unified Command under the auspices of the United

Nations forces. And incidentally, I think it's worthwhile emphasizing that a good part of the supplies that have been made available to the civilians of Korea have been contributed by various United Nations governments in the form of wheat, in the form of flour, in the form of cloth, and a thousand other odd items. Medicinal supplies have come from half a dozen different countries. Now that problem is a large one and will continue to be a large one uh but on top of that is the problem of rehabilitation. These people must be helped so that they can get back to work and make their own livings. Their factories have to be rebuilt. The blown-up bridges have to be replaced so that trains can move. Uh and all of the social and econo-economic life of the community must be organized. For that purpose, we have suggested and the United Nations is considering, the development of a United Nations special organization for Korea, which is called the Unification and Recovery Commission which will have responsibility not only for-- in a sense bringing democracy back to Korea, in the form of say supervising democratic elections, but in a sense would be responsible in a general way for the rehabilitation needs of Korea. And it is proposed that the United Nations have an organization to which all countries would contribute, to finance the rebuilding of the essential parts of their economies so that these people can go back to work and produce for themselves not only what they need now, but surpluses so that they can increase their standard of living generally.

[ER:] Now, you explained to us very well what ought to be done in Korea, but I find every now and then we have to think a little bit about um how it's going to be done, and think of it a little from our own point of view. Um and I wonder if this is another program, and there have been others, where the United States taxpayer is going to be expected to bear most of the burden.

[Isador Lubin:] Well, at the present time, for example, in the United Nations, we have an organization for furnishing technical assistance to the so-called under-developed areas. Uh the funds uh to the-for that purpose are contributed on a voluntary basis after an agreement uh by various United Nations members. Incidentally, it might-I might point out that the USSR voted for the creation of technical assistance and never contributed a nickel. Uh incidentally however, th-the idea is that these--all countries will pay their proportionate share of this bill. It's a United Nations venture, it is not an-a US venture. And, the United States will in all probability, pay the largest share of it, in other words will be the largest single contributor because--

[ER:] Well that-that is natural because, we are the strongest and best able to do it. But I'm glad that you emphasized that it's something that every one of the nations can take a part in because I think that should be increasingly emphasized. Now, Senator Cooper, I'd like to ask you another question. Uh, what is the United States position with um regard to the occupation of North uh Korea and uh how do we hope um to make this a unified country and set up a democratic government.

[John Cooper:] You certainly asked a rather large question, Mrs. Roosevelt. Uh I-I would like to say first that-that I think we could say in the most-- in the simplest terms, that the position of the United States with respect to Korea is the position of the United Nations with respect to Korea. And to make that clear, I-I would in-in the speeches that have been made by the Secretary of State, and in the very excellent statement that was made yesterday by Ambassador Austin in the First Committee, he made it clear that we have no interests in Korea, we have no designs upon Korea, we have no purposes there other than as they are connected with uh the interests of Korea and with the United Nations. So I want to start by saying our position is the position of the United Nations. I think that is first that it-we look toward a united and free and independent Korea, for them and also to uh protect peace in the world and protect peace in that area. Second, as you all said so well, to establish a united Korea, uh first through free elections, through consultation with the democratic elements there and with the constituted government to have free elections. Third, to rehabilitate and reconstruct the country. And I-I agree too, I think all of the members ought to join in that large and small--for large or small amounts. And then, uh I thought that both Mr. Acheson and Mr. Austin said a very significant thing when they said not only to accomplish the

physical reconstruction of Korea, but there to indicate in an area of the Pacific what the true interests of the United--of the free peoples of the world were, and to make that a great proving ground of what we believe in and what we stand for. Now, all these immediate questions about the thirty-eighth parallel and all of that, it seems to me that they'll be related to those objectives. Uh I-I think that uh all the great decisions that have been made there as Ben Cohen said a few minutes ago that one of the greatest is the one we are now making, and that is to reconstitute this country, and not in a spirit of revenge, but for the-- in the great purposes of the Charter [ER: Well--] as a general statement. [ER and Senator John Cooper overlap. Unknown speech]

[ER:] That's-that's-that's I think what we want. And now--

[John Cooper:] Well you were asking how you do it practically [ER laughs] and I should think perhaps they--

[ER:] Well now I want to ask Mr. Cohen a rather difficult question, one he may feel we can't answer yet, and that's: What-what can we say about Formosa? Can the United Nations manage to solve the question of Formosa peacefully?

[Benjamin Cohen:] Well that is certainly what we are seeking to have the United Nations do, Mrs. Roosevelt. We have uh, as you know, uh submitted the question to the General Assembly at this session in order to get their recommendation. It's not an easy problem to deal with. Back at Cairo, uh we did announce our uh intention of returning Formosa to the Chinese, but a great number of things have happened since then. What is best to be done with Formosa is not easy to say. One thing I think uh the Secretary of State mentioned it in his speech before the assembly, we do not want any unilateral uh solution for Korea, or any solution by force. We want it worked out peacefully on the basis of what is most just and fair in light of the commitments and in light of the welfare of the people. And we think if the assembly uh gives consideration to the problem, they will be able to find a solution that we can all accept.

[ER:] I'm sorry, it always seems as though our time went by so quickly, that we never have time to really fully cover everything we want to cover, but this afternoon has come to an end. And I'd like to remind you, the public, that uh the interest of future programs depends on you. You will have to ask the questions that you want to have answered. We will try to bring you people to answer those questions and we will try uh to get you the best information possible. Uh we will try to acquaint you, in other words, with the policies and the hopes and the plans of our leaders. Our leaders in the national political life, but also, we will try to bring you the leaders of the world uh as we can through the United Nations. Now I see that our time is out. So, until next Sunday, I will say goodbye.

[silence 59:54-59:58]

[theme Music 59:59-1:00:20]

[Unknown announcer (possibly Elliott Roosevelt):] [music continues softly] The key to the world's future lie within the Orient as America lost face among the Asiatic nations, what should be America's role in Asia? To answer these and other equally important questions regarding our relationships with the people of the Far East, and to give us an opportunity to see ourselves as they see us, next week Mrs. Roosevelt will present as her guests, Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, the honorable Foreign Minister of Pakistan; General Carlos Romulo, Philippine Representative to the United Nations; her excellency Madame Pandit, Indian Ambassador to the United States; and Dr. Lambertus Nicodemus Palar, Chief Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations. We invite you to join Mrs. Roosevelt with her guests, next week at the

same time to discuss America's role in Asia. Today's program, portions of which were on motion picture film originated from the Colonial Room of the Park Sheraton Hotel in New York City.

[Theme music 1:01:31-1:01:49]

[NBC Announcer:] NBC television.

[NBC Chimes]

(1:01:56)

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