

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~FAR EAST SURVEY
19 JUNE 1952

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THE KOREAN WAR

While there has been an abatement of Sino-Korean truculence concerning the Panmunjom negotiations, there are few indications that the Communists intend to retreat from their adamant stand on the prisoner issue. Peking and Pyongyang continue to assail American abuse of prisoners and the "unilateral" recessing of the talks, but the denunciation is frequently tempered by the reminder that an equitable truce can be obtained quickly if the Americans will withdraw their intolerable insistence on retaining prisoners.

There has been no softening of tone in regard to screening and re-screening, which are termed equally impermissible and contrary to the Geneva convention on prisoners. President Truman's suggestion that Asian neutrals supervise the re-screening process has been denounced as an attempt to use Asians to "cover up the crime of murdering Asians."

Comment on the biological warfare charges is concentrated almost exclusively in transmissions for North American audiences, and there has been no reference to the U.N.'s New York sessions which may bring a revival of the propaganda offensive.

In anticipation of the 25 June anniversary of the war, Pyongyang has given heavy play to the claim that the primary objectives of the war have been attained. The American plan to use Korea as a staging area for a full-scale war of aggression is said to have been decisively smashed, a third world war prevented by resolute Sino-Korean action, and the Americans driven further along the road to destruction.

References to military operations continue to increase. Heightened Communist fire power is said to have contributed in large measure to the defeat of the Americans wherever they have attacked. Sensitivity to U.N. successes in the "iron triangle" area seems indicated by the frequent charge that the Americans have used poison gas in their attacks against Kumhwa and Chorwon in a desperate gamble to make up for their dismal failure to crack Communist resistance with conventional weapons.

American Walk-Out Intended to Wreck the Talks: Although the Communists have vigorously assailed the Koje Island split-up operations and the Americans' insistence upon a recess in the talks, the vehemence of the propaganda seems to have abated and references to the possibility of a quick truce have occurred often enough to soften the ominous implications of Sino-Korean insistence that the last concession has been made. Korean delegate Nam Il charges with monotonous regularity that the Koje disorders were deliberately planned to disrupt the parleys and to permit an extension of the war, while contending that the unarmed prisoners were only defending themselves against American brutality.

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The U.N.'s "unilateral" recessing of the talks is described as another factor in the attempt to wreck the talks, and recent aerial attacks on North Korean POW camps and the artillery violation of the truce site are pictured as further provocations intended to exacerbate relations at Panmunjom. The truculence of such charges, however, is tempered by reminders that the Americans have never made a concession of substance and that the U.N. must show some degree of sincerity if it desires to end the war.

A further mitigating element in the general pattern of denunciation is the Communists' repeated insistence that the prisoners want only "to go home and live in peace." Although the Communist proposal of 2 May included a Communist commitment that returned POWs would be demobilized, the tune that the prisoners want only to return to a peaceful existence has been played so repetitively in recent days as to suggest possible Communist amenability to a further retreat on the POW question if a U.N. commitment is made to implement this desire of POWs to "return home and live in peace."

Communists Cannot Be Moved by Threats of Force: The Communists continue to demonstrate considerable pique with what they consider American attempts to treat the Chinese and Koreans as vanquished people. General Harrison has yet to learn, Peking declares, that he is negotiating with delegates of the Korean People's Army and Chinese People's Volunteers who are conscious of their strength and who cannot be moved by threats of force. The Americans are in no position to dictate terms, it is insisted, and no measure of intimidation will enable them to obtain at Panmunjom what they have been unable to win in the field. The Americans must realize, Peking further says, that "the future of the whole armistice talks rests completely with the Americans." No amount of blustering can avail them, and the sooner they adopt a more reasonable attitude and come down from their "final and irrevocable" stand, the sooner will peace be attained.

This contention that American reasonableness can bring a quick truce is echoed in a letter addressed to General Clark by Kim Il Sung and Peng Tehuai which attacks the U.N.'s brusque adjournment of the talks. The North Korean and Chinese military leaders call upon the U.N. to return to the tent at Panmunjom with reminders that one single question bars the road to peace.

Neutral Supervision Cannot Legalize Re-screening: There has been no wavering, however, in Sino-Korean insistence that since screening of prisoners is ruled out by the Geneva convention, no subsequent re-screening can endow a basically illegal act with a facade of legality. Any nation lending itself to such a fraud, Peking declares, cannot be considered a neutral, and President Truman's suggestion that camp conditions be examined by nations not involved in the war is another "new line of humbug." The suggestion that India, Pakistan and Indonesia participate in such an investigation is denounced as an attempt to use Asians to cover up the crime of murdering Asians, and Peking presents the opinion that the whole idea can only serve to intensify the Asian people's hatred and contempt of the Americans. Peking takes special umbrage at the "ever-present" Swiss, ready at a moment's notice, it is said, to provide the necessary buckets of white-wash and to see exactly what the Americans want them to see.

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BW Comment Remains at Low Level: References to the biological warfare charges remain at a low level and appear almost exclusively in broadcasts for American audiences. A new interrogation of Lt. Quinn stresses the flier's assurance that his confession came as a result of contrition, and that he had not been mistreated by his captors subsequent to his admissions. Professor Brandweiner's dismissal from his Graz University post is lamented by Chinese doctors who participated in the IADL investigation, and Prague citizens express similar emotions at a mass demonstration the professor attended. British trade-union delegates back from China say the charges are true, and the British Haldane Society's contention that a prima facie case has been made for the truth of the charges is reported.

There has, however, been no mention of the New York U.N. sessions called by Soviet delegate Jacob Malik to press the BW charges, although Communist media will almost certainly use the sessions as a device to revive biological warfare propaganda.

Sino-Korean Effort Prevented Third World War: As the second anniversary of the war approaches, Pyongyang especially has given wide play to the WFTU's call for solidarity with the Koreans in their struggle against American imperialism. Collateral comment on the anniversary argues that the basic objectives of the Korean and Chinese people in the war have already been won. This effort to present the war goals as already attained suggests Communist optimism concerning the possibility of an early end to the war.

The Americans, Pyongyang declares, dreamed of turning Korea into a "staging area for a full-scale war of aggression against the Chinese People's Republic and the Soviet Union." This plan has now been "smashed to pieces like a megalomaniac's day dream." The war was of historic import, it is further contended, and proved the solidarity and inexhaustible might of the international democratic camp led by the Soviet Union. Despite the mobilization of their army, navy and air forces, and the use of criminal weapons not even contemplated by Hitler and Tojo, the Americans have been decisively defeated, the North Korean radio says. By their resolute action, Pyongyang declares, the Chinese and Koreans quickly stifled the Americans' aggressive ambitions and prevented a third world war. The war has brought the imperialists nothing, it is concluded, and has only served to hasten their inevitable ruination.*

U.N. Repulsed by Communist Fire Power: References to the actual military operations are now at the highest level since late last year, and the daily communiques have now been considerably expanded from the recent laconic mentions of defensive actions and air war successes. Reporting U.N. action over wide sections of the front, Peking reveals that the "invading forces" have been consistently repulsed by the Communists' growing fire power. Sensitivity to the renewed U.N. attacks at the base of the "iron triangle" is indicated by the repeated allusions to the American use of poison gas at Chorwon and Kumhwa in a desperate attempt to turn the tide of battle, and attain through such a universally condemned weapon what they could not win through force of arms.

* See also comment on Asian Peace Conference, page C 2.

NORTH KOREA

Comment dealing with the South Korean crisis precipitated by differences over the election of a new president stresses the desperate position of Syngman Rhee. His efforts to maintain himself in office are reported in detail with frequent references to the expressed opposition of members of the National Assembly. No effort is spared to make the point that puppet Syngman Rhee, corrupt, grafting, and tyrannical, is struggling desperately to perpetuate his rule. There is no mention of Rhee's charge that opposition assemblymen have been plotting with the Communists to integrate South Korea with North Korea.

While Pyongyang for the most part exploits the crisis factually for its propaganda purposes, additional comment serves to present the present difficulties as proof of the failure of America's colonial policy in South Korea. Stress is laid upon the American dilemma in that they cannot support Rhee without antagonizing the British, while if they abandon their support of Rhee they may lose their dictatorial position in South Korea. Pyongyang makes little effort to explain how a United States' puppet succeeded in disrupting their plans, although the futile American efforts to force Rhee back into line are reported.

SOUTH KOREA

The current crisis between the National Assembly and Syngman Rhee over the election of a president is given wide but one-sided attention from Pusan. The comment assumes two forms: (a) repetition of Rhee's charges that opposition elements have plotted to seize power and integrate South Korea into the Communist Democratic Republic of Korea; and (b) protests against the abuse of power by, and the traitorous policy of, the National Assembly voiced by government sympathizers, local assemblymen, and participants in mass meetings. These protests usually call for the dissolution of the National Assembly, though President Rhee holds out the promise that he will be able to resist these demands if the National Assembly approves direct election of the President and a bicameral legislature.

The opposition of the United States, Britain, and the United Nations to the highhanded actions of President Rhee are dismissed as result of misinformation and misunderstanding of the situation. No reason is given for the suspension "until further notice" of the Voice of America and United Nations News.