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FAR EAST SURVEY
3 JULY 1952

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THE KOREAN WAR

Chinese and Korean strength and the capacity to meet any threat from the aggressive imperialist West provide the keynote for most comment associated with the 25 June anniversary of the war. There are frequent claims that Sino-Korean prowess has upset the American timetable for world aggression, has forced international recognition of China's role as a dominant world power and has advanced the cause of international peace.

In acknowledging Korea's debt to her Communist neighbors, Pyongyang demonstrates especial esteem for Stalin, while Mao is portrayed as a sincere friend who was quick to respond in the hour of Korea's greatest need.

Although there is voluminous propaganda attention to the anniversary, few demonstrations are reported from the Chinese mainland, and the All-China Federation of Labor has limited popular celebrations to small-scale affairs which will not interfere with production.

The Chinese continue to demonstrate no intention to concede on the prisoner repatriation issue, and it is contended that the Geneva Convention's stipulation concerning prisoner repatriation must be strictly adhered to. However, few new elements are provided, the atrocities issue is not belabored, and there are frequent reminders that an armistice could be reached "not in hours but in minutes" if the Americans would retreat from their "final and irrevocable" stand.

The bombing of the Yalu power stations has been vehemently denounced as a provocative assault on non-military installations serving the peaceful daily needs of the Korean people. And it is described as a futile attempt to apply pressure to intimidate the truce negotiators, since this bestial act will not deter the Chinese and Koreans from seeking an equitable truce.

The Anniversary of the War

U.S. Exposed as a Paper Tiger: Although there was little anticipatory propaganda, comment on the 25 June anniversary assumed sizeable proportions immediately preceding the anniversary date and subsequently the high level of attention has been sustained. Comment is in the strength-weakness framework and it is claimed that the Asian peoples in general, and China and Korea specifically, during the past two years have shown a readiness and capacity to meet any threat emanating from the aggressive imperialist

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West. Conversely, Communist media assert that the much-vaunted capitalist superiority in the techniques of war has been revealed as an illusion, and that the United States has been unmasked as a "paper tiger," inordinate in its ambition but with insufficient strength to satisfy its imperialist appetite.

Setting the general tone, the Peking PEOPLE'S DAILY declares that the victorious development of the war has "already sealed the fate of the American aggressors," and has shown that the Americans, who want to dominate the world, "can be defeated." London DAILY WORKER correspondent Alan Winnington adds that the war has clearly demonstrated the absurdity of the American contention that technical superiority is more important than the will of the people to resist. "After two years of war," Winnington declares, "the Americans are still at the 38th Parallel, and this is the crucial historical importance of Korea." The Americans have been forced to sit down at the same table with Asian peoples--former colonial peoples--and negotiate on equal terms, he says. China, especially, has demonstrated a new greatness and has taken her place among the world powers.

It is also contended that by tying down and depleting the vast portion of the American forces originally intended for world aggression, the Korean and Chinese peoples have upset the American timetable for an aggressive war against all of Asia, and thus have advanced the cause of peace. Peking contrasts Communist and U.N. strength by noting that while the Americans face the dilemma of fearing to retreat yet being powerless to advance, the position of the Korean and Chinese side is based on a firm confidence in a strength they know to be invincible.

Stalin Comes Before Mao in Korean Esteem: Pyongyang's tribute to Stalin in connection with the anniversary hails him as the "dear, great Generalissimo Stalin, the teacher of the working masses of the world, and the closest friend of the Korean people." The victories that have been won, it is further contended, came from the support and encouragement of Stalin personally, and from the Soviet people he leads. A Pyongyang city meeting held to commemorate the anniversary further describes the Soviet leader as the "personification of all conscience, righteousness, and wisdom of our age, and the sun and respected teacher of all progressive mankind." This may be compared with Pyongyang's accolade to Chinese aid and to Mao, who is described merely as the "great leader of the Chinese people, whom the Korean people respect and love, and who is giving us sincere support in the Fatherland Liberation War."

Additional statements refer to the "unshatterable" friendship and comradeship-in-arms of the Chinese and Korean peoples, and express thanks to the "friendly Chinese people who came to our aid in the most difficult days of the war." Peking outdoes Pyongyang in presenting the testimonies of Korean gratitude to and love for China, reporting that the Koreans "have forever engraved in their hearts the great achievements of the Chinese People's Volunteers." Praise for Kim Il Sung comes almost solely from Pyongyang, which declares that "every single victory achieved by the Korean people may be attributed to the leadership of General Kim."

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All For the Front: The Pyongyang radio especially utilizes the anniversary to call for a united effort to increase production, practice economy and assure the needs of the fighting forces. There are frequent admissions that shortages still plague large sections of the country, and the successes claimed are described as achievements attained "despite the lack of manpower, farm animals, tools, fertilizer and seed."

Small-Scale Celebrations Only Permitted on Chinese Mainland: Despite the WFTU's 24 May appeal to celebrate the 25 June anniversary as a "day of solidarity with the Korean people," there has been little subsequent exploitation of the appeal by Chinese transmitters and little use of the appeal as the peg for nationwide demonstrations. This reticence was especially marked by the distribution of a circular by the All-China Federation of Labor, a constituent element of the WFTU, informing labor organizations throughout China that they might convene meetings in factories, mines and other large establishments to celebrate the anniversary but that these must be "small-scale" meetings, must not interfere with production, must be "in accord with local conditions," and must be on a purely voluntary basis.

Other comment reports the statements of Chinese "democratic groups" who stressed the desire for a peaceful solution to the war, while predicating Sino-Korean ability to deal the aggressors a last deadly blow if necessary. Truce negotiation leader Nam Il, in a widely disseminated statement, repeats the charge that South Korean forces, under American control, invaded North Korea to trigger the war, but this charge is not widely repeated. This is consistent with the previous general practice of glossing over the origins of the war.

The Truce Negotiations

Communists, "Firm and Unshakable," Oppose U.N.'s "Final and Irrevocable" Stand: Recent propaganda utterances demonstrate no Communist wavering on the prisoner-repatriation issue. Adherence to the stipulations of the Geneva convention on prisoners is described consistently as the only course to be followed to ensure a rapid truce. This statement is accompanied by repeated charges that the Americans are increasing the number of their provocations in an attempt to hamstring, stall and eventually wreck the talks. But the Communists insist that they will continue to work for an equitable truce unless the Americans unilaterally break off the negotiations. While assailing the arrogance of the Americans' "final and irrevocable stand," Peking declares that the Communist position is "firm and unshakable," and that the compromise of 2 May represents the very last possible concession. The truculence of such remarks continues to be mitigated by the now customary reminders that the talks "are so near the brink of an armistice that the slightest sincerity to negotiate on equal terms at the conference table would push them to a successful conclusion." A further note of amenability is contained in the statement that if the Americans revert to Colonel Hickman's promise of 1 April (that the number of repatriated prisoners would fall between 116,000 and 132,000), peace could be obtained, "not in hours but in minutes."

The Communists also declare that a quick solution to the prisoner problem would make it possible to start political discussions at once. This is the first mention in nearly two months of these discussions slated to follow the conclusion of an armistice. The political discussions were a frequent topic of comment at a time when the conclusion of a truce seemed fairly imminent.

POW's Are Not Political Refugees: For reasons which are not clear, Peking has chosen to take note of a British ECONOMIST article by a "legal correspondent," which presents the point of view that the prisoners could be considered "political refugees" entitled to the right of asylum as defined in the U.N. Declaration on Human Rights. Peking finds the author in agreement with the Communist stand that the U.N. is apparently flaunting the Geneva convention, but assails as absurd the qualification of the POWS as political refugees. The broadcast declares that such a qualification gives the issue a political tinge and places the question beyond the scope of the truce talks which are not concerned with political questions. Peking's attempt to refute this argument in a broadcast apparently made only in English raises the question as to whether the Communists might be amenable to a retreat which would permit them to save face by relegating the prisoner issue to the post-armistice discussions.

Soviet Precedent for Non-Repatriation Irrelevant: Peking has evinced considerable sensitivity to Harrison's reminder that during World War II the Soviet Union promised surrounded Hungarian and German troops that they would not be forcibly repatriated. This sensitivity is demonstrated largely by Peking's adamant stand that the instances are not comparable, but there is no elaboration of the difference. Nam II said only that the Americans were attempting to compare belligerent forces with prisoners of war, adding that in any case the USSR repatriated all prisoners, with the exception of war criminals, after the war. Nam failed to make the point that since the Fascist regimes in those countries had been destroyed at the time of the repatriation, the USSR had kept its promise not to return them to their Nazi rulers.

Forced Recess Rude, Provocative, Childish and Ridiculous: General Harrison's third enforced recess in a month calls forth a spate of invective assailing the U.N. unilateral attempt to stall and wreck the talks. The recess is described as evidencing a desire to extend the war, and as rude, provocative, childish and ridiculous. Harrison's action is seen as consistent with the Americans plan to prevent an equitable peace so as to maintain international tension and ensure armaments profiteering in the United States.

Evidences of U.S. Bestiality Being Removed to Impress Neutrals: References to the mistreatment of prisoners have sharply declined, and the intensity of the residual comment has been sharply tempered. There is consistent emphasis, however, on the impermissibility of both "re-screening" or "screening" and there are frequent avowals that no Asian nation conscious of its self-respect will lend itself to any screening maneuver designed to relieve the Americans of the onus of guilt. Peking declares that President Truman's suggestion that neutrals participate in an impartial rescreening came only after the Americans had hurriedly destroyed all the evidence of their crimes against prisoners.

The Yalu Bombings

Plants Indispensable for Peaceful Korean Existence: Pyongyang and Peking have shown a marked coordination in assailing the attacks on the Yalu power plants as another American atrocity, a provocative attempt to extend the war, and a further indication of an American distaste for peace. Generally however, the comment has been surprisingly mild compared with the virulence demonstrated during the BW campaign and in connection with the Koje disorders. The Americans are accused specifically of bombing patently "non-military facilities, indispensable to the livelihood and well-being of the Korean people." The attacks are further described as another evidence of the Americans' belief that such "military pressure" must be applied to force Communist acceptance of U.N. conditions at Panmunjom. Winnington relates it to the use of BW, attacks on neutral areas and on delegation convoys as another attempt to obtain by provocation what could not be won on the battlefield. He compared it with the previous misconception of the Americans in 1950 that they could advance to the Yalu. There are continued assurances that such provocative action, however, will not prevent the Communist negotiators from seeking a just armistice.

Other comment on the bombings reports the criticism of Americans' rash actions prevalent among U.S. satellites and neutrals, and especially the "seething" anger of British laborites. Peking also reports Nehru's concern that the attack should have been made at a time when peace was being negotiated.

BW Comment Remains at Low Level: Parallel with a decline in the volume of comment on POW's, there has been a virtual disappearance of specific reference to biological warfare. There are some reminders that the BW criminals cannot escape punishment, and Malik's proposal that all states subscribe to the Geneva protocol is applauded, but given little elaboration. Various professional groups have appealed to their American and British counterparts to condemn all sorts of unconventional weapons.

Miscellaneous Comment: Alexander's trip to Korea is variously described as an indication of dissension in the Anglo-American camp and as an indication of an intent to extend the war. Military comment reports heavy American casualties in the last month and during the last year, while reporting that attacks on a scale unseen in the last four months have been launched in the Kumhwa-Chorwon area.

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N O R T H K O R E A

Pyongyang Broadcasts Affected by Yalu Bombings

The U.N. aerial attacks against the Yalu River hydroelectric plants apparently caused a major disruption of Pyongyang broadcasts. Starting at 1100 GMT Monday, 23 June, transmission was exceedingly erratic, and 24 hours later only one frequency was on the air, itself subject to many delays and interruptions.

The Pyongyang Home Service went off the air at 1325 GMT Monday, 23 June, in the middle of a commentary, and returned five minutes later. The announcer apologized for the power failure and resumed the commentary. However, the station left the air again at 1340 GMT, and when it returned at 1345 proceeded with the Japanese program regularly scheduled for that time. It subsequently left the air again and did not resume any sustained transmission until 2030 GMT Tuesday, 24 June, at which time it radiated a weak signal and was apparently transmitting on low emergency power.

S O U T H K O R E A

National Assembly Still Under Attack

National Assembly action extending the present term of Syngman Rhee to 14 August has apparently served only to heighten the tension surrounding the dispute between the Assembly and the President. Radio Pusan continues to report demonstrations and speeches by local assemblymen and Government supporters denouncing the selfish and anti-popular character of the Assembly and calling for its dissolution, by force if necessary. President Rhee himself, in a message sent to the Assembly on 30 June, said that while the type of action needed has not been decided, some step "cannot be postponed any longer."

President Rhee's original charges that Assemblymen were implicated in a Communist plot no longer receive attention, although the secret court martial of those Assemblymen arrested for complicity, begun on 19 June, is reported briefly.

Voice of America Relays Resumed: The South Korean relay of the Voice of America, broken off 12 June, was resumed on 28 June. It was explained that the ROK could not tolerate the "distorted and one-sided propaganda" which the VOA had been directing against the Republic.

Rhee Calls for End to Truce Talks; Advance to the Yalu: In an address on the second anniversary of the war, President Rhee reiterated that the truce negotiations could serve no special purpose and expressed the hope that U.N. forces would advance to the Yalu, which would be easier to defend. To date there has been little comment on the attempted assassination of the President beyond a report that an investigation is being conducted concerning the involvement of certain National Assemblymen in the plot.

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