

- A 1 -

THE KOREAN WAR

The Negotiations

Chinese propaganda as of 3 July again contains those elements which in the past have preceded concessions on the part of the Communists. Pertinent in this respect is the marked change in Radio Peking's comment specifically related to the negotiations. In the main, Communist intransigence concerning the "repatriation of all POWs" has been transferred to an insistence that prisoners must be allowed to "return home and live in peace." This movement from a precise to an ambiguous position has been accompanied for a period of time by an emphasis on the contention that the Americans have expressed a desire to negotiate--a change of attitude welcomed by the Communists.

Collateral comment on the negotiations contains a number of other indications of a softening of the Communist position. For example:

1. There is increased stress on Communist willingness to negotiate and desire for the conclusion of a truce.
2. Increasing attention to progress already made overshadows references to the meager fruits of prolonged negotiations.
3. A solution to the remaining issue is cast in terms of "reasonable attitudes," and argumentation on the POW issue is now devoid of emotional flavor, being characterized rather by a calm, statesmanlike tone.
4. The moral obligation of the Communists to their captured comrades is no longer an exploited theme.

Apart from the immediate context of the negotiations at Panmunjom, it is noteworthy that attention to the recent U.N. attack on the Yalu power plants and the bombardment of Pyongyang, together with the promotion of an increasing number of incidents (e.g. alleged U.N. attacks on North Korean POW camps, assaults on prisoners in U.N. compounds, etc.) serve to disperse the focus of comment on the Korean war and thus prevent audience concentration on possible areas of Communist concession.

Cease-Fire Given Priority Over Korean Independence: At the international level, Radio Moscow carries possible indications of Communist intent in Korea. Although the Soviet radio continues its customary practice of providing little substantive comment on the negotiations, comment on the World Peace Council sessions in Berlin tends to blur the issues of the Korean war with those of Japan and Germany. Perhaps most significant of the comment heard at the WPC meeting was the Joliot-Curie statement that peace partisans must struggle first of all for the cessation of military operations, then for the restoration of the freedom and independence of

- A 2 -

the Korean people. Peking has subsequently highlighted this primary need to terminate hostilities in Korea, although it has failed to append references to the freedom and independence of the Korean people. Joliot-Curie's speech, widely reported by Moscow and Peking, may be intended to inform the Communist world of a decision to seek an armistice in Korea. Joliot-Curie, with no reference to the negotiations at Panmunjom, alluded to the post-truce problems of Formosa and the admission of China into the United Nations. Kuo Mo-jo's speech at Berlin contained a direct reference to the post-armistice political talks. These statements concerning post-truce problems and political discussions seem to support the idea that the Communists envisage the imminent conclusion of an armistice.

Shifts in Peking's Line on the Negotiations: Peking's propaganda on the negotiations has undergone a three-fold development since early June:

1. Until the beginning of June discussion of the POW issue was vituperative, giving no indication that the Communists contemplated any retreat from their "firm and unshakable stand" on the repatriation of all prisoners of war. With increasing frequency during the month of June, Communist intransigence was shifted from an emphasis on the need to "repatriate all POWs" to the more ambiguous demand that all POWs should be allowed to "return home and live in peace." This behavior was interpreted at the time as a possible indication of forthcoming concessions on the POW question. Coincident with this development was the increasing stress on a Communist desire to negotiate, as Communist media throughout the world began to focus on the slogan "End the war in Korea!"
2. On 3 July, Peking's treatment of the POW issue took a decided turn in the direction of amenability. Key comment on the negotiations emphasized the fact that the American negotiators had expressed a sincere desire to negotiate and that this change of attitude was welcomed by the Chinese and North Korean delegates. Specifically, it was reported that U.N. delegate Harrison had responded to "Nam Il's proposal for re-classification" on the basis of readjusted prisoner lists by agreeing to the wording of paragraphs 51 and 52 of the draft armistice agreement, by giving up his "final and irrevocable" stand, by admitting that POWs should be allowed to "return home and lead a peaceful life," and by attesting to the fact that that agreement must to a "reasonable" degree meet the requirements of both sides.

At the core of this new Communist approach to the POW question is the contention that there has been no disagreement "in principle" on the problem of the POW's, only on the matter of making the POW lists conform with the provisions of the draft armistice agreement. Thus, the Communists no longer have a propaganda commitment on a clearly defined principle; rather, they are only committed to reach agreement on the lower-level issue of readjusting the POW lists.

3. During the past week, two additional developments have been observed in comment on the negotiations. The first of these is the disappearance of the amenable references to the U.N. desire to negotiate. The second development, apparently related to the first, is the build-up of the current executive sessions as a climactic juncture in the truce negotiations. Peking asserts flatly that the executive sessions will "decide the success or failure of the Korean armistice negotiations." Collateral comment accentuates the tenseness of the present critical stage of the negotiations by avowing Communist resolve to demonstrate its might in shattering blows against the American aggressors should they extend the war. The force of these statements, however, is mitigated by frequent appearance of contentions that the Communists must force the United States to conclude a truce.

Low-Level Bellicose Framework Remains: Although the weight of the propaganda evidence suggests a desire to conclude a truce, there remains as always a framework capable of supplementing belligerent policies or positions. Of primary import is the fact that despite the change of context, the latest Communist proposal is substantively no different from that advanced on 2 May. It still provides for the repatriation of North Korean residents and Chinese nationals, allowing only for the release of internees whose homes are in the territory held by their captors. Peking radio warns that the former U.N. proposal for retaining 100,000 POW's, including 15,000 Chinese Volunteers, is unacceptable and should not be advanced again. Although this is a reiteration of an adamant position, the attention at this time to the figure of 100,000 POW's and the failure to emphasize either the alleged 170,000 total figure or 70,000 repatriation figure previously proposed by the U.N. Command might be a feeler for a compromise settlement involving 100,000 prisoners to be repatriated.

There are also warnings that should the United Nations press its unacceptable demands of the past, the future of the talks would be in great danger. Alan Winnington, London DAILY WORKER correspondent, depicts the current stage of the negotiations as "critical," and warns that the vital criterion of American sincerity will be determined by whether or not the practice of turning prisoners over to Syngman Rhee and Chiang Kai-shek -- the subject of boasting by American newsmen -- is continued.

Concern With Saving-Face Indicated: The Communists at the present moment also seem to fear that the face-saving intent of their new tactics will be negated by large-scale U.S. publicizing of the fact that the principle of voluntary repatriation is to be maintained but disguised by calling it "reclassification." Peking quotes a statement by Gen. Nuckols to this effect and criticizes contemplated moves in this direction as "unilateral" and therefore unacceptable. It is significant, however, that such manipulation of the lists is not criticized per se, but only Nuckol's statement and the unilateral nature of such action.

POW Repatriation Only Issue Obstructing Truce: The Communists' consistent reiteration that the prisoner issue represents the "sole" point of contention in the negotiations and that only the resolution of this problem prevents a quick peace in Korea would seem to make it difficult for the Communists to bring up other means to stall a truce once the prisoner issue is resolved.

China Subscribes to Geneva Conventions

Latest reports indicate that Chou En-lai has expressed China's acceptance of the Geneva Conventions concerning treatment for victims of war and the protocols on bacteriological warfare. The CFR announces, however, the following reservations to the 1949 Convention:

"...that the substitute for a protecting power shall be subject to the consent of the power to which the protected persons belong, that the detaining power shall not be allowed to be absolved of its liability even after the prisoners of war or the wounded and sick have been transferred to another power, that the protection provided for in the convention shall be equally applicable to civilian persons outside the occupied territory, and that the prisoners of war who have been convicted as war criminals according to the principles established by the international military tribunals of Nuremberg and Tokyo shall not be entitled to the benefits of the convention concerned."

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

FAR EAST SURVEY
17 JULY 1952

- C 1 -

N O R T H K O R E A

Editorials Reveal Civilian Discontent: "A ruthless political and ideological struggle to exterminate reactionaries" in North Korea is demanded by the NODONG SINMUN and the MINJU CHOSON in recent editorials. In explicit terms the papers report the mounting infiltration of enemy spies and agents who make use of those among the population who are discontented, cowardly and greedy to succeed in gathering secret information, conducting sabotage, alienating the people, and assassinating and kidnapping Government leaders. An apparent war-weariness is indicated in warnings to the people not to be misled by rumors designed to paralyze the fighting strength of the Koreans. The papers call upon the "revolutionary alertness" of the Party members to combat this infiltration.

S O U T H K O R E A

Political Crisis Based by Assembly Action: The National Assembly has now passed constitutional amendments providing for creation of a bicameral legislature and for direct election of the president, as advocated by Syngman Rhee. Both bills as passed, however, represent a compromise between the Government-approved drafts and those advanced by Assemblymen. The lower House, to be known as the House of Representatives, is to be the sole repository of authority to vote non-confidence in the Cabinet.

Rhee Statement: President Rhee has reiterated his former statement that "I do not want to be a candidate" in the coming Presidential elections, though it is generally conceded that if he were "drafted" his election would be almost assured. He has also released the Assemblymen who had been imprisoned while an investigation of their activities was in progress. The investigation is to continue, however.

Craig Messing

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~