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WAR EAST SURVEY
18 JUNE 1953

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THE KOREAN WAR

Korean Victory Advances International Communist Objectives: Accepting an armistice as virtually achieved, Peking and to a lesser degree Pyongyang have tended increasingly to relate Korean developments to Communist world-wide objectives and accomplishments. The basic contentions are that (a) the agreement proves that negotiations are better than wars--hot or cold; (b) this success of the "world peace forces" proves that any "imperialist predatory war" launched by the Americans is doomed to failure; and (c) the Korean people have offered a "brilliant example" to other peoples fighting for national liberation. Rhee's obstruction of a truce is dismissed as more of a nuisance than a hindrance, and as reflecting the frenzied efforts of "die-hard jingoists" (Pyongyang), or "bellicose elements" (Peking) in the United States who wish to avoid peace at all costs. There is no implication that Rhee's recalcitrance has the official sanction of the American Government. Pyongyang notes the failure of Rhee's "previous efforts" to advance northward (in June 1950), but Peking, in line with its recent failure to press the Communist explanation of the war's origin, has offered no such reminders.

Complete Propaganda Silence on Present Military Offensive: During the past week there has been no propaganda allusion to the present hard fighting and official communiques have not reported the Communist gains. Although propaganda comment customarily fails to keep pace with the objective military situation, the complete absence of all battle reports at a time when the Communists are waging the greatest offensive in two years is unprecedented, and suggests that tactical objectives are sought which might be adversely affected by propaganda. Either or both of the following considerations may explain this maneuver:

- (a) the Communists seek to enlarge their territory before the cease-fire line is fixed, perhaps so that their permanent defense positions will be outside the buffer zone, but consider that official communiques on the drive might affect the negotiations;
- (b) they wish to provide Rhee with a realistic appreciation of the difficulties involved in a successful "drive to the north."

A Peking dispatch from Kaesong on 17 June conveys assurances, however, that no delay in agreement on the demarcation line is anticipated.

Truce Comment Avoids All Soviet References: Indications that the Asian Communists may have assumed major responsibility for the present conduct of the truce negotiations seems reflected in Communist comment on the proceedings at Panmunjom, which is unique in its avoidance of any form of Soviet identification with the truce developments. Peking and Pyongyang, although referring to truce progress as a victory for the camp of peace, democracy and socialism, fail for the first time to identify the Soviet Union as the leader of this camp. Allusions to the Sino-Korean initiative responsible for the resumption of the truce sessions fail for the first time to include any reference to Soviet participation as exemplified in Molotov's prompt endorsement of the Asian Communist proposals. For its part, Moscow has failed to claim any credit for the truce progress, in marked contrast to the self-praise following Malik's speech of June 1951 which paved the way for truce talks and the

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Soviet suggestions for a Korean settlement at the General Assembly. Moscow continues to avoid independent comment on the truce talks, omits any reference to Molotov's endorsement of the Chou-Kim proposals, and has failed to cite the progress towards a truce as a victory for the Soviet peace policy.

Unification Termed "Objective" of Political Conference: A Peking PEOPLE'S DAILY editorial of 9 June announced Chinese readiness to negotiate for Korean unification at the political conference to follow completion of a truce agreement and identified unification as "the object" of the political talks. This is the first Peking comment to interpret unification as a component of the agenda item calling for "peaceful settlement of the Korean question," and is the first time that Korean unification has been explicitly defined as obtainable through the machinery set up at the Panmunjom talks.

The timing of the Peking statement, which was widely disseminated throughout the Communist world, was perhaps conditioned by two principal factors: (a) the imminence of a final truce agreement, leading to convocation of the political conference and (b) the imminent possibility of a mutual defense agreement between the United States and South Korea which would crystallize the alliance of South Korea with the West in the post-truce era and lessen the appeal of a Communist offer of Korean unification, particularly one entailing little or no real compromise. The editorial expressly denounces the mutual defense pact offered to South Korea by President Eisenhower as a "premeditated scheme" aimed either at "sabotaging the Korean armistice and peace or at deepening the disunity of Korea." Even Syngman Rhee is alleged to have acknowledged this "plot" against the political talks and ultimate unification by his assertion that South Korea must continue the struggle.

Review of Communist Propaganda on War Objectives: Peking's present espousal of Korean unification marks a sharp divergence from past Chinese Communist propaganda which has in the main been imprecise in defining Chinese intentions regarding a Korean settlement and has given no indication that unification was one of the primary goals of the Chinese in Korea. Following Chinese Communist intervention in November 1950, Peking broadcasts stressed three major prerequisites for a cessation of hostilities: (a) the withdrawal of foreign troops from Korea, (b) withdrawal of U.S. forces from Formosa, and (c) acceptance of Communist China in the United Nations. Propaganda concentration on these points, however, continued only until January 1951. Of the three conditions, only agreement on the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Korea was made an explicit part of the agenda of the post-truce political conference. The American "aggression" against Formosa, which was at first linked explicitly to the Korean conflict, has not constituted an element of Korean war comment since 1951 and Peking references to the liberation of Formosa have become extremely marginal, appearing only briefly in connection with various patriotic anniversaries. Mention of ultimate Chinese Communist membership in the United Nations has also been the subject of only limited comment since 1951. Foreign Minister Molotov's suggestion that U.N. membership for Communist China would facilitate a Korean truce, included in the Soviet leader's 1 April 1953 endorsement of the Chou-Kim proposals for resumed negotiations, evoked no reaction from the Peking radio, although occasional reference by low-level Communist sources calling for Chinese membership in the United Nations following a Korean settlement have been broadcast.

Pyongyang, more intimately bound up with the objective of Korean unification, has also shown a vacillation in its propaganda attention to war aims. While an undefined unification has from the beginning of the war (and before) been the avowed goal of the Koreans, an appreciation of military realities seems to have impelled Pyongyang to limit its objectives somewhat equivocally to "ultimate victory," "national independence," and often merely "defeat of the aggressors." Only during the periods of Communist military success, particularly during the initial North Korean offensive prior to the Inchon landing and at the time of the Sino-Korean attack in late 1950, have Pyongyang broadcasts predicated unification as one of the results of the imminent defeat of the enemy.

Soviet Initiative: A major exception to the failure of Communist propaganda to present a concrete definition of war aims was provided by the Soviet resolution for settlement of the Korean war presented to the U.N. General Assembly in the fall of 1952. The Soviets proposed an 11-member commission with a dual function--to facilitate the return of prisoners of war and to assist in the unification of Korea "by the Koreans themselves." The solution envisaged by the Soviets, however, was apparently to be divorced from the administrative machinery established in the draft armistice terms. This Soviet resolution, pressed despite U.N. approval of the rival Indian plan, was normally endorsed by both Communist China and North Korea. Neither, however, elaborated on the unification plan; nor was this plan the subject of any explicit propaganda pronouncements. Opportunity for endorsement of Korean unification by Chinese and North Korean propaganda was again presented by the PRAVDA editorial of 11 April 1953 which repeated that peaceful settlement of the Korean conflict should permit the Korean people "to decide for themselves the questions concerning the unification and the internal arrangement of the Korean state." The Peking and Pyongyang radios, however, devoted much of their output to accounts of the exchange of sick and wounded prisoners, and again failed to make propaganda capital of this statement on the ultimate goal of a Korean settlement.

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SOUTH KOREA

Resistance to Truce Reflects Popular Sentiment: South Korean broadcasts continue to express dissatisfaction at any projected truce settlement short of unification and stress that the demonstrations now in progress throughout the nation are representative of the popular will. Concern lest these demonstrations be misinterpreted as anti-foreign as well as anti-truce is reflected in broadcast admonitions to the people to refrain from violence and other actions which might reflect on South Korea's moral position. Broadcast comment seems more concerned with demonstrating the validity of the Korean's national aspirations and with pointing out the difficulties of the post-truce period than in presenting a reasoned alternative for consideration. The necessary planning and preparation entailed in any continued South Korean hostile action are nowhere discussed.

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