

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

USSR SURVEY  
2 APRIL 1953

- 1 -

G L O B A L   T O P I C S

KOREAN WAR: Moscow Endorses New Truce Proposals

The first indication of apparent Communist willingness to accept some form of voluntary repatriation of prisoners of war--as revealed in the 28 March Kim Il Sung-Peng Te-huai letter to General Clark, the 30 March Chou En-lai statement on repatriation and Kim Il Sung's 31 March endorsement of Chou's statement--is reported by Moscow to Soviet listeners but is given only limited attention to foreign audiences to date. Soviet endorsement of the new proposal, as announced by Foreign Minister Molotov on 1 April, receives dissemination by Radio Moscow and TASS. Moscow, however, initiates no other comment and broadcasts only TASS reviews of foreign press and diplomatic response, which record the "cautious" but favorable attitude adopted by Western circles. The only comment singled out for special mention in a separate TASS release is that of the Indian delegate to the United Nations, Krishna Menon. Menon is reported as saying that the Communist proposal is one which "opens prospects of a hopeful future for the whole world." No other comment or individual is accorded similar attention.

Chou's proposal, which implies return of the entire Korean question to the machinery established at the Panmunjom talks and offers agreement on the repatriation issue, is in contrast to the Soviet resolution at the United Nations which provided for postponement of agreement on repatriation until after cessation of hostilities as well as for the settlement of the entire Korean question by the Soviet-sponsored 11-member commission on Korea. Moscow had reaffirmed this position in wide broadcast attention to the March discussions of the Korean question at the United Nations. Additional contrast was provided in broadcasts of two Leontyev commentaries on 17 and 19 March which denounced the American "ultimatum which foresees the forcible detention and nonrepatriation of thousands of Chinese and Korean prisoners of war" and which stated in unusually positive terms that "there is not a single state in the world that would agree to the detention of its citizens, forcibly and forever, as prisoners of war by its war adversary." However, Moscow broadcasts during the week prior to the latest Chinese and North Korean proposals contained no reference to problems of truce settlement.

It is possible that the ambiguities in the Chinese and North Korean proposals concerning ultimate disposition of those prisoners who resist repatriation may actually cloak further Communist intransigence on this question. It should be noted that Peking has broadcast new charges of brutality allegedly employed to force Communist prisoners to give up their demand to return home. In a 31 March commentary concerning "sadistic outrages" committed by "U.S. Chiang agents" at the prison camps, Peking claims that several recently captured

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

USSR SURVEY  
2 APRIL 1953

- 2 -

agents have confessed to using deception, brutality and even cannibalism against the prisoners. Although Peking and Pyongyang in particular have consistently maintained that Communists prisoners have been intimidated at the prison camps, such explicit and virulent charges of brutality by "special agents" have appeared only infrequently in the past. In contrast to Peking's continuation of prisoner atrocity and BW charges, Moscow and Pyongyang apparently eliminated all atrocity charges from their broadcasts after 29 March.

A contrast is also apparent in the respective attention accorded by Moscow and Peking to the U.N. discussion of the bacterial warfare charges. Widespread Peking comment reviews the Schwable-Bley depositions and reports the complete failure of the attempt by U.S. Delegate Gross to refute these depositions as well as the overwhelming mass of evidence compiled by the Communists. However, Moscow limits itself to a single TASS review of the favorable Arab-Asian support for its proposal to invite Chinese and North Korean participation in the debate.