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FAR EAST SURVEY
4 JUNE 1953

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THE KOREAN WAR

Peking's comment on the war, which has sharply declined in volume from the relatively high levels of the past few weeks and is now at its lowest point since the start of the truce sessions on 26 April, in large measure refrains from emphasizing any particular aspect of the present negotiations. The following elements characterize present propaganda:

1. Communist propaganda avoids comment on the latest American offer, and the stress upon the virtues of the Communist's 8-point proposal of 7 May which highlighted comment during the first week of this SURVEY period has now been considerably reduced.
2. The objections of the South Korean Government to the American proposal are not mentioned, although South Korea's violation of the secrecy of the truce sessions comes in for brief criticism.
3. Although there is no denunciation of the new American proposal, Peking comments on the conflicting pressures to which the U.S. Government is being subjected from its allies, and from certain "bellicose elements" led by Taft, Knowland, and McCarthy.
4. The only measurable atrocity comment concerns the American bombing of North Korean dams and irrigation facilities, which is termed an atrocity and a crude attempt to exert pressure on the truce talks.

Peking Notes Pressures Affecting American Truce Position: For the first time since the present truce talks began on 26 April, Chinese propaganda has all but eliminated its hammering denunciation of American attempts to detain prisoners forcibly and its concomitant stress on the superiority and sincerity of the Communist proposals. Peking limits itself to the bare announcement that a new American proposal has been advanced and that the secret truce sessions are now in recess. No mention is made of the South Korean objections to the American proposal, but South Korea's violation of unspecified secrecy provisions is attacked. Peking's failure to provide definite comment may reflect uncertainty over the future course of events and a hesitancy to create the impression that the Rhee Government, long-defined as the lackey of the United States, is capable of dissension.

However, Peking reports the diverse pressures acting upon the United States, any one of which could at any time gain ascendancy, and notes, on the one hand, those "bellicose elements" in the United States, led by Taft, Knowland, and McCarthy, who are intent on continuing the war. While these individuals are identified as part of the U.S. ruling circles, Peking does not define their views as necessarily reflecting final U.S. policy. On the other hand, Peking publicizes the various expressions of allied and neutral support for a Korean settlement, and PEOPLE'S DAILY identifies the reconsidered American position as a reflection of successful pressure from this latter bloc of opinion.

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Communist comment on the negotiations prior to the presentation of the new American plan at the 25 May truce meeting was marked by heavy volume and an intransigent insistence that the American stand entailed the forcible detention of prisoners, while the Communist plan was the only reasonable and acceptable solution. Old and horrendous accounts of U.S. mistreatment of the Communist prisoners, particularly during the "screening" operation, were revived briefly, apparently to buttress Communist denunciation of the American position.

PEOPLE'S DAILY Silent on Communist Truce Position: A widely publicized PEOPLE'S DAILY editorial of 31 May endorsing PRAVDA's 24 May comment on international problems sheds no light on the Communist position in the current negotiations. The daily praises the peaceful Soviet policy, as enunciated in the PRAVDA piece, but provides no positive indication of Communist intentions with regard to the new American proposal. The editorial does, however, present a more up-to-date account of the Korean truce developments and perhaps reflects greater Chinese acceptance of the benefits of a Korean peace by quoting Churchill's remarks that world prosperity and security would be advanced by a Korean settlement, an allusion PRAVDA failed to repeat. Pyongyang's MINJU CHOSUN on 27 May likewise endorsed the PRAVDA editorial, and went to great lengths to document the record of Soviet concern for Korea since the end of the second World War.

Communists Concerned by Attacks on Irrigation Facilities: Peking and Pyongyang comment on alleged American bombing attacks against North Korean dams and irrigation facilities accounts for the largest segment of atrocity material, which as a whole is at a low level. Both transmitters are loud in their denunciation of the bombing as a "crime" and an "atrocious," and familiar claims are made that the raids, which provide further proof of "the impotence of the American Air Force as a military weapon in Korea," were designed to exert crude pressure on the truce talks and on the civilian population. Pyongyang reports increased popular resentment at these American atrocities and reviews the failure of previous U.S. efforts to intimidate the Korean people.

Peking's reaction, which though of briefer duration is of greater intensity, compares the bombing with the waging of germ warfare, identifying it as a "terror weapon aimed at wiping out by starvation or by drowning huge sectors of the civilian population." Peking also exhibits concern that the next objective may be the giant Suiho Dam on the Yalu, and warns that destruction of this dam would involve "China and Korea equally" and would constitute more than a simple bombing raid. Chinese comment at the time of the 1952 raids on the Yalu power plants did not stress the fact that these plants also serviced Manchurian industry.

Further evidence of the apparent concern over these raids seems indicated in the Soviet-sponsored resolution at the recent Geneva Red Cross meeting calling for immediate suspension of military operations for an agreed period to allow armistice negotiations to proceed in more propitious circumstances. TASS specifically identifies the cessation of bombing raids on North Korea as an integral part of this resolution. The significance of this resolution,

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while perhaps largely related to the effectiveness of American raids, may also mark a renewal of the Soviet bid for an immediate cease-fire, with agreement on the POW question to follow later. Support for this solution, which included indefinite suspension of hostilities and establishment of an 11-member commission, was dropped following the appearance of the Chou-Kim statements at the end of March establishing the basis for resumption of the truce talks.

SOUTH KOREA

South Korea Demands "Decisive Voice" in Settlement: Pusan devotes widespread attention to the "serious situation" resulting from South Korean disagreement with the terms of the 25 May American truce plan, and reports fully the various meetings, resolutions and announcements concerning the problem. The chief South Korean complaint, according to Pusan broadcasts, lies in the fact that the U.S. proposal practically accepts all the Communist demands, which makes the prospect for the conclusion of an armistice--along lines desired by Communists--better than at any other time. Pusan does not, however, present any definite alternative of its own.

Foreign Minister Pyon however is quoted to the effect that "without the withdrawal of the Chinese Communist forces from Korea there can be neither armistice nor peace," and the previous Government offer of citizenship to Korean prisoners refusing repatriation is now expanded to include the promise of land and technical training. Little has been said concerning unification as a prerequisite for a truce settlement.

Pusan also reflects Korean concern over its role in the negotiations and voices the principle that "no matter how small a nation is, it should have a decisive voice in matters of vital interest." Similar South Korean concern was expressed at the time of the resumption of negotiations in April.

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