

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~USSR SURVEY
23 JULY 1953

- 1 -

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KOREAN WAR: Moscow, Pyongyang Fail to Echo Peking's Optimism

The text of the Nam Il statement at the 19 July truce session has now been widely disseminated by Peking, Pyongyang and Moscow. However, the North Korean and Soviet transmitters have been slow in adjusting their comment to the new situation which Peking promptly represents as "hopeful." The Moscow radio, which had once more begun to provide independent comment on the Korean situation, again becomes noncommittal following Nam Il's statement. The only Pyongyang reaction to the renewed preparations for signing of the armistice is contained in a summarized MINJU CHOSUN editorial broadcast first by Peking on 21 July. A similar device was employed at the time of the signing of the POW agreement in June when the first North Korean reaction, a NODONG SINMUN editorial, was released initially by NCNA on 10 June and broadcast by Pyongyang in Korean a day later, after it had been transmitted in Mandarin by the Pyongyang radio.*

This Peking initiation of alleged Pyongyang comment, coupled with the generally more intransigent tone of Pyongyang-initiated comment prior to the Nam Il statement and prior to the June POW agreement, supports the inference that Peking is providing guidance in a situation in which North Korea may fear the consequences of the truce concessions. While Moscow has supported all the basic positions on the truce as advanced by Peking, comment during the periods prior to a basic policy decision, as in the period preceding the Nam Il statement, has often tended to reflect the more intransigent Pyongyang position.

Tolkunov Sees Premeditated Threat to Korean Armistice: Moscow's reflection of the more intransigent Pyongyang position on the truce is particularly evident in a Tolkunov article in PRAVDA, broadcast on 19 July, the same day Nam Il ended discussion of the problems of truce implementation. The burden of the comment lays the blame for South Korean obstruction squarely on the United States and Tolkunov asserts that the United States is solely responsible for continuation of the Korean war. The commentator also takes great pains to point out in detail the threat posed to an armistice by the recent decisions of the Washington Foreign Ministers conference which contained a "pledge" to take military action should the Communists violate a truce in Korea. Tolkunov, while ridiculing the possibility of any Communist violation, points to the open threats of Syngman Rhee to create incidents during any armistice period, and warns that the United States is thus in a position to exploit any of these incidents as a pretext for renewal of the Korean fighting at any time. Tolkunov's references to the Foreign Ministers conference provides the first Moscow response to the announced decisions on Korea--Moscow had previously discussed in separate comment other phases of the Washington talks. On 21 July a PEOPLE'S DAILY editorial also referred to the Western decisions on Korea, but without the emphasis given by Tolkunov to the threat of a willful renewal of fighting. Neither Tolkunov's PRAVDA article nor the PEOPLE'S DAILY editorial make any reference to the Foreign Ministers' declarations favoring the unification of Korea and warning that an armistice in Korea must not jeopardize peace in other parts of Asia.

* (Peking similarly provided the sole broadcast review of Pyongyang editorial comment on Beria's dismissal--see SURVEY OF FAR EAST BROADCASTS, 16 July 1953)

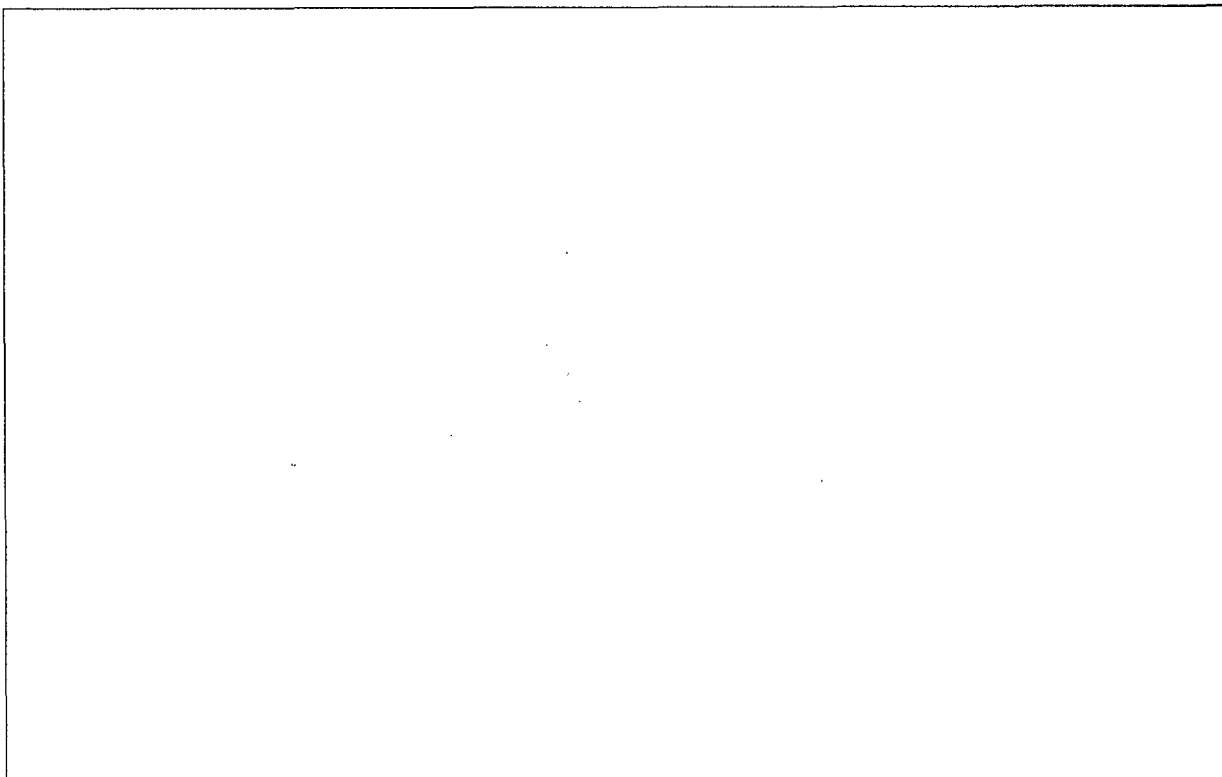
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USSR SURVEY
23 JULY 1953

- 2 -

The Tolkunov article cited above, as well as a 13 July PRAVDA article by Yuri Zhukov, are outstanding exceptions to the Soviet practice, evident since mid-April, of avoiding independent comment on Korea. These articles, while in general following the lines of Peking comment on Korea, are inclined to be more explicit in identifying the United States as the principal culprit in the Korean obstruction and are more vehement than Peking in warnings of continued threat. Zhukov links the obstruction in Korea to the Western "provocation and subversion" in Germany and East Europe and makes the belated and unusual claim that the "camp of peace, headed by the Soviet Union...brought to a successful conclusion the problem of exchange of POWs." This is the first time Soviet comment has claimed any share in the credit for the June POW agreement at Panmunjom and may reflect the mistrust of that agreement originally held by the Soviets.



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