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USSR SURVEY
28 NOVEMBER 1952

- 1 -

Korea

T W O C A M P S

KOREAN WAR

Moscow Stresses Repatriation Principle: The consistent Communist emphasis on the principle of repatriation of all prisoners of war and denunciation of the U.S. advocacy of no forced repatriation remain the dominant elements in Moscow comment on the U.N. debates on Korea. The Soviet position is made explicit in the Vishinsky speech on 24 November in which the Indian draft resolution is denounced. Communist objection to the 17 November resolution became evident in a 20 November TASS review of the proposal reporting the similarity between the Indian resolution and the U.S. position. TASS reports the "uneasiness" of other delegations as a result of the Menon speech, but there is no emphasis on Western disunity.

More explicit Communist opposition to the resolution was contained in a commentary on 22 November which "rumored" that the U.S. "has decided to take a favorable stand on this draft resolution." This broadcast charges that the resolution "is based on the principle of forcible screening and detention of war prisoners" and declares that the functions of the proposed repatriation commission would consist "of running the concentration camps where the war prisoners would languish." The "doom" awaiting these war prisoners is likened to the "tragic fate of the displaced persons who, after the second world war were forcibly detained ... and then became the slaves of landowners and capitalists." This may be an attempt by Moscow to discredit the position of the West in granting political asylum to war prisoners. Previous Moscow comment has rejected the concept of asylum for POWs and has insisted that the prisoners were being detained to provide cannonfodder for the armies of Chiang Kai-shek and Syngman Rhee.

Attention to Communist-Proposed Commission Fades: Comment on the Communist-proposed Korean Commission--which had been touted as making possible peaceful settlement of the Korean question--disappears as the Indian proposal comes under attack. The 10 November Vishinsky speech endorsing and elaborating on this commission was broadcast 87 times, compared to the 167 and 101 devoted to his first two U.N. speeches. A commentary by Romanov on 16 November--broadcast to the UK only--continued the trend toward greater specificity on this proposed commission and seemed to indicate the importance placed upon it by the Communists. Romanov called for "action" as opposed to the "talk of principles," for "only action can advance the Korean truce talks." He also suggested that "the only way to continue the (truce) talks is to transfer them to a higher level," presumably the Korean commission. The importance of a resumption of the truce talks is emphasized by Romanov's statement that "it will not be possible to make another step toward ending this...war until the truce talks are resumed." No explanation of how final agreement can be achieved is made however.

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

USSR SURVEY
28 NOVEMBER 1952

- 2 -

That this commentary was intended to prompt favorable British attention to the Communist proposal seems indicated by the following: (1) the British U.N. delegation was taken to task for dismissing the Vishinsky proposal for a Korean commission "without taking the trouble to examine it at all impartially;" and (2) the favorable response evoked by the proposal, even from those "who certainly cannot be suspected of leaning toward the Soviet viewpoint" was cited. However, Moscow has not directed a similar commentary to any other nations which might be considered especially receptive to a compromise settlement of the Korean issue.

Self-Strength Subject of Explicit Comment: Recent Moscow comment has become more specific concerning the strength of the Chinese and Korean forces. A rare review of military events in Korea by Col. Tolchenov--broadcast to the home audience only--refers in unusually specific terms to the improved technical equipment, especially artillery, to the powerful fortifications and strong "joint defense system" established across Korea, to the plentitude of weapons and ammunition and to the generally improved capabilities of the Korean and Chinese troops. The theme is echoed by TASS correspondent Tkachenko in Pyongyang who quotes a downed U.S. pilot, Captain Robert Henry, as admitting the growing difficulties faced by the U.S. Air Force since "the Koreans and Chinese have now acquired a great many anti-aircraft batteries and planes." This specificity, unusual in Moscow comment to date, has been foreshadowed by Peking comment on recent military events. Reference to the increased military and air capabilities has not been broadcast to the Koreans however.

New Threats Minimized By Inherent Weaknesses: The Soviet home and Korean audiences hear of the continued threat raised by U.S. aggressiveness. The home audience is told that despite our "disgraceful military failures" in Korea, a campaign is now in progress in the United States calling for increased military pressure on Korea, the bombing of Manchuria, the blockade of China and the use of the A-bomb. The blackmail which this campaign represents however is termed "the weapon of the weak against the cowards" and Moscow--in its first reaction to the announcement of hydrogen bomb experiments--implies that "hydrogen blackmail" will be no more successful than was atomic blackmail.

Moscow reports to its Korean listeners that inasmuch as the United States has failed to get sufficient troops from its satellites and is unwilling to provide more itself, South Koreans are to be armed in increasing numbers. Listeners are reassured however that the South Koreans hate their "oppressors" and are considered "unreliable" as military allies by the United States, while other comment reviews the record of South Korean resistance operations. At the same time a warning is extended to the United States that if it persists in its plan for mobilization of the South Koreans, much the same result can be expected as took place in China when wholesale desertions weakened the conscripted Chiang army.

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KOREAN WAR: Intransigence on POW Issue Continues

Korea

Comment on the United Nations debate on Korea reflects the continuing Communist intransigence on the POW repatriation issue. The following points sum up the Communist position:

1. The real issue is the forcing of prisoners to refuse to go home, not forcing the prisoners to go home as the United States claims.
2. The Geneva Convention does not recognize any choice on the part of prisoners regarding repatriation, hence discussion of "political asylum" in this context by America and its allies confuses the real issue. *14 Nov 52*
3. The compromise proposals of Peru and Mexico are contrary to international law since they predicate the right of prisoners to deny repatriation.

This position is made clear in Moscow comment on the speeches of Soviet delegates as well as in criticism of the speeches supporting the U.S. position. The United States is charged with "dodging the issue in an endeavor to whitewash itself in the eyes of public opinion," while those delegates who supported the U.S. stand on repatriation are accused of being "tedious and boring."

Peaceful Settlement Through New Commission Stressed: Originally proposed by Poland as part of its omnibus resolution on 17 October, the commission plan received no attention from Moscow until specifically endorsed by Vishinsky on 29 October. Comment during the past week, as well as the Vishinsky address of 10 November--which has been broadcast 54 times to date--states that the new commission should extend "assistance to the repatriation of all prisoners of war" but there is no explanation of how this "assistance" would be facilitated or on what principles it would be based. At the same time, Moscow drops all reference to the compromise proposals offered at Panmunjom on 8 October by the Communist delegation and ignores recent Peking hints that repatriation covers some form of reclassification.

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