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FAR EAST SURVEY
9 OCTOBER 1952

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THE KOREAN WAR

After reaching a four-month peak two weeks ago as a result of the heavy play given the International Scientific Commission's detailed and voluminous brief on American germ-warfare criminality, attention to BW has now been reduced to barely one percent of all items in the combined domestic and international services. This failure to sustain the high level of attention for an appreciable period lends weight to the supposition that the report was issued primarily for the record and does not presage any full-scale revival of the denunciatory campaign.

During the past week reports of military action have increased to a point where they comprise 25 percent of all references to the war. However, there has been a sharp compensatory decline in references to the truce talks, the POW question, and U.N. bombings. As a result the general volume of all references to the war remains fairly static at eight percent of all items. The fact that this increased battle reportage replaced rather than was added to a discussion of other topics suggests that Peking does not at this time wish to enlarge the focus of attention on the war.

There have been no indications of any change of attitude concerning the POW problem, and the Asian Peace Conference has as yet failed to discuss those measures for ending the war which have figured in speculation concerning the agenda. General Harrison's three alternative suggestions for a solution to the repatriation problem seem slated for summary rejection following an official allegation that the American offer provides nothing new and that the Communist stand represents a "question of principle" which cannot be obscured by "maneuvers in form or method." This implied rejection, which entails a refusal to consider a solution which would permit them to save face, seems to indicate that the Communists at the present time are more interested in continued stalemate than in concluding a truce.

BW Comment Returns to Low Levels: Following the 4-month high attained two weeks ago with the release of the ISC's detailed and voluminous report on U.S. germ-warfare criminality, with 30 percent of all items related to the charges and corroborating evidence, attention has now declined to a bare one percent. This sharp reversal has also been reflected in Moscow's slackening interest in the report. Peking's failure to exploit the report as a means of effecting a full-scale revival of the campaign supports the contention that the document was intended primarily for the record and in order to counter the skepticism which greeted the charges during the spring.

At the height of the campaign two weeks ago, Chinese and American audiences especially were told repeatedly that the charges had gained international

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acceptance and that American guilt had been demonstrated beyond cavil. The effort to make the charges more credible is also implicit in the differences between the confessions of American airmen Enoch and Quinn given wide publicity last spring and those of O'Neal and Kniss disseminated simultaneously with the appearance of the ISC report. The latter confessions contrast sharply with those of Enoch and Quinn in the greater specificity of detail, in the lack of equivocation concerning the fliers' involvement in BW, and in the untempered virulence of their denunciation of American bestiality.

U.N. Suffers 4,000 Casualties in Five Days: A sharp drop in the number of references to the truce talks, bombings and the POW question has been accompanied by an almost unprecedented increase in the volume of comment on actual military operations. During the week 29 September-5 October, 25 percent of all items relating to the Korean War were concerned with ground fighting. Peking reported that 4,000 U.N. casualties were inflicted during the last five days of September, and that eight hill positions had been captured. Four platoons of Syngman Rhee's Capitol Division are said to have been annihilated southeast of Kumsong, and an amphibious landing between Haeju and Yonan on the west coast thwarted. Despite such claims there are frequent ~~claims~~ ^{claims} that the Communists are outnumbered and that defensive battles are being fought. This may be a prelude to recognition that some positions have been lost, or conversely to claims of victory placed in greater relief because of the difficulties overcome. The fact that the increased volume of battle reportage has not increased the gross volume of comment related to Korea suggests that Peking does not at the present time wish to enlarge the general focus of attention on the war.

Unarmed Chinese Slaughtered for Singing: Although Peking reacted quickly and violently to the 1 October disorders on Cheju Island, it has not maintained the original vehemence of its denunciation. Peking charged that 56 unarmed, peaceful prisoners were destroyed in cold blood because they "sang and demonstrated their love for the Motherland." This is merely one more indication, in Peking's view, of the falsity of the American claim that 14,000 Chinese POWs do not want to go home.

Communism Violations, Release of "Civilians" Make Agreement Impossible: Peking continues to demonstrate considerable sensitivity to the U.N.'s declared intention to release 11,000 internees classified as civilians. Nam Il characterizes this "unilateral" act as another attempt to add to the number of U.N. puppet forces, and to continue and extend the war. Peking notes too the growing clamor in the United States for the use of Kuomintang troops, and charges that the release of these 11,000 "civilians" is a device to hasten Nationalist participation.

The repeated aerial violations of the truce site are described as another factor designed to aggravate relations and prevent a truce. Peking reports in addition that in two weeks in September American planes flew 1,040 sorties over Northeast China in a deliberate pattern of provocation and that casualties were suffered from strafing attacks over Antung.

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No Maneuvers in Form or Method Will Sway Chinese: Harrison's three alternative suggestions for a solution of the PCW impasse seem destined for summary rejection. A NEW CHINA NEWS AGENCY report quoting delegation chief Nam Il declares that the American suggestion contains nothing new and that the POW question is a "matter of principle" which cannot be obscured by "maneuvers in form or method." This implied rejection, which represents a refusal to accept an opportunity to save face, foreshadows continued stalemate and casts serious doubts on the Communist desire for a truce.

Chu Te Calls For Liberation of Formosa: The advent of National Day brings back into the limelight the Chinese tardy timetable for the liberation of Formosa. Army Commander Chu Te, in a widely broadcast "order of the day," reminds the Chinese Army and people that only Formosa remains to be liberated, and asks for a concerted national effort to redeem this enslaved segment of the national territory. Although Formosa has been mentioned only rarely in recent months, this stereotyped appeal is regularly brought forward in connection with major holidays.

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N O R T H K O R E A

Food Problems Plague Regime: Two recent cabinet decisions have been authorized by the People's Government to increase the food rations to the dependents of workers, technicians and clerical workers and to exempt "poor" farmers who have "displayed enthusiasm in farming" from payment of the tax in kind and contributions due under the State Food Loan of 1952. These measures, both having to do with the food supply on hand or shortly to be available, are on the surface inconsistent. The increased food ration is based on the assumption of "bumper crops" from this year's harvest, while the exempted payments in kind are based on the realities of war-imposed difficulties suffered by many farmers.

This apparent inconsistency in the cabinet decisions points to what may be a critical state of affairs in North Korea, with the Government forced to adopt measures to alleviate the plight of the population despite the threat of economic collapse entailed in drawing on meager reserves. It is possible also that the decisions resulted from promises of increased relief supplies for North Korea from China and the Soviet Union extended at the Sino-Soviet talks in Moscow.

Explanations of the decisions only serve to exaggerate the inconsistency, for a bumper harvest is postulated on the allegedly successful solution to the "labor shortage and the lack of farming implements and fertilizer." These difficulties, however, are still listed among the reasons why certain farmers must be exempted from food payments. A continued shortage of fertilizer, resulting possibly from U.S. bombing of chemical plants, is reflected, too, in broadcasts of appeals for the collection of grasses for home-made fertilizer and of detailed instructions concerning the preparation of this fertilizer. Farmers are urged to pay greater attention to securing "superior seed," for use of inferior seed will only result in decreased yields, "no matter what fertilizer is used."

North Korean editorial comment on the decisions, which are referred to as a "benevolent gift of the people's regime," stresses that they are designed to give "new confidence and encouragement to the workers and farmers." The decisions are also termed proof of the "great economic strength" held in "reserve" by the Government, a further admission that the benefits are made possible through the use of reserve supplies rather than large harvests.

Anniversaries Bring Reminders of Orbit Support: China's National Day occasions a flurry of messages between the leaders of Korea and China, all highlighting China's accomplishments and her aid to Korea in the struggle against the "common enemy"--American imperialism. The historical bonds of custom and culture are invoked as evidence of the continuing firm friendship between China and Korea, and confidence in final victory is voiced, based on the "firm and united might of the Korean and Chinese people."

The Soviet Union is praised in connection with the 19th Party Congress, and a Korean labor leader reports that "ever since the outbreak of the Korean war the Soviet people have considered it their own war and have extended aid to us." It is predicted that the Party Congress will expose the "downfall of imperialism," but there is no attempt to connect this directly with the Korean war. Pak Den Ai, originally scheduled to head the Korean delegation to the APC, is now in Moscow as head of the Korean delegation observing the 19th Party Congress.

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S O U T H K O R E A

Rhee Dismisses South Korean Premier: Pusan released an announcement by Syngman Rhee on 5 October announcing the dismissal of the Premier and Vice Foreign Minister. Both men are reported to have been implicated in the secret visit of the former Japanese mayor of Seoul, Furuichi, who arrived in the country "without due permission." Rhee charges that Furuichi "completed his mission of espionage and other objectives" before departing. Although Pusan on 25 September promised a full statement on the affair from the Justice Minister in a few days, no such explanation has appeared. Nor has Pusan made any reference to Premier Chang's alleged resignation.

Draft, Wounded Servicemen Poses Problem: Problems of Korea's armed forces apparently having their origin in neglected homefront failings are revealed by Pusan. A lack of adequate preparations and facilities is said to be responsible for poor morale and low combat efficiency of many South Korean troops concerned over the livelihood of their dependents, while riots of wounded servicemen in Pusan and elsewhere are revealed to be the result of failure to provide "necessary facilities" to care for these men. The Government promises increased efforts to meet these problems and urges the civilians and servicemen concerned to show patience and understanding, and to exert greater efforts themselves to alleviate these problems. The Vice Chief of the Office of Public Information also reveals difficulties in the operation of the new draft law, with "some" trying to avoid "the sacred call for the defense of their fatherland."

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