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FAR EAST SURVEY
12 MARCH 1953

- A 1 -

THE KOREAN WAR

Comment up to 8 March, when Peking's solitary preoccupation with Stalin's death drove all other material from the air, maintained the sharply aggressive tone engendered by the revival of the BW campaign subsequent to the release of the Schwable-Bley "confessions." The following elements characterized the treatment of the war up to that point:

- a. Although the confessions remained the focus of more than half of all news and commentary items concerning the war, they tended increasingly to be merged, along lines previously followed by Moscow and Pyongyang, with other citations of American atrocities to support the general condemnation of American bestiality.
- b. In contrast to the pattern noted in connection with the exploitation of the International Scientific Commission's report of last September, the bulk of the BW comment was broadcast to China's international audiences rather than to domestic listeners, a further indication that this phase of the campaign was intended to affect the U.N. sessions rather than to strengthen anti-American sentiments in China.
- c. Peking glossed over Vishinsky's 2 March admission that China was receiving armaments from the Soviet Union, and had not yet referred to Ambassador Lodge's charge that Moscow bears the onus of responsibility for the continuation of the war.
- d. Reports of battle operations have alluded to successful Sino-Korean attacks and skirmishes, in contrast to previous stress upon Communist defensive operations and counterattacks.
- e. North Korean comment continued its concentration on the dangers resulting from the infiltration of spies and saboteurs. An attempt to bolster flagging morale is illustrated in frequent allusions to the depressed status of South Koreans and to the growing number of desertions from ROK ranks.

BW Charges Blend into General Atrocity Propaganda: Although references to the Schwable-Bley confessions remain the focus of approximately half of all comment on the war, there has been an increasing tendency, along lines already noted from Moscow and Pyongyang, to merge the comment with other attacks on American bestiality. Peking has been quick to react to the new disorders in the POW camps and has warned again that the American command must assume responsibility for the possible consequences of continued maltreatment of prisoners. In a similar vein, Peking describes the further violations of the truce zone as a device intended to destroy the last basis for negotiation.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

FAR EAST SURVEY
12 MARCH 1953

- A 2 -

Domestic Audiences Slighted in Stress on EW: In a striking deviation from the pattern noted last September in connection with the release of the ISC report and the Kniss-O'Neal confessions, the bulk of present comment on BW is concentrated in the international service which serves Peking's Asian audiences outside of China. This imbalance would seem to provide some support for the contention that the present revival is intended primarily to condition external attitudes, perhaps in connection with the U.N. sessions, rather than to strengthen anti-American sentiments at home.

Vishinsky Proves U.S. Wants to Extend War: Although Moscow has given considerable play to Vishinsky's 2 March speech admitting the Soviet Union's delivery of arms to China, Peking has glossed over that aspect of the address and has stressed the Soviet representative's charge that official American policy aims at an extension and expansion of the war. There has been no allusion to U.S. Delegation Chief Lodge's 10-point indictment of the Soviet role in supporting the Communist war effort.

Communiqués Not Successful Communist Attacks: Communist communiqués on the war have demonstrated an increased willingness to report actions initiated by the Chinese and North Korean forces, in contrast to the usual practice of reporting defensive operations and counterattacks responding to enemy initiative. Although there has been little mention of territorial gains, the previous virtually solitary concentration on casualties and rebuffs suffered by the U.N. forces has been considerably relaxed.

Fear of Spies Plagues North Korean Regime: Pyongyang's major preoccupation, to judge from the tenor of recent propaganda broadcasts, is the danger from espionage and sabotage by infiltrated enemy agents. There has been no abatement of the campaign urging maximum vigilance on the part of the people, and noting the depredations already caused by U.N. agents. There have been admissions that enemy elements have been successful in their attempts "to shake the confidence of our people in final victory," to assay the damage caused by enemy bombings, and in determining the recuperative powers of bombed-out industry. There are also frequent lamentations that the Americans have been able to "persuade recalcitrant elements to work for them."

Such indications of impaired support for the regime and the war effort would seem to indicate the existence of a serious morale problem. There is support for such a conclusion in the repeated claims that the South Koreans are deserting to the North in greatly increased numbers and that the population in the South suffers from a lack of food, of clothing, and from continual oppression. Pyongyang also seeks to exploit the bitter memories of the Japanese occupation by reporting the revival in South Korea of the "national general mobilization act" by which the Japanese forced all men between 19 and 50 into military service or hard labor.

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

FAR EAST SURVEY
12 MARCH 1953

- C 1 -

NORTH KOREA

Stalin's Death

Brief Messages Avoid Reference to Soviet Aid; Cite Korean Disunity: North Korean officials join the world-wide Communist chorus of sympathy and grief over the death of Stalin and the radio deviates from its regular schedules to devote virtually total attention to the period of mourning. Official North Korean messages prompted by Stalin's death are in general brief, containing customary expressions of grief, condolence and pledges of loyalty to the Lenin-Stalin program.

In contrast to the messages from Chinese Communist and other Satellite leaders which invariably include reference to Stalin's consideration for their own nation and people, those of Kim Il Sung, Kim Doo Bong and other members of the North Korean hierarchy do not identify Stalin with any special policy of friendship and aid for the Korean people and nation. The only available exception to this pattern appears in the message from the Central Committee of the Korean Labor Party to Party members and the people of North Korea expressly praising Stalin for the liberation of Korea, for providing a "winning theory," and for having "always helped us in our grand struggle for complete unification and national independence."

Although the message goes on in conventional fashion to call for increased unity around Kim Il Sung, a "disciple" of Stalin, evidence of apparent unrest and disagreement within the Korean party ranks is revealed in an unusual reference to party disunity. The Party is urged to "struggle against all enemies of the Party within and without who are trying to weaken the unity of our Party" and is further exhorted to strengthen itself "ideologically and structurally." There is no mention of any specific crisis facing either the Korean Labor Party or the Communist camp in general, nor to any future increased dependence on Chinese leadership.

Internal Affairs

Government Reveals Shortcomings of Supply and Administrative Organs: The existence of serious defects and maladministration is revealed in a series of recent Cabinet decrees addressed to the local (ri) people's committees, State-owned commercial agencies and consumers unions and to the personnel administering the State program for technical workers, and remedial steps are prescribed.

Criticism of the ri people's committees, which are taken to task for having "failed to fully understand the political significance" of the recent reorganizations, suggests they have been unable to meet the increased responsibilities devolving upon them, particularly as "primary" Government offices "directly implementing State policies in all fields." Government awareness of the necessity to secure the cooperation of the people is indicated in the admonition that ri personnel give up their "bureaucratic attitude, be humble," and in the reminder they are "faithful servants of

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

FAR EAST SURVEY
12 MARCH 1953

- C 2 -

the people." The directive also suggests measures to enhance efficiency, such as the assignment of regular tasks to ri personnel, the "methodical" training of new personnel and "short-term" training courses to raise "administrative ability."

Evidence of defects in the supply organizations with resultant shortages and inequities is reflected in criticism of State-owned commercial agencies and consumers unions. The defects include improper emphasis on "profit-seeking," concentration on urban areas to the detriment of rural areas, sales delays, illegal activity in commodity purchasing and failure to supply workers' requirements.

The Government attributes these problems in part to overlapping responsibilities and announces a redivision of territory, with the commercial agencies to be responsible solely for supply of urban areas and the consumers unions to supply rural areas exclusively. Further, steps are to be taken to eliminate the production of low-quality items, the deterioration of goods, damage and breakage in transit and inaccurate weights and measures. An indoctrination campaign is to be instituted to eliminate theft, embezzlement and misappropriation of commodities.

Decree Threatens Resettlement of Marginal Farmers, Fishermen: Pyongyang uses both persuasion—in the form of promised Government assistance—and compulsion—in the form of threatened resettlement—in an attempt to alleviate what is apparently a continued inability of poor farmers to meet State food requirements and to raise depressed living conditions. Citing the losses to farmers occasioned by war, Pyongyang promises that poor farmers will receive first call on land which has been uncultivated up to now, and urges them to engage in extensive reclamation work to bring new land into cultivation.

The Government further promises them assistance from the Farmers' Bank in the purchase of draft animals as well as in the purchase of tools and raw materials necessary to engage in "sideline" production. The threat is held out, however, that it may be necessary to resettle farmers in localities where there is more uncultivated land available. The decree reveals the failure of farmers to engage in the cooperative use of manpower and draft animals and warns that farmers must join "mutual-aid units without fail" in order to use available resources "on a rational basis."

Attention is also called to the difficulties of fishermen deprived of their normal livelihood through curtailed high-seas fishing as well as through the destruction of fishing equipment; the Government urges fishing cooperatives to "organize fish cultivation along the coast and in rivers" as well as in lakes, ponds and reservoirs. Again the possibility is held out that marginal fishermen may have to be resettled on reclaimed or uncultivated farms.

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