

KOREA: WITHDRAWAL OF TROOPS Korea

The USSR's decision to withdraw its troops from Korea by the end of this year supersedes all other topics in broadcasts to and about Korea since the decision was announced on 19 September. Prior to that date Soviet broadcasters continued in the established pattern of praising the Pyongyang Government and denouncing the United States and the Seoul Government. Since 19 September, however, broadcasts to European as well as Asiatic audiences have given the troop withdrawal top billing. Radio Pyongyang has followed Moscow's lead, as is customary.

a. Withdrawal of Troops: Moscow and TASS give wide distribution to the announcement by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR that "it is possible to comply" with the Korean request for withdrawal of foreign troops and to the subsequent statement by the Soviet Foreign Office that the USSR will do so by the end of the year. On 20 and 21 September a commentary on the subject by Linetsky is broadcast in several languages. All these emissions follow the same outline although the Linetsky talk and the Foreign Office statement are more elaborate than the Presidium's reply to Kim Doo Bong.

The Presidium's statement, signed by Nikolai Shvernik and Alexander Gorkin as President and Secretary respectively of the Presidium, points out that since the Supreme People's Assembly in Pyongyang has established a Government, "representing the will of the overwhelming majority of the population of northern and southern Korea" and since this is a "guarantee that complete order and public peace will be maintained throughout Korea during withdrawal of foreign troops from Korea and after," the Presidium now finds it "possible" to accede to the Supreme Assembly's request of 10 September for withdrawal of troops. The statement also expresses the Presidium's "hope" that U.S. troops will be evacuated simultaneously.

The Foreign Office statement and Commentator Linetsky expand this announcement and in so doing include familiar rhetoric. According to the Foreign Office statement as broadcast in Korean on 20 September:

"As is known already, having annihilated the Japanese Kwantung Army and liberated Korea from the Japanese aggressors in the fall of 1945, the Soviet Army under agreement among the Allied powers, has been occupying Korea north of the 38th parallel. . . . Occupying North Korea, the Soviet Army has given the people full opportunity for the creation of truly democratic administrative bodies and constantly rendered friendly assistance to the cause of Korea's national revival. Furthermore the number of Soviet troops in northern Korea has gradually diminished."

The statement goes on to review the history of Soviet proposals for the withdrawal of troops and reiterates the "hope" that American troops will be similarly withdrawn.

Linetsky elaborates in turn upon the Presidium decision and the Foreign Office statement although he makes no direct reference to the latter. He repeats standard Soviet propaganda regarding the "truly democratic" elections, constitution, and procedures in the north, discounting the possibility that any "public disturbances or even civil war" might result.

from withdrawal of troops from both zones. He, too, reiterates the claim that "the Soviet Union delivered Korea from the drastic clutches of the Japanese warlords." Surveying the part played by the U.N. in the Korean situation, he declares that the Temporary Commission on Korea was formed at the behest of the U.S. and "unlawfully usurped" the authority of the United Nations. In general, Linetsky's commentary is little more than a rehashing of frequently-aided charges against America and its occupation policies.

Pyongyang's reportage of, and reaction to, the contemplated evacuation is, as is traditional, marked by exuberance. The decision itself is described as "historic" and as reflecting the "sincerity" of the USSR. The U.S. is denounced for having blocked earlier withdrawal of foreign forces. Pyongyang also reports that the announcement was received with "greatest enthusiasm" in every Korean hamlet.

b. Progress in the North; Puppets in the South: Soviet broadcasters are as concerned as ever to point out the contrast in conditions existing in the two zones of occupation. RED STAR, for example, contrasts the alleged achievements of the Supreme National Assembly with commercial and military agreements reportedly reached between Syngman Rhee and American officials. Thus the Pyongyang Government is said to be taking "important steps" toward "unification of the whole country into a single, independent, democratic government." On the other hand, RED STAR claims, reactionaries in the south, frightened by the success of the Pyongyang Government, "are seeking the support of their patrons"--the United States. (in Russian to Soviet Asia, 18 September 1948) These reactionaries are said to be arranging for prolongation of the American stay in Korea because they "are afraid to remain face to face with their own people."

Danilov makes the same contrast in a 15 September Korean-language broadcast. He summarizes briefly the "successful efforts" being made for restoration of the northern economy and parallels this with the activities of the "self-appointed government" of the south which, he claims, "is doing everything it can to serve the interests of the American monopolists, not the interests of the Korean people." He documents his charge by reference to the same evidence presented by RED STAR, i.e., conferences on commercial problems between American and South Korean officials. Danilov then branches off into a thorough-going denunciation of American trade policy. He claims that this policy is oriented toward exploitation of Korea's mineral resources in order to "rehabilitate the Americanized-Japanese munitions industry."