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USSR SURVEY
5 FEBRUARY 1953

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GLOBAL TOPICS

KOREAN WAR: BW Charges, Soviet Truce Plan Revived

Moscow revives comment on bacterial warfare for the first time since the Vienna Peace Congress, repeating recent North Korean charges that during November and December the Americans resorted to use of BW on both the east and west coastal areas of North Korea. These charges, only briefly mentioned by TASS previously, now constitute one fourth of Moscow's continuing low-level attention to the war and are perhaps intended to establish additional evidence of BW prior to U.N. discussion of the BW charges.

Moscow softens its comment on the Indian truce proposal in renewed discussion of truce plans presented at the recent General Assembly sessions. Broadcasts emphasize the similarity of the Indian and Soviet proposals, pointing out that the only difference is that the Soviet version provided for an immediate cease-fire. Moscow comment during the U.N. session bitterly denounced the similarity of the Indian proposal and the U.S. position on repatriation. The present comment, beamed among others to India and to the United Kingdom, seems designed to further the moral position of the Soviet Union vis-a-vis a Korean truce and may be preparation for a renewed effort at the U.N. to split the West and induce neutral support for the Soviet position on Korea. The comment gives no indication of a change in the basic Communist stand on repatriation however.

U.S. Weakness to Continue in 1953: Present Moscow comment dwells on evidence of U.S. weakness in Korea and avoids reference to events "proving" American aggressive plans which Peking gives heavy play. Tolchenov, Soviet military commentator, reviewing the Korean war during 1952 for the Soviet home audience, notes the record of U.S. failures in Korea during the past year and forecasts a "gloomy" prospect for 1953. He states that U.S. military prestige has been seriously undermined by successive defeats, that U.S. troop morale is deteriorating, and that there is little chance for the United States to acquire the desired Asian troops to embark on new offensive action. General Van Fleet's replacement is attributed to his failure to bring about military success despite heavy material and troop losses. U.S. troop desertions as well as the report of the refusal of the Puerto Rican soldiers to go into battle are all exploited as conclusive evidence of the disgust of American soldiers with this "unjust" war and of their refusal to die for the profits of a few monopolists. The failure of "Operation Snack" is exploited as positive evidence of the "impregnable defense" of the Koreans and Chinese.

In contrast to Moscow, Peking continues its concentration on evidence of the aggressive intentions of the United States, but without qualifying its charges by reports of U.S. weakness as does Moscow. The recent Peking reports of the violation of the Manchurian borders by an American B-29 and a jet fighter, the visit of General Collins to the Far East, and the record of General Maxwell Taylor in amphibious operations are all cited as evidence of the aggressive intentions of the United States. These topics are avoided entirely or are treated only marginally in Moscow comment.

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KOREAN WAR: Volume of Comment Remains Low

Moscow comment on the Korean war remains at a comparatively low level for the third consecutive week. Similar lulls occurred early in 1952 immediately preceding the BW and POW campaigns, and just before the heavy concentration on the General Assembly debates on Korea. While there are no firm indications of an imminent new propaganda campaign, a number of elements in current Communist propaganda could be the basis for such a campaign.

In recent weeks both Pyongyang and Peking have carried brief reports, apparently for the record, of recent American use of BW in Korea. These reports include new admissions of participation in BW by two American prisoners as well as a report by the chief of the medical service of the Chinese Volunteers. It is likely that this new documentation would be relied on by Communist propaganda during any U.N. investigation of BW charges.

It is possible that the current lull could reflect a "wait and see" attitude toward the new Eisenhower administration, particularly with regard to intentions in Korea. Communist broadcasts during the past month have suggested several courses of action President Eisenhower might follow. These include use of foreign troops, especially Japanese and Chinese Nationalists; resort to atomic weapons; an attempt at a limited U.N. offensive designed to push the battle line to the more defensible narrow waist of Korea and to gain possession of the wolfram mines of North Korea; a rescreening of Communist prisoners to be followed by resettlement of prisoners refusing to return to Communist control and subsequent presentation of a fait accompli to the Communist truce negotiators, and a desire to destroy the last vestige of truce negotiations. These varied charges seem designed primarily to meet the requirements imposed on Communist propaganda by continued war in Korea and to establish a framework for Communist response to any aggressive move by the Eisenhower administration.

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Rhee's Visit to Japan: Initial comment on Syngman Rhee's visit to Japan pointed up the desperate American need for more cannon fodder, to be fulfilled by use of Japanese troops as well as by conscription of Koreans in Japan. Subsequently however, these charges were repeated only to Korean and Chinese audiences, while Moscow warned other listeners of the danger represented by the planned formation of a Pacific bloc comprising Nationalist China, Japan and South Korea, with Chinese Nationalist troops to be used in Korea and Japanese troops slated for possible service in Vietnam.

A commentary entitled "The Aggressors Are Dreaming of Establishing a New Manchurian Nation," broadcast only to Korean and Chinese audiences, describes American designs to utilize Japanese forces "to invade and occupy Manchuria." These charges are documented by "quotations" from letters-to-the-editor published in American newspapers calling for such an invasion as a solution to the Korean War. This "documentation" serves to substantiate the unusual Moscow charge that the plan to utilize Japanese forces for U.S. aggression in Asia "has become very popular in America."

Recent accounts by U.S. officials and the press of a high rate of desertion of U.S. troops, particularly those about to be sent to Korea, are seized upon by Moscow as concrete evidence of the opposition of U.S. troops to the "unjust" war in Korea. Reference is made to the Stalin interview on 17 June 1951 calling attention to the lowered morale of U.S. troops in Korea as contrasted with their bravery in the "just" war against Germany and Japan.

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GLOBAL TOPICS

KOREAN WAR: New Campaign Charges American Bestiality

Moscow devotes both prompt and voluminous attention to the latest atrocity and BW charges, but comment follows previously established lines. The new charges--depositions by two Marine Corps staff officers and a North Korean review of evidence of American atrocities--are linked to previous charges and depositions as further proof of U.S. bestiality. Primary attention is given the BW charges--which account for 13 percent of all Moscow comment--and it is reported that as a result of the depositions by these "responsible officers" it can be stated that BW "was not the crime of individual sadists or murderers but the manifestation of a savage policy of gangsterism raised to the level of state policy." Moscow charges that it is little wonder the Americans have not ratified the Geneva Convention of 1925 inasmuch as they have been testing BW in Korea and plan to use it "as a threat over the heads of all peoples." Neither Moscow nor Peking links the BW charges to the truce issues, and Moscow continues to avoid mention of any trial of those responsible for the crimes, although such calls again appear in Peking and Pyongyang comment.

Resumption of the BW campaign, largely dormant since September 1952, may have been intended to provide a propaganda framework for exploitation of the expected U.N. investigation of the BW charges. A PRAVDA editorial of 25 February provides the only direct link between the BW charges and the United Nations however, in an admonition to the General Assembly that it "must immediately demand that the governments of all countries ratify the Geneva Protocol banning poison gas and chemical and germ weapons."

India No Longer Identified with Approved Truce Resolution: Moscow asserts that the United States has not indicated any desire to bring about a cease-fire and warns that the United States will suffer "moral and political isolation" if it persists in its aggressive plans. The resolution adopted by the United Nations in its 1952 meetings is described as "aimed at protracting the war," but is not identified as having been formulated by India. Moscow takes note of the change of several neutral votes in favor of the participation of North Korea in U.N. discussion and repeats Vishinsky's warning that representatives of North Korea must be present "if there were to be really serious discussion of the (Korean) matter."