

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

FAR EAST SURVEY
22 OCTOBER 1953

- A 1 -

K O R E A

Peking, Moscow Avoid Comment on Proposed Panmunjom Talks: Peking continues to avoid discussion of the Chou En-lai and Nam Il notes of 10 October and 19 October, the latter accepting a pre-conference meeting on 26 October at Panmunjom. The usual endorsements by Communist organizations and the press are also missing. Sole comment on the meeting is provided by Pyongyang which refers optimistically to the opportunity for convening a political conference at an early date. North Korean insistence that the composition of the conference be the principal and first item to be settled at Panmunjom--contained in an 11 October commentary--is missing from a 19 October Pyongyang discussion of the Chou-Nam proposals. Moscow, like Peking, gives only minor attention to the notes and broadcasts no comment on their significance.

PEOPLE'S DAILY Praises Commission Impartiality: The tone of Communist Chinese comment on the NNRC is established in a 13 October PEOPLE'S DAILY editorial which urges world support for the "impartial work" of the repatriation commission. The editorial also points out that "India, which has honorably assumed the task of chairman and umpire of the commission," has taken the lead in criticizing U.S. obstruction of the work of the Commission. In this regard, a commentary by Wilfred Burchett voices Peking's approval of the firm tactics used by the NNRC to overcome agent-inspired obstruction on the first day of the explanation work. The Chinese radio has been quick to present evidences of U.S.-Indian discord over the operation of the repatriation commission and has widely broadcast critical Indian press comment as well as various Nehru statements taking exception to U.S. conduct in Korea.

The favorable treatment afforded India and the Commission as a whole is typified by Peking's commendation of Indian troops for their firmness in suppressing prisoner riots in early October, irrespective of the fact that the Indian action resulted in prisoner casualties. Broadcasts on 21 October by the Polish and Czech members of the NNRC explaining their "withdrawal" from the commission contain the assertion that a continued policy of firmness is necessary to eradicate agent control of the prisoners and assure fulfillment of the terms of the armistice. The statements however explicitly assure the world that the commission's work will continue and that the Satellite delegates will take part in future commission operations.

Prisoners Urged to Seek Repatriation: The initiation of explanation work on 15 October was marked with a broadcast appeal by Kim Il Sung and Peng Teh-huai for prisoners to seek repatriation. The joint message promised pardon for all acts committed while in the prison camps as well as the return of prisoners to their families and a peaceful life.

Propaganda preparation for the eventuality that many Chinese and Korean prisoners will refuse repatriation is suggested by steady attention to charges that repeated U.S. violations of the rules governing explanations deny the prisoners the necessary freedom of choice. Released prisoners state that control of the camps by ROK and Nationalist Chinese agents has instilled a fear in the prisoners that they will not get out of the compounds alive should they choose repatriation. The ex-prisoners also charge that they were prevented from hearing NNRC assurances of adequate safeguards. The comment does not attach any blame to the NNRC however.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~