

Panmunjom Pattern of Hope: First It Falls and Then Rises

The fever chart of Pentagon hopes for a Korean truce has gone up and down so sharply and so often for 22 months that it looks like the most rugged Korean mountain range. Last week it leaped upward once again. One topmost official in Washington predicted that eight days more of truce talks ought to be enough to remove the last barriers. But this official also felt that, unless a cease-fire came that quickly, the U.N. would drop the whole dreary business.

These new hopes were grounded in a new Communist proposal at Panmunjom. Giving in to the U.N., Gen Nam Il agreed that prisoners refusing to be sent home should be held in Korea, rather than shipped to neutral territory, while their fate was decided. He suggested that these POW's be placed in custody of a "repatriation commission" of five neutrals—Switzerland, Sweden, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and India—making decisions by majority vote.



International

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THE KOREAN WAR

John Foster Dulles said the U.S. and its allies agreed that the Red proposals "will require elucidation and perhaps modification." Lt. Gen. William K. Harrison Jr. was sent back to Panmunjom with a long list of questions. Specifically, the U.S. feared that the Red proposal to leave the final disposition of anti-Communist prisoners to a future political conference might mean years of confinement. It also preferred Pakistan to India, although it would not let this issue alone block a truce.

On first glance, Washington was alarmed at the idea of admitting Polish and Czechoslovak troops behind U.N. lines, even if on an isolated island. But on second thought, some Pentagon officers felt that to expose East European Communists to life outside the Iron Curtain, albeit in a theater of war, might make them neat subjects for a subtle type of U.N. "brainwashing."

Quick

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Last Chance at Panmunjom?

There also was Senate opposition to the new U.N. truce plan at Panmunjom. This made "final" concessions to the Reds on prisoners-of-war, providing the enemy agrees to a series of safeguards, including a time limit on captivity.

QUICK's Washington bureau reported: "It is believed the Chinese are delaying the talks while they transmit the proposal to Moscow. Then Moscow may want to wait until after the three-power conference before making a response. In any case the current phase has the appearance of being the absolutely final exchange of proposals in Korea. Meanwhile, the Bermuda conference will no doubt weigh the Red Chinese price for real peace in the East: U.N. membership, liquidation of Formosa."



Mud-covered GI hero, Pvt. Alfred McCaulley, in fighting mood