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If Geneva Fails

TWO facts emerge clearly from the Geneva discussions on the Far East. There are substantial differences among the three Western Powers on their policy to the Far East. That is why the Western Powers have no co-ordinated policy either on Korea or on Indo-China. Mr Eden is trying his best to act as an honest broker. M Bidault is diplomatic, in fostering an impression that he is anxious to reach an honourable settlement in Indo-China. Both the American and the South Korean delegations are blunt in their gloomy prophecies that the Geneva Conference is doomed to failure. France has not seemingly lost hopes. But she is concerned about making active preparations for the steps to be undertaken in the event of a failure in Geneva. While the differences among the Western Powers are hampering progress in Geneva, the Communists are united in their policy. That is why, they retain the initiative at Geneva.

Six weeks have passed since the start of the Geneva Conference, From the deliberations so far, it is clear that both sides are repeating the tactics employed by each in Korea. Both sides are agreed on a cease-fire in Indo-China. But on all the other related issues, they differ. This has, as in Korea, provoked allegations and counter-allegations. While the Western Powers allege that the Communists are adopting delaying tactics at Geneva in order to gain a decisive military initiative in Indo-China, the Communists make the counter-allegation that the Western Powers are exploiting the Geneva Conference to have military staff talks. They have openly accused America of inducing Thailand to make an appeal to the United Nations for sending a team of observers in order to sabotage the Geneva Conference.

There is complete deadlock on Korea. Both sides are agreed on the need for an all-Korean election. It is on the composition of the body which is to supervise the elections that there is disagreement. According to the Western Powers, the Commission which will be entrusted with the task of supervising all-Korean elections should be a United Nations' Organisation. This demand is rejected by the Communists on two grounds. One is that the international organisation is one of the belligerents in Korea. That China is not a member of the United Nations, is the second reason for the Communist rejection of the Western demand. But the Communists suggest that they have no objection to the formation of an "appropriate international organisation" to supervise the all-Korean elections. Though the South Koreans are too eager to slam the door shut, M Molotov has left the door ajar by suggesting that the Geneva Conference should try to reach decisions on agreed points, and then proceed to discuss the issues in dispute.

Until last Saturday, the Korean deadlock seemed complete. Though the South Koreans remain adamant, the belief is growing in Geneva that M Molotov's suggestion demands careful consideration. Even as hopes have revived that the Korean deadlock may yet be solved, the