

January 26, 1959

Professor William H. Vatcher, Jr.
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San Jose, California

Dear Bill:

I am not sure of your address, but I hope that his letter reaches you. If it does not it will come back to me and I shall try again.

I was surprised and delighted to come across your book, Panmunjom, in our library the other day. I learned for the first time what you had been doing in Korea! That sort of brings me up to date on your military career, about which I didn't think to quiz you when we met at the convention last fall. At election time I scanned our newspapers in vain for some mention of the outcome of your Congressional election campaign. Would you now be kind enough to bring me up to date on this aspect of your many-faceted life?

I read your book with a great deal of interest, not only because it was well written and a distinct contribution to our store of knowledge, but because it touches so closely on an area which has interested me for several years and on which I prepared a monograph for ORO. I refer to the language problem, and in this case the problem as it affects military and political operations and negotiations in Asia.

Why I failed to run into you at Panmunjom, I don't know, although I would assume that I visited there at a point when you were away on leave or had gone elsewhere in the course of your work. In any event, may I take this opportunity to enlist your assistance in filling out one of the aspects of my ORO study on which you may have information.

The principle direct reference to our interpreters in your book is in Footnote 6, on page 30. I talked with Horace Underwood and Kenneth Wu and found them both knowledgeable informants. I was impressed with their earnestness and their skill—and with the gap in competence which seemed to exist between them and other members of our interpreter corp, even including Col. Ekwall. I was impressed furthermore with the fact that Wu and Underwood were very junior officers, while the senior Communist interpreters held field rank. It was apparent that our interpreters felt at a disadvantage vis-a-vis their opposite numbers and considered that their status and effectiveness suffered, both in this connection and in their dealings with our own senior negotiators, whom they felt tended to discount their advice and remarked because of their low rank. Do you feel that these are justified impressions? Did you experience any problems of this sort yourself?

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Need I add that if other related items or questions occur to you if and when you ponder on this, I'd be very happy to hear of them from you. In the meantime, my congratulations to you on your book, and best wishes for a happy and successful year.

Cordially,

Wesley R. Fishel
Professor

WRF:mvb