S. to the NEWS

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COLLISON COURSE AND KOREA

When President Gerald Ford made his acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention in Kansas City - the speech that has been widely applauded as the best he ever delivered - he stated: "While I am President we will not return to a collision course that could reduce civilization to ashes."

The same week, North Korean soldiers in the truce village of Panmunjom brutally hacked to death two U.S. Army officers with axes and metal pikes. It was an unprovoked attack while the American soldiers were peacefully supervising a routine tree-trimming operation.

The North Koreans apparently decided to embark on a "collision course" with the United States and see if they could force Ford to retreat. The North Koreans issued a note calling the murder "regretful" but declining to punish the guilty.

The Ford Administration first called the North Korean statement "not acceptable," but the next day backed down and called the very same note "a positive step."

The trouble with Ford's announcing to the world that he "will not return to a collision course" is that the Communists all over the world will conclude that Ford will do anything, even surrender, to avoid a confrontation.

• Having watched this test in Korea, the Soviets are now getting ready to take advantage of Ford's newly-proclaimed policy.

The Russians are well aware that Gerald Ford is now engaged in a contest in which his political life, his reputation, and his place

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i. bJ.sto:r.y are at stake, and all polls rank him as the Ullderclog to a peanut farmer who was utikrrnwn nati.onally a yea1· ago. Ford and his advisers cherish the fonc1 hope that, if they could just pull a rabbit out. of' the hat, all their jobs would be secure for another four years.

Ct1he best opportunity for such a 11rabbit 11 would 'be a nel SAL'l1 II treaty with the Soviets that could be publicized with appropriate fan... :t·are. ifi1e Georgia peanut farmer could. hardly top Jla,t,f

The si·tuation is ripe, tllere:fore, for the Soviets to wr:lte any terms they want; and Ford will sign on the dotted line. 1.l'hey Jmow he wants an agreement, they know he has publicly and ofticially committed himself to avoid 11a collision course,n and they know he just demonstrated this cownitmfmt in Korea.

If the Uussia.ns want to stop deployment of U.S. cruise missiles {or limit their range to a pitiful 375 miles), but refuse to stop soviet deployment their Of/five new ICBMs, Ford an.d Kissj,nger will agree. If tbe Soviets want a humilitating provision that lim:i.ts U.S. c1cploy ntent of the B-1 bomber, but puts no limit on the new a(1vanced soviet Backfire bomber, Ford and Kissinger will agree.

All the Soviets need to do in this politcally precarious eleotion year is to rattle a few sabres, and they know Forcl will wallr. backwards to sign any agreement while he tells the American people i.t is :ia positive step} Por both military and political reasons, Presiderrt I<'ord should not sign any SALT agreement before the November election.

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