

NLT 78-60

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

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10 July 1950

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: The Korean Situation

I. Military Situation

The over-all location of front lines has changed little during the past 24 hours. The three Northern Korean divisions located in the Chonan-Chinchon area have been hampered in their continuing efforts to regroup and assemble infantry and armour for a further move toward Taejon both by logistical difficulties and by heavy US air strikes. The stiffening of Southern resistance in the Chinchon area indicates some progress in the reorganization of Southern Army units and a continuation of the will to fight among some Southern remnants.

Northern forces in the Chonan area maintained only light contact with the US 24th Division yesterday. Elements of the US infantry battalion which was cut off in Chonan yesterday appear to have fought their way back to the US-held position north of Kongju. In the Chinchon area, Northern troops met strong Southern resistance, and are now engaged in relieving two of their battalions reportedly surrounded by the Southern Capital and 2nd Divisions. Further to the east, Northern forces strengthened their hold on Chungju and continued probing south and southwest along the restricted east coast road net.

Good weather permitted extensive US air operations and Northern tanks, troops, trucks, and lines of communication suffered a heavy pounding. Official US reports claim 14 tanks destroyed and 13 damaged, more than 70 trucks destroyed, and damage to several bridges in Northern-held territory south of the 38th Parallel. Although Northern forces are still capable of offensive movement, these US air strikes have slowed preparations for renewed advance toward Taejon. Northern aircraft have again failed to appear and it is believed that the invaders' air strength is being conserved for future efforts.

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The US naval patrol along the Korean east coast reports that the coastal road, previously cut by naval gunfire, has been repaired and is carrying light southbound traffic.

II. Political Stability.

President Rhee, impatient with five days of waiting in Pusan, left for Taejon on 9 July but his train was intercepted at Taegu, where, in view of the fluid situation north of Taejon, he was requested to remain. US Ambassador Muccio will suggest that Rhee summon all Southern cabinet Ministers, except the Prime Minister and the Ministers of Transportation and Interior, to his new location. Meanwhile, two small-scale Southern victories in the past three days have reportedly aided morale in the Southern forces and the arrival of US tanks in Taejon has upped civilian morale there.

An "Agrarian reform" program for the "liberated areas" of the South has been announced by Radio Pyongyang. Based on the principle of confiscation and free distribution of land among landless and poor peasants, the Northern program is calculated to appeal to poor Southern peasants. The Southerners' familiarity with the unfavorable aspects of Northern "land reform," however, will probably restrict the amount of genuine support gained by the Communist regime through this maneuver.

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