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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Korea

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Police/Contempt of Chinese for North Koreans

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SUPP. TO REPORT NO.

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

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1. During my internment in North Korea, I never saw any so-called brutal police interrogations. Usually interrogations were conducted by people of higher intelligence than the guards. It was difficult to get any slant on the interrogations. In the beginning, of course, everyone was a spy and everyone was working for the US Government; nothing you could say would please them. The Koreans kept us locked in prison for about six days, during which time they interrogated us night and day on that point. They were always pulling things out of a hat. For instance, they found a gun in the yard and a radio. In my case, they found a pistol in the house next door [REDACTED]. I was able to determine that they knew it wasn't my house and that the gun hadn't been fired recently, but that they would never admit to anyone. As far as they were concerned, it was still from my house [REDACTED].

[REDACTED] During the nine weeks spent in Pyongyang, the interrogations continued, but not so much along that line. We were then removed to a school house.

2. We had to fill out the same old questions over and over (I could not even guess how many times) on interrogation sheets. This episode was experienced, of course, under very bad conditions - we were at this point being slowly starved and had simply lost the power to think. I couldn't remember what my own home address was. I would sometimes put down one thing and again, another. We were required to write our life histories in great detail for about every year of our lives. Various teams interrogated us. At first, these teams seemed to have no coordination. Only at the last interrogation, which I had early this year (1953), did my interrogator show signs of having read my previous interrogations. After approximately the first year of internment, these interrogations became routine and were not, we felt, severe at all. We received no interrogations either in China or the USSR.

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3. The Koreans lectured to our soldiers at the interrogations and told our soldiers that if they were in the US Army they could not vote for President. There was always one of our fellows, a bit braver than the rest, who would question their statements. He would say, "I know that is not true because I have voted." The interrogator would then tell him that he was a liar, that it couldn't be done in the US. That is just how stupid the whole thing was. If the Koreans had told us about conditions in the USSR, about how good things were, we might not have believed them, but we could not have disproved them. I was once chatting with a few of the guards, when they asked if I had graduated from college. I said yes. Then they asked, "What did your father do?" I said he was a farmer, and they began to laugh, "That fellow is really a liar. His father is a farmer and he graduated from college. That couldn't happen in America." They were fully convinced of that.
4. The guards didn't mention the UN at first, just the US. They later put everyone in the same class, and did not attempt to justify it. The one thing that really made them angry was to say, "We thought the USSR was going to help you." In the beginning they told us that the Soviets were helping them. We knew that wasn't true - not, at least, in the way of manpower. Later, it depended on which way the Korean guards wanted to look at it.
5. Often our guards would ask if we thought the UN or North Korea was going to win the war. We were trying to get down to what they meant by winning. We told them we didn't think the north would win because they didn't have the material. The last year we were there [1952-1953] they conceded that we were right. Discussions about fighting and so on came up frequently, and we told them we knew the North Koreans couldn't win; there were no factories left. They would say something crazy like, "We are turning out jets, tanks, etc." They had to put up that front. The Koreans, however, were so fed up with the war that they had no hope of ever winning it.
6. I would say the Chinese looked down upon the Koreans. It is a generally accepted fact that the Korean standard of living is lower than that of the Chinese. I saw a great deal of friction or fighting, however; the Koreans have been stepped on for the last 39 years and are used to it. For instance, in one village before the Korean war there were about 10 thousand people; I don't suppose a dozen Koreans live there now because the whole village had simply been moved out. There was one Korean Government store. That was later moved out of town and the whole village was taken over by the Chinese and prisoners-of-war. In the whole time I spent there, I never saw a single combat Korean. I saw officers coming through, but I never saw one that I would call a combat man. We saw people come and go - sons coming and going from the farm. They were taken up by the army and then released for a few months to coincide with the spring harvest or the farming.
7. I don't believe the ordinary people got rice. Sometimes they had to eat millet, and sometimes one-third rice and two-thirds millet, or half-and-half. They were eating so badly that we began giving them our rice, because we had plenty at that time, and the guards wouldn't allow us to sell it anyway. The only things we could buy were straw roofing for our house, drums for water storage, or rations that they particularly wanted us to buy.
8. On one occasion, while in the north up along the Tally, the Koreans gave us a newspaper and showed us pictures of what looked like a school boy's bug collection for a biology class. We made more or less of a joke out of it. The officer got angry and walked off. They often referred to UN germ warfare but they showed us no more newspapers. The common people never mentioned germ warfare. Those people have gotten so fed up with propaganda that they have ceased reading the newspapers and have no radice. I don't believe the average Korean read a newspaper once a month. In fact, he never even bothered about the news. To get a newspaper one had to go into town or know someone connected with the military. The leader of the village usually had a newspaper, but he was just as rotten as some of the rest of the North Koreans. One sort of propaganda we saw was a mass of posters illustrating planes dropping lice and mosquitoes, with a cartoon of Uncle Sam in the pilot's seat. These were posted in various places, particularly around installations.

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9. The only thing we ever get in the line of group hygiene was what I called routine cleaning. Their idea of cleanliness is so different from ours. We liked to see grass, or even weeds, growing around our building, but to a Korean even grass is unsightly. We had to pull the grass out and keep the place swept.
10. I never saw any mistreatment of MOK prisoners, though perhaps the men we saw were picked. They came out without guard - at least, no guards with rifles, only pistols. There would sometimes be a group of 300 or 400 with only a few guards. Under the Chinese, the prisoners were receiving good treatment and they looked very healthy.

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