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KOREA

1. Little change in tactical situation--There have been no substantial changes in the tactical situation in the past twenty-four hours. Principal activity has been in the key western sector where North Korean troops are exerting heavy pressure against the US First Cavalry and Twenty-Fifth Infantry Divisions. In the southwestern sector, enemy troops are moving eastward toward contact with advanced US positions. Further to the north enemy troops are moving east to gain positions on the road running north from Kochang to Kumchon, present headquarters of the First Cavalry Division on the main rail line from Kumchon to Pusan. Positions are generally stabilized in the eastern sector where South Korean troops hold the line, although the concentration of enemy troops indicates the possibility of a major push towards Hamchang in the direction of Kumchon and Taegu. An attack by UN forces toward Yongdok on the east coast met stiff enemy resistance, and no change in the location of the front line one mile south of Yongdok has been reported. US naval units continued to support ground forces in the Yongdok area by off-shore bombardment of enemy concentrations, and other units launched four carrier air strikes, hitting enemy lines of communication and troop concentrations in the southwest and west sectors.

The United Nations Commission on Korea estimates that from 750,000 to 1,000,000 refugees are now added to the 6,000,000 persons normally occupying the area still under ROK control. Water supplies are deficient and unreliable, sanitation extremely poor, and congested living conditions most serious. Although this congestion and continued military reverses are unquestionably having a deleterious effect on the morale of the South Koreans, they are continuing to support the government.

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2. Views on US policy toward Korea--US Ambassador Kirk in Moscow has emphasized the importance of clarifying US political objectives in Korea and of properly correlating US policy in Korea with the problems of containing Soviet expansion in other areas of the world. Kirk believes the key political issue regarding Korea is whether UN forces should be committed now or in the near future to the elimination of Soviet influence and power from Korea north of the 38th parallel. Ambassador Kirk recommends that the UN declare its determination to assist the Koreans by all possible means to achieve their freedom in an independent, unified and democratic state, but believes it would be decidedly premature in such a declaration definitely to commit the US to the use of its forces north of the 38th parallel. Kirk stresses that the US is not now in a position to make a realistic appraisal of the obstacles, military and otherwise, which will exist after North Korean troops are driven back to the 38th parallel. According to Kirk, elementary prudence dictates that the US not now assume an obligation which would require a US military effort out of proportion to the political and strategic importance of Korea. 5/75

In estimating Soviet intentions, Kirk points out that the USSR has thus far cautiously avoided involving Soviet prestige and has given no indication of its reaction when the tide of battle turns against North Korean troops. In support of his belief that the USSR at that critical point will not throw its own forces or those of the Chinese Communists into South Korea, Kirk points to: (a) estimated Soviet reluctance to initiate global war; (b) the flexibility shown by the USSR when confronted with opposition in such areas as Iran, Greece and Berlin; and (c) the Soviet attitude since the Korean fighting began. Kirk considers it more likely that the USSR will attempt to arrange some kind of truce on the basis

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of the status quo, and, if unsuccessful, to withdraw North Korean troops to the 38th parallel. This latter move might be accompanied by a proclamation affirming the inviolability of the 38th parallel. On the other hand, if the USSR should decide that a commitment to defend North Korea would involve too great a risk of global war, Kirk recommends that the US be prepared to take advantage of any temporary military vacuum and, coincident with political unification moves by the UN, take whatever military measures might be necessary to maintain internal law and order north of the 38th parallel.

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