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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

25X1A

COUNTRY China

REPORT NO [REDACTED]

SUBJECT Relaxation of Control over Travel from Canton to Hongkong and Macao

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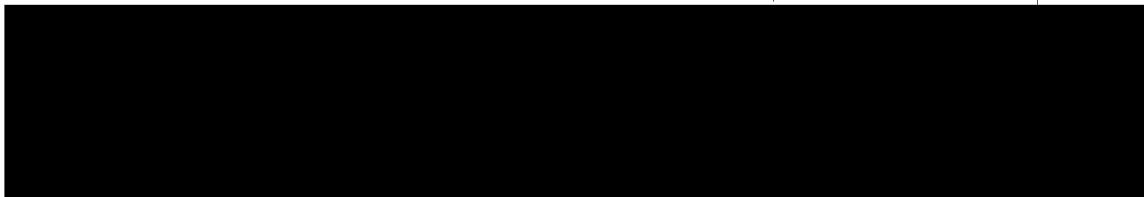
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- On 20 Aug 53 it was announced in Canton by the People's Government that thenceforth regulations for the issuance of travel permits to Hongkong and Macao would be changed. No guarantee as to the return and proper behavior of the traveler by a store would be required.
- The general procedure of filing an application, stating the purpose of the trip and the length of the stay is still followed. However, examination of the applicant was waived in most cases and the period between the submission of the application and the issuance of the permit was shortened considerably -- in general from two weeks to three or four days.
- Students desiring to see their relatives and friends were generally granted a leave of three weeks and people seeking medical treatment in Hongkong or Macao, about a month. While most students would utilize the stipulated period to the full extent, city folk who left Canton in search of medical treatment or medical supplies returned to Canton long before the expiration of the permit. One woman whose permit allowed her a full month in Hongkong returned to her home in Canton at the end of the second week.
- Contrary to expectations, there have been more people travelling to Macao than to Hongkong since the modification of the regulations. This is due to one, or a combination of the following reasons:
 - Hongkong authorities would not admit, even for a short temporary visit, any non-Cantonese speaking Chinese; whereas in Macao there is no such discrimination.
 - The standard of living is considerably lower in Macao than in Hongkong. Rice is about 20% cheaper and firewood, for cooking purposes, is almost 25% cheaper.

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- c. There are better boat connections between Canton and Macao and travellers are spared the trouble of undergoing UK passport and other inspections at the border, near Lo Hu.
 - d. There is a general belief among the city people in Canton that it is safer and more comfortable to live in Macao. There is no water-rationing in Macao as there is in Hongkong -- from 5 pm everyday to daybreak the following morning.
 - e. Pro-nationalist elements are of the opinion that Macao is more friendly to them.
 - f. The Chinese Nationalist Government has maintained a special office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Macao, where passports are issued to overseas Chinese. There are no such facilities in Hongkong.
5. According to one estimate, there were about 1,500 daily departures for Macao and about 500 for Hongkong during the period from 22 Jul 53 to 20 Aug 53.
 6. Speculation is rife in Canton and in Hongkong as to the reason for the relaxation of travel controls. Some of the conjectures are the following:
 - a. Completion of the Communist census in Canton, rendering the old system of guarantee somewhat unnecessary.
 - b. Easing off of the unemployment situation in Canton.
 - c. Playing up the peace tune, in accord with the Korean Truce propaganda.
 - d. Using the movement of civilians as a smoke screen for the infiltration of Hongkong and Macao with special agents and Communist underground workers.

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