

FWD
683

INFORMATION REPORT

CD NO.

COUNTRY Korea

DATE DISTR 20 JAN 50

SUBJECT Conscription in North Korea

CONFIDENTIAL

NO. OF PAGES 1

25X1A

ACQ: [REDACTED]

NO. OF ENCLS. (LISTED BELOW)

DATE OF INFO [REDACTED]

25X1X

SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO.



1. In May 1949, physical examinations to determine fitness for military service were instituted in North Korea. Men between eighteen and thirty were examined for active service; those between thirty-one and fifty-five were examined for reserv^e duties or rear area troops. Classification categories of good, fair, or bad were noted on each individual's identification card. The examinations, conducted by doctors in the army or in local hospitals, occurred in Wonsan from 18 to 25 June, in Yonchon (127-04, 38-06) County from 20 to 25 June, and in all the cities and counties of Kangwon Province at about the same time.
2. After the physical examination, a conscription movement was launched in various areas by the People's Front and the Democratic Youth League. The primary targets appeared to be younger members of farm families, especially those who had received land through post-war distribution. There was less pressure on sons of former landlords and farmers who owned their own land.
3. In Chok Chon Myon (赤田面), Togwon (德源) County, Yangwon Province, five members of the Democratic Youth League of Cholsanni, Wonsan, assembled about twenty-five youths of conscription age in the township administrative office. CHU Yong-hun (朱泳勳), one of the Democratic Youth League men, made a speech to the local youths urging them to join the North Korean army and help acquire South Korean territory to be redistributed as land for poor farmers, and concluding with a request for volunteers. When the group failed to respond, PAK T'ae-kap (朴泰甲), a local youth of 26, secretary of the Farmers' Union and known as an ardent Communist, announced that anyone who refused to join the army could only be considered a reactionary element. When a second request was made, the entire group felt compelled to volunteer.
4. Rural residents showed little tendency to avoid conscription, even though they accepted it unwillingly, but in the towns, persons of military age were more reluctant. Alarmed by accounts of fighting on the 38th parallel, some young men fled from their homes and crossed into South Korea. To prevent such attempts, the Bureau of Internal Affairs restricted the movements of persons eligible for conscription and in some cases even placed them under surveillance.

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Document No. 009

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Class. Change for TS S C

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Date: 05 JUN 50

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Next Review Date: 2008