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SOUTH KOREAN UNITS ASSIST IN RELEASE OF 29,000 PRISONERS

The American embassy reports that only about 5,000 of the 34,000 anti-Communist Korean prisoners still remain in the UNC camps. The camp authorities had no advance warning of the break, although they had foreseen the possibility of a mass break-out for the past several weeks. The orders for the release were given by General Won Yong-tok, provost marshal general, and South Korean security forces at the camps generally assisted in the escape.

The POW Command on the eve of the break still believed the South Korean units would follow the orders of the American camp commanders, according to the embassy. Although the Korean units are now considered "unreliable," they will be retained in their present duties.

Comment: Press reports indicate that the security units were removed from the command of army chief of staff Paek Sun-yop last week and placed under General Won, a loyal "political" general, thus assuring President Rhee that his orders would be carried out without prior consultation with UNC authorities. General Won's direction of the national police security functions assured cooperation from the police, who reportedly had collected clothing in advance for the escapees and made prior arrangements to billet them. Both President Rhee and General Won have publicly directed South Korean authorities to assist and harbor the prisoners.

State Department review completed

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