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FAR EAST

2. North Korean pilots may be training for bomber escorts:
 Early on 6 August, a ground controller on the North Korean GCI net, which is largely devoted to training, instructed a plane to "go there and protect the bomber." A little later, the same ground station queried, "Did you see the bomber? You must protect the bomber."

The US Air Force field unit comments that this is the first observation of what appears to be the training of North Korean fighter pilots in a bomber escort role. (CANOE 6920 Security Grp Johnson AFB Japan, AP 382, 10 Aug 52)

Comment: The North Korean Air Force is estimated to have a division of MIG-15's, and a division of conventional fighter aircraft, but no bombers. The Communists in China and Manchuria are believed, however, to have 260 light bombers.

3. Soviet-piloted aircraft again come to assistance of Chinese in Korea: In the early afternoon of 5 August, the controller on the Chinese GCI net vectored a flight of Chinese piloted MIG-15's onto UN aircraft in the Changyon area. Ten minutes later, the Russian ground controller scrambled two Soviet flights with instructions to "aid . . . the Islands (cover for Chinese). . . they are in battle with Sabres south of the (Tae Dong River)."

The US Fifth Air Force reports that one MIG-15 was destroyed in combat in the Chinnampo area at the same time as the above activity. The last previous occurrence of this type was on 11 March. (CANOE 6920 Security Grp Johnson AFB Japan, AP 360, 8 Aug 52)

4. Senior North Korean IV Corps officers on inspection near Kaesong: The chief of staff of the North Korean 21st Brigade in an 8 August message reports the presence in his sector of "the artillery (chief?) of staff of the corps and the operations section chief of the 17th (Infantry Division?)." The message indicates that these officers are on an inspection tour in the Yonan area west of Kaesong. (CANOE ROK Int Grp M Korea, SK-M-180, 9 Aug 52)

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Comment: The presence in the 21st Brigade sector, immediately behind the front, of senior officers from IV Corps and from one of the infantry divisions on the west coast is unexplained. It is probable, however, that an inspection of coastal and antiaircraft artillery positions is under way. More remotely, this inspection could forecast the move of other IV Corps elements into this sector.

5. North Korean unit continues agricultural activities:
In an 8 August message between two units thought to be subordinate to the North Korean 8th Division, the addressee was ordered "to submit a report on the area cultivated for autumn vegetables." He was also requested to report the potential harvest as compared with last year's, plus the period of cultivation. (CANOE 330th Comm Recon Grp Korea, Alt 610, 9 Aug 52)

Comment: Since early spring, both Chinese Communist and North Korean units in static defense positions have engaged in agricultural pursuits. The use of the military in this role is a North Korean attempt to alleviate the dire manpower shortage in rural areas as well as to augment the military's own food supplies.

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