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FAR EAST

6. Chinese artillery units shifting at battle front:
 Reconnaissance elements of the Chinese 21st Artillery Regiment, according to a 5 September message, set out from the regiment's positions in the east central sector to go to the 15th Army's sector on the central front.

On 12 September, the reconnaissance party reported that terrain in the 15th Army sector was flat with little cover, although the roads were good. Apparently this same reconnaissance unit had received orders to "go to the 9th Army Group and investigate the terrain." (CANOE L, []/T-519, 12 Sept; L []/T-522, 5 Sept 52)

Comment: The 21st Artillery Regiment, subordinate to the 7th Division, is to be completely relieved by the independent 41st Artillery Division by the end of September. These messages indicate that the 21st - and possibly the entire 7th Artillery Division - may either be redeployed to support the 15th Army in the central sector or be rotated to the 9th Army Group in the Wonsan-Yangdok area for rest and training - and for possible use against an expected UN amphibious operation in that area.

7. Chinese armored "regiments" mentioned in recent messages:
 On 28 August, in a Chinese communications system associated with armor, a message was passed from an unidentified regiment to a subordinate company. The message stated that a man was to be sent to the front to investigate a "T-34 tank abandoned by the 2nd Regiment."

A later message of 7 September, passed from the same company to the above unidentified armored regiment was addressed to ". . . training regiment. . . regimental headquarters." (CANOE G, []/T-14, 28 Aug; L, []/T-502, 7 Sept 52)

Comment: Little is known about the Chinese armored units deployed in Korea. [] indicated the presence of two divisions, but a subsequent re-evaluation by the Far East Command suggested that there are only three independent Chinese tank regiments.

The above messages suggest that FECOM's estimate may be valid and that Chinese armor is present in Korea on a regimental basis only.

16 Sept 52

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8. Chinese units to assume North Korean brigade's coastal security role: According to an incomplete 11 September message from a political officer of the North Korean 21st Brigade, "It was decided that all Volunteer troops will move to the front. . . and the People's Army troops. . . will remain in the interior Sinchon zone and take part in combat political training. The Volunteers will depart on the 11th." (CANOE [redacted] T-573, 11 Sept 52)

Comment: Since the North Korean 21st Brigade has a coastal defense mission in western Hwanghae Province, it is probable that the "front" toward which the Chinese will move is the coast. Both the Chinese 63rd and 64th Armies, and possibly the 42nd, are in this area and are far better fitted than the Korean brigade to repel the UN landing expected by the enemy in the west.

9. New planned railroad construction and steel rail production in Southwest China: The Ministry of Railways in Peiping was expected to ship in July 20,000 tons of 38-kilogram rails to Chungking via Hankow for the Szechwan-Yunnan railroads, according to purported intercepts obtained from a foreign source. From similar material it is also reported that the 101st Factory in Chungking shipped 1,098 tons of steel rails to Hankow on 5 and 18 July. No previous shipments of rails to Chungking have been observed, although rail shipments downriver from Chungking were noted in late 1951. (CANOE CC/CAP-307, Commodity Movements in China No 19, 25 Aug 52)

Comment: The 420-mile Yunnan-Szechwan line is one of some 3,000 miles of new railroads in western China which the Communists have surveyed. Its construction has probably begun, or will soon.

The unexplained shipment of rails both to and from Chungking may be a case of misplanning. The fact that the shipment toward Chungking is much larger may indicate that the 101st Factory's rail output, which has been enough for the laying of perhaps 250 miles of track a year, is inadequate for future planned construction in the Southwest.

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