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COMMUNIST INTENTIONS IN KOREA

[REDACTED] Although the enemy's conduct of cease-fire negotiations and his propaganda have recently suggested an expectation that an agreement on the cessation of hostilities will eventually be reached, his pronouncements continue to strike a balance between conciliatory and belligerent themes. Meanwhile, a continuing improvement of the enemy's military position in Korea and contiguous areas has been observed.

From the date of Chinese Communist intervention in Korea until the spring of 1951 the stated objective of Communist forces was the forcible expulsion of UN troops from all of Korea. This position had ceased to be made explicit some weeks prior to Malik's cease-fire proposal of late June 1951, and has not been stated categorically since, although it presumably remains the Communist long-range objective.

The most nearly reliable gauge of Communist intentions in Korea has been the prevailing tenor of their propaganda which has attempted alternately to prepare for either successful negotiations and a cessation of military operations or failure of negotiations and a prolonged conflict. For most of the past month, enemy propaganda has emphasized the first possibility, attempting to prove that Communist forces have attained their objectives in Korea, that the US has suffered an unprecedented defeat, that the battle-lines are in the vicinity of the 38th Parallel, and that there are no insuperable obstacles to successful negotiations.

At the same time, Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai have asserted that Peiping's offer to settle the Korean question by peaceful means "still holds good," but have cautioned that support for the "long-term struggle" is still the "central task." Thus, even if the complex problem of a cease-fire is resolved, subsequent negotiations may see the reaffirmation of the enemy's original objectives.

Ranking Chinese Communist leaders have recently stated that Chinese "volunteers" would not have been dispatched to Korea if the US had not "occupied" Formosa, "invaded" Korea, and pushed toward Manchuria, and that Peiping's objective in Korea remains that of defending the territorial integrity of China. More ominously, Soviet Foreign Minister Vyshinsky at the Paris UN meeting has again put forth unacceptable proposals regarding the 38th Parallel and withdrawal of foreign troops as part of a Korean peace plan. These statements clearly permit renewal of the earlier explicit demand for abandonment by the US of its policy of "neutralization" of Formosa and for withdrawal of all foreign troops from Korea.

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Ambiguous political indications of a desire for an armistice have not been reflected in Communist military activity, with their air and ground forces continuing to improve their capabilities.

The major--and possibly the most decisive--improvement in the Communist strength has been in their air potential. Enemy air activity over North Korea expanded during 1951 and has now reached a point where effective UN superiority over northwestern Korea has been denied. There has also been a decided improvement in pilot ability. Chinese pilots have been noticed supplementing Soviet personnel who previously carried the main burden of enemy air combat. An effective air defense system now exists in northwestern Korea including daylight jet interceptors, night interceptors, probably utilizing radar, radar directed antiaircraft artillery, and an integrated early warning ground-controlled intercept radar net. Communist air strength in Manchuria is at an all-time high with about 500 MIG-15 jet aircraft, and enemy jets have recently begun operations from a Korean border airfield. Active preparations to base aircraft at other operational Korean airfields continue.

Communist troop strength has been maintained at about the maximum which can be logistically supported, and new units have appeared since the cease-fire talks began. The enemy has attempted to overcome his decided inferiority in weapons and firepower by introducing heavier equipment. At the time of the Chinese intervention, he had no effective armored force, but three armored divisions--partially equipped with tanks heavier than the familiar T-34--are now accepted in Korea. Firepower has also been increased by the addition of a Chinese Communist anti-tank division, and by a considerable increase in organic North Korean divisional artillery. Four, or possible five, Chinese Communist artillery divisions, possessing some conventional rocket weapons, are presently in support of front line troops. Antiaircraft strength, estimated to exceed six Soviet-style antiaircraft divisions, is disposed at strategic points throughout Communist held territory.

All evidence points to a continuing adequate supply situation to support current military operations. Morale among the enemy forces varies from good to excellent, with certain exceptions among units that have been heavily engaged during the past month.

While the problem of logistical support probably prevents the introduction of additional Chinese Communist elements, individual replacements continue to maintain existing units at or near strength. Major units that have lost their combat effectiveness have been replaced by fresh units from China and Manchuria. Chinese Communist strength in Manchuria has been maintained at a fairly constant level and presumably is available for commitment in Korea in the event of need. Reports of various degrees of reliability continue to indicate the re-equipping and training by the USSR of large numbers of Chinese troops in Manchuria.

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Although the Soviet Union has avoided publicly associating itself with the Communist cause in the Korean war--other than by giving limited diplomatic and propaganda support--Soviet covert participation has increased considerably during the summer and fall of 1951. It has included the continuous supplying of war material and of large numbers of Soviet military personnel, tentatively estimated by FECOM at 20,000, serving in both technical and combat capacities in rear areas. The effect has been to bolster Communist technical capabilities.

There continues to be no evidence, however, that the Soviet Union plans to employ its considerable Far Eastern military forces openly in Korea. In the event of such intervention, the Russians could commit up to 15 infantry divisions and sufficient air power to ensure Communist air supremacy. The USSR is increasing its offensive capability in the Far East by the conversion of conventional fighter air regiments to high performance jet fighters.

All current indications point to a continued strong enemy defense in depth. The Communists are believed to be preparing a series of defensive positions extending as far north as the Wonsan-Pyongyang line. In western Korea, they retain a considerable offensive potential, supported by armor and artillery; however, recent UN interdiction of supply lines has resulted in some deterioration of this potential. There are no indications, however, that offensive action, other than limited defensive counter and spoiling attacks, will be launched in the near future.

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