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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
22 July 1953

PROSPECTS FOR AN EFFECTIVE TRUCE IN THE KOREAN WAR

South Korean President Rhee has again jeopardized the prospects for an effective Korean truce by publicly stating that he and the UN Command are not in agreement on major issues. The Communists, by publicly binding the UN Command to assurances that the truce will be implemented and by continuing their strong military build-up, are in a good position to exploit whatever conflict may develop.

There are ample indications of Communist military preparations, particularly on the west-central front, and one suggestion of a set target date for a general offensive this weekend. Major Communist attacks might be launched to take advantage of an American-South Korean rupture, or may have been planned to occur in any event in connection with Communist stalling on a truce.

On 22 July Rhee told correspondents that his agreement "not to obstruct" a truce was conditional, pending assurances from the United States which had not been received. Rhee made clear that the desired assurances -- relating to a time-limit on a post-truce political conference and American support of South Korean military operations -- were directly counter to the most important assurances which the UN Command had given the Communists in recent meetings at Panmunjom. On the same date Rhee's foreign minister publicly stated that South Korea "will not observe any implementation of the armistice."

The Communists in their 19 July statement, accepting UN assurances on all major points, had foreseen this possibility. The statement noted that the truce might be obstructed before or after its signing and declared that the UN Command, in such an event, must "strictly fulfill (its) solemn assurances" The Communists are thus expected to cite current South Korean statements and await the UN Command's response.

As of 22 July, only one problem required settlement before a truce was signed -- the area where the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission was to take custody of the anti-Communist prisoners. It seemed likely that the Communists would compromise, as they had taken a conciliatory line in their 19 July statement on all aspects of the prisoner issue.

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The Communists have been assured that no more prisoners will be released, that South Korean forces will observe a cease-fire and will withdraw from the demilitarized zone, and that the safety and ability to function of neutral and Communist personnel required to operate in UN Command areas are guaranteed.

The most important assurances given the Communists were that either side may take "necessary" military action against truce violations by the other, that the UN Command will not support South Korean forces in violating a truce and will maintain the armistice in the event of such violation, and that there shall be no time-limit on the armistice. The Communists had sought such assurances in the light of repeated statements by South Korean spokesmen that they were determined to unify Korea and desired American support in undertaking such an operation if the political conference did not reach an early solution.

In any case, whether the Communists do or do not desire an American-South Korean conflict, by adopting an attitude of sweet reasonableness in their 19 July statement and by publicly binding the UN Command to assurances that the truce will be implemented, they are in a good political position to exploit whatever conflict may develop.

They are also in a strong military position. They have continued their build-up for large-scale attacks in several areas or, conceivably, for a general offensive. There are firm indications of continued Communist planning for large-scale attacks which, if they coincide, might not easily be distinguished from a general offensive.

Large-scale attacks of the type which the Communists have been conducting for the past several weeks would be consistent with a genuine intention to sign a truce. It does not seem likely that the Communists have all along been using the Panmunjom talks for a surprise offensive just as a truce is about to be signed.

There is a somewhat stronger possibility that the Communists will seize upon the current incendiary statements by Rhee and his spokesmen as a pretext for launching a general offensive. It seems more likely, however, that they will delay such action at least until they see what Rhee and the UN Command are going to do.

In implementing his opposition to an armistice, Rhee has many means available which could harass the UN Command and which are in line with his repeatedly expressed opposition to any truce leaving Korea divided. These include:

1. Withdrawing South Korean forces from the UN Command;
2. Refusing to evacuate the demilitarized zone;
3. Attacking incoming neutral nation truce supervisory personnel;
4. Releasing additional prisoners of war;
5. Engaging in independent military action which he believes might force the US to come to his aid;
6. Withdrawing Korean supply and dock workers from UN employment;
7. Drafting Koreans employed by UN agencies;
8. Crippling UN intelligence operations and installations;
9. Seizing UN supply and ammunition dumps;
10. Inducting released prisoners into the South Korean army;
11. Replacing key government personnel who oppose his antiarmistice stand;
12. Developing further the potentialities of the Provost Marshal General Command, the organization which carried out the release of North Korean anti-Communist prisoners in mid-June.

The Provost Marshal General Command has been rapidly growing and expanding in power for the past two months and its chief, General Won Yong-tok would willingly obey any of Rhee's orders. This organization reportedly has been given extraconstitutional powers to deal with the current crisis and broad authority to investigate and arrest both civilian and military personnel. It now ostensibly has direct lines into the National Police and the Public Security Board and perhaps into the defense establishment.

Concurrently, Rhee has ordered a reorganization of the National Police and the Public Security Board. [redacted]

[redacted] and ordered close coordination between these agencies and the Provost Marshal General Command. [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

The real key to what Rhee may do, however, remains the army's attitude at the critical moment, and information now available leaves this attitude obscure. [redacted]

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SECURITY INFORMATION

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
22 June 1953

THE CURRENT ENEMY ATTACK SITUATION IN KOREA

During the night of 21 June nine front-line divisions reported a complete lack of enemy action and only minor probes were reported elsewhere along the Korean front. Artillery and mortar fire was also considerably reduced. Messages, nevertheless, reflect planning for attacks in the east and east-central front through 25 June.

The continued lack of other important offensive indications leads to the conclusion that these attacks will also be for limited objectives, and no general offensive is planned or intended. One North Korean message to "all unit commanders" on 21 June seems, in fact, to reveal an over-all defensive enemy attitude.

Preliminary analysis, however, does suggest that two Chinese Communist armies may be moving to areas on the east-central front immediately behind the two enemy armies recently engaged in heavy and successful limited objective attacks against the South Korean 8th Division. Communications interchanges concerning these two new armies strongly suggest that they will be used to relieve rather than to reinforce the armies already there.

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