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HEADQUARTERS  
UNITED STATES MILITARY GOVERNMENT IN KOREA  
Department of Public Information  
Seoul, Korea

of 9 Dec. 1946

SUBJECT: Report of trip to the Province of CHEJU during the period  
4-6 December 1946.

TO : Those concerned

Location

CHEJU-DO is the island province some 50 miles directly south of the Southwest tip of the Korean Peninsula.

Explanation

This business trip originally had as its purpose only the hiring of an interviewer for the Opinion Sampling Section of the Bureau of Public Opinion. Developments and various "leads" uncovered while on the island province of CHEJU makes a complete trip & report seem necessary.

Where the source of any of the information presented below is omitted, it should be understood that it was obtained during individual conversations with Korean citizens of the island.

Island Economy

The location of CHEJU-Do makes it the ideal receiving point for goods smuggled into Korea from China and Japan. Commodities successfully landed on the island are bought with money sent down from the mainland for that specific purpose. The president of the Industrial Bank of Cheju-do gave the figure of ₩ 13,896,499 as the amount of money sent down from the Korean Peninsula through his bank alone during the one month of October 1946.

Police officials of the island stated that a total of seven million yen worth of such goods as: rubber shoes, aluminum, cooking utensils, and other such daily necessities had been confiscated for illegal entry. Personal observation and conversations with a hotel manager proved that many business men were on CHEJU-DO seeking to buy any such illegal goods for re-shipment to, and sale on, the mainland.

This false business boom has forced island prices up. If outside money continues to enter the island at its present rate it is feared that prices of essential goods on the island will rise to a level that would put them beyond the reach of the 360,000 people populating the province.

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It is advisable to add that the goods confiscated by the police are then sold at small cost to the people of the island holding the regular food ration cards, as is the policy throughout Korea. As most of the people are farmers and therefore not eligible for food rationing this means that a small group of city dwellers are the lucky recipients of these goods at extremely low government prices.

The present price of rice on this rocky island where little rice is grown is ₩ 400 per small mal (2.38 gallons), higher even than in the overcrowded capital city of SEOUL. Governor PALK of Cheju Province claimed that with 55,000 suk (One SUK equals ten small MAL) of rice, the proper food ration could be issued to the people for the coming fiscal year.

#### The Political Situation

Common belief in SEOUL is that CHEJU-DO is predominantly extreme leftist in sentiment. This is true only so far as the majority party on the island call themselves the Peoples Committee. Actually they stem not from the present Peoples Committee on the mainland but from the original party that grew out of the "Preparing Committee for Rehabilitation" organized by LYUH Woon Hyung and AN Che Hng immediately after the Korean liberation on 15 August 1945. They are still the mild leftist socialistic minded people of that era of Korean history. Police, American personnel, and the general public all say that there has never been any trouble or riot on the island.

Peoples Committee representatives have given their word to the Korean police that there will be no riots in the future. The police further stated that the Peoples Committee have scorn to take responsibility for any trouble that might arise in the province. The Peoples Committee, so numerically strong and so careful in their actions, has aroused a fear among the rightist groups that their very example will cause even more people to join the island's leftist party.

Heard from the Provincial Chief Prosecutor, the rightist groups complain that the police and Military Government do nothing to suppress the Peoples Committee.

#### Island Production

CHEJU-DO's chief and probably only major factory is an alcohol producing plant in the main city of CHEJU. At one time able to produce 1,000 drums of alcohol a month it recently had a monthly output of 240 drums. Its' storage vats were at one time during the war destroyed by American bombing planes. The island itself is able to supply all the raw materials needed for full scale production, the major commodity, sweet potatoes are grown in surplus on the island.

At the time of this writing the factory is not in production. The reason, as stated by the factory's production Manager, is that the Ordinance prohibiting the production of alcoholic beverages has caused them to shut down. This is denied in SEOUL by an American with the New Korea Company who claimed that a mechanical shortage has caused the production stoppage.

Past buyers of the alcohol produced here have been predominantly those who used it for medical purposes. Only a small amount had been sold to those making liquor.

#### The Provincial Chief of Police

Accompanying me on this trip was SUL Kook Whan, a correspondent of the Korean Pacific Press. At KIMPO Airport awaiting the departure of our plane he pointed out to me a Korean Police captain, SIN U Kyun, as being the man who as a sergeant in the Special Police during the Japanese occupation had been assigned to follow him around to check on his (Sul's) anti-Japanese activities.

This man was also going to ~~replace~~ Cheju-Do. He was going to take over his duties as the new Provincial Chief of Police. He will replace ~~him~~, Dwi Bong, well liked among the island's population.

Even Captain SIN U Kyun thought it strange that he, a policeman under the Japanese, should now hold so important a position. His only explanation was that he knew no other work save that of being a policeman.

#### Actions Of The Island's American Personnel

A day after we landed on Cheju-Do a member of the DAI Han Rapid Realization of Independence Young Men's Association, a rightest group, whose president is RHEE Syngman, met me and made an appointment to speak with us later that day. The three young men who later came before us asked that CIC personnel and Military Police be sent to the island to check on the activities of the American personnel there. At Present there are no such groups in Cheju-Do.

The major unit there is the 59th Military Government Company commanded by Major Thurman Stout. The only tactical troops on Cheju-Do are in a small group of about twenty men that is replaced every two weeks by new personnel. It is actually only sort of a rest camp for them, although they do come fully equipped and do "pull" guard duty.

Though the representatives of the Young Men's Association could cite no specific instances of monetary profit made by American for illegal activities, they did make mention of alleged ~~activities~~ grandiose parties and procuring of women for both Major Stout and Captain Partridge, the island's Safety Officer.

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One case cited by the three young men is that of WOON Man Yong, released from jail by order of Major Stout in contradiction of the orders of the Korean Police and of a Captain Jones, Safety Officer at that time. This Captain Jones has since been replaced, it was said. It is believed that he is now on MP duty in SEOUL. It is alleged that Mr. WOON had at one time beaten a cafe girl for refusing to keep company with a Captain Martin (?), former property Custodian of Cheju-Do.

He had been arrested during the period of the cholera epidemic on a charge of possessing a surplus of Japanese medicines used in the treatment of cholera that he had bought from the government. He was ordered to give them up for sale and proper distribution but refused saying that he passed no such medicines.

Search through his house immediately after his arrest proved him to be lying, the young men said. However his release on Major Stout's orders came so rapidly that he was met on his way home by the very policemen who had searched his home and were bringing in the medicines as evidence. Because of his release, the medicines were handed back to him by the men, completely confused and disgusted by such a miscarriage of justice, who had so recently discovered them.

Another case, this time related to us by Police Lieutenant CHOI Chung Sik, was also of American's alleged interference in another arrest. A man, Mr. HAN Chung Ok, who had bought a quantity of illegally smuggled goods had contracted to sell them to another person. The latter realizing the existing laws, broke his part of the bargain. When Mr. HAN told Captain Partridge of the case this other man was arrested, forced to pay HAN the called for payment of ₩ 15,000, and then released. The police then arrested Mr. HAN for illegal activities. He was subsequently the Lieutenant said, released on the orders of Captain Partridge.

Lieutenant CHOI further stated that as per Major Stout's orders prisoners are used for labor on the island regardless of whether they had already been convicted or not. In other words, men awaiting trial are used for forced labor under American guard. Major Stout's own words on this were that he had ordered that only men already convicted be used for such labor but he did add that due to the language difficulty, a misunderstanding might exist It is alleged that Major Stout had threatened to dismiss the Police Chief if the prisoners were not handed over for these labor details. The police officer further added that while under American guard one of the prisoners was shot in the leg for idleness. Hurred investigation led us to believe that the American had shot between the man's legs and that a loose rock had struck him, seriously enough to put him in the hospital. This man's was that of stealing a quantity of plate glass from a local primary school.

The Police Lieutenant further stated that while under American guard two of the prisoners had escaped.

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The island's police force feel that American interference in their activities is insufferable and actually handicapping them in the fulfillment of their duties.

American actions as listed above are considered ripe for exploitation by the leftist groups, for them to show through propaganda that the American way of government is not one to be desired for Korea.

Moon Do Bai

One of the recently elected legislature members Moon Do Bai was in jail when we reached Cheju-do. The charge; accused of stealing surplus Japanese supplies after the Japanese surrender over a year ago.

Reports of his alleged crime had reached the Provincial Police on 8 October 1946. Investigation had started only after he was elected to the legislature.

On Major Stout's orders he was released at 1800 on 5 December 1946 to leave immediately for Seoul to be present at the opening of the legislature on 12 December 1946. It is said that he will leave for Seoul with the other legislature members on 9 December 1946.

In a discussion with the Chief Prosecutor he made note of the written law to us that a legislature member could gain release from imprisonment only if the legislature was at the time actually in session. Mr. Moon's release was thought wrong by both the police and the Chief Prosecutor.

Major Stout stated that he was acting on orders from Seoul (a headquarters that knew nothing of local conditions) ordering him to send the two newly elected legislature members to the Capitol.

"Permanent American Army Bases"

The rumor that America is building permanent army bases on Cheju-do in Korean circles was caused, it is believed, by a compilation of unconnected incidents on the island. Generals Hodge, Lerch, and Helmick visiting the island, the erection of some quonset huts to house the 59th MG Co. personnel, and the Korean Constabulary occupying a former Japanese Army base near the city of Mosulpo on the southwest tip of the island, have all been combined to give forth the ridiculous rumor that the United States is building a permanent base there.

The proposed trip of Korean Newspaper correspondents to the island will soon prove to the public that no such base is in construction.

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