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HQ 6TH INF DIV
19001 1 May 1947

Inclosure #1 to G-2 Periodic Report #530, 1 May 1947.

PUBLIC OPINION AND POLITICAL TRENDS

1. CHOLLA-NORTH:

Public opinion in Cholla-North has remained Anti-American during the past month. Many posters and handbills were found by 63rd Infantry patrols criticizing the American Foreign policies and censoring or threatening Korean officials for being pro-American. The majority of the people however seem relieved that the U. S. has finally committed itself to a strong arm policy in Korea. The rice collection drive has stabilized at 60.25% of the quota. Leftist propaganda was definitely Anti-Military Government. Leftist groups are making plans for the May Day celebrations. Communist inspired disorders were concentrated in the CHULPO (968 - 1403)-PUAN (973 - 1421)-CHONGUP (986 - 1401)-KUMJE (989 - 1429) and NAREYON (1038 - 1382) areas. The "Chosun Democratic Y.M. Alliance" of this province seems to have received the green light from higher sources and has played prominent parts in disorders, sabotage and terrorism throughout the provincial area. The short lived strike of 22 Merch indicates that the Leftist labor groups are closely knit and well organized with an effective chain of command extending down to their lowest units. The intermittent school strikes have cleared up except for the CHONJU Normal School which is under investigation for terrorism on the part of the students. The political trend is toward the Left, with the "Chosun Democratic Y.M.A" and the "South Korea Labor Party" (SKLP) playing prominent parts. The Right Wing is lethargic except for the "Northwest (SO BUK) Youth Association" and the "Kwang Bok Youth Association"; both of these participated in terroristic attacks against the Leftists. The Regimental C.O. of the Korean Constabulary, Major KIM, Pak Il, reported that the ten enlisted men of the KUNSAN detachment, who were placed in prison four months ago for Leftist activities, have been reinstated after they signified a "change of heart".

2. CHOLLA-SOUTH:

The first half of April has found attention directed to General Hodge's Headquarters for any announcement of result of his recent trip to the United States. However no comments or editorials of significance have appeared in the papers of the province. It is felt that the presence of American troops is being more and more resented in the province, particularly in connection with the proposed summer grain collection. The people feel there should be no control of production, distribution and consumption of barley, and considerable resistance to forced collection is anticipated. Virtually all governmental functions have been turned directly over to the Koreans with the American personnel acting only in an advisory capacity. This newly acquired freedom on the part of some officials however has served to swell the rising desire for complete removal of United States personnel from Korean affairs. The greatest organized demonstration of Public Opinion has been the continued disturbances among the students. In the larger cities of the province the schools have been characterized by strikes of either students or teachers. Meddling of police in school matters has been presented as one of the foremost grievances. Objection to the National University is another popular grievance.

3. KYONGSANG-NORTH:

POHANG Area: The public opinion of the Korean Nationals toward the occupation by American Forces in the POHANG area is steadily getting more hostile. The slowness of the American Forces in paying legitimately contracted debts has done a lot in lowering the Americans in the eyes of the Koreans. Koreans who usually work on a cash or trade basis cannot understand a bill being due for four or five months. Political trends in the POHANG area are about the same as last month except that there has been an influx of Communistic handbills flooding the area.

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4. KYONGSANG-SOUTH:

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a. PUSAN Area: Spot checks on Korean public opinion and political trends in the past month shows little change in the general situation. Some comments received from Koreans in PUSAN area during the period 15 March to 10 April were as follows:

- (1) In PUSAN, (1202 - 1345) a watch repair shop proprietor said, "I go with the majority, be it Left or Right wing. Neither of these political groups have a majority, so I haven't joined either."
- (2) In PUSAN an industrial shop owner said: that he was definitely Right wing, that Military Government had been a great assistance to his business, and that he hoped the Americans would stay in Korea permanently.
- (3) In PUSAN a policeman stated that the Left wing faction was increasing in strength.
- (4) In ULSAN (1230 - 1402) a drugstore keeper, said: that he was a member of a Right wing group, that the Military Government was of great aid to himself and to Korea and that he believed the Americans were helping make Korea free. He also stated that the average Korean would agree with the estimated political views of any person trying to take a cross section of public thought.
- (5) In ULSAN a silk goods shop keeper said he was neutral concerning Korean political parties, but that he definitely wanted the occupation forces out of Korea.
- (6) In ULSAN a candy shop keeper stated, "The Military Government is fine. I have much candy to sell and have made considerable money." He believed the city of ULSAN was about evenly divided between Left and Right wing political philosophy.

A consensus of opinion in the PUSAN area leads one to believe that Left wing strength is growing and that the strength of any political group in Korea is largely founded on promises or accusations that concern immediate material gain. The Right wing party members are usually the "have" people and the Left wing party members are the "have nots". As a result the "have nots" are gaining strength by accusations against the Military Government and Koreans who have prospered under the occupation.

b. Western KYONGSANG-SOUTH: Patrols throughout the Sixth Division Artillery Zone of responsibility reveal the following public opinion and political trends:

The people in the MASAN (1156 - 1357) area are generally well satisfied with the present occupational set up. From a material viewpoint they compare Russia and the United States. The fact that Russia took much Japanese equipment from Korea and Manchuria, while the United States did not, is counting heavily in favor of the United States. Also, the fact that we do not need this material impressed the Koreans that we are far richer and in a position to help them more than Russia. As for the Occupational Forces themselves the people in the MASAN area have been very much impressed by the strict control of Military Personnel. A few incidents have occurred but the offenders were dealt with immediately. The cooperation between the MP's and civil authorities has been excellent and resulted in good order being maintained. The people compare our occupation with that of the Japanese and find ours far more satisfactory and just.

Statements of people interviewed in MASAN, Korea.

- (1) Stamp shop operator: Believes that Dr. Rhee exerts himself in the betterment of national affairs in Korea and abroad, and that he is doing a good job. The shop operator also thinks that all men elected

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in last years general election turned out to be traitors to the national cause, and he is not satisfied with them. This shop operator had no comment on General Hodge's recent visit to MASAAN.

- (2) Farmer: "I am not satisfied with Dr. Rhee; when Dr. Rhee went to the United States he collected a contribution from the Korean people for expenses and used the biggest share for his personal gain. The people got little in return. I have no opinion on elections, and think that the present government is a puppet and does nothing. Dr. Rhee is a figure head for this group".
- (3) Radio shop operator: Did not know about General Hodge's visit until he arrived; had no comment on the visit. Wants to gain Korean independence quickly. Dr. Rhee is supposed to have arranged for this with the United States, Russia, and China. All members of present government are disqualified from people's view to continue in office. Expect to clear them out this year.
- (4) Carpenter: Did not know that General Hodge came to MASAAN. Did not know what to think of the visit. Thinks that Dr. Rhee's and General Loo's return to Korea is a good sign and will speed up the Korean independence. Thinks that the present Korean government is doing nothing for the people, but in the future Dr. Rhee will take over and build up a good government and system.
- (5) High school student: Had nothing to say about General Hodge's visit. We are satisfied with Dr. Rhee; he is our patriotic hero; he suffered many hardships for us. Had no election comments. Not satisfied with present government; all are disqualified for the assembly and are not educated to the needs of the people.

Public opinions of people interviewed in KUMHAE (1187 - 1362), Korea:

- (1) Druggist: Korean druggists in KUMHAE complains of the lack of re-supply. He stated that he could sell many more drugs if he could only get a resupply. The druggist had only a few American made drugs in stock; most of his stock being made up of Japanese drugs. The cost of ten aspirin tablets (American made) was approximately fifteen yen. The druggist stated that he belonged to no political party but that he still had hopes for Korean independence. He failed to understand the 38 degree parallel and the reasons for it. He felt that Korea should become one nation. When asked if had heard of the Russian proposal for a meeting on 20 May he stated that he had not. The druggist failed to understand why Russia and United States could not come to agreement about Korea.
- (2) Radio repair shop: Operator complains of no equipment. He states that business would be much better if he could only get more parts. Owner stated that he had no political affiliation with any party except for the furtherance of Korean independence. The owner of the shop stated that he hoped the Americans would remain in Korea until Korea was one independent country. The operator had heard of the conference in Moscow and was discouraged by the fact that no conclusion had been reached on Korea.
- (3) Watch repair shop: The watch repair man had no watches or clocks for sale and very few for repair. Repairman learned trade from his father. The watch repairman was a member of no political party and had no views on the present political policy. He stated that he thought the Americans should remain in Korea and that the country was benefited by their stay. He had a radio in his shop and often listened to speeches over the radio but had formed no opinion about them. The repairman had heard of Dr. Rhee and thought he was a very fine man and a hero of the Korean people. He was not discouraged with the work of Dr. Rhee and desired that Dr. Rhee continue his work for a free and independent Korea.

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