

Military, Political, Economic, Social Situation, Press Review, Civil Intelligence, Miscellaneous

Selected items for the information of Commanders and Staffs of the Far East Command

11 March 49

No. 2375

MILITARY SITUATION

1. Rebel Activity:

a. Police Ambushed: Two civilian drivers, six members of a local defense corps, and 19 policemen were killed in South Cholla Province recently when rebels ambushed a police column. The incident was the only serious disorder reported in South Korea during 26 Feb-5 Mar. The rebels captured one light machine gun, eight carbines, and 10 Japanese rifles. Delayed reports state that 39 rebels, eight civilians, nine policemen, and two members of local defense corps units were killed in 16 clashes between the Republic's armed forces and rebels in South Cholla Province during 14-24 Feb. Other delayed reports for the same period state that 11 rebels were killed in five clashes between police and rebels in North Kyongsan Province. Using spears, members of the People's Protective Corps executed 76 rebels on Cheju Island on 20 Feb.

National police in Seoul arrested 58 leftists suspected of planning riots and disturbances for 1 Mar, and 69 students, members of the Democratic Students' Alliance, a leftist organization. However, no reports have been received concerning serious civil disturbances, Communist uprisings, or riots occurring on 1 Mar, Sam Il Day. (a)

Source Comment: Sam Il Day on 1 Mar is an historic day in Korea. It derives its significance from the revolt of Korean patriots against the Japanese occupation in 1919. In the past, it has been marked by widespread Communist uprisings and demonstrations. Extensive counter-preparations by the police probably discouraged the Communists from implementing plans for widespread disturbances on 1 Mar 49. Brutality against humans, even though rebels, and the denial of due process of law, has been forcefully brought to the attention of high Korean officials, and it has been pointed out that such action by mobs is contrary to U.S. precepts of democracy. (a)

Comment: The decreased number of civil disturbances in South Korea may be due in part to aggressive military action and the screening of dissidents from the armed forces. Also, the people may realize that the Government is in control of the situation, and capable of punishing dissidents.

ECONOMIC REPORT

2. Collections Continue:

a. Slight Progress Made: Voluntary sale to the Government of about 767,850 bushels of rice brings the total to about 18,720,000 bushels that had been purchased by the Government as of 2 Mar. This figure represents about 48.7 per cent of the 38,392,500-bushel quota. (a)

Source Comment: LEE Chong Hyun, new Minister of Agriculture (Intell. Summary 2366), admitted recently that he saw no prospects of achieving the grain purchase goal, and that imports would be necessary to make up shortages. LEE did not reveal what funds the government could utilize for foreign grain purchases. Despite the failure of the grain collection program, the price of rice remains stable at about 45 yen a pound on Seoul markets. (a)

Comment: Voluntary sales of rice to the Government probably will drop because of an Assembly resolution which forbids the compulsory purchase of grain from the farmers (Intell. Summary 2373). Previously, the compulsory sales provision was a "reminder" that grains would be collected by force if they were not sold voluntarily.

b. Trade Mission: An eight-man Korean Trade Mission arrived in Tokyo on 9 Mar. KIM Hoon, assistant director of the Office of Planning, heads the Korean delegation, and Owen T. Jones, First Secretary of the U.S. Mission in Korea, heads a delegation of ECA personnel. The mission expects to remain in Tokyo until 19 Mar. (b,c)

- (a) USAFIK 45837, 5 Mar 49
(b) ECA Mission Korea, 46496, 8 Mar 49

(c) G-2 Comment

Not a mission of exchange Korea

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