

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

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

MISCELLANEOUS

No. 2389

1. South Korean Unrest:

a. Motive to be Established: U.S. Army and Korean investigators are trying to establish the motive for the murder of Mrs Ethel Underwood, U.S. missionary in Korea, who was killed in her home in Seoul on 17 Mar (Intell. Summary 2383). One theory has been advanced that the assailant's original intention was to intimidate education leaders of the Chosen Christian College who were attending a meeting at Mrs Underwood's home. The faculty members, strongly pro-American, were discussing anti-Communist measures to be taken in their school when two masked men shot Mrs Underwood. Some support for this premise can be gained by the fact that the college president received a threatening telephone call four days previously with regard to his pro-American activities. Another possible theory advanced is that MO Yung Suk was the real object of the attack (Intell. Summary 2383). MO was at one time a leftist, but later she established a pro-Japanese reputation. At present, she is a supporter of President RHEE. Korean police believe that Mrs Underwood was shot unintentionally during the excitement of the intrusion. This theory is based on preliminary investigation of the bullet's trajectory and statements by eye witnesses. (a)

b. Armed Forces Active: Assuming the initiative against rebels in the mountainous regions of western South Kyongsang Province, a Korean Army task force killed 180 rebels and captured 25 during operations from 9-13 Mar. Government forces recovered 114 M-1 rifles, 10 carbines, three Japanese rifles, and two light machine guns.

Elements of the Korean Army on Cheju Island have announced that 111 rebels and 28 soldiers were killed and 183 rebels were captured from 5-12 Mar. Government forces confiscated two light machine guns, seven M-1 rifles, 10 carbines, and 11 Japanese rifles during the period. (C-3) While there has been no marked upturn in rebel activities on Cheju Island in recent months, the hardship and privation of the populace is steadily increasing as a result of guerrilla outrages and excesses of the armed forces. Casualties among the civilian populace are heavy. An estimated 15 per cent of the homes on the island have been destroyed, and food stocks are not sufficient to feed the homeless refugees, who are concentrated primarily in northern coastal cities. Losses among the armed forces have been relatively heavy, considering the minor inroads they have made on guerrilla concentrations to date. However, many of the army casualties can be attributed to its failure to follow tactical suggestions of U.S. advisors, particularly with regard to march security. (C-3) (a)

Source Comment: The relatively small number of arms confiscated on Cheju Island by the Army, as compared to the number of rebels killed, is an indication that comparatively few weapons are possessed by the rebels.

Comment: Guerrilla activity and a shortage of foodstuffs may inflict extreme hardships on the island's populace, providing a fertile ground for Communist recruitment. The effectiveness of the Republic's armed forces against the rebels has decreased since late Dec 48, when the 2d Regiment replaced the 9th Regiment.

c. Rebel Activity: Three rebels and two civilians were killed in two acts of violence by rebels in South Cholla Province from 12-19 Mar. Delayed reports from South Cholla Province state that nine policemen and 10 rebels were killed when rebels attacked a police station and a village, and ambushed a police patrol. Other delayed reports state that 16 rebels and two policemen were killed during three clashes in South Cholla Province from 7-8 Mar. (C-3) (a)

d. Ambassador Nominated: John J. Muccio, U.S. Special Representative to Korea, was nominated on 21 Mar to be the first U.S. Ambassador to Korea. Mr. Muccio served as U.S. political adviser on German affairs prior to his arrival in Seoul on 23 Aug 48 (Intell. Summary 2193). (b)

(a) USAFIK 50842, 19 Mar

(b) DA 51882, 23 Mar 49