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...and the President have both agreed to...
...along the lines wanted by us. In then we get rid of...
...of Staff, plus the Coast Guard into wide and...
2 May 1949

Lieut. General Albert C. Wedemeyer
Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans & Combat Operations
Department of the Army
Washington 25, D. C.

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Dear Wedemeyer:

I know your busy but feel you're the person to informally keep in touch with there about the Korean situation.

We are now in probably the quietest period for a large number of years -- the border or parallel incidents are practically nil now -- Communist activity is practically all underground now not only in the Army and police but in civilian activity too. Purges in the Army recently have succeeded in pulling the teeth of that group right efficaciously -- 500 alleged leftists in the Army are now being watched. Today (May Day) was quiet all over I hear. Down South in the Chiri-san mountain area the guerrillas have been beaten down by an intelligently conducted operation with 12 battalions. This force is now being sent back to its various stations. The several leaders of the guerrillas, the guerrilla staff, and the bulk of the active force have been destroyed. Similarly in Cheju-do, the guerrilla force has been beaten down and most of the active members killed or captured along with their weapons.

Since the shot in the arm provided by your visit supply practices in the Korean Army have improved several hundred percent. Training too is advancing very satisfactorily. This is evident from weekly advisor reports. Also we will complete on 7 May a comprehensive series of demonstrations to all troops of the Korean Army. These were prepared and delivered by the 5th RCT over the last 3 months -- consisted of 5 squad demonstrations, 5 platoon demonstrations, 2 of each company and of battalion. These not only helped the Korean Army which was very interested but the 5th RCT felt it had to do a perfect job and nearly did it.

During May a stiff team of senior advisors will make a comprehensive training inspection of each regiment of the Korean Army. If you would be interested in the reports I'll send them. Late in the fall, I plan another to hold against this. Last summer I did another.

Lee Bum Suk is out as Defense Minister but is still Premier. I hear he's on his way out of that job too. Sihm, who was Home Minister when you were here, is now Defense Minister. He is the best they have and I fear he may become Premier and thus we'd lose him. I have rumors Chough, now in the states, may be the Defense man. Bill Dean liked him above all except for his bottle habits.

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The President went to Cheju-do recently and was widely acclaimed. It was a home run. Friday the 29th of April he returned from a week's trip in the South -- I think both the trips were excellent for the nation.

Mr. Sihm and the President have both agreed to reorganize the Defense Department along the lines wanted by us. In then we get rid of the job of the Supreme Chief of Staff, give the Coast Guard more voice and reduce the Bureau of National Defense Department.

Right now as Commanding General, USAFIK, I'm concerned with the roll-up and close-out by 1 July. Here it is 1 May and we can do little but get ready if we are not given the go signal and if this Top Secret stuff is not declassified. I'd like to do a clean and clear out job and believe we can get out okay if we get orders promptly. First thing I know they'll have my troops out and my tonnage sitting on the dock and no one to handle it.

Morale now is an item I do not worry about -- it's the best in the Far East.

The VD rate hit it's peak with your visit -- it is now down to 180 with a low of 156.

Quarters have markedly improved. We stopped most work on them on the word to evacuate and concentrated on KMAC with its expansion to twice its present size.

We were hurt by the order to ~~not~~ allow Korea (KMAC) to have an 18 month foreign service tour. I will probably not be able to get the officers I want because of that. If Guam and Okinawa can have an 18 month tour we feel we should too. Half of my officers will be in the provinces without doctors, families, and little to amuse them; even rations to them is difficult.

Relations with AMIK are tops. Mr. Muccio and I are determined there will be no scraps, though it is hard at times to hold back. We have made friends with UN too by conducting them on numerous visits, giving them prepared discussions, showing them everything and asking them to see demonstrations.

Right now we're in the position of a company of rookie recruits who have heard the command "Forward". We are leaning way forward anticipating "March". If the word to go doesn't come soon we'll fall flat on our faces.

A word on the Coast Guard. They have some slow YMS (yard mine sweepers) American and Jap. They are slow, around 9 knots. The smugglers laugh at them. Consequently the economy of Korea is hurt by the food being shipped out. They need a few fast light ships. It would pay ECA to pay for them. They are even taking some American YMS's away. This is no time to be taking the Coast Guard ships away.

I note that Washington and particularly Congress is raising Cain about arming Europe and other countries in order to implement the Atlantic Pact.

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My two-cents worth fellows: -- the cheapest thing big industrial America can do is to furnish other peoples the product of our factories and resources in order that they may shoot for us and may shoot first, consequently 1 or 2 billions of dollar value is but a drop in the bucket and the finest bit of preparation we can make.

I feel that way about this South Korean Army, my work is to make them capable of shooting first and well for Uncle Sugar.

By all the agreements, my power here now is puny and after C-day will be punier. However I think I can still, by persuasion and sincere treatment of the leaders by the officers of KNAG, command their army and make it do what is necessary when the time comes.

Best personal regards,

Yours,

W. L. ROBERTS
Brigadier General, U. S. Army
Commanding

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