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E.O. 11652, Sec. 3(b) and 5(D) or (E)

OSD letter, May 3, 1972

PLS-46, NARS Date 7-11-75

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OPERATIONAL PRIORITY

CRYPTOGRAPHIC SECURITY DOES NOT APPLY HANDLE AS SECRET  
CORRESPONDENCE PER PARAS 44g and 53a, AR 380-5

From: Commander in Chief, Army Forces, Pacific, Advance,  
Tokyo, Japan

To: War Department

Nr: CA 52414 28 September 1945

WARTAG for Joint Chiefs of Staff cite CA 52414.

The following report of conditions in North Korea  
made by a member of the Australian Department of Information  
is forwarded for your information.

"Russian occupation of Northern Korea.

With the permission of Colonel Duncan Sinclair,  
I accompanied 4 members of an American prisoner of war  
recovery unit, on September 15th, 1945, to Kanko strip in  
Russian occupied Korea.

The object of my trip was to interview British and  
Australian prisoners of war in Konan prisoner of war camp  
about 8 miles from the strip, and report the nature of my  
findings to the Australian government.

I represented myself to the Russians as an  
Australian War Correspondent, and during my 7 days sojourn  
in the area was not obstructed in any way.

My first days investigation was so revealing that  
I decided to pursue my inquiries further afield and learn  
the true facts about the Russian occupation of Northern  
Korea.

CM-IN-23404 (28 Sept 45)

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E.O. 11652, Sec. 3(D) and 3(D) or 3(D)

OSD Letter, May 3, 1971

By ~~SECRET~~ NAME Date 7-11-72

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OPERATIONAL PRIORITY

Page 2

From: Commander in Chief, Army Forces, Pacific, Advance,  
Tokyo, Japan

Nr: CA 52414 28 September 1945

What I wish to record is based on fact and what I saw personally, and not on what I heard. This is what I learned:

1. That the Russians, from the Manchurian border to areas below Kanko and Konan industrial districts, are indulging in widespread and indiscriminate looting of both Korean and Japanese property; and are indulging in rape and robbery of both Koreans and Japanese by armed force.
2. The Russians are substituting, in Kanko and Konan, Russian roubles and kopacs for Korean yen, the substitution being 1 for 1.
3. In Kanko and Konan the attitude of the Russians is bringing together the Japs and Koreans-for the first time in 40 years.
4. Communists, who represent about 1 tenth of the population of Kanko and Konan, are taking advantage of the advent of the Russians and are using the Russians to further their ends.
5. The Russians are living off the land they have occupied, and are using only meagre quantities of their own supplies which consist mainly of rice, bean meal, rice bread, and a few vegetables, principally cabbages.
6. The Russians are bringing south-that is, to areas below Kanko and Konan-heavy armament and equipment, such as tanks, machine guns, heavy trucks.

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CED letter, May 3, 1971  
By *SP-7* *SP-6*, NARS Date *7-17-75*

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OPERATIONAL PRIORITY

Page 3

From: Commander in Chief, Army Forces, Pacific, Advance  
Tokyo, Japan

Nr: CA 52414 28 September 1945

7. The Russian occupation is forcing thousands of Koreans and Japanese to trek south to the American Zone. Another result is seen in the almost complete cessation of industrial enterprises.

8. The prisoners of war in Konan Camp were allowed to run the camp themselves but were given little food by the Russians who left them to fend for themselves for the most part, and did nothing, until representations were made by members of the American Recovery GH Unit, to repatriate the prisoners.

1. On 7 successive days I saw Russians looting in Kanko and Konan districts, and areas to the south and north. On one occasion I asked, and was allowed to accompany, a looting party. The procedure was this:

The Russians, armed with tommy guns, would drive up to a Korean or Japanese house, fire a few shots in the air, then break into the house, drag out what women (mostly young girls) they could find, put them into the truck along with the furniture and any other articles that caught their eyes, and drive off to their barracks. After a day or two the girls are thrown on the street.

On the occasion I accompanied the looting party I protested when the Russian brought forth a young girl in tears. They laughed, waved their guns at me significantly, and carried on with the business. They not only brought out a young girl; they brought out a camera, two kimonoa, some cushions and some small ornaments representing Geisha girls.

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OSD Letter, May 3, 1972  
BY *SP-1* NAME *DAVID J. J.*

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OPERATIONAL PRIORITY

Page 4

From: Commander in Chief, Army Forces, Pacific, Advance,  
Tokyo, Japan

Hr: CA 52414

28 September 1945

They usually looted at night and acted belligerently if anyone tried to interfere.

Many hundreds of Korean and Japanese women in the vicinity helped feed the prisoners after the Japs were thrown out. At first they bartered with the prisoners in a healthy way, the latter paying in Korean yen for eggs, tomatoes, potatoes, and so forth - food they had not tasted in three and a half years. As time went on, however, the women would bring food to the prisoners without seeking anything in return. They said the prisoners were their friends, and the Russians their enemies.

Many prisoners, who spoke Japanese well, were asked to visit Japanese and Korean homes, but more particularly Japanese. If Russians saw them entering they (the Russians) would demand entrance, too, and a woman. The position became so electric one night while I was at the camp that the Camp Commandant (Captain George Kinloch, of Glasgow, Scotland) henceforth denied the men leave at night. His action, in my opinion, was a wise one, because the prisoners to a man would stand up to defend any woman, regardless of her nationality. And this may have led to bloodshed.

On another occasion I saw Russians deliberately knock a Korean or a Jap from his cart, remove the ox from the shafts and take it away, presumably to be killed for food.

Terrorism seems to be the order of the day with the Russians. They go around in Jap commandeered trucks, armed with tommy guns, dash into a populous district and fire off

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OSD letter, May 3, 1972

By ~~SECRET~~ NAME Date 12-1-75

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OPERATIONAL PRIORITY

Page 5

From: Commander in Chief, Army Forces, Pacific, Advance  
Tokyo, Japan

Nr: CA 52414

28 September 1945

several rounds until the crowd has fled screaming.

2. On September 18 the Russians suddenly began exchanging roubles for Korean yen (the Jap yen, of course is worthless in Korea). When I heard of this circumstance I hitch hiked into Kanko and made inquiries. A prisoner named Sergeant Bill Pyke, of Sydney, came up and showed me a handful of roubles he had just received for Korean yen. He said they had been exchanged at the rate of one for one. He also told me that the Russians were forcing the Koreans to exchange their money.

I went up to a Russian lounging near an intersection and held out five single yen notes. He immediately grabbed my arm and propelled me to a Russian guard house where my yen were snatched from my hand and roubles given me.

Next day I went to the market place in Kanko and saw Russians approach with bags of paper roubles and force the people to hand over their yen. In every case the rate of exchange was one for one. The Koreans obviously did not want the Russian money and some came to me holding out the roubles and by signs indicated they wanted me to hand them yen.

I returned to camp and told some of the British officers about the new exchange rate. They agreed that if they could get roubles for yen at the rate aforementioned they would be on a profit making basis if they exchanged their yen forthwith. They took with them some 1500 yen

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E.O. 11652, Sec. 9(b) and 5(D) or (E)

OSD Letter, May 3, 1972

By ~~ADJ-ASAC~~ NARS Date: 11-25-75

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OPERATIONAL PRIORITY

Page 6

From: Commander in Chief, Army Forces, Pacific, Advence,  
Tokyo, Japan

Nr: CA 52414

28 September 1945

and received a like sum in roubles. (At the old rate of exchange - about 1934 - roubles were worth about 2/4 pence of the English market and about 2/8 pence on the Australian market. That is slightly more than 1/3 of a dollar. In other words the rouble is worth about three times that of the Korean yen.) As the result of this I bought an apple from a Korean woman for half a yen (fifty sen). The next day I visited the same place, knowing that the Russians in the meantime had made the woman exchange her money for roubles, and was charged half a rouble. Not having half a rouble on me I offered the woman 50 sen. She looked out the door, then hurriedly took the note and gave me the apple. I had an interpreter with me at the time. He spoke in Japanese.

The prisoners hope to change their roubles for either Australian or English money. If they can at even half the old rate they will make a substantial profit.

3. At Kosen I visited a Japanese house and was invited to drink tea. I was introduced to two Koreans who stayed in the same house. The Jap told me that he and the two Koreans were traders. During the war they were enemies, but since the coming of the Russians they were friends, and intended to be friends and trade amicably in the future no matter what happened. I was quite convinced they meant what they said. Captain Kinloch, the Camp Commandant was with me at the time. He translated for the Koreans, and the Jap spoke English.

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E.O. 11652, Sec. 3(c) and 5(D) or (E)

OSD letter, May 3, 1972

OPERATIONAL PRIORITY

~~By A/C NAC, NARS Date 7-11-75~~

Page 7

From: Commander in Chief, Army Forces, Pacific, Advance,  
Tokyo, Japan

Re: CA 52414

28 September 1945

At Kaniko I met the same thing - Koreans and Japs  
befriending each other against the Russians.

At the Prisoner of War Camp Korean and Japanese  
women visited the camp every day with presents. This be-  
came particularly noticeable the last three days. It was  
a common sight to see a Korean and a Jap woman issuing  
present to each other so that each would be able to give  
the prisoners the same value in tokens.

I think the most revealing scene occurred on September  
21st when the prisoners were taken in Russian trucks to  
Kaniko station on the first stage of their journey home.  
Although under heavy Russian guard - each truck carried two  
Russians each armed with tommy guns - Koreans and Japs lined  
the roads and waved and cheered. Some wept openly, and  
many waved American and Korean flags. It was the same at  
the station. Although the Russians kept the crowd at a  
distance the locals cheered and clapped as the train pulled  
out. It was really touching. They regarded the prisoners as  
their friends. The women especially, looked to them for  
assistance when they were in trouble.

I might add at this juncture that the camp doctor,  
Captain George Morris, a Canadian, attached to the Indian  
Medical Service before being captured in Singapore, after  
the prisoners took over the camp themselves, daily treated  
dozens of Jap and Korean women and children. He refused  
no one. This went on until the prisoners left. His fame  
went abroad; so much so that he had women calling on him  
from ten miles distant.

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CSD letter, May 3, 1972

By ~~SECRET~~ ~~SECRET~~ TOT  
DATE 1-2-83  
OPERATIONAL PRIORITY

Page 8

From: Commander in Chief, Army Forces, Pacific, Advance,  
Tokyo, Japan

Nr: CA 52414

28 September 1945

4. The Communist element in Russian occupied Korea is a small, but very vocal minority. It is using the Russians to further its own ends for instance I saw Korean Communists, with two Russians for support, ask a Korean if he was anti Communist. When he denied having anything to do with Communists he was seized and searched, his money was taken from him, and he was ordered out of Kenko. I had a prisoner of war with me at the time who understood what was said and repeated it to me. We then followed the party and saw another Korean forced from his house. When I returned next day Communist Koreans had taken over the house and the former owner had been set adrift with nothing but what he stood up in.

I saw much evidence of this. In all cases I was able to check the Russians had played an active part.

I also saw Russians eject from his house a Korean who said he was not in favor of Russia taking over Korea. In several cases I checked I was able to ascertain that where the person said he was not pro Russia, either by actual statement or inference, he was ejected from his house forthwith and told to go south.

I interviewed two Koreans, both old men, who were walking south, just out of Kenko. Through an interpreter they told me they had been forced from their homes by the Russians. All they stood up in, and 30 yen, represented their entire possessions.

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OSD Letter, May 3, 1972

By *ALC/HL* NARS Date *7/1/75*

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OPERATIONAL PRIORITY

Page 9

From: Commander in Chief, Army Forces, Pacific, Advance,  
Tokyo, Japan

Nr: CA 52414

28 September 1945

5. Russians, by indiscriminate robbery, obtain all the food they require. I actually accompanied a Russian patrol one day when it haphazardly moved around the city of Kanke. Suddenly the truck turned towards a farm, the Russians jumped out pell mell, and started shooting. They brought back five pigs that had received the combined magazines of several tommy guns.

The truck continued on its way. A fowl yard was visited and several fowls collected. The owner was not consulted. It was plain robbery.

I have seen Russians go into a field of vegetables and remove the lot, despite the farmers entreaties that he and his family will starve unless they pay for them but the Russians don't pay for the food they collect. At least I have never seen them pay, and Koreans have told me they have received nothing for the animals and vegetables the Russians have taken.

One day I lunched with the Russians at their Kanke headquarters. The place was indescribably filthy. The food consisted of rice and cabbage soup and some sort of flapjacks. They told me, through an interpreter, of course, that the chickens and pork taken from the Koreans, had been consumed the previous night at a big feast. They also told me that most of their food came from the Koreans; they brought very little with them, only rice and a little meal and a very few vegetables.

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OSD Letter, May 3, 1972

OSD letter, May 3, 1975  
By ALH/NK NASS Date 7-11-75

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OPERATIONAL PRIORITY

Page 10

From: Commander in Chief, Army Forces, Pacific, Advance,  
Tokyo, Japan

NY: CA 52414

28 September 1945

6. Russian tanks, heavy trucks and other mobile equipment are moving past Kanko southwards. Every day I was in the area I saw trainloads of men and equipment moving south. In the train today I saw accumulations of Russian equipment, vehicles, supplies, and so forth, at points just above the 38th parallel. Why they should bring in tanks now that the war is over is beyond my comprehension. The Japs are quiescent; they have no arms with which to fight, anyway. The Russians saw to that early in the peace. Big internment camps are being set up for the reception of the Japs. In these camps, I understand, the Russians supply them with an adequate allowance of rice, but Japs I saw returning from the Manchurian border were starving, and nearly mobbed a Prisoner of War when he held forth a small bar of candy. A Jap, a former wool buyer in Australia, who spoke excellent English, said he had eaten nothing for 24 hours and very little in three days. He said the Russians, mostly young peasants, had herded them along like cattle. While the Russians had plenty to eat and rode horses, the Japs had to keep pace on empty stomachs.

7. All along the line, from Kenko to the American lines, there is a stream of Korean and Jap refugees trekking south. A few I interviewed said they were escaping from the Russians who they feared. Their one desire was to get to American occupied Korea. I saw this line just out of Kenko, I saw it coming into Kenko from the Manchurian border, and I saw it entering the American Zone, some 200 miles to the south. I don't suggest that the line stretches that distance without a break, but it is significant. The attitude of the Russians towards the Koreans has had its effect

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**Abstract**



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OSD letter, May 2, 1972

By ~~NET/NAAC~~ NAAC Date 7-11-75

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OPERATIONAL PRIORITY

Page 11

From: Commander in Chief, Army Forces, Pacific, Advance,  
Tokyo, Japan

Nr: CA 52414

28 September 1945

on the industrial enterprises, especially around Konko and Konan. When I visited the big carbide works at Konan on September 20th and 21st only one of the six furnaces was in operation, and then only at half cock. On the latter day I counted only four men on the premises which stretch for miles. When the Japs were in occupation the works occupied some ten thousand employees. The same applies to the chemical works. Apart from a few Koreans walking about the whole place was idle on September 21st. The Koreans say that if the Russians take over the works, as they expect them to do, they will be forced to work hard at low rates of pay. They don't want to work for the Russians, so they are letting the works go idle in the hope that the Russians won't bother to set them in motion again.

8. From August 29th, when the Russians kicked out the Japs from the POW Camp at Konan, until September 21st when the POWs left for Jinsen, the only food supplied by the Russians to the camp consisted of three days rations of rice, millet, Jap tinned fish, a pig and two small oxen. The prisoners had to depend on the droppings of supplies by the B 29s, and from what they could get from the Koreans and Japs in the vicinity of the camp.

The Russians did nothing to repatriate the prisoners. They promised all sorts of things, but nothing happened. The first incident occurred when a B 29 was virtually shot down by a Yak fighter. The second incident occurred when my party arrived and told the prisoners they would all be on the way home within two or three days. It was seven days before they moved, thanks to the Russians.

When the Russians did act it was with ostentation.

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E.O. 11652, Sec. 3(E) and 5(D) or (E)  
OASD letter, May 3, 1972  
By WAT/TKC, NASS Date 7-11-75

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OPERATIONAL PRIORITY

Page 12

From: Commander in Chief, Army Forces, Pacific, Advance,  
Tokyo, Japan

Re: CA 52414

28 September 1945

My summing up is this: The Russians I saw were a poor peasant type, dirty and ill kempt, without organization or leadership. Some hadn't washed for months by the look of their clothes or faces and necks. They all acted belligerently and with some show of bravado, but it was easy to see they had an inferiority complex. There was no method in anything they did. When they looted, which was pretty often, it was quite indiscriminately.

Some of the Russians had a Mongol look, more like a Tartar. They ate in filth with flies everywhere - even the officers - and they dressed in clothes unwashed for months.

Some told me they had just returned from the Berlin Zone. That might account for the condition of their dress, but not for the dirt on their skin. Many supported medals. Some said they had fought in the Battle for Moscow and a few said they were at Stalingrad when the Germans there were beaten.

Everywhere I went in Kanke or Kosen the inhabitants wanted to see the Americans come in and take over. Both Japs and Koreans want this. Rumors flew thick and fast every day I was there that the Americans were going to take over the country to the 40th parallel.

The people, except the few who ardently support the Russians to further their own political ends, are pro American and would like America to take over the whole of Korea.

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E.O. 11652, Sec. 302 and 500 or (b)

OSD letter, May 3, 1972

By ~~ALT. AUTH.~~ NAME Date 7-11-78

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OPERATIONAL PRIORITY

Page 13

From: Commander in Chief, Army Forces, Pacific, Advance,  
Tokyo, Japan

Nr: CA 52414

28 September 1945

From my observations of the two zones I say definitely that Korea is being torn in half. People in the northern zone are terrified of the Russians, industry is at a standstill, and the one desire, it seems, is to get south to the American Zone as quickly as possible. Sgd Leonard K Bersdell Australian representative at GHQ for the Department of Information 22 September 1945".



End

See CM-IN-23151.

ACTION: OPD

INFO : JC/S, Adm Leahy, CG AAF, OPD (State), G-2,  
CAD, Adm King, Mr. McCloy, C of S

CM-IN-23404 (28 Sept 45) DTG 281149Z da

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