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17. Organization of the Chinese Communist Fifth Field Army reported:

[Redacted] the Chinese Communists in August 1951 organized the Fifth Field

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Army. It comprises four infantry armies and four mechanized corps of the same size as a Soviet mechanized corps. It is equipped with Soviet arms. [redacted]

Comment: There have been many previous unconfirmed reports of the formation of a Chinese Communist Fifth Field Army, organized with Soviet assistance and advice. [redacted] claims that the Fifth Field Army was formed under Soviet guidance in the spring of 1951, its troops being drawn from the North China Military Area Special Army Group, long known as the "5th Field Army." While subsequent reports have alleged the presence of units of the Fifth Field Army in Korea under Nieh Jung-chen, who was and is C.O. of the NCMASAG, no such Soviet-equipped units have been encountered in combat.

18. KOREA. Food shortage in North Korea not seen as acute; [redacted]

[redacted] while indications point to a less than normal yield in the current crop harvest in North Korea, there is currently no acute food shortage in the area. It is probable, however, that the civilian population will experience shortages during the coming winter and spring. [redacted] this anticipated shortage will have "no significant effect on the stability of the North Korean regime" inasmuch as that government exercises "good control" and has an effective "production program."

[redacted] there have been no recent reports indicating that the CCF logistical program was being utilized for anything except the complete support of Communist military forces. [redacted]

Comment: It has been generally indicated that the coming winter will work a severe hardship on the North Korean civilian population. Factors, in addition to food, contributing to this suffering will be the acute lack of housing and a probable shortage of consumer goods, particularly textiles.

No firm conclusions regarding the stability or instability of the North Korean regime can be drawn from current evidence. There are indications, however, pointing to increasing administrative problems being encountered in the lower levels of government. The disorganization following UN occupation last winter, the considerable loss of effective administrative personnel by death, defection or conscription, and the previously observed sharp lowering of living standards must all be considered in assessing the degree of success achieved by the North Korean regime in reimposing its previously tight control system.

19. Steps taken to alleviate refugee problem in ROK: The ROK Minister of Social Affairs issued a statement November 1 concerning the dispersion of 15,000 refugees from North Korea concentrated in the Seoul region "into warm southern areas." This action is part of a "winter preparations" plan which includes the designation of November as the "month for refugees entry arrangements" and an appeal for "the public to make preparations for the approaching winter season." (R FBID Ticker, 1 Nov 51)

Comment: With 1,500 other refugees arriving in Seoul and its environs each week from all Korea and a conservatively estimated four million refugees throughout South Korea, the immensity of the task confronting ROK officials is manifest. Nevertheless, it is encouraging to note that definite, even though inadequate, steps are being taken to cope with this critical problem.

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