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Staff Memorandum

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE  
IN KOREA

by

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ii  
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## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE IN KOREA

In order to conduct effective psychological warfare in Korea, one must have a good understanding of the psychological characteristics of the Korean people in general and of North Korean soldiers in particular. There are many important points which require our attention.

As far as the enemy's organized resistance in South Korea is concerned, the war is over, but communists are as good, if not better, in guerilla activities as they are in a conventional war. Stragglers in mountain areas can be a serious menace to our rear. A prominent publisher, Mr. Song Jung Whoon, who left Seoul on 3 September and arrived here on 25 September, met numerous North Korean stragglers in small groups practically in every mountain pass he came through. Mr. Song told me they never showed any desire to give up fighting. If they are ever to be induced to surrender, this is the time when every effort should be made. Communist guerillas in the past years proved that they could survive the severe winters in the mountains with few provisions.

When properly approached, most of them would undoubtedly be willing to surrender. On the other hand, if they are left alone, they may become desperate bandits. Most of the prisoners I interviewed had been afraid to surrender for fear of maltreatment. Those stragglers who are not in immediate contact with our troops may have stronger fears than those who are engaged in combat.

Almost all of the prisoners surrendered because they did not want to die, although they would not admit that was their prime motive. We must lead the enemy to rationalize to a better motive, more unselfish and noble. Appeal to their patriotic zeal by telling them that future Korea needs every young man to help build a happy and free nation. The most patriotic and enthusiastic Koreans are found among those of high school and college ages - the ages of North Korean fighting men. "Surrender-or-die" type of leaflets may actually cause them to be more fanatical. An American missionary who worked in the Orient for many years made the following observation:

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ORO-S-68

## Korean Psychological Warfare

"Use a Japanese with authority and impersonality.  
Use a Chinese with a whip. Use a Korean with a  
pat on his shoulder."

Give the North Korean a means of saving "face" in surrendering.

If possible, assign a well-qualified Korean to write a text for leaflets or for broadcast. (It is very difficult, if not impossible, to find a non-Korean who can make translations sound alive and original.) Let him write the original and correct, add, or improve when necessary. Ordinary Korean writers are strongly tempted to use difficult academic terms when they write. The same trend is found in translators. A writer or translator should be cautioned to use simple language which can be easily understood by the North Korean soldiers who generally have very poor educational backgrounds.

Use prisoners of war for broadcasting and use their pictures to show how they are treated. I discovered that many prisoners, both officers and enlisted men, are sincerely anxious to help us by doing something for our cause. High-ranking officers will have greater influence than those of lower rank, but it will be advisable to use a few enlisted men. We cannot expect to eliminate completely their doubt as to our proper treatment of prisoners, but having the prisoners tell how they are treated and the repeated showing of pictures of the prisoners will help a great deal. At least it will convince them that the surrendered are not killed as they are made to believe.

Besides using prisoner-of-war broadcasts and pictures, prisoners should be permitted to write personal letters to their relatives or friends to be delivered by air drop since there is no other means of delivery quick enough to serve the purpose. In small country villages or small towns, all the inhabitants know each other. If a letter is dropped into a town or village and if it is not confiscated by the police, it will very likely reach the addressee. Even if it fails to reach the right address, certainly the word of its arrival will spread very fast and everybody in the area will hear about it. As the word travels, rumors in our favor will increase. If and when we advance into North Korea, this tactic would have prepared the communist soldiers to surrender more readily than those in South Korea. The North Korean masses are very fertile soil for our seed.

The majority of the interrogees, when asked, said that it would not hurt their feelings if we criticized their government or leaders. But, that should not be accepted as a representative attitude. The Koreans are very sensitive people. They may not be any more sensitive or prouder than any other race, but when one has a strong "sour grape"

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ORO-S-68

## Korean Psychological Warfare

complex and does not want to admit that he has it, he can be hurt very easily. It is necessary to let them know that we believe they were misled by communism, and we can do it without making direct or sharp criticism of their leaders.

The technique of broadcasts from a B-29 seems to be very effective, for the following reasons:

1. Verbal messages have a greater appeal than the printed.
2. Any Korean will be surprised to learn that he can listen to a broadcast from a B-29 with a radio. This wonder of science alone will have an "atomic" effect on Korean psychology.
3. Not only North Korean soldiers, but the general populace in war-torn areas are deprived of the means to listen to radio. Radio broadcasts from stations in Korea, Tokyo, and "Voice of America" are very helpful in maintaining the morale of those Koreans who are blessed with electric power and radio sets, but these people are not our immediate tactical targets.
4. Practically all prisoners of war agreed that B-29 broadcasts would be the best medium, "if it will work."

The young North Koreans were taught in the past 10 years (remember that the average age of the North Korean soldiers is not over 25), first by the Japanese and later by the Russians, that the United States was the most fearful enemy of Korea. The majority of the young North Korean soldiers may never have seen any Americans. The only Americans they saw were the imaginary ones pictured by the Japanese and the Russians. These boys were told thousands of times that the Republic of Korea as well as the United Nations were the tools of the American imperialistic ambition of world domination.

Every possible attempt should be made to correct that misconception for reasons of both immediate tactical effect and long range political development. In this effort, the following factors should be remembered:

1. The Koreans are very critical people. Do not try to deny the charges. A negative approach may stimulate their critical mind. No one wants to throw away what he possesses unless he has something better.
2. Next to the fear of death, the immediate pressing fear of the North Koreans may be that of hunger. They should be told of economic

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ORO-S-68

Korean Psychological Warfare

aid which will benefit every Korean. It will be more acceptable to the North Koreans if some Korean leaders, or United Nations representatives, or Red Cross people tell them of the relief or economic assistance rather than if the American tell it themselves.

3. Build up the United Nations as extensively as possible. The Korean communists have the alterable belief that political evolution has reached the stage where an international state is feasible and they believe that the international state will be a communistic one. Let them know that the United Nations is an international organization working for international cooperation and for mutual understanding of all peoples regardless of race and creed, that the United States is just one of the members of the United Nations, and Korea, when united, will be eligible for full-fledged membership.

Increase the volume of propaganda. Quality is very important, but our past experience shows that quantity is also an important factor. Even a clear blatant lie may be accepted when it is propagated repeatedly. The lower the intellectual level of our targets, the more we should put emphasis on quantity. Most of the prisoners of war that surrendered on 27 and 28 September did not hear anything about the fighting in Seoul. The majority of them did not even know of the landing at Inchon.

The good conduct of our troops must be strictly guaranteed in North Korea. North Korean soldiers, in general, treated ordinary South Koreans very kindly in their conquered areas.

South Koreans must be indoctrinated thoroughly and given strict orders to treat the North Koreans as their fellow countrymen. The majority of North Koreans waited for five years for the ROK Army to liberate them. We should not disappoint them in a moral sense. Many floating elements in North Korea may judge any United Nations-supported ROK forces by their observations of the ROK Army. ROK troops must not act as conquerors.

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