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Information Report

COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA CHARGING UNITED STATES
WITH THE USE OF BW IN KOREA

CIA/SI 29-51

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COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA CHARGING UNITED STATES WITH

USE OF BW IN KOREA

CONCLUSIONS

1. Current propaganda takes the form of:
 - a. Outright prevarication
 - b. Distortion of facts
 - c. Imputation of insidious motives to innocent acts
2. The majority of propaganda is directed from Moscow toward the Far East and Western Europe - while a proportionately small amount of material, mostly from newspapers, is planned for "home" consumption.
3. An effort is underway to reach the Chinese, whose political and military affection need to be solidly won, and those West Europeans whose remilitarization by and for the West would present a precarious situation for the USSR.
4. Charges of inhuman methods of warfare by bacteriological means would have a definite emotional and psychological effect upon those nations considered "on the edge" in political affiliation.
5. The wide "Hate America" campaign launched by the USSR propagandists endeavors to disillusion and demoralize the defenders of Korea and advance the cause of staunch Communism in the Far East.

DISCUSSION

1. Shortly before the outbreak of the present Korean hostilities, Kim Song Yun, chief of the Epidemic Prevention Bureau, Ministry of Public Health, North Korea, warned Koreans of the possibility of summer epidemics emanating from South Korea where no preventive measures had been undertaken to combat them. Mr. Yun stated it would be difficult to foretell what kind of epidemics might be permitted to spread northward from South Korea.
2. When the Communist Army captured Seoul, it purported to discover in the intelligence offices of the General Staff of the South Korean Army documents written in rather technical detail and designated "Plan A" and "Plan B." Some chapters entitled

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"Destruction," "Arson," and "Bacteriological Dissemination," supposedly mapped out reconnaissance work for 1950 and described how rivers and reservoirs of North Korea were to be infected with bacteria. Whether the capsules of bacilli were to be obtained from American Camp Detrick or from Japanese stocks was left in question.

3. USSR press reported an alleged typhus epidemic raging in American occupied areas of Korea and that the population was receiving no medical aid. It was further claimed that, within two weeks, each village in the region had been penetrated with the disease with an increase in the overall death rate up to ninety (90) per cent. American authorities were reported as inoculating only servicemen and Syngman Rhee government officials, and it was also charged there had been numerous cases where seriously ill persons had been killed. Actually, the situation is quite different in that:

a. Shortly after the beginning of the war, ROK Ministry of Health, with vaccine furnished by ECA, began a vaccination program against smallpox for civilians, concentrating especially upon children under fifteen years of age. No records were kept, and the efficiency of the program cannot be ascertained.

b. United Nations reported vaccination of millions of Koreans against smallpox, typhus, typhoid, and cholera.

c. There are confirmed reports of typhus epidemics and a substantiated presence of smallpox in the Wonsan area. Many Communist troops are suffering from both diseases. All civilian doctors have been mobilized; penicillin and other drugs have been confiscated for Communist Army needs; civilians have been evacuated.

4. It is also purported that a serious skin disease is caused by a new United Nations' weapon and that the disease, where it is encountered, is responsible for fifty (50) per cent casualties. This propaganda may refer, of course, to casualties from the United Nations' use of napalm incendiary weapons.

5. Soviet propaganda also depicts American forces as prepared to use bacteriological weapons against the Korean people to excuse the failure of their troops in the field. MacArthur's headquarters in Japan was purported to have been producing bacteria with the aid and assistance of unpunished Japanese war criminals. For this activity the Yoshida government had appropriated 1.5 million yen.

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The propaganda then resolved into a condemnation of MacArthur by Soviet scientists and an assurance that they (the Soviets) are discovering methods to combat such warfare.

6. Reports have also been disseminated by Communist sources that plague-carrying fleas have been employed by American forces to spread plague in Korea. It is claimed MacArthur sent eighteen Japanese bacteriologists, in 1946, to War Department laboratories to continue the culture of BW agents.

7. Chinese Communist radio broadcast from Peiping, allegedly quoting from the American magazine, "Weekly Newspaper" (NEWSWEEK) and Allied war prisoners, states Chinese Communist prisoners were subjected to bacteriological experiments on a small island outside Wonsan. Moscow, in a broadcast quoting Peiping sources, states that the Chinese Red Cross has revealed the Americans are testing bacteriological weapons on captured Chinese volunteers and gruesome experiments are being conducted under the guise of epidemic control. These facts were reportedly admitted by the United States magazine, NEWSWEEK, 9 April 1951. The Chinese Red Cross called on all the sixty-eight countries belonging to the International Red Cross and on all peace-loving peoples to punish this vicious enemy. Actually, the excerpts from the NEWSWEEK item referred to involved an article about a Navy epidemic control laboratory ship off Wonsan harbor on the east coast of Korea . . . where Navy landing parties have been capturing a number of Chinese Reds from the tiny island and have taken them back to the ship where they are tested for symptoms of bubonic plague because of reported epidemics among enemy troops which may endanger our troops. The ship is an infantry landing vessel on which a laboratory complete with mice and rabbits is installed.

An American naval medical officer immediately and publicly denied these charges and stated that the United States does maintain an "epidemic control ship" docked near a small island off the coast of South Korea. For the benefit of United Nations' forces, this laboratory provides facilities for studying all types of diseases contracted by the military personnel so that epidemics may be prevented. This officer further stated that no prisoners have been taken aboard nor has any experimental work been performed.

8. Pak Hun Yong, Foreign Minister of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, protested in a message to the Chairman of the United Nations General Assembly and the President of the Security Council against the use of bacteriological weapons by American forces. He cited the following incidents:

a. American Far East Command, under orders from General MacArthur, has been preparing BW with the aid of Japanese finances and personnel.

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b. Documents, "Plan A" and "Plan B," found in ROK headquarters in Seoul, outlined, for 1950, sabotage plans, based on use of bacteria, against vital North Korean installations, towns, and army units.

c. American armed forces, temporarily holding areas of North Korea, contaminated the inhabitants of these areas with smallpox. In this connection, Yong pointed out no cases occurred in areas not occupied by the Americans and that outbreaks in Japan were undoubtedly caused by infected American troops involved in covert dissemination (of the germs) in North Korea.

Yong then concluded that Americans have thereby violated Geneva Protocol of 17 June 1925, prohibiting the use of.... bacteria in warfare and that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea demands the arrest and trial of MacArthur and Ridgway who have followed in the steps of the Japanese war criminals.

9. The Department of State of the United States has issued to all consular offices a statement of policy guidance advising that such charges should not be dignified by direct refutation. On the contrary, every opportunity should be used to demonstrate that the epidemics were the result of Communist leaders' disregard of troops and civilian population as shown by their failure to take adequate measures to prevent disease. Emphasis should be directed to the fact that United Nations forces, ROK civilians, and POW's are subject to inoculation and sanitation programs throughout the Republic of Korea. (The United Nations fosters this preventive measure.)

10. Last March (1951), the United Nations command in Korea knew some sort of epidemic, feared to be bubonic plague, was raging north of the 38th parallel. Brigadier General Crawford Sams, United Nations Army Chief of Public Health and Welfare, volunteered to obtain details. With three other officers, Sams entered North Korean territory and learned that the epidemic was not plague but hemorrhagic smallpox. For this exploit, he received the D.S.C. The Communists, learning of his mission, broadcast the fantastic story that the United States had deliberately planted germs in North Korea thereby causing the epidemic, and, with the clear intention of perverting these facts, IZVESTIA published a statement, supposedly attributed to a United Press release, which recounted a fantastic story of the "miraculous salvation of the United Nations forces from a smallpox epidemic as the result of a special raid by a group of American doctors in the North Korean rear." For this "heroic exploit," according to the purported United Press report, the American Brigadier General Crawford SOAMES (Sams), who is "head of the public health and social security department at the headquarters of the United Nations forces," received a very high

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military award since Soames' detachment "discovered" the presence of a smallpox epidemic in North Korea.

11. Moscow propagandist again quoted an alleged Associated Press dispatch of 18 May 1951, furnishing details of United States preparations for BW by using Korean PW's as guinea pigs aboard the American landing vessel No. 1091 off Koje (Koje-do) Island. The ship was reported to have installed "a modern laboratory, completely equipped with all gear her scientists would need."

TASS, again quoting the alleged Associated Press dispatch of 18 May 1951, adds to the above the charge that the landing vessel was relocated from Wonsan to Kojede (Koje-do) Island, 40 kilometers S-W of Pusan, in order better to utilize the PW's confined in some half-dozen nearby convict prisons. According to TASS's version of the Associated Press dispatch, 3,000 experiments on oral bacteria and rectal bacteria are being made daily by a 38-man medical team. Brigadier General Crawford Sams is mentioned again as participating in these experiments.

12. The propaganda picture was further enlarged by a Moscow Korean-language broadcast which claimed that 3,000 Korean families have been banished from Japan and that General Ridgway's headquarters were making every possible effort to conceal where the expelled Koreans were sent and what became of them after their deportation. The broadcast raised the conjecture that some of these Koreans had been taken to some deserted island and used for testing new types of bacteriological weapons.

13. A special delegation from the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF), an international Communist organization, has been dispatched to Korea to investigate United Nations "war crimes." Their report is being widely publicized by Communist propaganda media and will, undoubtedly, provide background for additional stories of atrocities.

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