

16 May 51
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KOR: 13

4. North Koreans mass artillery in eastern sector:

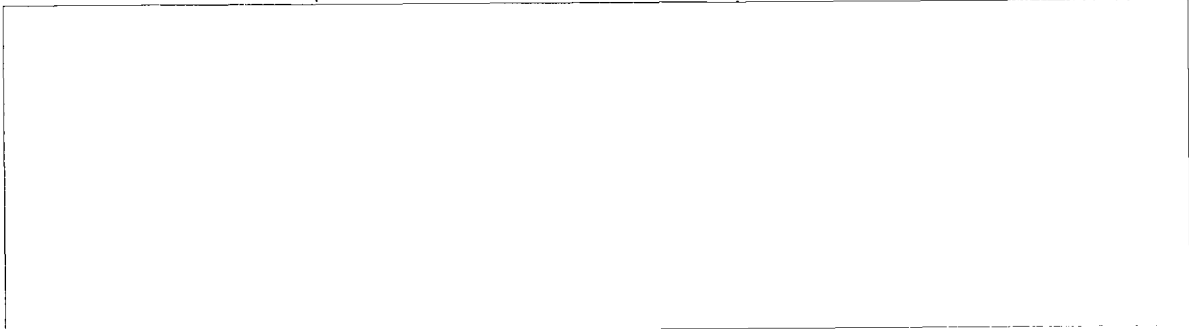
CINCFE Tokyo
15 May 51
ACORN

Preliminary field analysis of recent North Korean messages reveals that all artillery assigned to the North Korean II, III and V Corps (all in the eastern sector) is to be centralized under the command of the II Corps Artillery Commander. Similarly, control of all self-propelled artillery of the three corps is to be delegated to the Artillery Commander's Chief of Staff. In connection with this centralization of control, orders have been issued to assemble the artillery in the "rear areas" and to reconnoiter the North Korean V Corps sectors. (This Corps is currently engaged with ROK elements in the east.)

Comment: Communications intelligence in April revealed that these three North Korean corps had succeeded in building up their artillery strength to almost 600 pieces, including mortars. The placing of this artillery under a centralized command may be indicative of North Korean intentions to employ massed artillery, a favorite Soviet tactic, in the weakly held eastern sector in support of the coming offensive.

While Communist massing of artillery anywhere near the front lines will greatly increase their vulnerability to UN air and artillery counteraction, a concentration in the eastern sector against lightly-armed and sometimes gun-shy ROK troops may work a definite advantage for the enemy.

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