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ADVANCE HEADQUARTERS
FIFTH AIR FORCE
APO 970, Unit 1

25 July 1950

MEMO TO GENERAL TIMBERLAKE

Subject: Policy on Strafing Civilian Refugees

I. THE PROBLEM:

1. To determine the policy for guidance of all Fifth Air Force units in regard to strafing of civilian refugees on the highways.

II. FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM:

2. It is reported that large groups of civilians, either composed of or controlled by North Korean soldiers, are infiltrating U. S. positions.

3. The army has requested that we strafe all civilian refugee parties that are noted approaching our positions.

4. To date, we have complied with the army request in this respect.

III. DISCUSSION:

5. Our operations involving the strafing of civilians is sure to receive wide publicity and may cause embarrassment to the U. S. Air Force and to the U. S. government in its relation with the United Nations.

6. It appears that such civilian groups are marching on the highways through U. S. ground positions. It is not understood why the army is not screening such personnel or shooting them as they come through if they desire such action. Further, it is felt that more suitable targets are available for the air effort, the destruction of which would be of more value to the army in the long run.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS:

7. For the protection of the Air Force, it is recommended that a policy be established whereby Fifth Air Force aircraft will not attack civilian refugees, unless they are definitely known to contain North Korean soldiers or commit hostile acts.

8. It is further recommended that we so inform 8th Army Headquarters.

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