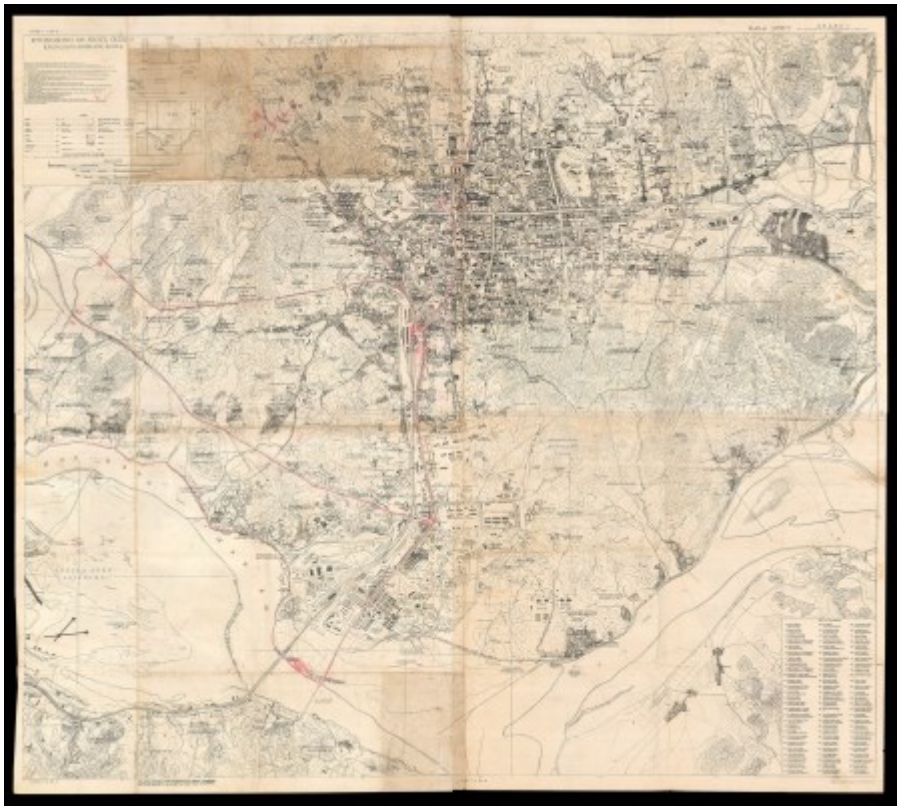

Lithograph map, on four sheets, joined, with contemporary manuscript annotations in red pencil.

SEOUL AT THE MOMENT OF THE DIVISION OF KOREA

Kyongsong or Seoul (Keijo). Kyonggi-Do (Keiki-Do), Korea.

Author
LAKE SURVEY BRANCH, ARMY MAP SERVICE

Publication date
August 1945.

Publisher
Reproduced by 3020th Engr. Topo. Co. (Corps),

Publication place

Physical description
Lithograph map, on four sheets, joined, with contemporary manuscript annotations in red pencil.

Dimensions
965 by 1090mm. (38 by 43 inches).

Notes
This rare – and “secret” – map of Seoul presents the preparations of the US Army towards the end of the Second World War, at a critical moment in the history of Korea.

For millennia, Korea had existed as a unified country, ruled by a succession of kings. This changed in the early-twentieth century, following the Russo-Japanese War, with Korea first occupied, then, in 1910, formally annexed by Japan. The advent of the Second World War, however, meant that

Japanese colonial rule was short-lived. With Japan surrendering on 15th August 1945, the decision was taken by the Allied forces (whose knowledge of the Korean language, let alone complex political situation, was limited) to divide the country into two, along the 38th parallel. The north zone was to be occupied by the Soviet Union, with a communist regime established, while the south was to be occupied by the US, who supported a military government. Originally intended as a temporary solution, as US-Soviet relations deteriorated, Korea became collateral damage of the Cold War – the ramifications of this felt to this day.

The present map, reproduced in August 1945 from an earlier edition of January 1945, compiled for the Commanding General of the US Army Air Forces by the Army Map Service (the US military cartographic agency, part of the US Army Corps of Engineers), reflects the preparations of the US Army at the very moment of the division of Korea. As the note in the top-left corner of the map explains, the map has been put together from ten different sources (from maps by the Japanese Imperial Land Survey, to intelligence data), with a table illustrating the sources that have shaped each section. Detail includes important buildings, such as hospitals, temples, post offices, and police stations, as well as different terrains, the symbols and shading that indicate each explained by a key in the top-left corner.

The map is, as is stated in the top-right corner, “SECRET”, and would have been intended for military use only. It is possible that the manuscript annotations in red crayon reflect proposed or actual US military manoeuvres.

Rare:
We have been unable to trace any other examples of this map.

Bibliography

Provenance

Price: £5000

Inventory reference: 21522

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