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Enclosure to  
Despatch No. 87  
from TaipeiTHE YOUTH DEPARTMENT OF THE CHINESE MOSLEM ASSOCIATION

The Youth Department, an integral part of the Chinese Moslem Association, was inaugurated in Taipei on July 13, 1952, in response to the call made by President Chiang on March 29 for unification of all young people, according to SHIH Tzu-chou (時子綱), Honorary Chairman of the Board of the Association and National Policy Advisor, and CH'ANG Tzu-hsuan (常子勳), religious leader for Taipei district. The predecessor of the Youth Department was the Youth Committee, which came into existence at Chungking during the Sino-Japanese war.

There used to be quite a large number of Moslems on Formosa; however, fifty years of Japanese occupation and lack of outside contact have drastically weakened their religious faith. At present there is only a handful of genuine Formosan Moslems. Over 90% of the four thousand odd Moslems now on Formosa are mainlanders, and about two-thirds are young people. According to a recent registration drive in the southern part of this island, of the 721 registered up to July 26 over 50% (including 12 returned students and 125 army, naval, and air officers) are college and technical school graduates, over 60% are between 20 and 35 years of age, and about one-third are females. These figures cannot be considered conclusive since the registration drive has not come to an end. However, one thing is quite certain: that is, a high percentage of the young Moslems are military men.

Major CHIANG Kuo-chung (蔣國鐘) and YANG Lien-chung (楊連仲), both staff members of the Youth Department, emphasized that whatever policies are laid down by the Government relating to the unification of young people would be followed faithfully by the Youth Department in addition to the propagation of the Islamic faith among young Moslems. In other words, the Youth Department would operate within the framework of the Islamic Association in helping the Government strengthen youth unification and would accept Government policies as its own. The Youth Department with its headquarters established in Taipei is headed by Lieutenant-General MA Ch'eng-hsiang (馬呈祥)\* as Chief Secretary, under whom there are 19 staff members in charge of different activities. Their tenure of office is two years.

\* Ma was born in Ch'inghai Province in 1913. He graduated from the Army College at Nanking, specializing in cavalry. He has been a battalion, regiment and army commander. He fled the Chinese Communist occupation of Sinkiang, coming to Formosa via Pakistan, India, Mecca, Iraq and the Philippines. He is a Kuomintang member.

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As the Youth Department is just beginning to function, projects such as selecting young Moslems to apply for scholarships offered by the Egyptian and Turkish Governments, employment services, financial aid to Moslem students, strengthening religious ties, etc., are still in the planning stage. At present there have been tentatively established four sections in the Youth Department: Business, Organization, Education, and Public Service. A branch office of the Youth Department was set up at Kaohsiung on July 27. Other branches will be established in the course of time at Taichung and Taitung.

The Moslems are well-known for their esprit de corps, and Chinese Moslems are generally regarded as akin to other Moslems the world over. China has a reported Moslem population of fifty million, roughly one-ninth of the total Chinese population. Most of them are spread over the northern and northwestern parts of China mainland. The Chinese Moslems, although considered a separate race, are actually no different from ordinary Chinese except in their way of life. For centuries they have been at odds with the Chinese central government. During the Sino-Japanese war, General PAI Chung-hsi (白崇禧), head of the Association and Vice-Chairman of the Chinese Government Military Strategy Advisory Committee, with Government backing, succeeded to some extent in absorbing quite a large number of Moslems into the Chinese Moslem Association under the anti-Japanese banner. However, it may be recalled that Pai was then branded by some Moslems as a betrayer of Islam because of his unconditional adherence to the Chinese Government. Pai is undisputedly a strong leader of the Chinese Moslems, but by no means the only one. In the fight against Communism, the Government is once more appealing for unification of all Chinese people, and the General once again comes to the fore in activating the Moslem Association and in organizing the Moslems. It must be admitted that a successful unification of Moslems under the anti-Communist banner would greatly further the anti-Communist cause, especially in the matter of foreign relations with Moslem countries and in the event of a counterattack against the mainland. It would be an easy matter for the Youth Department to band together all young Moslems now on Formosa; how effective it will be as a link between the Government and mainland Moslems remains to be seen in spite of the fact that Mohammedanism is incompatible with Communism. This is exactly the task the Youth Department has set for itself.

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