

February 27, 1961

**Cable from the Chinese Embassy in North Korea,
'New Developments in the South Korean People's
Struggle'**

Citation:

"Cable from the Chinese Embassy in North Korea, 'New Developments in the South Korean People's Struggle'", February 27, 1961, Wilson Center Digital Archive, PRC FMA 106-00581-02, 1-5. Translated by Anna Beth Keim.
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/113767>

Summary:

The Chinese Embassy in North Korea describes the South Korean movements for the reunification of the Korean Peninsula.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from ROK Ministry of Unification

Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English
Translation - Korean

[...]

New Developments in the South Korean People's Struggle

To the [Chinese] Foreign Ministry

Copy: Military Intelligence Department

Since the beginning of this year, there have been new developments in the South Korean people's struggle. The chief demands have been for self-directed national reunification, while at the same time masses from every class have further launched all sorts of specific struggles for the right to subsistence and democratic rights. South Koreans, who have long suffered cruel oppression and exploitation at the hands of imperialists, oppose the Jang Myeon-led government's opening the door again to Japanese monopoly capital; especially recently, with opposition to the "Korea-U.S. Economic and Technological [Development] Agreement"; [they] have combined opposition to U.S. invasion and the fight for self-directed national reunification.

South Korea's self-directed national reunification movement developed and gathered steam following various suggestions by the Supreme People's Assembly last November to advance the peaceful reunification of Korea. On January 15th of this year, the "Self-Directed National Reunification Central Committee" planning committee, formed late last year in Seoul by various South Korean political parties, social organizations and democracy activists for the self-directed national peaceful reunification of the South and North, passed and issued a "Reunification Declaration", selecting 999 planning committee members, and by February 25 had already officially established the "Self-Directed National Reunification Central Committee" and passed a resolution to advance South-North contacts and communication.

The declaration and resolution emphasized the principle of independent national decision-making, maintaining that the international trend "is small, weak peoples winning independence one after another"; [that] "without economic independence, there is no political freedom; without political freedom, there is no national independence", [that they] "absolutely cannot become a people dependent on foreign aid", [and that they] "must break away from external forces". This organization established planning organizations in many provinces and in Seoul, and for the past two months has continuously issued positions and actively launched activities; political parties and groups participating in this organization, including the People's Socialist Party and the Socialist Party, also successively issued statements. The "National Front for the Reunification of the Motherland", established on January 9th, put forward slogans of "reunification first, [nation-] building later" and national self-determination, and denounced the "United Nations-supervised" elections as the same old principle of [foreign] aggression, without any practical results. Young adult students organized such groups as the "Nationwide Students' Committee to Advance the Reunification of the Motherland" and the "National Reunification League". The organizations, political parties, etc., described above, all demand that there be written exchange and economic and cultural communications between South and North, and preparations for holding South-North negotiations; they also put forward such propositions as setting up permanent establishments and post offices in the buffer zones, mutual dispatching of journalists and non-governmental inspection groups, and the South and North jointly organizing teams of contestants to participate in international sports contests.

The opinions expressed in some newspapers also condone South-North contacts. For example, the Korea Daily says: "Trading South Korean grain for North Korean fertilizer and electric power is self-evident economic logic, as well as the way to restore villages, revive industry and ease unemployment." The Busan Daily says: "[We] should try out South-North economic exchange, and seek in them the keys for reunification." The Korea Daily feels that written exchange can be carried out

immediately. There is also a flurry of discussion among the masses about such issues as South-North economic exchange. Jang Myeon, when speaking of these circumstances, said: "This street-corner clamor is like a dam bursting." In its commentary, the Hapdong [sic] Press says that calls for reunification are the most resounding among young adult students; these calls have already "taken root and sprouted" not only in Seoul but in universities in such places as Daegu and Busan. Broadcasting stations in Seoul, Daegu, Mokpo and other places put forward such questions as, "What should we as a people do from this day forward?" and, "What are our wishes this New Year?"; the response of many students and masses is, "Reunification is the most urgent issue" and "I wish for the South and North to achieve reunification soon".

A new defining characteristic of the South Korean people's struggle is: The struggle of laboring masses, such as workers and peasants, is growing by the day. According to the pared-down figures issued by the authorities, from last August until the end of last year there were a total of 222 incidences of workers' struggles demanding improved living [conditions] and democratic rights, more than an eightfold increase from the January - April [period] of last year. So far this year, organized dock workers and railroad workers have carried out relatively large-scale strikes and also supported each other; they have been successful in getting salaries raised. Peasants protested exploitative taxation and demanded the distribution of relief grain and reduction of irrigation fees. Fishermen demanded tax exemption for fishing industry-related petroleum use [and] the elimination of exploitative middleman organs. Meanwhile, the struggles of people from all classes cover a very broad scope. For example, the unemployed demand employment, the poor demand relief, laid-off government employees demand stipends, food and beverage industries protest puppet officials "eating for free", disabled veterans have attacked the puppet "Central Affairs Department of the Prime Minister's Office", and vast numbers of youth resist army conscription; struggles by elementary and middle school teachers, especially - for legal recognition of teachers' unions and distribution of teacher stipends - are being launched everywhere, and have won the support of all political parties, social organizations and the masses. These specific struggles reflect [the fact] that some of the specific struggle slogans proposed by the Supreme People's Assembly fit with the South Korean people's immediate requirements. These struggles are mutually compatible with the fight for self-directed national reunification, and have increased the pressure on the Jang Myeon clique.

Opposing an invasion of Japanese monopoly capital is an inevitable reaction on the part of South Koreans demanding self-directed national reunification. The Jang Myeon clique's plan to relieve current economic difficulties with Japanese capital has provoked fury and hatred of the Japanese in people from all walks of life. All political parties and such social organizations as the "Democratic Students' League" have released statements in quick succession, condemning the Jang Myeon clique for betraying the nation's interests and cursing Jang Myeon's Cabinet as "the Yi Wan-yong Cabinet". The "North Gyeongsang Committee to Oppose Japanese Economic Inspection Groups Entering the Country", founded in Daegu, carried out a major demonstration with over 2,000 participants. The "Nationwide Congress Planning Committee for the Struggle Against Japan", composed of over 50 community leaders including Kim Byeong-ro, opposes "bringing our longtime enemies the Japanese into South Korea". The Jang Myeon government was forced to postpone the Japanese economic inspection team visits to South Korea indefinitely, bringing the preparatory talks between Chang and Japan to a standstill.

Anti-American sentiment and anti-American struggles among the South Korean people have been developing and growing more apparent by the day starting in the first six months of last year. At the end of last year, [groups composed] mainly of captains of industry and young adult students founded the "Committee for Advancing National Economic Self-Reliance" and the "Committee for the Struggle to Oppose America and [Gain] Economic Self-Reliance," which opposed raising the U.S. dollar-Korean currency exchange rate, publicly exposing and opposing "American

aid". Within the first two months of this year, vast numbers of Korean workers employed by the U.S. Army demonstrated across the country, and over 3,000 hired-worker representatives from across the country gathered together to demonstrate at the gates of the U.S. embassy, demanding higher salaries and improved working conditions, and opposing prejudice against and exploitation of the [Korean] people. From January to February 1st, South Korea's exchange rate with the U.S. dollar was raised twice, going from 650:1 to 1,300:1. This measure not only raised prices and industrial production costs, it also intensified U.S. control of the South Korean economy, causing extreme displeasure among people from all walks of life; it also aroused indignation in the puppet National Assembly. A strong wave of opposition rose quickly after the "Korea-U.S. Economic and Technological [Development] Agreement" was signed on February 8th. The "Self-Directed National Reunification Central Committee" and all parties and organizations successively released statements, and all newspapers also gave strong criticism; it was unanimously felt that [this] agreement's reaffirmation of all the promises in such military agreements as the "Korea-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty" allowing U.S. representatives to conduct unlimited investigations of the relevant plans, activities and records, and giving diplomatic privileges, etc. to special delegation representatives dispatched by the U.S. constituted a humiliating and unfair agreement that insults the nation and deprives it of sovereignty. Seventeen political parties, including the People's Socialist Party, collectively established the "Committee for the Shared Struggle Against the February 8th 'Korea-U.S. Economic and Technological [Development] Agreement'", demanding that the sovereignty-infringing clauses be eliminated. This committee issued a statement condemning Jang Myeon's "anti-national behavior of ignoring sovereignty"; [they] believe the new agreement will increase the United States' economic enslavement of South Korea and its blatant interference in internal affairs, cause the national split to become permanent, and worsen starvation and poverty. Seoul University students and the masses from such places as Busan and Haeju held a gathering and stated that they would oppose it to the death. Seoul University students demonstrated at the gates of the U.S. embassy, shouting such slogans as "South Korea is not a U.S. concession" and, "The young lions of the April Revolution will once more stain Seoul's streets with blood", and also had clashes with police. The New People's Party assemblymen among them said that the new agreement was similar to the 1905 treaty that betrayed the country to the Japanese. Many parties condemned the Jang Myeon clique as having committed a grave sin [against] the nation, demanding that the puppet National Assembly refuse to approve the agreement, demanding that Jang Myeon resign, and demanding the speedy conclusion of the U.S. army occupation agreement. At present this struggle is still continuing and developing.

The reasons that South Koreans' demand for self-directed national reunification and struggle against the U.S. have gathered steam are: After taking office, Jang Myeon not only did nothing to improve the people's predicament, [he] deepened the people's tribulations and disappointments. Such things as most enterprises shutting down, the worsening decline of small and mid-sized industrial and commercial enterprises, the daily increase in the numbers of unemployed, people who have run out of food, and beggars, rising prices and social unrest, makes people feel, as Seoul's Korea University professor Yi Chang-ryul puts it, "that all has gone pitch-black [with hopelessness]". A number of the fantasies South Koreans cherished prior to overturning Syngman Rhee have been destroyed, and since last year distrust toward the Jang Myeon government has been openly expressed in local elections and speech. With education in real-world affairs, many people have become more aware that the American imperialists' occupation and the Korean split are the source of their own poverty and suffering, and demanded that American imperialist control be cast off, placing [their] hopes on South-North reunification. North Korea's propositions for alleviating the South Korean people's predicament, its willingness to supply economic aid and to have written communications go back and forth, etc., as well as its immediate strong support for the South Korean people's struggles, have also had a considerable effect.

South Koreans urgently demand a change in the current circumstances; their consciousness has been raised, and many different forms of struggle might easily break out. The Hapdong Press said in commenting on the South Korean situation: "It seems that this year will become one of carrying out intense struggle to achieve reunification." Quite a few people speculate that the flames of struggle will likely be re-ignited in South Korea this April, and this is possible. Under U.S. directives, the Jang Myeon clique has already made arrangements for four ground force divisions, preparing to use them to suppress possible large-scale uprisings of the masses in Seoul and other places. But powerful, unifying, progressive leadership has not yet formed in the South Korean people's struggle, and there remains room for improvement in the worker and peasant masses' political struggle. The composition and membership, factional differences, and stated opinions among the reformist parties that more or less represent the nation's intermediate stratum - the capitalist class, small and mid-sized industrial and commercial entrepreneurs, intellectuals, etc - are all very complicated; there is a side that reflects the people's demands and opposes the U.S., and also a vacillating and anti-Communist side. For example, before the "Committee for Self-Directed National Reunification" was established, 30 permanent committee members and 253 planning committee members - including Seo Sang-il, Kim Seong-suk, and Jang Geon-sang - split off; [they] opposed relying on South-North negotiations to achieve reunification, and favored launching the so-called Perpetual Neutrality reunification movement. Young adult students are active in the struggle; there is also a portion that is being used by the ruling class. Those among all South Korean political parties and young adult students who advocate so-called neutral reunification take all sorts of different stands. Thus, the struggle's development will continue to be complicated and tortuous.

[Chinese] Embassy in [North] Korea
February 27 [1961]

