

May 17, 1961

**Cable from the Chinese Embassy in Sweden,
'Swedish News Publications' Comments on the
South Korean Coup'**

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Summary:

The Chinese Embassy in Sweden summarizes the reaction in the local press to the coup in South Korea.

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[...]

Swedish News Publications' Comments on the South Korean Coup

To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the General Staff Departments:

The Stockholm Daily believes that it is still difficult to determine the real background of Monday's coup in South Korea; it is said that "a bunch of young high-ranking officers played a decisive role" and that its nature may be "a social revolution of the same type as those that have occurred in Egypt and other Arab countries".

The Daily News, on the other hand, believes that Jang Myeon had to deal with two types of "extremists": one type were opposition parties that "use every opportunity to create political chaos" and "organize anti-American protests, etc"; the other type "was fearful that left-leaning troublemakers, with support from infiltrating North Koreans, would one day overthrow the legal government", and that those behind the current coup are the latter type.

The Daily News predicted that the coup's hopes for success are miniscule, because "in addition to the navy and air force, the majority of the ground forces are also negative [about the coup]. And America's warnings could very possibly cause them to rise up and oppose the rebels, not support them". The two above-mentioned newspapers both believe that, "even though the military strategists can control Seoul for a few days," from a long-term perspective, "no government can survive in South Korea without American economic aid."

But if in the end the U.S. does not support the rebels and instead exerts "a deadly effect", what the coup's engineers will end up achieving is "the unanticipated revitalization of left-leaning extremist elements".

At the same time, the Stockholm Daily also believes that Jang Myeon was just as bad as Syngman Rhee, and that there was no difference at all: "Even though Jang Myeon had promised, when he became Prime Minister, that a new, relatively good time was on the way, in the end harmful social trends continued to exist and became even worse, incredible inflation made things harder for people with incomes than they had been in the Syngman Rhee era, active-duty troops continued to top 500,000, corruption flourished, and people who opposed the new laws were all labeled Communists; this made it very difficult see any difference between Jang and Rhee".

The [Chinese] Embassy in Sweden
May 17th