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Kolisa-57 Special Report No. 1, 'Trip to RyuKyu'

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Summary:

A special report from Minister Choi to the President after visiting Ryukyu. Choi reports that there is slight chance that Ryukyu will become an independent country rather than becoming incorporated into Japan.

Credits:

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CONFIDENTIAL.

KOLISA-57 - Special Report No.01
Trip to RyuKyu

Excellency,

I have the honour to submit this special report regarding my trip to RyuKyu which was according to the instructions of Your Excellency and was made possible by the good offices of General Lemnitzer.

During the two days stay in RyuKyu, I met American officials and civilians and also the Ryukyus Chief Executive.

I am confident that the trip was worthwhile and I report the details of the trip to Your Excellency as follows:

1. Visit to General Lemnitzer at the Headquarters of the United Nations Command
 2. Meeting with Officials and Civilians in RyuKyu
 3. General description of RyuKyu situation
 4. Conclusions and Recommendations.
1. Visit to General Lemnitzer at the Headquarters of the United Nations Command.

On the afternoon of February 11, I left our country and arrived in Tokyo in the evening of the same day. After my arrival in Tokyo I immediately made a call on Minister Kim. He gave me a telegram from FORMIN saying "Advise Minister Choi not stop over Taipei; directly go from RyuKyu to Hongkong".

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Because of the instruction contained in the telegram I had to change my original schedule. However, the definite schedule was drawn up after I saw General Lemnitzer and the trip to RyuKyu was finalized.

On Wednesday at 1030 I made an appointment to call on General Lemnitzer at his office in the headquarters of the UNC.

Firstly, I told him how much I was impressed with the improvement of the ROKA, especially the planning and research fields which were started by me after I had had a week's study in the office of General Lemnitzer in 1954. At that time he was the Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Research and the same post was occupied by me in our Army at that time. He seemed pleased to listen to my remarks and I feel the friendship between us was established on the occasion in 1954 when I accompanied Your Excellency to the U.S.A.

I then reminded him of the statement made by our Government spokesman Chae Kyung Oh and emphasized to him that one of our national policies is to encourage and assist every race and people to get their self-determination and independence and as far as RyuKyu is concerned our stand is really also to support the stand of the United States on RyuKyu. Since the Japanese are trying to get the U.S. forces out of RyuKyu as soon as is possible and using the "RyuKyu issue" as the ammunition of anti-American policy, the calling upon adjacent countries such as Korea and Free China to resist Japan's plotting against RyuKyuan freedom is really encouraging the firm stand of U.S.A.'s policy. I have urged General Lemnitzer to give the RyuKyuan people the same freedom according to American philosophy of self-determination.

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I then inquired of him if there would be any difficulty in making a trip to the Islands and to see at first hand the real situation of Ryukyu. His reply was - and without hesitation - "You are most certainly welcome to go there" and he instructed his Aide to give me every assistance to go to Ryukyu.

I did not disclose Your Excellency's farsighted plan to General Lemnitzer because I feel it is a long-range plan and the first thing we ought to do right now is to stop the American Authority's thinking of giving back these Islands to Japan and rousing the attention to develop the opportunity for Ryukyuan independence in due course.

My meeting with General Lemnitzer was a most friendly one and I am glad to report to Your Excellency that the General shared the same sentiment as ours.

2. Meeting with Officials and Civilians
in Ryukyu.

At midnight of Thursday-Friday, I left Tokyo and in the early morning of Friday, February 15, arrived at Okinawa airport. I was met by Colonel Holland who was at one time the Senior Advisor of our 20th Division under my command when I was I Corps Commander. He is now the Special Assistant to Lieutenant General Moore, the Acting Governor and commanding the Ryukyu Command. General Lemnitzer is the Governor.

At 1000 hrs the same Friday I made a call on General Moore at his Headquarters. He was flanked by his full staff to meet me. His staff gave a very good orientation on the Ryukyu situation, and we also had quite a long discussion during this meeting.

General Moore arranged for me a very nice guided tour. He had also scheduled a busy entertainment program during my two days stay. I was not particularly interested in the guided tour of the military and civil installations and facilities. However, I did get a good deal of valuable information from the officers who acted as guides and was afforded the opportunity to talk with many people during the two evening entertainments.

It was interesting to note that no single RyuKyuan was present at the aforementioned gatherings and General Moore's office had made only one arrangement for me to meet the RyuKuan and that was the meeting with the Chief Executive, Mr. Thomas. The American authority told me Mr. Thomas is a RyuKyuan and was appointed by the Governor, General Lemnitzer, to administrate the RyuKyuan under the supervision of American authority.

3. General Description of RyuKyu Situation.

The Islands of RyuKyu consist of more than 60 big and small islands; 2,388.24 square kilometers; and have a population of 780,000. The largest Island, Okinawa, is 1,500 square kilometers in size and has a population of 660,000. Naha is the capital.

After more than 70 years of Japanese rule, the RyuKyuan were almost completely "Nipponized", and I am reporting with regret to Your Excellency that the United States has failed to take any positive action to guide the Ryukyuan toward the goal of true "self-determination" and "independence".

According to the San Francisco Peace Treaty, the Ryukyuan Islands had a chance to gain their independence. However, in the statement made by John Foster Dulles, on behalf of the delegation of the United States of America, as co-sponsor of the draft treaty of peace with Japan, at the second plenary session of 224

Signatory Conference at San Francisco, on September 5, 1951, the chances for the Ryukyans to gain their independence seemed to be very dark. The statement follows:

"Article 3 deals with the Ryukyus and other islands to the south and southeast of Japan. These, since surrender, have been under the sole administration of the United States.

"Several of the Allied powers urged that the treaty should require Japan to renounce its sovereignty over these Islands in favour of United States sovereignty. Others suggested that they should be restored completely to Japan.

"In the face of this division of allied opinion the United States felt that the best formula would be to permit Japan to retain residual sovereignty, while making it possible for these Islands to be brought into the United Nations trusteeship system, with the United States as administrating authority"

And Mr. Sebald, the then Political Advisor to General McArthur, and later U.S. Ambassador to Japan, said in his address before the American-Japan Society in Tokyo on September 28, 1951 "..... The net result, therefore, of Article 3 is to retain residual sovereignty in Japan over the Nansei Shoto (including the Ryukyu and Daito Islands) and other specified islands, and, further, to postpone the question of a United Nations trusteeship until such time as a proposal to that effect is made by the United States"

These above quoted statements made by two highly responsible officials of the U.S. Government had completely deadened the hope of "independence" and/or "self-determination" for Ryukyu.

The situation gravely was worsened when the U.S. Government signed an agreement with the Japanese Government concerning the Amami Islands, which are located North of the Ryukyus, on December 24, 1953. In this agreement the U.S. Government agreed

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to Japan assuming full responsibility and authority for the exercise of all powers of administration, legislation and jurisdiction over the territory and inhabitants of the Amami Islands. This American "Christmas Gift" in 1953 gave a hint to the Japanese that the U.S. Authority will eventually turn the Ryukyus also to Japan. Also it gave the impression to Japan that the occupation of Okinawa would only be so long as the Communist threat is in existence.

The fact that the U.S. Government allowed the establishing of Japanese Government Liaison offices in the Ryukyus Islands on May 21, 1953, was responsible for the complete abandonment by the Ryukyuan people of any hope for their future. Their only thought was that the Japanese had again come in bent on re-occupation of the Ryukyuan Kingdom.

Besides the above-mentioned legal mistakes made by the U.S. Government due to ignorance of Ryukyuan history and traditions, the U.S. Authority has made and still is making mistakes also in the administrative and educational and political fields.

a. In the administrative field: the employees of the Civil Administration are all Japanese-minded and Japanese-educated Ryukyuan and it only follows, therefore, the procedures of Japanese Imperialistic Government system.

Before I went to see Mr. Thomas, General Moore and other American officials hoped that I would give Mr. Thomas some lessons which we had learned from our fighting against the Communists and also clear some misunderstandings toward U.S. policy.

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I saw Mr. Thomas at the office of the American Civil Administrator. There was only an interpreter who spoke fairly understandable English, besides me and Mr. Thomas, the Ryukyuan Chief Executive. I told him in a very simple way saying that the sole aim of Communism is to destroy the Nation, the society, the family and the individual right and freedom. That life under the Communist rule will be worse than the life of an animal society. For example, I told him the individuals under the Communist rule will have not only no right to do something, but that individuals even have no right and freedom to do nothing. In the family they will make the son to spy on his father. They will destroy the religion and at the end they will ruin all society of human beings.

Mr. Thomas seemed very interested to listen and told me he himself is anti-Communist.

Then we turned to talk of the United States policy. I told him what we understand of the U.S.A. are:

1. anti-colonialism
2. no territorial desire, and
3. the economic aid is aimed to raise the living standard of aid-receiving people.

He agreed on these. However, he stated that there are people who wanted America to get out as soon as possible because of the "motherly" thought. Through the words "motherly" I found that he meant it as the "reunion of Ryukyu to Japan".

b. In the educational field. All schools are using the Japanese language. It has never occurred to the U.S. Authority to develop the native Ryukyuan language. Someone told me that there is a Ryukyuan native language, but very few people could understand or speak it.

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All teachers are Japanese-educated and they are naturally adopting the education system of Japan. The Authority was proud of having established a university in RyuKyu which did not exist under Japanese rule. I was guided to the site of the university which is a spot from where there is a bird's eye view of the Island and the oceans of both East China Sea and the Pacific. They told me it was the site of the palaces of the RyuKyu Kingdom.

However, when I inquired of the educational language and the origin of the professors, I was told that they are Japanese-educated professors and using the Japanese language as the medium of teaching.

c. In the political field. When I inquired of the political situation, the staff officer who briefed me on this problem said:

"The majority of the people wanted to maintain the present status in order to develop the "economy" under the assistance of U.S. aid. They do not insist on the return to Japan in the very near future. The present Chief Executive, who was appointed by the U.S. authority is the leader of this majority group. There is also a minority of people who insist on returning to Japan right now."

I then inquired of him how he could find out the "majority" and the "minority". He told me these were according to information gathered from various presses and speeches which were expressions of the people.

I then asked him if there was any one to speak for the "independence of RyuKyu". His answer was "No". I told him that it seemed we could not hear the true voice of the people. What they can learn is only from those people who were educated by the Japanese Imperialism and the U.S. Authority has never tried to search for the true voice of the people themselves.

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I inquired further if they knew Mr. Tsai Chang, the Ryukyus Chief Delegate of APACL. They said "Yes, we have heard of him, however, he does not have the slightest influence on the people in Ryukyu".

Although we did have a hot discussion on this problem, these U.S. officials, including General Moore, felt it was a worthwhile talk, because gradually they are also beginning to feel that the Japanese are people not to be trusted, and they also feel that our government's views on the Ryukyu are supporting their continuance of the administration of the Ryukyu Islands.

Although the American officials could not seem to express their opinions on their problem clearly and frankly, still there was an American civilian, who is in charge of "Caltex" oil in the Ryukyu Islands, who told me privately that he is insisting on the retention of Okinawa for a long time not only because we have to fight the Communists, but also to prevent another "Pearl Harbour". He said the statement made by the Government spokesman of the Republic of Korea and my visit to Ryukyu has given much strength to the U.S. Government in Okinawa.

He is an old hand of Asia. He suffered very much by the Japanese during the second World War. He described the Japanese as "they will bow as low as you want; when they need your help. However, in the mind they are preparing to blow the Yang-Ki to death when the opportunity comes. This time they will not fail.....".

I was much impressed by his frank talks.

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4. Conclusions and Recommendations:

From the above described situation I have reached the following conclusions and recommendations:

a. There are no signs of efforts being made by the present Authority to develop the philosophy of self-determination.

b. The present leaders, who are recognized by U.S. Authority, seemed to have the confidence that the RyuKyu Islands are already in Japanese possession. The divisions of opinions are only either "in the future" or "right now". They know sooner or later the administration of the Islands will be transferred to the government of Japan.

c. It is regrettable that there is not in existence any political group who is insisting on "independence". I am not sure if Mr. Tsai Chang, the Chief Delegate of APACL, has any influence on the people in the RyuKyuan Islands. And it seemed that he is neither liked by the pro-Japanese RyuKyuan leaders nor by the American authority.

d. It seemed that the American Authority has the opinion that the RyuKyuan could not have the capability of independence from the economic point of view.

Although my fact-finding visit to RyuKyua left me with pessimistic impressions, still I would like to recommend the following points in order to support our national policy.

We should be farsighted and long-range in our endeavours and efforts to attain the goal of Your Excellency and we must try and achieve this goal despite so pitiful and pessimistic a situation.

The geographical position of the RyuKyu Islands is so important that it would be for us a fight for life or death.

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When it is controlled by an unfriendly country it is evident that both our seaway and air traffic toward south-east Asia will be encircled and blocked.

With these purposes in mind I humbly make the following recommendations to Your Excellency:

a. To charge to our Ambassador to the United States the responsibility to advise and persuade the U.S. Authority to develop the real philosophy of self-determination for the RyuKyuan people. Further to remind them that the U.S. is doing something which will eventually only be of benefit to Japan.

b. To charge to our Ambassador to Free China the responsibilities:

1) to morally and materially support the RyuKyuan struggle against colonial moves of Japan; and

2) to get the full cooperation of Free China on this matter.

c. We should advise and assist the Chairman of the RyuKyuan Revolutionary Committee to get into the RyuKyua Islands and influence the people directly, or we have to find another leader who has a real influence on the people in the RyuKyu Islands.

If the "independence" or "self-determination" sentiments and voices can not stem from the people inside of RyuKyua then the fate of RyuKyu will certainly be one to be pitied.

d. There could be several possible formulae such as:

1) For a certain period place the Islands under the trusteeship of a country who had never had colonial or imperialistic influence in the history of the RyuKyuan. This country should also be geographically close to the Islands. The Republic of Korea is in a position to take over this trusteeship and to assist in the development of the philosophy of

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self-determination and finally to achieve the independence in due course.

2) Under the trusteeship, for a certain period, of two countries: our country and the Republic of China would be in a good position to assume these responsibilities.

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3) Under the trusteeship of three countries, such as Korea, China and Japan.

4) Continue the present situation until the philosophy of self-determination is developed to such a degree that the people of Ryukyu could establish their own democratic government.

5) Under the trusteeship of Japan alone, which we must most desperately oppose.

These above observations and recommendations are based only on a two-day visit. I feel it is too vigorous to make this report on so vital and important a problem. Further, I regret that I could not personally meet Mr. Tsai Chang, the Chairman of the Ryukyuan Revolutionary Committee, who is living in Keelung, Taiwan. My plans to visit Taiwan were dropped because of the sudden instructions contained in the telegram from FCRMIN which I received upon my arrival in Tokyo.

With sentiments of deepest loyalty and highest esteem.

Respectfully,



Choi, Duk Shin

Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary
Republic of Korea to Vietnam

His Excellency

President of Republic of Korea.

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