

November 21, 1957
**Letter No. 99 from the President (Syngman Rhee) to
Minister Duk Shin Choi**

Citation:

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Summary:

President Rhee briefly responds to Choi's previous reported opinions on Korean unification and the threat of Red China and Japan.

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Transcript - English



November 21, 1957.

No. 99

TO: Minister Duk Shin Choi
Saigon

FROM: The President

I wish to acknowledge receipt of your weekly report Number 062 dated November 8, and the photographs showing some of the exhibition at the cultural fair for which I thank you.

I am sure you fully realize how difficult it is to send any of our art goods abroad particularly to those nations where the Reds are very active. We can never predict what might happen to them. Not only the communists but also the Japanese will do anything to hamper our efforts to show our art treasures to some of the Asian people.

In most of the countries where the British have been dominating for many years and are now forced to withdraw, the gap was readily filled by the Reds. When America advised the Egyptians to withdraw the British from their land it never thought of the consequences. It is not only the communists who are trying to wedge themselves in everywhere but the Japanese as well. The latter use the same method because they know that sooner or later the communists will be defeated and also that America will never be the leader in the Orient. The Japanese are quietly preparing for that day by sending out technicians to work in underdeveloped countries.

I think you should write to some of the people you met during your Asian tour and explain to them the necessity of keeping the Communists and Japanese out of their countries because their national lives will be undermined and they will be easily influenced by the enemies' propaganda.

I have carefully read your outline in regard to our unification. To my mind the only way to fight communism is by using military might and as you very well know our people are ready but preparations being so inadequate we would have to sacrifice our people as the Americans will not support us in any unilateral action against the reds now.

As you undoubtedly know, they have not even provided their own troops with modern weapons which they had promised long ago. Fortunately the launching of the two satellites has wakened up the American government officials and they are now preparing for a better defense program.

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In Washington the air is rife with rumors to the effect that the communists might test America by attacking Korea. U.S. army leaders seem to be very much concerned about this. I am sending you a copy of the speech made by General Lemnitzer which was reprinted in The Korean Republic and from it you will readily note the change in American policy. Democracy always takes long to stir up the people in support of their administration.

With regard to opening up of a second front on the mainland of China, you have no doubt read President Chiang's statement where he pledged to the U.S. that he would not do it, so this is out.

The moral pressure in the U.N. cannot be counted on because as you know U.N. is divided by the veto power and even if it intends to undertake anything the organization will never succeed in putting it across.

You are perfectly right in saying that we should accredit one envoy to several posts etc., but unless these countries agree to exchange envoys on an ambassadorial level we should not do it. As you say, the question of prestige is involved.

Japan has ambassadors everywhere while we have only a minister and I believe it would cost the same amount of money. I wish you would quietly work towards the raising of the legation to embassy status.

I am very pleased that the Philippine government made it possible for us to raise our legation to an embassy and sooner or later the government of Vietnam might see fit to do the same but I caution you not to show any anxiety because we might give up the idea for the time being.

I appreciate your suggestion to deal with the home government rather than through delegations to international conferences, but we cannot do that with countries like America, England, etc., where our people are stationed. With Governments that have no diplomatic representation with us we could just contact their delegates. I do not think it would be correct for our government to contact the Ceylonese government directly but our people abroad should talk to the Ceylonese representative in the country where he is stationed and let him report home. This seems to be the proper way.

Enclosure: Korean Republic - November 21

Full text of Gen. Lemnitzer's speech

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