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Letter, Syngman Rhee to J. W. Staggers

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Summary:

Syngman Rhee explains why Grafe-Callahan Company's bid was rejected for the tungsten contract.

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June 28, 1955

Dear John:

You referred to my letter of September 1, 1954 in which I said you were not working in harmony with our Embassy in Washington. That must have come to you as a surprise. However, my remarks were not concerned with the question of the tungsten deal, but only to let you know that the Ambassador found it difficult to help you in everything you wished him to do for you. But that is not important and perhaps I should not have said this to you in the first place.

In reference to the tungsten contract, we wanted you to recommend some good company capable of handling the tungsten operation. Later on my attention was called to the Grafe-Callahan Company which you recommended and I desired to do all I could to help that company. You may remember however, that it took 12 to 15 months to get these people. Nowadays we cannot sit so long a time without making efforts to get things done.

You know I am not handling all these matters. There are so many companies who make bids and there are proper authorities to handle this matter. But when the decision was made, I inquired why the Grafe-Callahan Company had lost. I ascertained in the first place that the Grafe-Callahan Company bid was among the highest, and in the second place some of the United States Government authorities thought the Utah Construction Company highly reputable. I could not change their decision made at that time.

At present, the U.S. no longer buys our tungsten and the mines are almost at a standstill. However, the young man who is in charge of tungsten operations believes we should employ the Utah Company to set up a refinery to produce the tungsten in a proper way to our best interests. If the Grafe-Callahan Company has sufficient interest to install all the proper machines for us we may consider their proposition, although at present the tungsten business is almost closed. Some day the U.S. may be in need of it again. Some of our Government authorities advocate that

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the tungsten mines be closed up for a while and perhaps we may decide to do this. Unless we see an immediate possibility of demand for the material, our people do not think it wise to invest a lot of money while we have so much other construction work to do.

I am sorry you wasted so much of your time and energy in this matter. If you are still interested, you may get in touch with the Grafe-Callahan people and see what they have to say about it.

Sincerely,