

November 3, 1955

**Letter, Kim Yong-shik of the Korean Mission in Japan
to President Syngman Rhee**

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Summary:

On the issues and conflicts regarding conservative merger in Japan; Japanese economic growth

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REPUBLIC OF KOREA

KOREAN MISSION IN JAPAN

Tokyo, November 3, 1955

Excellency:

I. During the past week the move toward the conservative merger in Japan reached a deadlock due to the difference of views between the Democrats and Liberals over the question how to select the new party head; the latter favoring elections among the Diet members, whereas the formula of consultations favored by the former. Notwithstanding, various factors indicate that the conservative merger will materialize, after all, with Premier Hatoyama as the head of the new conservative party.

Pending the realization of the conservative merger all the major diplomatic decisions, such as the Philippine-Japanese reparations and Russo-Japanese talks, are being delayed. The United States apparently endorses the conservative merger, because only through it the current political situation of Japan will be stabilized in her favor.

On the other hand there is some fear among the local diplomatic circles as well as certain Jap government officials that the Socialists' strength in Japan might come to the fore in about five years' time. This fear is felt especially because the Japanese Socialists are different in characteristics from the British Labor Party in that the former advocates pro-Communist bloc foreign policy to a great extent.

Several months ago I reported that the chances for the Japanese Socialists to take over government in foreseeable future were very slim. This still remain true under the present circumstances. Another consideration is that in case the situation changes and the Socialists become powerful enough to vie headon against the conservative

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His Excellency
President Syngman Rhee

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party, conservative leaders are likely to mould the public opinion along the expansionism-line.

The other day I had a chance to meet the Philippine Minister here, Mr. Jose F. Imperial, who just came back from his consultation trip to Manila. He said that there existed considerable difficulties in negotiating with the Japanese on the reparations issue. When I asked him about the US attitude in that regard, Minister Imperial replied that the United States takes 'hands-off' policy. Judging from his remarks, it appears that the United States is afraid of giving the Japanese the impression that she is sided with any opposite countries in negotiations involving the Japanese, as is the case with our talks with the Japs.

II. In the meantime, the Japanese economic situation continues to be improving. Particularly, the international trade balance continues to follow the upward trend and as of the end of September the total foreign currency possessed by the Japanese Government reached the all-time high of US\$1,300,000,000 which far surpasses the figure during the Korean War boom.

Separately, according to the announcement by the Jap Ministry of Transportation a plan is now under way to construct a total of 700,000 tons of vessels by the end of this year and another 1,200,000 tons in the coming year. Considerable portion of these vessels are for export.

The Tokyo Trade Fair of Red China has been open for the past three weeks here. The fair is sponsored on the Jap side by the Association for Promotion of International Trade and the Dietmen's Group for Trade between Red China and Japan and was arranged between them and the visiting Red Chinese Trade Mission earlier this year.

In this connection the Chinese Ambassador here, Mr. Hollington K. Tong, told me the other day that the Japs were quite disappointed at the fair, because the Red Chinese were contemplating about the same kinds of goods for export to Japan as they had in mind for export to China. The Jap business circles now realize that there is only limited room for Japanese goods' being consumed by the continental market.

With sentiments of loyalty and esteem, I remain

Most respectfully,

W. G. L. Kim

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