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Letter No. 43 from Syngman Rhee to Young Kee Kim

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Summary:

President Rhee writes on the efforts of the Unites States to induce the Asian countries to sign a mutual security pact with Japan.

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2 May 1957

No. 43

To Minister Young Kee Kim

From the President

We are deeply disturbed by the recurrent efforts of the United States State Department, invariably supported by Nationalist China, to induce the independent nations of Asia to join in the formation of a mutual security pact with Japan as a key member. We note with warm approval the continuing opposition to these proposals by the Philippines Government, and its realization, as reflected in the Philippines press, that Japan has not abandoned her aggressive intentions toward Asia, and could be expected -- given the opportunity -- to seize the initiative and try to impose her will anew not only in Northeast Asia, but also in the SEATO Treaty area as well.

I wish our appreciation of this stand to be expressed to the Philippines Government, together with the expression of our views on these matters, along the following lines;

We would strongly advocate and support -- in fact feel there is imperative need for -- an organization that would really help the democratic nations of Asia in their struggle against Communism, and that would be genuinely anti-Communist in fact as well as name. But in all the endeavors which have so far been made, we have seen little, if any, sincerity.

It is axiomatic that if an organization is to be genuinely anti-Communist, it cannot include a single nation which is not. We simply cannot understand -- and would certainly like to know the reaons for -- the seeming presumption by the United States and Nationalist China that Japan is anti-Communist, when more and more consistently and more and more openly Japan has been orienting herself toward friendship with the entire Communist bloc, and particularly with Red China and the Soviet Union.

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Before Japan should be considered for membership in a NEATO or any such group, she should outlaw her Communist party, as has been done in the Philippines, sever all relations with Soviet Russia and Red China, and stand unquestionably firm alonside all the other truly anti-Communist nations. Then -- but only then -- could we welcome her to membership in anything deserving to be called a mutual security pact.

For more than 10 years, the Republic of Korea has been trying to forgive and forget the past in the hope that Japan might be persuaded to stand together with us in the face of the imminent danger of the Communist expansion movement. But we are now convinced that Japan has not had a change of heart; that, indeed, she does not wish to live in peace and harmony with her neighbors. In fact, with the aid of the Soviet Union, Red China, and even of the United States, Japan quite clearly is trying to play the same old dangerous game of power politics, in covetous anticipation of resuming her former role as the dominating power in Asia.

With the almost unbelievably strong influence Japan seems to have over certain American statesmen, she has even succeeded in winning their support of her stand between the democratic countries on one side and the Communists on the other. What she obviously wants is freedom of action to choose, in selfish expediency, whichever side is mot beneficial to her at any given moment.

As further examples of this influence, just last week the American State Department delivered to Tokyo a new and materially relaxed proposal for Japanese trade with Red China, which the U.S. will support at the COCOM meeting in Paris next month. And Secretary Dullues announced that, while the U.S. intended to remain in Okinawa for some time to come, it did not intend to hold and oocupy the Ryukyus permanently, and that their ultimate sovereignty remains with Japan.

Nationalist China's continuing support of Japan as an anti-Communist nation is equally hard to understand. Surely it is not forgotten that it was following Japan's former occupation and reduction of the Ryukyus to servitude that she also seized Formosa. And in recent weeks a Japanese Socialist Party mission to Peiping agreed with Choi En-lai that the question of Formosa was the biggest stumbling block to establish-

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ing full relations between their countries, which the Japanese Government has made no secret of strongly favoring.

American statesmen have told us ever since the end of World War II that they thought their build-up of Japan was the only way to keep Japan from going to the Communist camp. But they have never been able to answer our questions as to what will happen and who will defend against Japan if, as now seems so likely, Japan turns against the U.S. and lines up with the Communists for what she considers her selfish advantage of the moment.

The U.S. statesmen who seem so bent on restoring Japanese hegemony in Asia and who, along with the Chiang Kaishek Government, seem so insistent that Japan be a guiding and dominant power among Free Asian Nations, should first make certain that Japan abandons both her Communist friendships and her aggressive designs on Asia, and demonstrates a genuine willingness to live as an equal with other independent, freedom-loving, Asiatic nations.