

April 5, 1956
**Letter from the President (Syngman Rhee) to Lt.
General Choi Duk-shin**

Citation:

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<https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/121025>

Summary:

President Rhee orders Choi Duk Shin to travel to Formosa (Taiwan) and South Vietnam in order to develop diplomatic relations and initiate discussions on a possible mutual defense pact. President Rhee specifically requests the exclusion of Japan from the defense pact.

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April 5, 1956

TO: Lt. General Choi Duk-shin

FROM: The President

Before appointing you as the first Republic of Korea Minister to Vietnam, it was decided that you would go to Vietnam to establish relations between our two countries. Later someone else may be appointed to enable you to devote yourself to a military career.

It is true that the Vietnam Government has delayed appointing a minister to Korea but they have quietly informed this Government that their difficulty is in their having few experienced men for such posts. Since they are in the process of organizing their government it is not easy for them to find a qualified man to send to Korea. This is a situation which our Government can fully appreciate since we are experiencing similar problems. We are assured the Vietnam Government is trying to find a suitable representative to send here and is anxious to have representation in Korea.

I want you to go to Vietnam as soon as possible. Even the American officials approve of our sending a representative to this country. Furthermore, sentiment is growing in favor of a mutual defense pact being concluded among Vietnam, Formosa, and Korea. Our American friends favor such a pact.

I want you to stop in Formosa on your way to Vietnam to talk with the President of Nationalist China or its Foreign Minister and find out how this Government feels about the matter. I believe President Chiang supports the idea of a mutual defense pact. However, some recent news reports from China have advocated that Korea, Formosa, and Japan agree on an anti-Communist pact. Please tell the Chinese officials whom you meet that Korea insists that Japan be left out of anti-Communist associations of this kind because the Japanese Government is clearly not anti-Communistic in its attitude. If Japan is left out, she will sooner or later have to come to terms with us since our policies will be supported by all free nations. Japan must first take a definitely anti-Communist stand, and I am certain that you can persuade the Chinese Government not to

raise the question of Japan's inclusion as an anti-Communist nation at this time.

When you arrive in Vietnam you can discuss this matter with the Vietnam officials and find out what the attitude of the Vietnam Government is toward Japan. Korea is in a better position than either Formosa or Vietnam and you should be able to get them to agree with us.

I want to repeat that you should leave right away. You know the situation there and when you feel that satisfactory arrangements have been made and a successor can take over we may consider appointing a person to succeed you in this post.