

April 1956

Draft Letter from the President (Syngman Rhee) to Lt. General Choi Duk-shin

Citation:

"Draft Letter from the President (Syngman Rhee) to Lt. General Choi Duk-shin", April 1956, Wilson Center Digital Archive, B-333b-093, The Korean Legation in Vietnam, Reports from the Korean Mission to the United Nations and Republic of Korea Embassies and Legations, Syngman Rhee Institute, Yonsei University.
<https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/121029>

Summary:

President Rhee drafts an order to Choi Duk Shin to travel to Formosa (Taiwan) and South Vietnam in order to develop diplomatic relations and initiate discussion on a possible Seoul-Saigon-Taipei mutual defense pact. President Rhee specifically requests the exclusion of Japan from the defense pact.

Credits:

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Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

Pl. Keep as original. Copy for For. Min Cleo
 X original to Gen Chai

Before I appointed you as the first minister to Viet nam we had talked it over that you will go there to open up the relations between these to countries. and later on ^{so that you can} you may appoint someone else to devote yourself to the mil career. It is true that the Vietnam government has delayed ^{the appointment of a Min.} but they have quietly informed us that their difficulty lies in the fact that they have no experienced man and they are just in the process of organizing their government and it is difficult to find the right man. We had our difficulties in the same way more or less and we sympathize with them fully. They are looking for a suitable person (and are very anxious to do it.) I want ^{you} to start your trip right away ^{even} because the American ^{appreciates} government heartily approves of our sending ^{some one} there. Furthermore the sentiment is growing strongly in favor of a mutual defense pact which will be concluded between Vietnam, Formosa and Korea. Our American friends are also in favor of such pact. I want you to stop in Formosa on your way and quietly discuss with the Foreign Minister or Pre Chiang and find out what they think about the plan. I know Pres Chiang is enthusiastically advocating that plan. However ^(Ku Chen, Kung) some Chinese publicly advocate that Formosa and Japan should sign a anti Communist pact. I want you to take up this question against up with the Chinese telling them that J has to be left out of the anticommunist organization of any kind. Because J is not anticommunist. If we keep them out, J will have sooner or later come to our terms because J's vacillating attitude keeps J out of any pact with us two nations, and our policy will be supported by all free nations. J will be forced to come to our terms and stand definitely as an anti communist government. By telling ^{this} them you will convince them that J should ^{not} be included. I am certain that you can persuade the Chinese government not to raise the Japanese question in this connection again.

And we feel that if Form and Vietnam are willing to come to a pact with us we will be willing to go in with them.

When you reach Vietnam you can talk over the matter with them and find out what they really want to do. Of course, we are in a better position than either of them. It will be an easy matter for you to get the best terms we can.

I wish to repeat that you are to live right away- you know the situation there and when you have the situation satisfactorily arranged we may consider to appoint a successor.