

May 13, 1954
Letter, John W. Staggers to Syngman Rhee

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Summary:

John W. Stagger met with representative Shafer about Resolution 219 and the proposed Private Enterprise Plan.

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The Syngman Rhee Institute

JOHN W. STAGGERS
ATTORNEY AND COUNSELLOR AT LAW
508-511 COLUMBIAN BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D. C.

May 13, 1954

The Honorable, Dr. Syngman Rhee
President, Republic of Korea
Seoul, Korea

Dear Dr. Rhee:

I arrived home safely and much to my surprise, I found that everyone had gotten along very well without me. I shed my traveling clothes and put on my fighting armor for Korea. So far, it has not been punctured.

Immediately upon my return to the office, I called and made an appointment with James Cromwell. I informed him that his action here, in having Representative Paul W. Shafer introduce the resolution had not only displeased you, but everyone who had come in contact with it. He insisted that he was trying to help Korea. I pointed out to him, that it had the opposite effect.

Also, I pointed out that he was only furnishing our enemies (Korea's enemies) with new weapons to be used against Korea. I advised him that I had an appointment with Representative Shafer and that I intended to do everything I could to have the resolution pigeonholed or withdrawn. He insisted that I was making a mistake. I told him I could not see it that way and I wanted him to know what action I proposed to take.

I spent an hour going over the Korean situation with Representative Shafer and he has agreed not to take any action on the resolution. I feel sure that I have made a very strong friend out of Representative Shafer for Korea.

Following this, I asked him what his reaction would be to a proposal that all funds appropriated for Korea be made direct to the Korean Government, and that a small committee be provided for by Congress, to be appointed by the Korean Government, to see to it and report back to Congress that the money was spent for the rehabilitation of Korea. I also pointed out to him that if this procedure was followed, the cost would not run more than two to five per cent for putting the plan into effect against forty or fifty per cent under the present methods of operation. His response was that he liked the suggestion. He advised me that he was going to Michigan over the weekend, but asked me to meet his representative in his office Saturday at 11:00 A.M. to develop an outline to be followed as suggested by me. Representative Shafer also stated that he would like to have my full and complete statement in writing, given to him so that he could present it to other Congressmen. He stated also, that the information which I had given him was what the Congress needed and would like very much to have.



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Dr. Rhee

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I called Jay Jerome Williams. I thought I would have him help me prepare the statement. He advised me that he was leaving for Connecticut within a few hours. I will prepare the statement for Representative Shafer over the weekend.

You will be interested to know that I covered the situation with him as I saw it on my last trip to Korea. I pointed out to him that the Koreans were facing the situation with a determination that was unequalled anywhere in the world. They were not complaining; they were going forward without tears in their eyes; and, by this indomitable spirit you can see the results of their individual efforts wherever you go.

The expense of carrying this program through will run approximately Twelve Hundred Dollars (\$1200.00) per month. If you wish a breakdown on these figures, I will be very glad to give it to you.

There are many other things which I wish to write you about but will defer doing so until next week. I felt that it was important to get this letter out today, so that you can be assured that no action would be taken by Congress that would be detrimental to Korea's best interest.

With kind personal regards to both you and Madame Rhee, I am

Sincerely yours,



J. W. STAGG

JWS:dgo
LETTER NO. 96
VIA DIPLOMATIC POUCH

P. S.

You will find enclosed a clipping from one of the local newspapers upon my return.



Staggers Returns To Laurel After Visit Of Three Months In Korea

John W. Staggers of Contee returned on Sunday from a three months' trip to Korea made at the request of President Syngman Rhee whom he has served for many years as legal advisor. While in Korea, Mr. Staggers attended a number of official functions and was introduced by President Rhee as one of his "oldest and best friends and a great benefactor of Korea." At one ceremony Mr. Staggers was presented by the Mayor of Seoul with a key to the City.

Upon landing in San Francisco last week on the way to his Maryland home, Mr. Staggers gave interviews to the press. He stated that the progress of the United States' and United Nations' programs for the rehabilitation of Korea was quite disappointing. In sharp contrast, the aid financed by private American contributions and administered by the American-Korean Foundation was, he said, very effective and is greatly appreciated by the Korean people.

Concerning the Geneva Conference, presently in session for the purpose of bringing about a diplomatic settlement of the Korean War, Mr. Staggers expressed pessimism. He refused to give a direct answer to the question: Would President Rhee attempt to reunite his country by force in the event the Geneva Conference failed to bring about the removal of the foreign Communist armies from North Korea.

He pointed out that President Rhee is probably the best educated chief of state in the world today (after exhausting the curriculum of oriental learning, he earned de-



John W. Staggers

grees from George Washington University, Harvard, and Princeton) and his record proves him a far-sighted statesman. Mr. Staggers stated that it was reasonable to assume that whatever course of action President Rhee decided upon would be based on wisdom backed by a thorough knowledge of world affairs.

Mr. Staggers retains a keen interest in local as well as international affairs.