

October 19, 1955

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

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Summary:

On Kim's meeting with members of office regarding Omura case

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REPUBLIC OF KOREA

KOREAN MISSION IN JAPAN

Tokyo, October 19, 1955

Excellency:

I beg to acknowledge with appreciation the receipt of Your Excellency's letters dated October 10 and memorandum showing our policy toward Japan. I will keep in mind the said memorandum as valuable guiding principles in dealing with the Japanese.

I. After I met the Japanese Justice Minister Hanamura last week (on which I reported last week), he sent one of his Bureau Chiefs to Omura for fact-finding. The Justice Ministry also notified this office of its desire to have talks with this office. Accordingly, I sent members of my office to the Justice Ministry to talk with the Japanese officials for the settlement of the Omura case.

According to their report after the meeting with the Japanese side, the Japanese Government presented the following proposal:

Japan will release the entire group of Korean detainees who entered Japan before the end of World War II on condition that Korea accepts all of the pre-war Koreans who will be detained hereafter.

Or, in case the above proposal is not acceptable to our side, as an alternative, Japan will release the entire pre-war Korean detainees from Omura on condition that Korea accepts the deportation of recalcitrants among the pre-war Koreans.

I instructed our officers to reject the above Japanese proposal, and instead demand that Japan should release all of the pre-war Korean detainees unconditionally. In the course of the talks the Japanese Justice Ministry officials pointed out that twenty-nine (29) of the pre-war detainees are Communists.

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His Excellency
President Syngman Rhee

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According to information the Japanese Foreign Ministry yesterday held a staff conference to discuss the Omura case, however, has not reached any decision to accept our terms yet.

The local press on Oct. 14 reported that two Japanese fishing vessels trespassing our zone were fired upon by our naval craft. This week a group of representatives of Japanese fishing industry visited the Prime Minister and petitioned for an early release of Japanese fishermen held at Pusan and also to extend protection to Japanese fishing vessels in the said waters. They demanded that the Japanese Government take a stiff attitude in this regard. They also requested the use of the Self Defense Force vessels for this purpose. Premier Hatoyama is reported to have avoided direct answer, merely saying that he would do his best in this regard.

These representatives also met Japanese Defense Board Chief Sunada, making the same request. According to one of the local dailies, Sunada told the petitioners that if the Japanese Government so decided, he would mobilize Japanese fleet to protect fishing boats from outside attacks and that he was confident of victory in this case.

At a cocktail given by Japanese Foreign Minister Shigemitsu for the heads of local diplomatic missions last night (Oct. 18) I met a number of Japanese officials. The party was attended by more than 30 ambassadors and ministers here. On this occasion Asian Bureau Director Nakagawa of the Japanese Foreign Ministry told me that he was quite surprised at the way the local papers reported the Sunada remarks. He said that the papers skipped a part of his remark that he wanted to settle the matter peacefully, etc.

I bluntly told Nakagawa that the paper I read reported that Sunada said that he would mobilize naval forces if the Cabinet so decided.

Further check-up with the local news agency by this office this morning revealed that Sunada claims the paper misquoted his remarks. (The contents of his remarks were already reported to the Government by cable.) It is felt necessary that our naval force maintain superiority over Japanese naval force in order to protect our zone from Japanese intrusion.

Nakagawa at the same time told me that his Ministry held a staff meeting to discuss the Omura case and it was generally agreed that all the pre-war Koreans would be released, except for a group of recalcitrants. I repeated

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our insistence that all the detainees must be released unconditionally for satisfactory settlement of the case. He also implied to me that the Japanese side would withdraw the property claims if the talks were resumed. I made it clear to him again that the property claims should be withdrawn unconditionally.

As I reported last week, the Japanese Government is now under fire to seek the release of Japanese fishermen held at Pusan. Unless they are released soon the Matoyama Cabinet will be placed in a difficult position when the Diet is reconvened. So far, however, the Japanese Government has not shown any signs to agree to our terms. I will continue to watch future development of this issue.

Pyongyang Radio quoted North Korean puppets as demanding that the Japanese Government permit the entry of North Korean Red Cross representatives to negotiate for the release of Korean detainees at Omura. They maintain, according to the press report, that it is unfair for the Japanese to negotiate only with the Republic of Korea on this matter. The North Korean puppet spokesman is further quoted as saying that demanding that Japan immediately release the entire Korean detainees.

II. According to the press report US Ambassador in Seoul, William S.B. Lacy, is scheduled to leave Seoul on Thursday due to his ill health, etc. Earlier the Nippon Times reported an INS dispatch, originated from Seoul, concerning the alleged feud between our side and Lacy over the tax issue. (Please refer to the attached clipping.)

It is a matter of usual practice for Japanese press to play up any story indicative of disharmony existing between the US side and our country.

III. Last Saturday, Oct. 15, we notified the Japanese side officially that we would not purchase chemical fertilizer from Japan for the reason of insufficient stock on Japan's part. The notification was made in order to withdraw our formal proposal in this regard made a few weeks ago.

With sentiments of loyalty and esteem, I remain,

Most respectfully,



Enclosure: a/s