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December 12, 1955

**Letter, Minister Yong Shik Kim [Kim Yong-shik] to
the Office of the President**

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Summary:

Request to hold reply to Japanese and explanation of ROK government's stance
regarding joint statement

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December 12, 1955

To: Minister Yong Shik Kim

From: The President

I have read your letter of December 1st and other reports of the same date with keen interest.

One thing you ought to know is that in my cable instruction to you of November 31, I asked you to hold the reply I had previously told you to make: To agree to the Japanese proposal when they have released the Omura Camp detainees who entered Japan before 1945 and to deport those who illegally entered Japan, while we on our part were to release the Japanese fishermen who have served their sentences and are entitled to be released.

On receipt of your letter I gave you my consent to accept and agree to the Japanese proposal. Then when Taiha came, he told me that he had proposed to certain Japanese authorities that in addition to the above, the Japanese must deport some of the Korean political refugees who are connected with treason trials and Taiha was hoping that they would agree to our demand. That is the reason I wired you asking you to hold the reply to them. However, I think the Joint Chiefs of Staff's public statement upset their equilibrium and it is doubtful whether they will carry out their original plan or not.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff purposely took this advantage to warn the Japanese that if they take any aggressive action we will meet their force with force. We believe that is the only way to keep the Japanese from aggressive actions. If we do not pin them down now we will never be able to do it later. Now they are involved in international relations and cannot take any free action against Korea. One main point which we want to emphasize in our public declarations is that Japan has lined up with Kim Il Sung to infiltrate into Korea under pretext of trade, fishing and other relationships. Their main objective is to disrupt our government from within, politically and otherwise. The Government together with the people will leave no stone unturned until we have blocked every channel through which the communists from Soviet Russia, Red China and Pink Japan can start a revolution in Korea, thus to overthrow our government. Our aim is to make Japan agree with us, pledging not to have any aggressive tendency, but the Japanese

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refuse to withdraw the property claim. They also refuse to agree with us in the fairest and most reasonable proposal. The peace line was originally started by General MacArthur to keep the two peoples separate in order to maintain peaceful relations between the two nations and later by General Clark for military security. The Japanese fishery right claim is not for fishing interests only but under the pretext of fishing they want to push into the Korean islands and coastlines and gradually into Korea as a whole.

The peace line will mean more to them, to Korea and to the peace of the Pacific than all the fish they can get from our side of the line. We are fighting the communists on the battlefield with our lives for the independence and sovereign rights of our nation, and after making all the sacrifices we are not going to let the Japanese come through our back doors and grab us by the throat without giving us a fighting chance as they did in 1904-05.

The U.S. is taking sides with Japan. They may say they will withdraw the American army from Korea. They may have their army and navy lined up on the Pacific Ocean and coasts to keep us from defending our peace line, but that will not force us down and allow Japan and America to destroy our independence as they did before.

Whenever we make such statements, we should not show a belligerent and hostile attitude. Our Joint Chiefs of Staff's statement was meant to serve as a warning in order to avoid any instance. So long as they heed that warning there will be no aggressive steps taken by the Koreans, but if they start any aggressive action then nobody will keep us from fighting in self-defense. Americans are trying to keep superficial peace to show that they have accomplished world peace and on that basis they want to have successful elections. When they know that all their threats and siding with Japan will not avail they can do all they want. We are struggling for our survival as an independent nation and we have no aggressive intentions of any kind and if you make them know these facts the Japanese will have to find some other means. The U.S. State Department, as I have already stated, is taking sides with Japan and will not support our fishery line. We will have to depend on ourselves.

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This letter was dictated in a hurry and the wording and phrases may not be correct, but I am simply reiterating all that you know to reaffirm our policy in general. I understand that Mr. Zablocki stated that the Kubota statement was most unfortunate. This is the first time that the U.S. side publicly admitted that Japan is wrong.