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August 19, 1954

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We are concerned about recent press reports that the United States is negotiating with a number of Southeast Asian governments for a regional security arrangement somewhat after the fashion of NATO. Our concern is particularly aroused by the news that the State Department is considering the establishment of a Northeastern Asian bloc with Japan, Formosa and Korea as its members. We are naturally interested to know whether this is true and, if true, what this means.

I need not tell you that the Southeastern Asian countries are not favorably disposed toward colonial powers, whether Europen or Asiatic, for reasons which are too well-known. And England and France who, you think, should be included in the contemplated arrangement are certainly such colonial powers in the eyes of entire Asia. They have no interest in the area except through their colonial holdings. Besides, their leanings to Communist countries become more and more pronounced. In short, their participation will conduce to the weakness instead of the strength of any anti-Communist Asian structure.

It is beyond our comprehension, therefore, that the United States should insist upon bringing these disreputable non-Asiatic nations into an Asiatic bloc, if its purpose is really to bind the Asiatic peoples together for a common ffront against world Communism. All anti-Communist Asians look to the United States for leadership, aware of its clean record, a record free from colonial exploitation. Indeed, the leadership of the United States in Asia suffers from its associations with nations still branded by Asians as predatory nations.

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In connection with the reported North-eastern Asian pact, let me make a brief comment. I have repeatedly told you that Japan still lays claim to 85% of entire Korean wealth. How can anybody expect Korea to associate itself with such an unreasonable country in a joint venture? If the United States supports Japan's claim to ownership of nearly all of the Korean peninsula, we want to be told so.

Moreover, Japan's position on Communism is, at best, dubious. Its expansionist intentions grow more and more apparent. Its policy of force is increasingly felt by Korea, at least. We wish to know whether the United States approves the re-surgent Japanese designs on Korea or whether it supports Korea in its refusal to submit to the preposterous Japanese demands. I believe it will be very helpful to all concerned if clarification is achieved on this very momentous question which will have so much to do with the peace of East Asia.

Sincerely yours,

S/ Syngman Rhee

The Honorable John Foster Dulles
The Secretary of State
Department of State
Washington, D. C.

159
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