

May 20, 1961
**Telegram from Ambassador Schneidewind on the
Situation in Korea**

Citation:

"Telegram from Ambassador Schneidewind on the Situation in Korea", May 20, 1961, Wilson Center Digital Archive, SAPMO-BA, DY 30, IV 2/20/137. Translated for NKIDP by Bernd Schaefer. <https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/112585>

Summary:

GDR Ambassador Schneidewind discusses anti-communist demonstrations in North Korea and South Korea's military coup.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from ROK Ministry of Unification

Original Language:

German

Contents:

Translation - English

Government of the German Democratic Republic
Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Deputy of the Minister

Berlin, 20 May 1961

To:
Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers
Comrade Willi Stoph

To:
Member of the [SED] Politburo
Comrade Alfred Neumann

To:
Head of Department of Foreign Policy
and International Relations
[SED Central Committee]
Comrade Peter Florin

Berlin

Dear Comrades!

Attached I send for your information the transcript of a telegram from our ambassador in Korea on the current development in South Korea.

With socialist greetings
[signed]
[Sepp] Schwab

Attachment

Transcript

Telegram No. 215 from 19 May 1961
Sender: Ambassador Schneidewind
To: Comrade Stude/ Comrade Colonel Schütz

There still exists no clear assessment by the North Korean comrades on current developments in South Korea. The statement published on 18 May by ZTAK ["Central Telegraph Agency of Korea;" KCNA] about the situation in South Korea does still contain significant contradictions. On the one hand it does welcome the overthrow of the Chang Myeon Clique, while at the same time it condemns initiators and leading politicians behind the military coup as reactionary. Nevertheless the statement still has lines like the following: " [...] The soldiers, privates, officers, and generals of the South Korean defense forces, who were rising up to stage a military coup, have to reject maneuvers by those who violate their [the defense forces'] demands and attempt to sell out the national interests. They immediately must begin patriotic actions and stand side by side with the people [...]."

Furthermore: " [...] Since the treasonous Chang Myeon Clique has been finished, it is imperative today to decisively strike against interference and cabals, if one wants to move the currently existing situation in South Korea towards a path of preserving the interests of the fatherland and the nation [...]."

In light of the openly anti-communist demonstrations held yesterday in Seoul this statement by ZTAK is unsatisfactory. It is still lacking a clear assessment of this reactionary military coup.

The diplomatic representatives of socialist countries [in Pyongyang] think the Korean comrades allowed themselves to get confused through the initial statement from American representatives; and also through the fact that students and other circles initially welcomed this military coup out of excitement about the overthrow of Chang Myeon. For the Korean comrades, the military coup came as surprising as the April events last year [1960]. Although this [ZTAK] statement comes out against the reactionary and counterrevolutionary leaders of the coup, in our opinion it is falling short of providing a correct assessment. It fails to point at the enormous danger created by this military coup.

Full text of the statement will be sent with next courier.

Schneidewind