

**May 8, 1954**  
**Letter, President Syngman Rhee to General Van Fleet**

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**Summary:**

The United States has appropriated the ROK a billion dollars' worth of weapons and supplies. Rhee gives General Van Fleet full control of these funds and encourages him to help transform the ROK into a self-supporting nation. Instead of buying Japanese goods, Korea should set-up her own arms and ammunition producing machines.

**Credits:**

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18 May 1954

My dear General Van Fleet,

I am glad to hear of your decision to go to Washington and return about 10 June. I am sure everything you plan will come out as you wish.

Mrs. Rhee and I would like to know what we can do for Mrs. Van Fleet and we wish she could stay here. You know we will do our best to take care of her and you won't have to worry about anything.

I hope soon to receive your letter regarding your desire to engage the Bando Hotel rooms.

Ambassador Dean said this afternoon that he had received word from Washington that the United States Government had decided to appropriate a billion dollars worth of weapons and supplies to the Republic of Korea, but we would like to have assurance that there will be no agency or organization of any kind to exercise any authority over the use of such funds and materials. We want you to have sole power to use the funds and materials in consultation with the Government of the Republic. We do not want anyone to use the funds for the purchase of Japanese goods or machines, but desire to set up our machines to produce our own arms and ammunition as far as possible. Otherwise we cannot make Korea a self supporting nation with the huge army we will carry, even with US support.

With my very good wishes and hopes for your success in your great mission.

Warmest regards.

Yours sincerely,

General James A. Van Fleet,  
PUSAN.