

July 11, 1957

**Letter No. 24 from Tai Ha Yiu [Yu Tae-ha] of the
Korean Mission in Japan to President Syngman Rhee**

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Summary:

Yu briefs Syngman Rhee on Kishi and his new cabinet and speculation on how it will impact Korea-Japan relations.

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REPUBLIC OF KOREA

KOREAN MISSION IN JAPAN

Tokyo, July 11, 1957

No. 24

TO : His Excellency
President Rhee

FROM : Tai Ha Yiu

SUBJECT : Kishi and his New Cabinet

The lineup of Prime Minister Kishi's new cabinet was completed in the afternoon of the 10th. The policy and hopes of Kishi to form a strong cabinet on the basis of party unity failed to materialize as the new cabinet lineup showed.

Immediately after his return from Washington, Kishi went to his Hakone villa to plan his new cabinet. According to very reliable sources, Kishi's choice of cabinet ministers had been revised four times due to opposition from various factions in the L-D party. Some last minute changes in the agriculture and other posts had to be made.

The breakdown of the cabinet shows that Kono and his group managed to grab five posts, with Ishii's group reduced from five to two including Ishii. The groups supporting Ishibashi and Yoshida now became the "opposition" within the party. As to Ishii, he and his group decided not to have anything to do with the new cabinet, but at Kishi's insistent request, Ishii reluctantly agreed to retain his post. The lone man in the cabinet belonging to the Ishii group is the new director of the defense agency.

Criticism is mounting among members of the party that the new cabinet is merely a puppet government of Ichiro Kono, former agriculture-forestry Minister as was the case of the Hatoyama cabinet at which time Kono yielded so much power as to establish Soviet-Japan ties over stiff opposition. The question will arise why Kishi failed to keep Kono and his group out of his new cabinet. As is well known, Kishi was secretary-general of the party when the Hatoyama cabinet was in power, and because of the deep connections he had with the two, it was impossible to break them off. Also, during the election of the prime minister, the votes from Kono's and Hatoyama's groups elevated Kishi to his present position.

The new cabinet failed to get the support of ex-prime ministers, Yoshida and Ishibashi and many critics gave the cabinet a very short life. A dissolution of the Diet and a re-election, if successful, might prolong his shaky cabinet, but whatever he does, it will not be a smooth road for Kishi.

The new minister of justice was very active in the Home Ministry during the Tojo cabinet and his nomination is said to be connected with the government policy of coping strongly with spy activities which had become most active with the establishment of the Soviet Embassy in Japan.

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The same is also said of the appointment of the new National Public Safety Commissioner.

It will be most interesting to watch the developments that will arise with a cabinet formed of members who are strongly for close ties with Soviet Russia and Red China and those who are against it.

The new foreign minister, Fujiyama Aiichiro is a man prominent in the business world and very wealthy. Fujiyama played a big role in the settlement of the Japan-Philippines reparations issue and is an ardent advocate of the Southeast Asia development plan. Kishi probably needed such a man to push through his plan. Kishi also needed the man's wealth. When Kishi was depurged by the U.S. occupation authorities, it was Fujiyama who backed Kishi financially. Fujiyama was reluctant to accept the foreign portfolio, but as reliable sources have it, Kishi's brother, Eisaku Sato urged Kishi to leave the Foreign post as he was most likely to make a mistake.

With regard to the question of what effect will the new cabinet have on Korea-Japan relations, I can only reiterate what Kono advised Hatoyama to do with the Koreans at the Omura camp at the time when Kim and Nakagawa were holding talks on the detainee issue. Kono advised Hatoyama to release the Koreans at the camp and see what the Korean move would be with the Japanese fishermen in Pusan, and if Korea does not respond, the Japanese side would turn to propaganda warfare. With Kono and his group holding so many posts in the new cabinet, I am unable to say what the new Japanese attitude would be.