

P. M. Heyn
Johnson on Korea

In his remarks during the arrival ceremony for Chung Hee Park, President Lyndon B. Johnson spoke to the effect that South Korea has made great economic and social progress with American assistance since the end of the Korean war. Such a view is considerably at variance with the facts.

Although productivity in the manufacturing sector has risen, the general economic situation in the country is very poor. According to the *New York Times* "unemployment has grown by 700,000 since a year ago. One-third of the country's total labor force is either unemployed or underemployed." *The Washington Post* reports, "South Korea's innumerable universities are graduating students into a country without jobs. And the older people who do have jobs suffer from shockingly low pay, shockingly high prices and general scarcity..."

On the social level, what better indication is there of the worth of the Park regime in the eyes of the South Korean people than the seemingly perpetual rioting against it?

In passing it should be noted that it is probably North Korea rather than the South which deserves any credit at all for making progress since the war. There is the study in *Foreign Affairs*, which relates that "Production in all sectors of the economy has surpassed previous totals, in most cases by wide margins, and an unusually rapid pace of economic growth has been attained." This study concludes that "the Communist threat to South Korea today is a threat of subversion by invidious comparison."

In closing I cannot help but remark that President Johnson's estimate of conditions in South Korea portend grave U.S. policy errors in that country in the future. Sooner or later a deep-running revolution must erupt there. To believe that such a revolution is directed against the patriotic leaders of a land of progress and plenty and, accordingly, to try to crush it would, as our interventions today in Viet-Nam and Santo Domingo, be foolhardy and immoral.

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