



F Post
4/15/74

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WASHINGTON — Classified State Department cables report that Rep. Richard Hanna, D-Calif., has been escorting a South Korean entrepreneur in search of oil deals around the Middle East.

The Korean businessman is Tongsun Park, a patrician who owns the posh, exclusive Georgetown Club in Washington. Park frequently travels to the Middle East on behalf of a family-owned petroleum shipping and marketing firm called the Miryung Company.

Oil tycoons from all over the world are swarming over the Middle East in pursuit of Arab oil concessions. But the enterprising Park is the only one who has brought along a U.S. congressman to introduce him to the right people.

Hanna is Capitol Hill's premier globe-trotter. In January, he was gallivanting around the Far East "as a guest," he admitted to us, "of the Pertamina Oil Company," Indonesia's national oil firm. From Indonesia, he flew to the Middle East. Classified cables from the U.S. embassy in Sana, Yemen, pick up the story:

"(Hanna) was joined here by a Mr. Park, a former South Korean national engaged in shipping, elaboration of foreign investment opportunities and apparently political lobbying in Washington."

For nearly three days, the pair flitted around Yemen meeting government and business leaders. A cable from Ambassador William Crawford informed the State Department;

"Congressman Hanna expressed an interest in meeting key (Yemen) development and financial officials and requested embassy facilitate. This we did and during the two and one half days of his visit, he was introduced to ministers of Treasury, Economy, Development, Director of Central Planning Organization, political and legal advisers to President, and Governor of Central Bank.... Congressman had short amiable courtesy meeting with President Iryani, escorted by Ambassador."

Concluded Ambassador Crawford: "Rep. Hanna evinced a lively interest in Yemen and its problems. He and Mr. Park promised (Yemen) officials that they would engage themselves in an effort to bring American capital to Yemen. They expressed particular interest in contracts for mineral development and a joint shipping venture."

The two travelers then departed for Saudi Arabia and Egypt, where the record of their activities is more difficult to trace. Reports have reached us, however, of wheeling and dealing with the Saudis.

Again this month, the congressman and the Korean businessman will return to the Middle East. They will visit Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Although Tongsun Park is not an official of any government, the State Department is arranging for his accommodations in the best hotels.

In a classified cable to the various embassies, the department has request "each post except Cairo" to ensconce Park in "single room located next to or near room reserved for" Rep. Hanna. In Cairo, telegraphed State, "Mr. Park requests a suite on the river side of the (Nile) Hilton."

The engaging Park insisted to my associate Joe Spear that he and Hanna aren't promoting any business deals but just happen to be going to the Middle East at the same time. They travel together, said Park, because the congressman "is like my brother."

Hanna told us he and Park had talked to officials only at cocktail parties, not at formal meetings. The likable liberal acknowledged that he had promised Yemen officials he would encourage capital investment in their country, but he didn't "have anyone in mind," he said. As for the "joint shipping venture," Hanna insisted: "I don't know what the ambassador is talking about."

HEADLINES AND FOOTNOTES: The patent lobby

is using chain letters to fight reform of the patent system. It was started by Vincent Gregory, president of Rohm and Haas chemical firm, who wrote his employes and his 20 main competitors urging them to bombard the Senate with letters similar to his...The Army is going ahead with plans to produce and test a deadly nerve gas despite warnings this would jeopardize an agreement at Geneva to ban chemical warfare altogether...The Army has ordered up to \$51 million worth of 20-ton dump trucks, which the brass hats have now discovered are really 18-ton trucks modified to look larger. The military brass "saved" \$1,500 per truck by contracting with the low bidder. Now it will cost an estimated \$2,600 per truck to bring it up to specifications...National Parks Director Ronald Walker, a former White House advance man, last year ordered his subordinates to display a recent picture of the President...Sen. Howard Baker, R-Tenn., responding to an inquiry from Sen. Daniel Inouye, D-Hawaii, about our story that he and his staff have been working secretly with ex-White House lawyer Charles Colson, wrote: "Colson is not cooperating with me or the committee in the investigation." Our story is true; Baker's denial is false.