

Period IV (2)-ii. Understanding of the United States on the territorial sovereignty of Takeshima

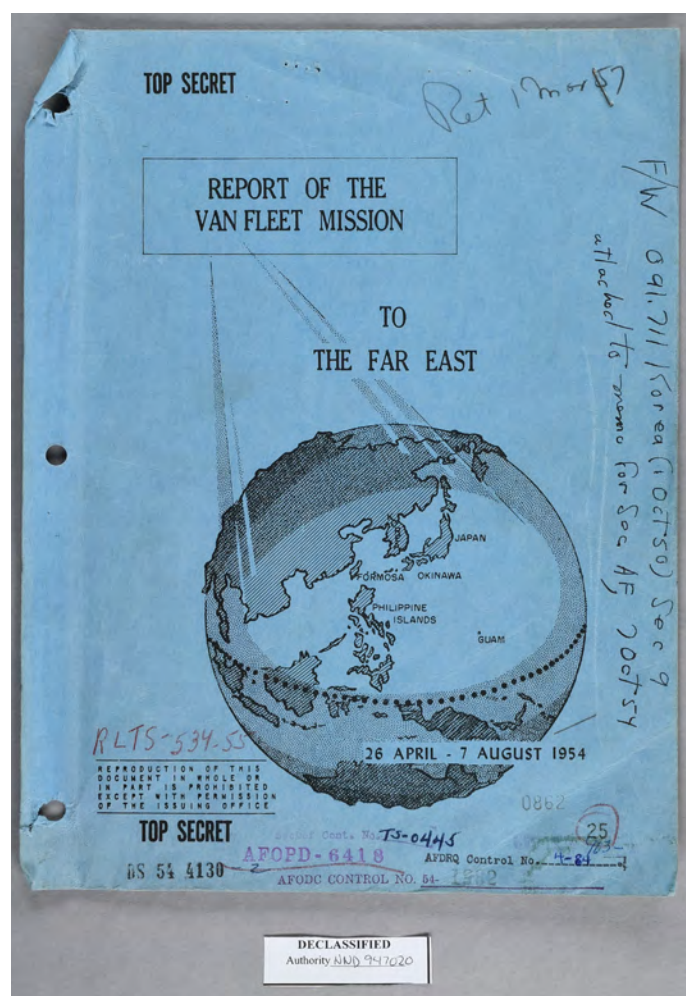
Document showing a proposal by the U.S. Government to the South Korean Government to refer the Takeshima issue to the International Court of Justice
No.57 REPORT OF THE VAN FLEET MISSION TO THE FAR EAST
FY2017/P39 September 30, 1954

Overview

The U.S. Government Mission to the Far East led by Ambassador Van Fleet visited South Korea, Taiwan, Japan and the Philippines from April to July 1954 and carried out research. Afterwards on October 4 of the same year, Ambassador Van Fleet submitted a report to President Eisenhower. This is the "Report of the Van Fleet Mission to the Far East". The report contains research results on the military preparedness of those countries and recommendations for military preparedness policies on the part of the U.S.. With regard to the issue of sovereignty over Takeshima, it is stated in the report that the United States, in the process of drawing up the draft of the San Francisco Peace Treaty, concluded that Takeshima remained under the sovereignty of Japan and was not included among the islands which Japan released its ownership despite the demands from South Korea. According to the report, while the United States considered the said islands as Japanese territory, it declined to interfere in the dispute, and proposed to South Korea that the issue regarding the territorial sovereignty over Takeshima should be resolved by referring it to the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

Excerpt
4. Ownership of Dokto Island

The Island of Dokto (otherwise called Liancourt and Taka Shima (sic)) is in the Sea of Japan approximately midway between Korea and Honshu (131. 80E, 36.20N). This Island [※Takeshima] is , in fact, only a group of barren, uninhabited rocks. When the Treaty of Peace with Japan was being drafted, the Republic of Korea asserted its claims to Dokto but the United States concluded that they remained under Japanese sovereignty and the Island was not included among the Islands that Japan released from its ownership under the Peace Treaty. (text omitted) Though the United States considers that the islands are Japanese territory, we have declined to interfere in the dispute. Our position has been that the dispute might properly be referred to the International Court of Justice and this suggestion has been informally conveyed to the Republic of Korea. (text omitted)



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This Mission was advised by the Republic of Korea that:

"What is still worse is that Japan now claims the possession of the little islet of Dokto known as Liancourt Rocks near the Woolnungdo known as Dagelet. Japanese officials are making frequent visits to the islet with armed vessels molesting Korean fishermen there. They set up posts here and there in the islet with description declaring as if it were Japanese territory. Throughout our history and knowledge up to the very moment of the declaration of sovereignty over adjacent seas (Rhee Line), Korea's sovereignty over it has never been contended by any country, as it has long been an immovably established fact that the islet, Dokto, has been historically as well as legally a part of Woolnungdo (Dagelet) Korean territory."