

Japanese government is using Rusk note as the base for its sovereignty claim over Dokdo/Takeshima and many Japanese believe SF Peace Treaty with Japan gave Dokdo to Japan because Dean Rusk rejected Korean request to include Dokdo in the territories Japan had to renounce.

Rusk Note

However, Rusk Note was just a U.S. secret position regarding Dokdo unfairly in favor of Japan's claim during the Peace Treaty negotiations. No matter what the reasons were, Japanese government's aggressive lobbying or U.S. strategic interests, it was true U.S. strongly supported Japan's claim on Dokdo through the Rusk Note during the late stage of treaty negotiation, but Rusk Note has a critical weakness for Japan to use as a base for claiming Dokdo was given to Japan in the SF Peace Treaty. **Rusk Note was a U.S. confidential memorandum sent only to Korea. SF Peace Treaty was about the agreement between Japan and the Allied Powers, not between Japan and U.S.** Rusk Note wasn't delivered to Japan and even to the Allied Powers who were the signatories of the treaty. In other words, **Rusk Note was not reflected in the final draft of SF Treaty.**

Below is the U.S. documents proving Rusk Note was a U.S. confidential memorandum which was never reflected in the final draft of SF Treaty.

(Note : 1) Liancourt Rocks are the western name for Dokdo/Takeshima.
2) Rusk Note was open to the public decades after Peace Treaty.)

1. Even the U.S. Embassy in Korea and Japan didn't know about Rusk Note until 1952 one year after the signing of Peace Treaty.

On Oct.3 1952, the First Secretary of the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo, John M. Steeves on behalf of Ambassador to Japan, Robert Murphy sent a despatch No.659 entitled "Koreans on Liancourt Rocks" to the U.S. State Department and its copy to U.S. Embassy in Korea. In this letter, Mr. Steeves wrote as follows:

The history of these rocks has been reviewed more than once by the Department, and

does not need extensive recounting here. The rocks, which are fertile seal breeding grounds, were at one time part of the Kingdom of Korea. They were, of course, annexed together with the remaining territory of Korea when Japan extended its Empire over the former Korean state. However, during the course of this imperial control, the Japanese Government formally incorporated this territory into the metropolitan area of Japan and placed it administratively under the control of one of the Japanese prefectures. Therefore, when Japan agreed in Article II of the peace treaty to renounce "all right, title and claim to Korea, including the islands of Quelpart, Port Hamilton and Dagelet", the drafters of the treaty did not include these islands with the area to be renounced. Japan has, and with reason, assumed that its sovereignty still extends over these islands. For obvious reasons, the Koreans have disputed this assumption."

The original Document is [here](#).

In response to this letter, Kenneth T. Young, Director of the Office of Northeast Asian Affairs of the U.S. Department State Department informed the U.S. Embassy in Japan and Korea of the Rusk Note siding with Japan. (Kenneth T. Young's letter is [here](#).)

After being informed of the Rusk Note, E. Allan Lightener Jr. at U.S. Embassy in Korea sent a letter to the U.S. Department of State as follows:

The information you gave us had never been previously available to the Embassy. We had never heard of Dean Rusk's letter to the Korean Ambassador in which the Department took a definite stand on this question.Well, now we know and we are very glad to have the information as we have been operating on the basis of wrong assumption for a long time.

The original text and document is [here](#).

2. U.S. didn't let Japan know about Rusk Note and made it clear U.S. view in favor of Japan is not related to the views of other members of Allied Powers.

On July 22, 1953, L. Burmaster of the Office of Northeast Asian Affairs of U.S. State Department sent a letter entitled "Possible Methods of Resolving Liancourt Rocks Dispute between Japan

and the Republic of Korea" to Robert J. G. MaClukin in the same Office as follows:

"With regard to the question of who has sovereignty over the Liancourt Rocks (which are also known in Japanese as Takeshima, and in Korean as Dokdo), it may be of interest to recall that the United States position, contained in a note to the Republic of Korea's Ambassador dated August 10, 1951 reads in part:.....(This position has never been formally communicated to the Japanese Government)"

The Original Document is [here](#).

There's one more document proving Japan didn't know the existence of Rusk Note. On Dec. 9, 1953, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles sent a telegram to the American Embassy in Tokyo as follows:

"Department aware of peace treaty determinations and US administrative decisions which would Japanese expect us act in their far with any dispute with ROK over sovereignty Takeshima. However, to best our knowledge formal statement US position to ROK in Rusk Note August 10, 1951 has not rpt not been communicated Japanese.Despite US view peace treaty a determination under terms Postdam Declaration and that treaty leaves Takeshima to Japan, and despite our participation in Postdam and treaty and action under administrative agreement, it does not rpt not necessarily follow US automatically responsible for settling or intervening in Japan's international disputes, territorial or otherwise, arised from peace treaty. US view re Takeshima simply that of one of many signatories to treaty."

Secretary of State John Foster Dulles clearly stated Rusk Note was not revealed to Japan and U.S. support for Japan's claim on Takeshima was nothing but a U.S. view irrelevant to the Allied Powers' agreement.

The original document is [here](#).

3. Rusk Note was never made public, which means the other members of the Allied Powers didn't know the existence of Rusk Note and thus, it was never influenced the final draft of SF Peace Treaty.

In his report to the President Eisenhower in August 1954, Van Fleet(a US special mission ambassador) wrote on the "Ownership of Dokdo Island" as follows:

The Island of Dokdo (otherwise called Liancourt and Take Shima) is in the Sea of Japan approximately midway between Korea and Honshu(131.80E, 36.20N). This Island 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. **The Republic of Korea has been confidentially informed of the United States position regarding the islands but our position has not been made public.** Though the United States considers that the islands are Japanese territory, we have declined to interfere in the dispute. Our position has been that might properly be referred to the International Court of Justice and this suggestion has been informally conveyed to the Republic of Korea.

The original document is [here](#).

The documents above clearly prove U.S. support for Japanese claim over Dokdo through Rusk Note was never open and official throughout the negotiation process of Peace Treaty and naturally even not in the final decision of Treaty. Rusk Note symbolizes U.S. foreign policy based on its interests at the beginning of the cold war-era. Early U.S. drafts of treaty put Liancourt Rocks under Korea sovereignty, but after William J. Sebald's advice on November 14th 1949, U.S. reversed her previous support for Korean sovereignty over Liancourt Rocks. William J. Sebald, U.S. Department of State's Political Adviser in Japan sent the Secretary of State a telegram recommending reconsideration on Liancourt Rocks **for the security reason**. His advice meant if Japan were to be given Liancourt Rocks, the U.S. military would be able to build military facilities on Liancourt Rocks such as weather and radar station, which would be a great interest to U.S.

Japanese Takeshima pamphlet by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan states as follows:

Point 7. In the drafting process of the Treaty of Peace with Japan, the United States rejected the request by the ROK that Takeshima be added to the relevant article of the Treaty as one of the areas Japan would renounce, claiming that Takeshima had been under the jurisdiction of Japan.....**Based on this correspondence(=Rusk Note), it is evident that Takeshima was affirmed as part of the territory of Japan.**

[Link to Point 7 of 10 Issues of Takeshima by MOFA of Japan](#)

Japan's sovereignty claim on Dokdo is based on an invalid U.S. confidential memorandum

which had nothing to do with the view of the other Allied Powers. Japan's reckless conclusion drawn from the Rusk Note is misleading the Japanese to believe U.S. gave Dokdo to Japan in SF Peace Treaty and U.S. still supports Japan's claim on Dokdo.

At the San Francisco Peace Conference on September 5, 1951 three days before signing of Peace Treaty, John Foster Dulles who deeply involved in draft of SF Treaty said as follows:

“What is the territory of Japanese sovereignty? Chapter II deals with that. Japan formally ratifies the territorial provisions of the Potsdam Surrender Terms, provisions which, so far as Japan is concerned, were actually carried into effect 6 years ago.

The Potsdam Surrender Terms constitute the only definition of peace terms to which, and by which, Japan and the Allied Powers as a whole are bound. There have been some private understandings between some Allied Governments; but by these Japan was not bound, nor were other Allies bound. Therefore, the treaty embodies **article 8 of the Surrender Terms which provided that Japanese sovereignty** should be limited to Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoku and some minor islands. The renunciations contained in article 2 of chapter II strictly and scrupulously conform to that surrender term.” ([LINK](#))

There's no any mention of Rusk Note in his explaining the Japanese territory decided by SF Treaty. Instead, John Foster Dulles said Japanese sovereignty should be limited to Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoku and some minor islands as stated in the Potsdam Surrender Terms. Definitely, Dokdo wasn't included among some islands as the Allied Powers determined. What the Allied Powers determined was the separation of Dokdo from Japan through SCAPIN 677.

[SCAPIN 677 separated Dokdo from Japan.](#)

Mr. Rusk said as follows:

As regards the island of Dokdo, otherwise known as Takeshima or Liancourt Rocks, this normally uninhabited rock formation was **according to our information** never treated as part of Korea and, since about 1905, has been under the jurisdiction of the Oki Islands Branch Office of Shimane Prefecture of Japan. The island does not appear ever before to have been claimed by Korea.

[Was “our information” in Rusk Note based on the true history of Dokdo?](#)

There are Japanese historical documents proving the U.S. information in favor of Japanese claim over Dokdo was wrong.

- 1) [Tottori Han's Reply to Bakufu's Inquiry \(1696\)](#)
- 2) [The Report of Meiji Government's MOFA officials \(1870\)](#)
- 3) [Dajokna Order of Meiji Government \(1877\)](#)

On Aug. 26, 1954, U.S. Department of State cast a doubt on the validity of Rusk Letter. The Department of State document entitled "Conflicting Korean-Japanese Claims to Dokdo Island (otherwise known as Takeshima or Liancourt Rocks)" stated as follows:

“On the other hand, it may be argued that Mr. Rusk's letter refusing to include Dokdo in the enumeration of islands renounced in connection with the renunciation of Korean was based on our understating of the historical facts ("Dokdo...was according to our information never treated as part of Korea") and that his statement left the door open to Korean to show that it had in fact treated Dokdo as part of Korea prior to 1905, when the Japanese placed Dokdo under the jurisdiction of the Shimane Prefecture of Japan. (Japan established a protectorate over Korea in 1904, and annexed Korea in 1910.) Under this theory Korea would still be free to establish legally if it could, that the "Korea" renounced in the peace treaty included the island of Dokdo.”

Conflicting Korean-Japanese Claims to Dokdo Island (otherwise known as Takeshima or Liancourt Rocks)

After 3 years of Rusk Note, America became doubtful if "our information" in Rusk Note was based on the historical facts.

As seen above, Rusk Note was nothing but a secret U.S. letter to Korea based on the Japanese false claim over Dokdo resulted from pursuing U.S. strategic interest. Rusk Note is just one of the invalid bases Japan is using for its false claim over Dokdo.

