C O P Y

CONFIDENTIAL

April 16, 1954

My dear Mr. President:

I have your further letter of April 8 expressing renewed misgivings in regard to the Geneva Conference and requesting increased support of the Korean armed forces.

I fully appreciate your expression of misgivings in the situation with which we are confronted. I myself am under no illusions as to the difficulties of negotiating and reaching satisfactory settlement with the Communists. Still it is my deep conviction that we should go to Geneva prepared to exhaust every possibility of obtaining the peaceful unification of Korea. That is fully in keeping with the spirit and terms of the Armistice Agreement and our own previous understanding. Therefore, I want to add my own earnest appeal to that of Secretary of State Dulles, most recently expressed in his message of April 7, that you join with us and our other allies at Geneva in a concerted and earnest attempt to attain the peaceful settlement of the Korean problem which we all ardently desire. As we had sought all along, Soviet Russia will be at Geneva on the one side flanked by her Chinese Communist and Korean Communist allies. Neither India nor any other neutral nation will attend the Korean Conference. If the Republic of Korea participates we shall be there 16 strong on our side with determination to /work to the utmost/ of our abilities to obtain a satisfactory settlement. In addition, I believe that Korea's presence at Geneva would be immeasurably helpful in mainteining the unity of the free world at a time when we are attempting to forge a commonfront to cope with Communist activities.

Once having met at Geneva, should the Communist side stall or act in bad faith, we shall be prepared, pursuant to the understanding reached between you and Secretary Dulles, to consult about what further steps we can properly take to deal with the then existing situation. You must understand that, for the reasons set forth in my letter of March 20, I cannot comply with your requests for United States support in military action to unify Korea.

With respect to your desire to strengthen the armed forces of the Republic of Korea, I can assure you of my sympathetic understanding. In studying these requests we have had to consider the whole strategic position of the free world, the necessity placed upon us for supplying equipment to help the forces of the French and the Associated

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States in their struggle against Communist aggression, and the assistance previously furnished to the Republic of Korea. We have also considered the manpower and budgetary requirements for the program of economic rehabilitation upon which we are jointly engaged, as well as the requirements for the defense of your country.

After weighing the foregoing factors, we are considering the following program for the continued improvement of ROK forces with additional United States assistance:

1. Continued development of the ROK army to a field army, capable in itself of sustained combat operations.

2. Continued modernization of the ROK navy and the addition to it of anti-submarine, amphibious and auxiliary type vessels, including two destroyer escorts.

3. Reorganization of the ROK Marine Corps from a brigade of scattered small units to a combat-capable division.

4. Modernization of the ROK air force by re-equipping the existing fighter wing with jet type aircraft, and by the establishment of an efficient tactical control organization. Training of ROK pilots for transition to jet aircraft will begin as soon as practicable.

To this end, I am asking General Van Fleet to go to Korea to consult with you and your military advisers, to study the situation thoroughly, and to develop recommendations in concert with General Hull both as to the future size and composition of the active armed forces of the Republic of Korea and the practicability of a joint United States-Republic of Korea program for Korean reserve forces.

I am confident that if the United States and the Republic of Korea work in close concert to carry out the strengthening of your defense forces and to push forward the program of economic rehabilitation, we can continue to build the position of strength in Korea which we both realize is essential to your interests, to ours, and to those of the free world as a whole.

With personal good wishes and warm regards,

Sincerely,

Dwight D. Eisenhower