Miss Rowe

TOP SECRET
SECURITY INFORMATION

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

November 4, 1953

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Dear Mr. President:

This is a matter which I must take up with you in the interest of our future close cooperation. I want you to know that such cooperation is my sincere purpose. However, to achieve it, I must know your purpose also.

I recall that your agreement of August eighth with Secretary Dulles provided that, until the Mutual Defense Treaty between our two nations could be expected to come into force -- which we then thought might be about sixty days after the Senate reconvenes in Janaury -- you will keep your forces under the United Nations Command which would comply with the armistice terms.

Time is fast running out on this period. I need now to be thinking and planning ahead beyond this period in political, security, and economic terms.

From a political standpoint, the important thing is the ratification of our Mutual Defense Treaty. We shall face many questions from the Senators when they meet again and begin considering this Treaty. I hope for prompt and favorable action from the Senate. But to get that, I shall have to be able to assure the Senators that this Treaty will actually promote peace and mutual defense. If I should be forced to conclude that after the coming ##### into force of the Treaty, you might unilaterally touch off a resumption of war in Korea, I could not recommend its ratification and I am certain that the Senate would not ratify it. When I formally submit the Treaty to the Senate next January, I must be in a position personally to give a clear assurance on this point.

From a military standpoint, I have heavy responsibilities for the safety of the United States forces in Korea as their Commander-in-Chief, and for the safety of the other United Nations forces as President of the United States which exercises the unified command for the United Nations action in Korea. We are, of course, now committed to react instantly if the Communist forces violate the armistice. Planning for this contingency involves the assumption that your forces and those of the United Nations will continue to act in coordination. But ## if you should decide to attack alone, I am convinced that you would expose the ROK forces to a disastrous defeat and they might well be permanently destroyed as an effective military force. Therefore, I must know whether or not we are to stand united so that our military leaders may make appropriate plans.

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In signing the armistice, the United States has pledged itself not to renew hostilities in Korea. We mean to carry out that commitment fully. Moreover, we will not directly or indirectly violate or evade that commitment by assistance in any form to any renewal of such hostilities by ROK forces. If you were to plan to initiate military action while the Communist forces are complying with the Armistice, my obligation as to both United States forces and other United Nations forces would be to plan how best to prevent their becoming involved and to assure their security.

To turn now to economic matters, we are making plans for the future which will require me to ask for further appropriations from the Congress during the next session. When I request those appropriations, I shall surely be asked whether I have confidence that the expenditure will promote a long-term restoration of the Republic of Korea. If I believed that these funds would merely create new targets in a war renewed by you, I could not, consistently with my duty, request Congress to authorize this appropriation.

I am sending you this frank letter to take you into my confidence about pressing problems of great concern to both our countries. I count upon your loyal cooperation. However, I cannot, as you see, leave that to assumption and speculation. I must have explicit confirmation from you, in order to reach my own decisions and to be able to answer the questions which the Senate and the Congress will properly ask before they make their indispensable contribution to the cooperative plans which you and Secretary Dulles and I have been developing.

I have asked the Vice President to hand this note to you when he calls on you with Ambassador Briggs and General Hull.

He has my complete confidence and you can talk to him as you would do me. As you know, he is not only Vice President but the President of the Senate and a former member of the House and Senate. As such, he will be consulted by many Senators and Representatives when our Treaty comes before the Senate for ratification and when economic appropriations are sought. He is conversant with my views on the matters covered in this letter.

You can, if it is convenient to you, hand to him your reply to this letter. Otherwise, you can deliver it to our Embassy for transmission to me.

I extend to you and to Mrs. Rhee my very best wishes and the assurance of my continuing regard.

Sincerely,

/s/ DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

His Excellency
Syngman Rhee
President of the Republic of Korea

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