C O P Y

THE FOREIGN SERVICE
of the
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

American Embassy, Pusan

CONFIDENTIAL

April 25, 1953

Dear Mr. President:

I have the honor to transmit to you herewith, under instructions from my Government, the text of a letter which has been addressed to you under date of April 23, 1953 by the President of the United States. The signed original of the enclosed letter will be forwarded to you as soon as it is received.

I avail myself, Mr. President, of this opportunity to renew to you the assurances of my highest and most distinguished consideration.

Ellis O. Briggs

Enclosure:

Copy of letter dated April 23, 1953 from
President Eisenhower to His Excellency, Syngman Rhee

His Excellency

Syngman Rhee,

President of the Republic of Korea.

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C O P Y

THE WITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

April 23, 1953.

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Mr. President;

Since my return to Washington I have had an opportunity carefully to study your letter of April 9.

As I said in my message delivered to you April 17 by Ambassador Briggs, because of their sufferings and sacrifices in the common cause the Korean people may be sure that the United States will never forget Korea or cease to be concerned for its welfare and security.

Also, as you well know, I am deeply sympathetic with the aspirations of yourself and the Korean people to bring an end to the artificial and unnatural division of your country, and to expel the Chinese aggressors from all of Korea.

However, I would be lacking in candor if I did not state that I was deeply disturbed at the implication of your letter of April 9, not only for Korea but for the efforts being made to deal with the problem of Communist aggression by the collective action of free peoples.

I think it important that we reiterate certain fundamental facts inherent in the situation.

First, the action taken by the United Nations in Korea was to assist your valiant country in repelling the armed attack directed against it initially by the North Korean regime and subsequently by the Chinese Communists. This has successfully been accomplished.

Second, the task of repelling the armed attack having been accomplished it would not be defensible to refuse to stop the fighting on an honorable basis as a prerequisite to working out the remaining issues by peaceful means.

Third, the United States and the United Nations have consistently supported the unification of Korea under conditions which would assure its freedom and independence. Neither the United States nor the United Nations has ever committed itself to resort to war to achieve this objective. To do so would be a complete negation of the basic tenets of this country and the United Nations.

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Fourth, any agreement to stop the fighting on an honorable basis presupposes a willingness on the part of both sides to discuss the remaining issues and to make every reasonable effort to reach agreement thereon. As I said in my address of April 16 an honorable armistice "means the immediate cessation of hostilities and the prompt initiation of political discussions leading to the holding of free elections in a united Korea."

If an honorable agreement is reached to stop the fighting, the United States intends to proceed promptly, vigorously and in good faith to seek by all appropriate means, in full consultation with your government, to achieve a settlement of the problems confronting your country with the objective of achieving a true peace.

These efforts would, of course, be entirely nullified if your Government should take actions which could not be supported by this or other governments supporting the defense of your country, I am also certain that you recognize that any such action by your government could only result in disaster for your country, obliterating all that has been gained at such sacrifice by our peoples. I am confident that if a spirit of mutual respect, trust and confidence so essential to the accomplishment of the high task upon which our countries are engaged can be maintained, we shall be successful. However, if unhappily the objective of a true peace proves to be unattainable, sober consideration will then have to be given as to what should be done under those circumstances.

Ambassador Briggs will shortly be communicating further with you concerning the questions which you raised with him in your conversation of April 14.

Sincerely,

(Singed) Dwight D. Eisenhower

C O P Y

AIDE-MEMOIRE

I have been directed by my government under date of a radiogram dated April 22, 1953, and received thatsame day at the Korean Embassy, Washington D. C., to inform the Preaident of the United States that President Syngman Rhee is preparing to withdraw the Republic of Korea military forces from the United Nations Command when, and if, the United Nations makes with the Communist aggressors any arrangement which, after a cease--fire agreement, would either permit or allow Chinese Communists to remain South of the Yalu River, the northernmost boundary of the Republic of Korea. The Republic of Korea land, sea and air forces, in this eventuality, will have to fight it out alone and either to win or lose, if necessary, but in either event, with honor as free men.