July 1, 1954

My dear Mr. Secretary:

Your letter of June 18, 1954 was read with much interest and deep appreciation.

You are to be congratulated on the successful withdrawal from the Geneva Conference with the unanimous support of some fifteen nations. It was a great moral victory, to say the least.

The Conference having come to an end, we should, as suggested in your letter, consult together to adopt some measure of action. Since the futility of peaceful negotiation with the Communists has been categorically demonstrated to all Allied Nations, we must employ some other means to save the situation before it drifts beyond control. One alternative is renewal of war.

In this connection, I have a definite plan to propose and explain confidentially to President Eisenhower and you. This plan will, I am sure, enable us to push up to the Yalu River with comparatively little sacrifice. This historic boundary line, if properly fortified, will be more easily held against the enemy than any other line to the South. It is quite certain that this conclusive but limited action will not provoke a general war.

President Eisenhower seems, however, to be of opinion that fighting must not be resumed, no matter what the circumstances. He also appears to be convinced that we cannot fight our way so far North as we wish. The only other alternative then is for President Eisenhower to carry out the plans outlined in his letter to me of April 16. When General Van Fleet came to Korea it was presumed he would undertake immediately to implement this program of building up our defense forces, and we were disappointed when he was required to return to the United States. It is desired that General Van Fleet shall return to Korea immediately and be fully empowered to take charge of the execution of these plans under the direct orders of President Eisenhower. An adequate appropriation for arming and equipping the additional fifteen to twenty army divisions and sea and air forces commensurate with the land strength, and for the manufacture of arms and planes in Korea should be made.

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The time element is very important in stemming the growing tide of Communist strength. We are more than disturbed about the daily-worsening situation.

Before I can decide to leave for the United States I must give our people, as well as our military leaders, a definite assurance of some action to be taken when I return. Since the failure of the Geneva Conference they have been agitating for a definite measure to rout the Communists out of north Korea, or an immediate increase in strength to ensure our own security against aggression. Our enemy may push down any time as they did four years ago, taking advantage ofour weakness. Some of our military leaders are impatient of my hesitation to order them North. If I were able to promise tha t action would be taken when I return the present unrest could be quieted down. Will you please let me know whether you will be able to agree to either or both of the alternatives mentioned and I will come at once to discuss the matter in detail.

For my part, an official invitation from President Eisenhower to visit the United States would be a great honor, but I think you will understand my situation.

With warm personal regards,

Cordially yours,

/s/ SYNGMAN RHEE

The Honorable
John Foster Dulles
Secretary of State
Washington, D. C.

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