

*Original in book*

MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT RHEE FROM PRESIDENT EISENHOWER

In view of the extremely heavy load on the free world in the struggle against Communism with which it is now engaged, we cannot appear to be too arbitrary in our demands on the Communists and expect at the same time to retain the support of free people. I personally request that you accept my assurances in my continued interest in the economy and defense of Korea. For this reason I do not see how we can object to North Korean prisoners of war, who were taken with arms in their hands fighting against Republic of Korea and United Nations forces, from receiving the same treatment as other prisoners of war opposing repatriation. This seems to me particularly true since we intend to make certain that the Korean prisoners of war will not be subjected to any coercion or force and will in any event be released within Korea within a definite time period if they so desire.

American Embassy,

Seoul,

May 25, 1953.

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