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KYUNG MU DAI

May 30, 1953

Dear Mr. President:

I have recently had the honor of receiving several messages from Your Excellency, some oral and some written, through General Clark and Ambassador Briggs, and, as a result, come to be fully cognizant of your intention to settle the war in Korea by means of an armistice. I have given them full study and attention. I earnestly wish I could see my way clear to make a public statement, as requested, pledging to accept any armistice you may deem necessary. But we are fearfully aware, on the other hand, that to accept any armistice arrangement which would allow the Chinese Communists to remain in Korea would mean to the Korean nation, in terms of eventualities, an acceptance of a death sentence without protest. It is a hard thing for a nation to do. Furthermore, even if I personally agree to such an arrangement, it will not help the matter very much, as subsequent developments, I fear, will show.

It seems at once appropriate and opportune for us, therefore, to make a proposal now for the consideration of the United Nations and the Communist negotiators. Communists made their proposals; so did the United Nations. The Government of the Republic of Korea, however, has been patiently waiting all this while for them to discuss the matter fully among themselves. None of these proposals from both sides has proved to be acceptable to all and consequently there has come about a stalemate in negotiation, in addition to this stalemated war. Whatever academic arguments there may be against it, we cannot but feel that rough and rudimental justice calls for Korea making one first and last proposal on its own part.

From our own point of view, the Korean problem which the United Nations started to settle by military means when they sent their armed forces to Korea to fight the Communists and kept on fighting for three years should be settled by punishing the aggressors, unifying Korea and thus firmly establishing the collective security of all free nations. This would be honorable and just for all concerned and alone would force the war makers to abandon their ambition to conquer the world. However, we have

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found, to our great disappointment, the new United Nations proposal to be of such an appeasing nature that it cannot avoid the appearance of surrender and that that, in turn, will lead to a great disaster to all. We are forced, therefore, to propose something which may not be fraught with such a danger.

Meanwhile, I am sure you have been fully informed of it, for I mentioned it to General Clark and Ambassador Briggs the other day, asking them to present my view of the matter to you. I told them further that I would not publicly announce it until I heard from them. I take it for granted, however, that you would not mind, if I released it now. I am going to write down here what I orally said to them by way of confirming it. There are, of course, certain detail matters to be worked out satisfactorily in order to safeguard the fruit of our common efforts so far made from dissipation. I submit the following as a rough outline of what we propose as something to be preferred to any arrangement leaving Korea divided and letting the Chinese Communists stay on in Korea.

We propose a simultaneous withdrawal of both the Communist and United Nations forces from Korea, on the condition that a mutual defense pact between our two governments precede it. The Communist puppet regime in north Korea has a military pact, I understand, with Red China, while the latter has another with Soviet Union. Korea has nothing to counteract the formidable impact of this series of Communist military copulations. We sincerely believe that once when both parties agree to see this primary need and the danger from the absence of its satisfaction, the difficulties, mostly academic in our view, that seem to discourage such a pact will vanish or, at least, can be brushed aside with much reason and wisdom.

The Mutual Defense Pact will, we earnestly hope, cover the following points, among others to be agreed upon by both sides.

The United States will agree to come to our military aid and assistance immediately without any consultation or conference with any nation or nations, if and when an enemy nation or nations resume aggressive activities against the Korean Peninsula.

Adequate supplies of arms, ammunition and general logistic materials will be given Korea with a view to making it strong enough to defend itself without needing American soldiers to fight in Korea again.

The United States air and naval forces will remain where they are now so as to deter the enemy from attempting another aggression.

In case the idea of simultaneous withdrawal is found unacceptable to either or both of the negotiating parties, I beg you to allow the Koreans to continue the fighting, for this is the universal preference of the Korean people to any divisive armistice or peace. Our first choice, if we are allowed to make it, is still to have our allies by our side to actively help us fight out our common issue. But, if that is no longer possible, we would rather wish to have the right of self-determination to decide the issue ourselves conclusively one way or the other. Anyway, it is beyond question that we cannot any longer survive a stalemate of division.

Let me assure Your Excellency that the defense of the United States is as dear to us as is that of our own, for the ultimate safety or security of the whole free world hangs upon that of the United States. For this reason, we even resent the so-called unity of the free nations, some of whom do urge the United States to join in their appeasement policy. These nations do not realize where they stand in this global struggle between Democracy and Communism.

Due to the lack of a firm and steady policy on the part of the free world, we have lost already too many nations to the Soviets. The longer this policy continues, the more free nations will be forced to join with the enemy of Democracy. To disappoint the Koreans is to disappoint most of the anti-Communist elements everywhere. The United States will in the end find itself a democratic oasis in a Communist desert. I trust that the people of America will never sell out their freedom and democratic institutions at the price of peace.

Action, not words, will deter the world aggressor.

Our prayers are unwaveringly behind every effort of yours to pull through an effective action against the enemy, in spite of the difficulties that surround you.

Most sincerely yours,

President Dwight D. Eisenhower