

26 July 1953

My dear Mr. Secretary:

Your letter of July 25 is both reassuring and a little bit disturbing. I am sorry to have given President Eisenhower and you any reason to doubt to any degree the integrity of the pledges which I have made to you. As my letter of July 25 indicates, I have had some uneasiness lest the conditions upon which my pledges were founded were somehow being undermined. Had it been possible to secure an early and clear reassurance that General Harrison was not empowered to enter into any agreements with the communists which would negate or circumvent our mutual understandings, there would have been no necessity for my message of July 24. I trust you will convey to President Eisenhower the sense of my letter of July 25, so that he, as well as you, may know that I am a man of my word, and that my only effort has been to regain ground which unrepudiated official reports indicated had been lost.

Your assurance that "If, in violation of the armistice, the Republic of Korea is subjected to unprovoked attack, you may of course count upon our immediate and automatic military reaction" meets the question I have raised about this aspect of the mutual defense treaty. I trust that this same principle may be extended to include the contingency of an attack upon Korea by Japan or another external power.

The question of whether your armed forces will join with ours, or of whether moral and material support will be extended to us for our own undertaking to re-unify our nation, in the event of the failure of the political conference, is, I understand, left for consideration in my talks with you, and also in the consultations between our two Governments at the conclusion of ninety days after the political conference convenes. I am heartily in accord with your expressed confidence that we shall be able to arrive at a mutually agreeable program for achieving our common objective of the liberation and reunification of Korea.

I am humbly grateful for the splendid spirit of accord and mutual cooperation which have marked our recent negotiations. I cannot express adequately how deeply all Koreans feel the complete accuracy of your assurance that "Never in all its history has the United States offered to any other country as much as it has offered to you." I think no one knows better than you that we have tried our best to fulfill our own obligations of our close alliance to the very utmost of our abilities. As you know, the great and unfortunate drawback to our mutuality of relations in the past has been the fact that my Government was never consulted concerning the decisions made regarding our status and our future. No matter how excellent may be the motivation, when one Power or a group of Powers simply tell another nation what is to be done to it, or what it must do, the

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results can lead only to impairment of confidence. President Eisenhower and you have notably eliminated this grave disability through the new emphasis you have given to full mutuality of consideration of our common problems. This forward-looking development in international relations will forever redound to the credit of the United States, in Korea and around the world.

I am sadly aware that my motives and my position have been given the worst possible interpretation by some Governments and in some press accounts. President Eisenhower and you have done much to counteract these harmful reactions and have never to the slightest degree permitted yourselves to be affected by them. Your expression of confidence is appreciated, and your request for confidence is worthy of our utmost concurrence. In this fine spirit we may together look forward confidently to greatly improved circumstances in all the problems of our common concern in the Pacific area.

With warm assurances of my ~~high esteem~~ and friendship, I am,

Sincerely yours,

*Syngman Rhee*

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