

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Ottawa - Canada

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Following is the text of a letter from the President of the Seventh Session of the United Nations General Assembly, Mr. L.B. Pearson, which has been cabled to the President of the Republic of Korea, His Excellency Dr. Syngman Rhee:

"Dear Mr. President,

As President of the General Assembly of the United Nations I have been shocked to hear of the unilateral action which you have sanctioned in bringing about the release of non-repatriable North Korean prisoners from the United Nations prisoner-of-war camps in Korea.

" I take this occasion to recall the decisive action taken by the United Nations when aggression was initiated in June, 1950, and the satisfaction which you expressed in the response of the United Nations to the urgent appeals made by you for military and other assistance. That collaboration, aimed at the repelling of aggression and the restoration of your country to a condition of peace and economic well-being, has been marked by three years of effective effort on the part of Members of the United Nations, and of your Government and people, under the direction of the United Nations Command. In view of what this collaboration has meant to your people it is most regrettable that you have taken action which threatens the results already achieved and the prospect of a peaceful solution of remaining problems.

" This release of North Korean prisoners from United Nations prisoner-of-war camps in Korea is particularly shocking in view of the progress made by the armistice negotiators in Panmunjom, which has resulted in the acceptance of principles laid down in the United Nations General Assembly's resolution of 3 December, 1952, endorsed by 54 Member Nations. The acceptance of the principles underlying this resolution, especially that of no forcible repatriation of prisoners, which has been the basis of your position as well as that of the United Nations, has only been obtained after two years of patient and persistent negotiation by the United Nations Command.

" The action taken with your consent, in releasing the North Korean prisoners, violates the agreement reached by the two sides on June 8, 1953, embodying these principles, and it occurs at a time when hostilities are about to cease, and when the questions of the unification of Korea and related Korean problems can be dealt with by a political conference involving the parties concerned.

"In July, 1950, as a means of assuring necessary military solidarity with the United Nations effort in repelling aggression, you undertook to place the land, sea and air forces of the Republic of Korea under the "command authority" of the United Nations Command. Your action referred to above violates that undertaking.

"As President of the General Assembly of the United Nations, I feel it my duty to bring to your attention the gravity of this situation. I hope and trust that you will cooperate with the United Nations Command in its continuing and determined efforts to obtain an early and honourable armistice.

"I should like to take this occasion to express, as President of the United Nations General Assembly, my profound sympathy for the sufferings of the people of Korea during the past three years, and my admiration for the valiant efforts of the R.O.K. Army in its co-operation with the forces of the United Nations. It is my earnest hope that this co-operation will continue, not only in the immediate task of obtaining the armistice but in assuring that the armistice is thereafter faithfully observed, in order that we may jointly proceed toward our common objective of the unification of Korea by peaceful means. If this co-operation were ended, it would be the Korean people who would suffer first and suffer most."

L.B. Pearson,  
President of the United Nations General Assembly.