

March 11, 1954

Letter, General Maxwell D. Taylor to Syngman Rhee

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Summary:

The Eighth Army will permit farming in military controlled areas and allow for resettlement of civilians.

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C O P Y

11 March 1954

His Excellency Mr. Syngman Rhee
President of the Republic of Korea
Kyung Mu Dai

Dear Mr. President,

In order to increase the arable land under production, I have directed the Corps Commanders of the Eighth Army to permit farming throughout their Corps areas except in close proximity to defensive works and military installations, and in areas essential to training. While this action will create many problems arising from the eventual resettlement of thousands of civilians in military areas, I feel sure that Eighth Army can work out procedures which will permit the gradual resumption of agriculture without undue hardship to the farmers. It is probable, however, that considerable time will elapse before entirely normal village life can be established in the new communities.

In resettling these areas, the Eighth Army Corps Commanders will have to work closely with the provincial officials of the Republic of Korea south of the 38th parallel: While these contacts can be worked out locally, it would be most helpful if you would indicate your interest in this operation and urge provincial officials to cooperate to the fullest with the representatives of the Eighth Army. It is important to avoid any uncontrolled movement of settlers northward at a rate faster than that acceptable to the responsible military commanders.

Although the reopening of these farm lands in forward areas does not affect the legal status of the area north of the 38th parallel, it should tend eventually to alleviate the refugee burden in South Korea and at the same time add to the productivity of Korean agriculture.

Sincerely yours,

MAXWELL D. TAYLOR
General, U. S. Army
Commanding