

August 16, 1955

Letter, I. D. White to President Syngman Rhee

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Summary:

General White appeals to President Rhee to accept the United Nations Command's offer to pay Korean Service Corps laborers. Because the KSC's existence is essential to the joint defense effort, immediate steps should be taken to solve this issue as soon as possible.

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HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES ARMY FORCES, FAR EAST
AND
EIGHTH UNITED STATES ARMY
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL
APO 301, San Francisco, California

16 August 1955

His Excellency
President Syngman Rhee
Kyung Mu Dai
Seoul

Dear Mr. President:

The United Nations Command has received a letter from Dr. Choi, Minister of Health and Social Affairs, proposing that the pay of Korean Service Corps laborers be raised to 600 hwan a day, including logistical support. I am inclosing a copy of General Collier's reply to Dr. Choi for your information.

During a discussion of the KSC problem with General Lemnitzer on 28 July, you gave assurances that the Republic of Korea Government wished to support the KSC if the United Nations Command could pay KSC laborers wages comparable to those paid direct hire laborers who perform equivalent work for the UN forces. This General Lemnitzer agreed to do. The Minister of Health and Social Affairs has now proposed that we pay KSC laborers more than we are currently paying direct hire unskilled labor. The UN forces are currently employing heavy laborers in metropolitan areas at a maximum daily wage of 520 hwan. Therefore, in a letter from General Collier to Dr. Choi, it has been proposed that we pay the KSC laborer a maximum of 520 hwan a day, including logistical support. This is the maximum amount that the United Nations Command can afford to pay. Fund limitations make it impossible for the UNC to pay KSC laborers 600 hwan a day and, at the same time, maintain a KSC force of the minimum size I consider essential to support our requirements for this type of labor.

Unless positive and immediate steps are taken to settle this matter and to resume induction of laborers, the KSC will go out of existence by the end of August, at which time the last of the laborers



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His Excellency
President Syngman Rhee

15 August 1955

now in service will be due for discharge, except for a small number of volunteers.

During the period of hostilities in Korea, I observed the KSC in action and I know that they are indispensable to our joint defense effort. Having personal knowledge of their value in combat, I cannot stress too strongly the serious impairment to the presently constituted defense structure of the Republic of Korea if your Government allows the KSC to go out of existence. Therefore, I am personally appealing to you, in accordance with the previous assurances given General Lemnitzer, to persuade your Government to accept our offer to pay KSC laborers 520 hwan a day -- an offer which I feel to be both realistic and just.

Sincerely,

I. D. WHITE
General, U.S. Army
Commanding

Incl

Ltr Gen Collier to
Dr. Choi