

An insight from the Korean Armistice...

Something President Eisenhower and his team had to contend with early on...

“Rhee [President of South Korea] vociferously opposed the armistice. He wanted Korea unified and all Chinese forces withdrawn from Korea. Koreans filled the streets of Seoul and other cities throughout South Korea to demonstrate. **Most South Koreans supported President Rhee’s stance that an armistice should not be concluded until North Korea was liberated. Rhee was intransigent.**” - Professor Carter Malkasian, *The Korean War, 1950–1953*

“[In 1953] Walter Robertson [Assistant Secretary of State] and General Clark [Commander of the United Nations forces] were **conferring daily with South Korean President Rhee, threatening him with an American pull-out if he did not cooperate in the armistice, promising him virtually unlimited American aid if he did.** Rhee resisted the pressure, helped by reports from the [United] States that seemed to indicate a near revolt by Republican senators against their own Administration.

*Continued:*

“[Republican leader Styles] Bridges and [Joseph] McCarthy believed that ‘freedom-loving people’ should applaud Rhee’s defiance of the armistice... On July 5, the acting majority leader, **Senator Knowland** blamed **Eisenhower for a ‘breach’ with Rhee** and announced his support for Korean unification before any armistice agreement was signed. **Despite the clamor, Eisenhower insisted that Robertson and Clark be firm.** They were, and **ultimately persuaded Rhee that it was futile for South Korea to try to go it alone.** On July 8 [15 days ahead of the Korean Armistice Agreement being signed], **Rhee finally issued a public statement promising to cooperate.**” - Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower, Volume #2: The President* (1984)

What got Rhee to cooperate?