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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
LABOR AND PUBLIC WELFARE

April 17, 1951

Dear Friend:

Thank you for your recent communication protesting the removal of General MacArthur from his command.

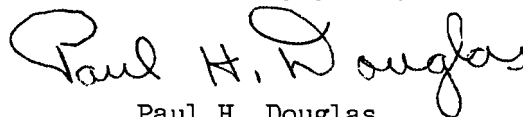
The whole incident is very unfortunate. General MacArthur has been a brave and skillful soldier and has done an excellent job in Japan. While you may not agree, I am convinced that President Truman has the good of our country at heart, is determined to defeat communist aggression in Korea, but does not wish our forces to get bogged down in a war on the mainland of China. With these general objectives, I am in agreement.

Without going into the substantive merits of the differences of opinion, it is nevertheless true in our democracy (1) that the military commanders should ultimately be subordinate to the civil authorities and (2) that a general should not go over the head of the Commander-in-Chief in an appeal to the people or an opposition political party. It is regrettable but true that General MacArthur violated these rules. Had you been commanding a military unit and had one of your subordinates acted similarly, under the rules of military discipline and the traditions of the service, you would have been forced, however reluctantly, to relieve such a person. I hope you will consider this phase of the situation very carefully. The issue is one of military discipline and the principles upon which we are waging war and not the respective personal merits of General MacArthur and the Commander-in-Chief.

I feel strongly, however, that we should not yield in the slightest to the Chinese communists. We should bomb their supply lines in Korea and fight to defeat them. I want to weaken them on the mainland, short of open war. Under no conditions would I favor turning over Formosa to them or permitting them to join the United Nations until they have shown a complete change of heart - and such a change I do not expect. I oppose both the appeasement, that some of our allies are reported to favor, and the withdrawal from Korea and the surrender of Asia to the communists that some of our prominent citizens have been urging.

I hope that differences of opinion on this matter will not weaken our national determination to turn back communism and that on major matters we may close our ranks and go forward.

Faithfully yours,



Paul H. Douglas