

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON



April 10, 1952

Dear General Eisenhower:

In accordance with your request contained in your letter of 2 April, and with the approval of the President, I am taking appropriate action to secure your release from assignment as Supreme Commander, Allied Powers Europe, effective 1 June, and to have you placed on inactive status upon your return to the United States.

With kindest regards, I am

Very sincerely yours,

General Dwight D. Eisenhower
Supreme Commander
Allied Powers Europe
APO 55, C/o Postmaster
New York, New York

RAL:vwa

Supreme Headquarters
Allied Powers Europe
2 April 1952



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Dear Mr. Secretary:

I request that you initiate appropriate action to secure my release from assignment as Supreme Commander, Allied Powers Europe, by approximately June 1st, and that I be placed on inactive status upon my return to the United States. A relief date fixed this far in advance should provide ample time for the appointment of a successor and for any preparation and counsel that he may desire from me.

This proposal is in the spirit of the understanding I gain from officials in Washington who outlined the special purposes of my original appointment in December 1950. At that time it was believed by those individuals that, because of past experience, I had relationships with respect to Europe which would facilitate the formation of a common defense structure and the establishment of a pattern for its operation. An assumption on the part of responsible officials of our Government that I could be helpful in the vital task of preserving peace was, of course, a compelling reason for instantaneous return to active service and acceptance of this assignment.

As of now, I consider that the specific purposes for which I was recalled to duty have been largely accomplished; the command has been formed, its procedures established, and basic questions settled. Moreover, a program of growth and development, based on early experience and searching reexamination, has been agreed at governmental levels. There are many difficulties to be overcome but, given the wholehearted support of the NATO community, this program will provide a reassuring degree of security in this region, despite the continued presence of the threat of Soviet Communism. There is every reason to believe that the NATO nations will continue to work together successfully, toward the goal of a secure peace.

Sincerely,

(signed)
Dwight D. Eisenhower

Honorable Robert A. Lovett
Secretary of Defense
Washington 25, D. C.

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Supreme Headquarters
Allied Powers Europe
2 April 1952



Dear Mr. Chairman;

I have this date requested the United States Government to initiate action looking to my relief as Supreme Commander, Allied Powers Europe, by approximately the first of June.

This action is in consonance with my understanding and intentions when the President of the United States, in response to request from the NATO Council, appointed me to the post more than a year ago. It was assumed at that time that wartime experience particularly qualified me to facilitate the initial organization of SHAPE, establishment of its procedures, and the institution of basic programs. Since these phases are now accomplished and, in view of the press of other developments, it is my hope to return to inactive military status.

In addition to establishing organizational and procedural patterns, I feel that we have made considerable progress during the past year in our efforts to build adequate defenses in the European region. As related to you in my Annual Report, these gains were accompanied by a number of shortcomings and continuing problems. But, in the main, the results have been definitely positive.

The way to greater progress over the coming months was charted in the memorable conference at Lisbon, the prime significance of which was the coordination of military requirements with economic capabilities and the setting of specific goals for each of the NATO countries. If these goals are achieved, we shall see, by the end of this year, respectable forces established on the Continent, with the promise of further increase in future years, including substantial German reinforcement through the European Defense Force. I know that you and your associates will spare no efforts to bring into realization all the essential steps agreed at Lisbon.

When I entered upon my duties in December 1950, I was sure that our common task in Europe was a job that had to be done. From later experience, I am convinced that it can be done and that, given full cooperation, it will be done.

Throughout the period of my service here, the support of the NATO governments, peoples and armed services, and of the Standing Group and Military Committee has been a prime factor in whatever success we have achieved in this command. I am most deeply grateful to you and hope that our NATO commands under your direction will continue to flourish as guardians of the peace.

Sincerely,

(signed)

Dwight D. Eisenhower



Lieutenant General Paul Ely
The Chairman
The Standing Group
North Atlantic Treaty Organization
Room 2E865, Pentagon
Washington 25, D. C.

The following is copy of a longhand letter, written by the President to General Eisenhower:

April 6, 1952

Dear Ike:- I received your letter about your retirement from the military service. It makes me rather sad. I feel as some of my friends have told me they felt when I took myself out of the political picture on Saturday, March 29.

I shall handle the situation as you suggest. Bob Lovett brought your letter to me and we are in agreement with you as to how to handle it.

I hope you will be happy in your new role.

Most sincerely,

s/ Harry S. Truman

General of the Army
Dwight D. Eisenhower

Envelope was addressed: General of the Army
in longhand) Dwight D. Eisenhower,
Paris

and was marked Personal & Confidential



DDE



Supreme Headquarters
Allied Powers Europe
2 April 1952

Dear Mr. President:

By separate letter, I am requesting the Secretary of Defense to initiate action to bring about my relief from my current post as Supreme Commander, Allied Powers Europe, on or about June 1st of this year. By then I shall have served a year and a half on the NATO assignment upon which I entered, at your request, in late 1950.

It is, of course, quite clear that by June the work of SHAPE will not be finished. Fundamentally, however, those phases of the work that were defined in the spirit of the conversations that I had with you and various officials in Washington between October and December 1950, and in accordance with which I was specifically requested to return to active military duty, have been completed. Patterns of development have been devised, security plans prepared, organizations set up, logistic and support measures initiated, first candid reexaminations made and, from now on, progress will of necessity follow the lines that have already been marked out in more or less distinct fashion. This is not to minimize the problems a successor will face in this post. They are certain to be difficult and numerous. However, the special organizational and initial planning missions that were deemed critical in the late weeks of 1950 have now been accomplished. Whatever the validity, at that time, of the belief expressed to me that I could undertake these tasks with greater prospect of success than could any other available individual, the situation has changed from one of exploration and initial negotiation to one of confident planning and development.

My suggestion of June 1st is based on several considerations. I feel that the period of time intervening will be sufficient for me to



finish work on projects I have been handling personally, to give to my successor such preparatory assistance as he may desire, and to pay final courtesy visits to the various capitals associated with this project. Obviously, these cannot be started until after our first comprehensive Command Post Exercise between April 7th and 11th, and it would be most unfortunate to have any publicity before its termination. Consequently, I have requested through the Secretary of Defense that public announcement be arranged for April 11th.

It would be unrealistic for me to ignore the influence of a number of American political incidents of the past winter upon the specific timing of this request. Having maintained for years the position that I did not aspire to political office, I clearly miscalculated, last January, in assuming that by publicly reasserting that attitude, I could avoid the impingement upon my time and attention of political movements then in progress. This view is no longer tenable, and I deem it necessary to seek early termination of my military assignment so that any political activity centering about me cannot possibly affect the military service. This naturally leads to a consideration of my future military status. My request contemplates transfer to inactive status on the date that I can make a final report to the proper officials in Washington. Moreover, in the event that I should be nominated for high political office, my resignation as an officer of the Army will be instantly submitted to you for your approval.

With many others I share the conviction that America's interests and the peace of the world require that Western Europe be kept outside the Iron Curtain. Moreover, I believe this can be done, given a readiness to cooperate effectively among all nations of NATO. In spite of the great distance remaining between these nations and their goals, they have achieved, thus far, a marked degree of success in the task of building a viable defense structure in this critical region. For my part, I shall always be grateful to you for the staunch support and encouragement given to all here at SHAPE

in a task that has constituted, for each of us, a most important duty to his own country, and to the peace of the world.

With sincere thanks and warm personal regard,



Respectfully,

Dwight D. Eisenhower

The President
The White House
Washington 25, D. C.