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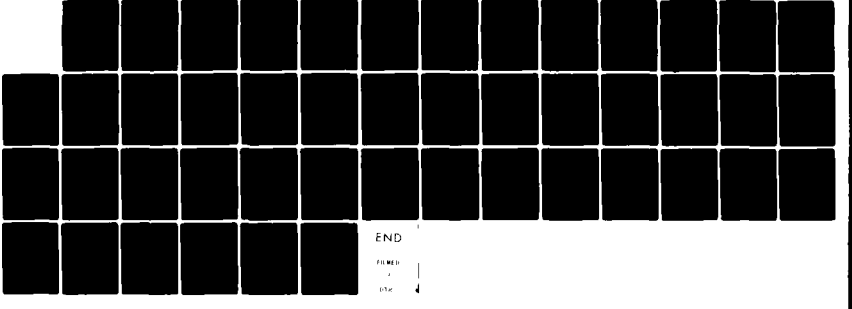

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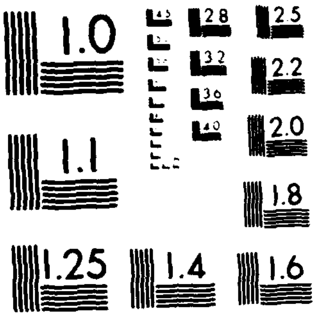

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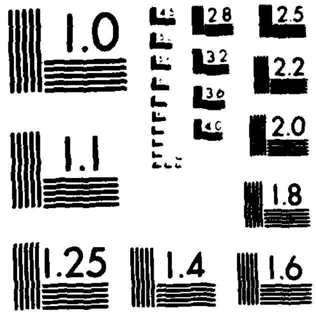

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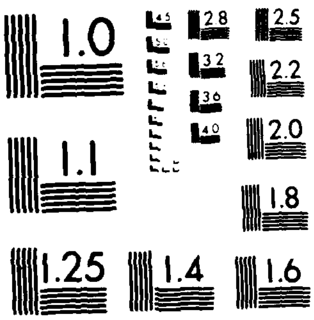

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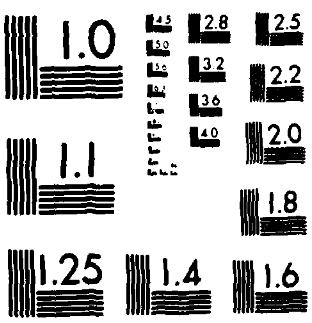

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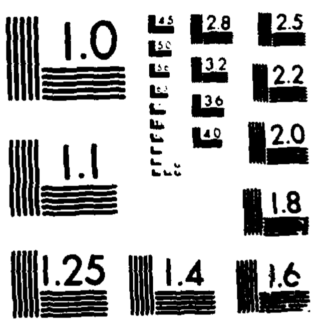

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KOREA IN POSTWAR U.S. SECURITY POLICY

Norman D. Levin and Richard L. Sneider

June 1982

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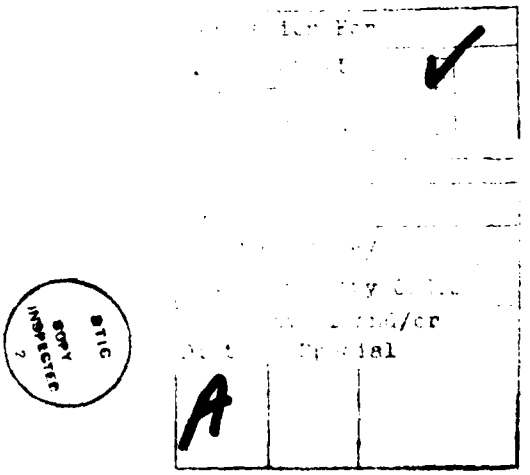
INTRODUCTION

Historically, Korea has had a strategic importance far out of proportion to its size. This importance was linked for centuries to the competition between Japan and China for control over the peninsula. In the post-World War II period, Korea's importance has stemmed from its geopolitical position at the intersection of conflicting great power interests in East Asia. In this period, the United States and the Soviet Union became the central actors. Throughout the post-war period, however, the United States has vacillated in its appreciation of Korea's strategic importance, and in its estimation of Korea's value in terms of U.S. global strategy. This has given U.S. security policy toward Korea a basic quality of ambivalence. It has also allowed U.S. policy to fluctuate between the extremes of intervention and withdrawal, leaving in its wake a sense of ambiguity regarding America's fundamental commitment to the defense of Korea. As we proceed through the 1980s, the task for policymakers is to provide a coherent and consistent policy toward the security of Korea. The purpose of this paper is to take a step in this direction.



HISTORICAL EVOLUTION

PERIOD I: TRUSTEESHIP, OCCUPATION, AND U.S. DISENGAGEMENT (1945-50)

Prior to 1945, American concern with and involvement in Korea was minimal. China dwarfed what little popular interest there was in Korea while the long Japanese occupation diminished what small diplomatic, economic, and missionary interests as had existed. Although a few Americans, missionaries in particular, played a significant role in sustaining the Korean educational system and lending support to the independence movement during Japan's occupation, the broad U.S. attitude resulting from its minimal involvement was characterized on both the public and official levels largely by ignorance and indifference.

World War II dramatically changed the nature of U.S. involvement. This was reflected early in the Cairo Declaration of December, 1943. Declaring that Korea should be divested from Japan and in due time become a free and independent nation, the declaration marked the initial, official U.S. involvement in Korea's future. By physically overthrowing Japanese domination and militarily occupying both Korea and Japan, the United States further inserted itself as the preeminent power. Moreover, by committing itself politically to Korea's independence, the U.S. became the sponsor and final arbiter of Korea's political development. In the process, the U.S. assumed a position in Korea that contrasted markedly with its traditional orientation.

The United States assumed this position, however, with only the most minimum of preparation. This was reflected in the paucity of wartime planning for Korea's postwar disposition. It also was reflected in many of the early decisions. The decision to divide Korea at the 38th parallel with Soviet occupation of the northern half of the country, for example, was made at a late-night meeting primarily as a means for resolving conflicting bureaucratic inclinations.[1]

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[1] Dean Rusk's recollection remains the most convincing. See *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1945*, Vol. VI (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1969), pp. 1039-1040. For a recent conflicting view see Lee, Changsoo, "The State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee and Joint Chiefs of Staff: A Reassessment of its Decision on the Thirty-eighth Parallel," The Korean Political Science Association, *Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Meeting* (Seoul, 1977).

Similary, the decision to "occupy" Korea was made without even the most rudimentary accompanying plans for its future.[2] Such lack of preparation reflected not only the minimal official knowledge of Korea, but also the limited appreciation of Korea's strategic position as it related to U.S. security concerns. The contrast between America's actual involvement and its almost casual and unplanned approach gave U.S. policy from the beginning a fundamentally ambivalent character.

Despite this contrast, however, the United States demonstrated a clear awareness of the linkage between competition for influence in Korea and stability in East Asia. Inklings of this awareness were evident in President Roosevelt's emphases upon "trusteeship" and "joint administration." As Soviet-American relations deteriorated following the end of World War II, this awareness became even stronger. This is reflected in the "Policy for Korea" drafted by the State Department in May and June, 1946 and concurred in by both the War and Navy Departments. Designed to determine "the basic objectives of the United States with regard to Korea and how best to achieve these objectives," the policy stated:

> The fundamental United States objective with regard to Korea, simply stated, is the independence of Korea. This the United States has promised in the Cairo Declaration and subsequent statements. Korean independence is important not only for the sake of the Koreans themselves but also as a means of strengthening political stability throughout the Far East, for the domination of Korea by either Japan or the Soviet Union would further endanger Chinese control of Manchuria and would thus lessen the prospect of the creation of a strong and stable China, without which there can be no permanent political stability in the Far East.[3]

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[2] For details see Henderson, Gregory, *Korea--The Politics of the Vortex* (Harvard University Press, 1968), esp. pp. 120-136.

[3] U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946*, Volume VIII (United States Government Printing Office, 1971), p. 697. The immediately preceding quotation is on page 693.

In a covering memo the Assistant Secretary of State for Occupied Areas, J. H. Hilldring, made clear that this thinking was designed to be reflected in U.S. military policy as well. "Steps have been taken," he wrote, "to prepare a new JCS directive for Korea based on political principles outlined below [i.e. in the "Policy"] . . . which are considered necessary in order effectively to implement a revised policy."[4]

The early strategic thinking of U.S. military planners generated by this basic "Policy" was expressed in the first East Asia Plan, entitled JCS 1259/16, drafted by the Joint Chiefs of Staff over the summer months of 1946. This plan defined U.S. strategic objectives primarily in terms of denial: denying the Soviet Union positions from which it could cut off U.S. sea lines of communication and preventing any power from dominating Korea, China, Japan, or the Philippines.[5] In making such a definition the Joint Chiefs evinced an awareness of Korea's strategic value both in terms of the Asian continent and as part of the larger global political struggle with the Soviet Union. They also demonstrated an appreciation of the implications of growing Soviet control in the North. On this basis, the wartime emphasis upon early troop withdrawal was rescinded, negotiations with the USSR were temporarily suspended, and direct efforts to structure political developments in the South were stepped up.[6]

In line with this early strategic thinking, the United States initiated a major program of military and economic assistance. In January, 1945, for example, the U.S. fostered the establishment of a national military force (the National Constabulary) and provided it both arms and training. Thereafter, the U.S. encouraged the development of the Constabulary into more of a full-fledged army (the National Defence Force) and transferred to it a range of older weapons. And in early 1950, the United States approved a comprehensive $11 million military aid package for Korea. This military assistance was supplemented,

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[4]Ibid., p. 692.

[5]Dingman, Roger, "American Planning for War in East Asia, 1945-1950," an unpublished paper prepared for the Conference on American Strategy in East Asia, pp. 9-10.

[6]Okonogi, Masao, "The Shifting Strategic Value of Korea, 1942-1950," *Korean Studies*, Volume 3, 1979, p. 59.

moreover, by a substantial economic effort. Between 1945 and 1949 the United States provided more than $500 million in economic aid to Korea. It made available considerable technical assistance, particularly in the fields of agriculture and finance. And, most important, perhaps, it fostered a large land redistribution program that had dramatic political and social consequences.[7] All this was in line with the principles of the "Policy for Korea" drafted in the spring of 1946.

This basic policy was gradually undermined, however, by doubts about Korea's strategic importance. Such doubts were exacerbated by the rapid demobilization and cutbacks in military spending that followed the end of the war. Faced with a growing gap between missions and resources, U.S. military planners increasingly inclined toward a "maritime strategy" that downplayed the salience of the U.S. position in Korea (and China) while increasing the importance of Okinawa and Japan. By the end of 1946, U.S. strategic thinking had moved perceptably away from American military involvement on the Asian continent.

This movement became much more pronounced after the Truman Doctrine in March, 1947, and the Marshall Plan almost immediately thereafter, greatly increased the commitment of American resources to Europe. With their emphases upon preventing the extension of Communist power to European countries like Greece and Turkey, these actions lowered the priority of Korea even further among U.S. strategic concerns. This is evident in a top secret memorandum from Secretary of Defense Forrestal to the Secretary of State a few months later. Stressing the cutbacks in military spending and the pressing need for manpower elsewhere, Forrestal argued that ". . . from the standpoint of military security, the United States has little strategic interest in maintaining the present troops in Korea."[8] Reflecting the judgments reached by U.S. strategic planners, Secretary of War Patterson drew the logical conclusion: "I am convinced that the United States should

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[7]Cole, David and Lyman, Princeton, *Korean Development* (Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. 21-22.

[8]*Foreign Relations of the United States, 1947*, Volume VI, pp. 817-818.

pursue forcefully a course of action whereby we get out of Korea at an early date and believe all our measures should have early withdrawal as their overriding objective."[9] While there remained strong political opposition to any precipitous withdrawal that would damage U.S. prestige, by late 1947 a consensus had been reached among U.S. policymakers that ". . . the U.S. position in Korea is untenable," and that a settlement should be sought ". . . which would enable the U.S. to withdraw from Korea as soon as possible with the minimum of bad effect."[10]

This consensus, it might be emphasized, was the product of both limited U.S. military resources and the perception of Korea as a peripheral security interest in the global context. It also represented a denigration of Korea's importance in regional terms as well. As Secretary of Defense Forrestal argued in the memorandum described above, Korea would be at best irrelevant in the event of hostilities in the Far East and at worst "a military liability."[11] Accordingly, a U.S. military presence was neither required nor justified given other pressing American requirements. Six months later, on April 8, 1948, the National Security Council ratified this consensus with the decision to withdraw all U.S. troops from Korea.[12] Although completion

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[9]Ibid., pp. 626-627. Patterson acknowledged that ". . . from the standpoint of U.S. security, our policy in the Far East cannot be considered on a piecemeal basis, and logically the policy concerning Korea must be viewed as part of an integrated whole which includes Manchuria and China." Given the "decreasing capability" of the U.S. military, however, he concluded that the U.S. must "review critically all programs with the realization that non-availability of means will force us to drop the least remunerative of them in the near future."

[10]"Memorandum by Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs (Butterworth) to the Under Secretary of State (Lovett)" in ibid., pp. 820-821.

[11]U.S. forces would be irrelevant because ". . . any offensive operation the United States might wish to conduct on the Asiatic continent most probably would bypass the Korean peninsula"; they would be a "military liability" because they ". . . could not be maintained there without substantial reinforcement prior to the initiation of hostilities," ibid., p. 817.

[12]"Report by the National Security Council on the Position of the United States with respect to Korea," *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948*, Volume VI, pp. 1168-1169.

of the troop withdrawal was delayed at the behest of the State Department until June, 1949 and a 500-man military assistance group (KMAG) was left behind to advise South Korean forces, the relative speed and completeness of the withdrawal conveyed little U.S. interest in Korea's defense. The exclusion of Korea from the U.S. defense "perimeter," made famous in Secretary of State Acheson's National Press Club speech of January, 1950, was simply a public reiteration of this longstanding consensus.[13]

The equivocacy about Korea's strategic importance affected not only the U.S. military presence but its assistance programs as well. Most seriously affected was U.S. military aid. In addition to the inherent problems of higher aid priorities and limited funding resources, this aid was plagued by low estimations of Korea's strategic value and by continued concern with a possible South Korean attack northward. Accordingly, despite official endorsement of Korean "independence," the U.S. restricted its military objectives throughout this period toward the creation of a minimal, *internal* security force.[14] The United States provided the South Korean army only light weapons that could not be used for offensive purposes. It restricted the Korean Coast Guard to a few small PT boats. And it limited the Air Force, which was not created until October, 1949, to a few light planes and propeller-driven aircraft. Moreover, because of the low priority assigned Korea by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, execution of the military aid program approved under the Mutual Defense Assistance Act was hindered by the requirement that deliveries await new contracts

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[13]For an interesting retrospective exchange among some of the key participants, see Heller, Francis H., *The Korean War: A 25-Year Perspective* (The Regents Press of Kansas, 1977), pp. 11-16. All of the participants agree that there was nothing in Acheson's speech that had not been approved by the NSC, the JCS, and President Truman over two years earlier.

[14]The most authoritative account remains Sawyer, Robert, *Military Advisors in Korea: KMAG in Peace and War* (Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1962), pp. 7-45 and 96-104. For a recent account, see Lee, Young-Woo, "Birth of the Korean Army, 1945-1950," *Korea and World Affairs*, 1980, pp. 639-656.

rather than draw upon existing military stocks.[15] As a result, the ROK army, which itself numbered less than 100,000 men by mid-1950, was armed with weapons for a force only half that size. It had no tanks, no medium or heavy artillery, no large mortars, and not even a single combat aircraft.[16] Despite Congressional approval of nearly $11 million of military aid in March, 1950, no additional direct military assistance reached Seoul until after the Korean War began.

In contrast, North Korea was engaged in a huge military buildup. Clandestinely organized in September, 1946, the Korean People's Army (KPA) was officially activated in February, 1948, more than a half year prior to the founding of the state itself.[17] From this point on the KPA grew rapidly, totalling nearly 60,000 men by the end of the year. By mid-1950, the KPA had between 150,000 and 200,00 men, of whom 10,000 were officers trained in the Soviet Union and 40,000 were veterans of China's PLA.[18] This massive buildup of manpower was augmented by large shipments from the Soviet Union of heavy arms, tanks, and first-line fighter aircraft. Coupled with stepped-up infiltration efforts beginning in late 1948, the military buildup made North Korean and Soviet intentions seem anything but innocuous. That the U.S. did not respond to the recognized danger with a commensurate buildup of South Korean military capability, however, is only partly due to the misreading of North Korean, and distrust of South Korean, intentions. It also is due to the nature of U.S. strategic thinking itself which, as suggested above, was fundamentally ambivalent about the importance of South Korea to U.S. security interests.

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[15] Paige, Glenn D., *The Korean Decision* (The Free Press, 1968), p. 70.

[16] Fehrenback, T. R., *This Kind of War* (Macmillan Co., 1963), p. 17

[17] Scalapino, Robert & Lee, Chong-sik, *Communism in Korea, Part II* (University of California Press, 1972), pp. 923-928.

[18] Vreeland & Shinn, et al., *Area Handbook for North Korea, 19[illegible]* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976), pp. 314-315. Also see Department of State, *North Korea: A Case Study in the Techniques of Takeover* (U.S. Printing Office, 1961), pp. 16-17.

While military assistance was most seriously hurt by the ambivalence concerning Korea's importance, economic aid was also affected. This can be seen in the short-range quality of U.S. aid objectives. The Government Appropriations for Relief in Occupied Area (GARIOA) program which accompanied the U.S. military government in Korea, for example, was oriented almost exclusively to relief programs. Of the more than $500 million in economic aid provided to Korea under GARIOA, most was in the form of food, fertilizer, clothing, fuel, and other commodities, only 14% went to reconstruction efforts.[19] This short-range orientation reflected more than Congressional niggardliness. It also reflected minimal concern with Asian economic reconstruction, and limited interest in the kind of costly economic development program necessary to make South Korea self-sustaining.[20]

This lack of interest was made manifest as early as March, 1947 when a more positive, long-range economic rehabilitation program put forward by the State Department was withdrawn prior to Congressional consideration due to anticipated opposition. It was even more apparent in U.S. vacillation over the three-year aid program prepared by the Economic Cooperation Administration in mid-1949, the first large-scale, long-range assistance program drafted by the U.S. that linked economic recovery with political stability. Despite a modest request of $150 million for the 1949-50 fiscal year and a warning by Secretary of State Acheson that South Korea would fall within three months if assistance were not provided, the aid program languished in Congress for over six months. In January, 1950, it was rejected. Although the program was reconsidered and passed one month later (less $40 million for Korea), the problems encountered implied a low priority and lack of fundamental concern for Korea.[21]

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[19] Mason, Kim, et al., *The Economic and Social Modernization of the Republic of Korea* (Harvard University Press, 1980), p. 168.

[20] Ibid., p. 169.

[21] Cho, Soon-Sung, *Korea in World Politics 1940-1967* (University of California Press, 1967), pp. 240-244. Asked in an interview published on May 5, 1950 whether "the suggestion that we abandon Korea is going to be seriously considered," the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Tom Connally, replied: "I'm afraid it's going to be seriously considered because I'm afraid it's going to happen, whether we want it to or not . . . ," *U.S. News and World Report*, May 5, 1950, p. 40, cited in Paige, op. cit., p. 68.

Coupled with Acheson's "defense perimeter" speech, U.S. policy on economic assistance may have served as an impetus for the subsequent North Korean invasion.

PERIOD II: HOT WAR, COLD WAR, AND U.S. RE-INVOLVEMENT (1950-1968)

The Korean War dramatically reversed U.S. security policy to Korea, both by creating an awareness of the strategic importance of Korea to U.S. "containment" objectives and by instilling a general "brothers-in-arms" sentiment. As a result of the North Korean invasion, South Korea became not only a central part of the U.S. "forward defense zone" but also a trusted and valued ally. In the decade and a half thereafter, the U.S. assumed a dominant role in Korean military, economic, and political development in a relationship characterized as much by its closeness as by its fundamental asymmetry.[22]

The roots of this new involvement lay in the changing nature of American strategic thinking. Over the course of the late-1940s, the United States had come to accept the need to prevent the expansion of Soviet communism. This was clearly expressed in George Kennan's famous *Foreign Affairs* article of July, 1947 which, formulated as a National Security Council study entitled NSC-20, represented the intellectual foundation for a move away from a policy of "collaboration" to one of "containment."[23] U.S. defense planners approached the question of Soviet expansion, however, almost wholly in terms of general war. Treating lightly, at best, the possibility of more limited, local aggression, they defined "containment" primarily in terms of large-scale aggression in Western Europe.[24] In the process, as suggested above, they relegated Korea to a peripheral position among U.S. strategic priorities.

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[22]Han Sungjoo, "The Republic of Korea & the United States: The Changing Alliance" in Kim & Kang, ed., *Korea: A Nation in Transition* (Research Center for Peace & Unification, Seoul, 1978), pp. 56-82.

[23]X(anonymous), "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs*, July, 1947, pp. 566-582.

[24]Halperin, Morton, *Defense Strategies for the Seventies* (Little, Brown & Co., 1971), pp. 38-39.

By late 1949 and 1950, however, a number of developments had begun to induce a major re-evaluation of American strategic thinking. Particularly important in this regard were the Soviet detonation of an atomic bomb in August and the fall of China to the communists in October, 1949. The Soviet detonation of an atomic bomb threw into doubt U.S. reliance upon strategic airpower and atomic weapons as the sole means for countering Soviet expansion. The fall of China not only significantly strengthened the communist side of the global balance of power fulcrum; it also called into question the continuing validity of the singular emphasis upon Europe, and upon strategies focused exclusively on the Atlantic community.[25] Together with a growing program of military assistance and the related efforts of the State Department to coordinate foreign policy and military strategy, these developments led to the creation of a joint State-Defense Department committee in January, 1950 which initiated a fundamental re-examination of U.S. security policy.

The study resulting from this re-examination, subsequently labeled NSC-68, reflected significant changes in American strategic thinking. In its final form, NSC-68 portrayed an inherent conflict of interests between the U.S. and the Soviet Union due to irreconcilable ideological differences. Warning of the dangers of local wars and limited military challenges, given the nature of Soviet objectives, it called for a major U.S. military buildup that would give the United States the capabilities necessary for both general war and the range of more limited military engagements.[26] While NSC-68 did not specifically anticipate the challenge Korea would pose only a few months later, it did reflect a growing consensus among American strategic planners on the need to be able to counter Soviet expansion in whatever its form or manifestation. The North Korean invasion, perceived as it was as naked aggression inspired and controlled by the Soviet Union, represented both an object lesson and political imperative for the

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[25]Hammond, Paul, "NSC-68: Prologue to Rearmament" in Schilling, Hammond, & Snyder, *Strategy, Politics & Defense Budgets* (Columbia University Press, 1962), p. 285.

[26]Ibid., pp. 304-307.

development of such a capability.[27] The U.S. response to the North Korean invasion was thus less a reflection of the strategic importance of Korea than a manifestation of the perceived need to respond to the Soviet challenge.

In the wake of the North Korean invasion, U.S. military spending increased rapidly. From a fiercely-maintained ceiling of $15 billion (actual appropriations approved by the House of Representatives on the eve of the Korean War totaled only $13.8 billion for fiscal 1951), military spending more than tripled (to nearly $50 billion in 1953) before leveling off at roughly $40 billion a year thereafter. Along with this increase came a buildup of U.S. military manpower, and a rapid rise in the rate of weapons production. Along with this increase also came a new American commitment to a strategy of deterrence. While U.S. strategic doctrine underwent several changes over the course of this period, the fundamental U.S. determination to "deter" Soviet aggression and "contain" the expansion of Communism remained intact.[28]

With this determination came a major reinvolvement of the United States in Korea. Most dramatic, of course, was U.S. intervention in the Korean War. In this intervention, the U.S. committed some 350,000 soldiers, spent at least $18 billion, and suffered some 157,000 casualties, including 33,600 battle fatalities and over 54,000 total deaths.[29] The U.S. also equipped the South Korean forces, which

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[27]Given the continued stress in the spring of 1950 on restraining defense spending, it is problematical whether or not this growing consensus could have been translated into the kind of military effort NSC-68 envisioned. The North Korean invasion rendered this question academic. In this sense, the significance of NSC-68 is less in the impetus it provided to the U.S. military buildup than in the role it played in consolidating perspectives among American planners and in structuring the subsequent rearmament effort. Ibid., pp. 362-363.

[28]For a summary of the changes in U.S. strategic doctrine over this period, see Huntington, Samuel, *The Common Defense* (Columbia University Press, 1961), pp. 47-122. On the strategy of deterrence, see Sneider, Richard, "Prospects for Korean Security" in Solomon (ed.), *Asian Security in the 1980s* (Oelgeschlager, Gunn & Hain, Inc., 1979), pp. 109-147.

[29]U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, *Foreign Assistance and Related Programs Appropriations Bill, 1976*, H.R. 94-857, 94th Cong., 2nd Sess., March 1, 1976, p. 40. The $18 billion cost figure is undoubtedly underestimated. Other calculations raise the total to $25-26 billion, and some to as high as $79 billion. For further discussion, see White, Nathan, *U.S. Policy Toward Korea: Analysis, Alternatives, and Recommendations* (Westview Press, 1979), pp. 224-226.

burgeoned from less than 100,000 in 1950 to 250,000 in 1952 (despite the loss of roughly 80,000 men) and to 650,000 two years later.[30] The significance of U.S. intervention is hard to exaggerate: not only did it integrate Korea fully into central U.S. strategic concerns (as a "forward defense zone" in the strategy of "containment") and commit the United States fundamentally to the "deterrence" of future conflict in the peninsula; it also helped generate a widespread "brother-in-arms" sentiment that served as the psychological underpinning for a close bilateral alliance. This alliance was formalized with the signing of a mutual defense treaty in October, 1953. Remaining in force "indefinitely," the treaty expressed the joint recognition that ". . . an armed attack in the Pacific area on either of the Parties . . . would be dangerous to its own peace and safety" and committed each to "act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes."[31]

In the period following the Korean War, the most visible symbol of U.S. involvement in Korea was the pervasive American military presence. Throughout this period, the United States maintained roughly 60,000 troops in two divisions, backed up by air and logistic support, to deter and/or repel another invasion. Moreover, since the senior American military commander also serves as the commander of all UN forces, the U.S. retained operational control over the Korean armed forces.[32] As noted above, the U.S. also maintained a large group of military advisors (KMAG) to assist South Korean forces in improving their organizational, training, and maintenance skills, as well as their operational abilities. Although ROK military capabilities gradually improved over the course of the 1960s, South Korea remained almost totally dependent militarily upon the U.S. presence.[33]

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[30] Kim, Se-jin, *The Politics of Military Revolution in Korea* (The University of North Carolina Press, 1971), pp. 39-40.

[31] Article III, ROK-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty. For the complete text, see Kim, Se-jin, *Documents on Korean-American Relations, 1943-1976* (Research Center for Peace and Unification, Seoul, 1976), pp. 185-186. This treaty, it might be noted, was much stronger than the Security Treaty ratified one year earlier with Japan. The U.S.-Japan treaty lacked any formal defense obligation.

[32] For the texts of the letters exchanged between General MacArthur and President Rhee in the wake of the North Korean invasion confirming this arrangement, see ibid., pp. 117-119.

[33] Han, Sungjoo, "South Korea and the United States: the Alliance Survives," *Asian Survey*, November, 1980, p. 1075.

Almost equally significant, however, was U.S. military and economic assistance. Militarily, the Korean War had a devastating effect on North and South Korea. Both sides suffered enormous casualties, industrial damage, and equipment losses. In line with the change in its perception of Korea as an important part of its "forward defense zone" against Communist expansion, the U.S. altered its policies from providing only limited military assistance to making available large amounts of military aid. This was designed to strengthen South Korean forces to the point where, backed by the United States, they could effectively deter North Korean aggression. As a result of this policy change, major arms transfers to South Korea increased dramatically over the previous period. As Table 1 indicates, these transfers included F-5 fighters and F-86 Sabre fighter-bombers, 203 mm howitzers, and advanced missiles such as the Nike Hercules, Honest John, and the Hawk. Including Military Assistance Program (MAP) funding and credit assistance, U.S. military aid to Korea between 1950 and 1968 totaled some $2 1/2 billion. As Table 2 indicates, this represented more than 27% of all U.S. military aid given to East Asia and the Pacific during this period, over 30% in the period before Vietnam started to absorb increasing amounts of U.S. assistance. In the process of assuming such a large responsibility, the United States played a major role in prescribing the size, configuration, and weaponry of the South Korean military forces.[34] It also dictated the contents of the deterrence strategy. As one observer put it, "it is no exaggeration to state that the Korean armed forces owed their existence and functioning almost entirely to the United States."[35]

With such U.S. assistance, South Korea developed a substantial military capability. By 1968, ROK forces numbered roughly 620,000. The Army alone totaled some 550,000 men, and consisted of 19 front-line infantry divisions, 2 armored brigades, and 40 artillery batallions in addition to 4 other tank batallions held in reserve; the Navy

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[34]Stilwell, Richard, "The Need for U.S. Ground Forces in Korea--Withdrawal of U.S. Troops from Korea?", *AEI Defense Review*, 1977, p. 16.

[35]Han, "The Republic of Korea and the United States: The Changing Alliance," op. cit., pp. 58-59.

Table 1

U.S. Arms Supplies to South Korea, 1950-1968

Date	Number	Item	Date	Number	Item
		Aircraft			Naval vessels
1950-52	75	NA F-51 Mustang	1950	2	Frigate, "Tacoma" class
1950-52	(15)	Piper L-4			
(1950-52)	(15)	Douglas C-47	1950	1	Patrol boat "PC" type
(1950-53)	20	Curtiss C-46D			
1954	3	Aero Commander 520	1951	2	Frigate, "Tacoma" class
1955	5	NA F-86F Sabre	1951	4	Patrol boat, "PC" type
1956	75	NA F-86F Sabre	1952	4	Patrol boat, "PCS" type
(1956)	6	Sikorsky S-55	1952	4	Motor torpedo boat
1957	9	Lockheed T-33A	1953	1	Frigate, "Tacoma" class
(1957)	(5)	Cessna O-1A Birddog			
1958	30	NA F-86F Sabre	1955	1	Oiler
1960	(30)	NA F-86D Sabre	1955	2	Tank landing ship
			1955	2	Escort, "180 ft." PCE type
(1960)	(5)	Cessna LC-180			
(1962)	(30)	NA F-86D Sabre	1955-57	6	Supply ship
			1956	2	Escort, "180 ft." PCE type
(1962)	(16)	NA T-28	1956	1	Tank landing ship
(1964)	(8)	Cessna 185 Skywagon	1956	2	Frigate, "Bostwick" type
(1965)	(15)	Cessna O-1E Birddog			
1965-66	30	Northrop F-5A Freedom Fighter	1956	9	Medium landing ship
1965-66	4	Northrop F-5B Freedom Fighter	1956	3	Coastal minesweeper, "YMS" type
1965-66	(2)	Curtiss C-46D	(1957)	4	Coastal minesweeper,
(1967)	(5)	Douglas C-54			"YMS" type
1967-68	(2)	Curtiss C-46			
1967-68	(5)	Cessna O-1A Birddog	(1957)	3	Medium landing ship
(1968)	2	Northrop F-5B Freedom Fighter	1958	3	Tank landing ship
			1959	(2)	Tank landing ship
		Missiles			
(1959)	(12)	Usamicon MGR-1 Honest John	1959	1	Escort transport
1960-62	(360)	NWC Sidewinder	1959	3	Coastal minesweeper, "Bluebird" class
1965	(25)	Western Electric Nike Hercules	1960	1	Rocket landing ship
1965	(150)	Raytheon MIM-23 Hawk	1960	2	Patrol boat, "PC" type
			(1960)	1	Landing craft repair ship
			1961	4	Escort, "180 ft." PCE type
		Armoured fighting vehicles	1962	2	Tug, "Maricopa" class
			1963	1	Destroyer, "Fletcher" class
			1963	1	Frigate, "Rudderow" class
(1950-51)	(100)	M-Sherman	1963	1	Escort, "Auk" class
(1950-51)	(50)	M-5 Stuart	1963	2	Coastal minesweeper, "Bluebird" class
(1950-53	(50)	M-24 Chaffee			
(1950-53)	(70)	M-10	1964	1	Patrol boat, "PC" type
(1950-59)	(200)	M-8 Greyhound	1966	2	Escort transport
(1951-66)	(500)	M-47/M-48 Patton			
(1954-60)	(70)	M-36	1967	2	Escort, "Auk" class
(1961-65)	(150)	M-113	1968	1	Coastal minesweeper, "Bluebird" class
1965-66	(50)	(M-52) 105mm howitzer			
1965-66	(50)	(M-109) 155mm howitzer	1968	2	Destroyer, "Fletcher" class
1966-67	(60)	(M-110) 203mm howitzer	1968	1	Hydrographic survey vessel

SOURCE: SIPRI, *Arms Trade Registers* (Almqvist and Wiksell, International, Stockholm, 1975), pp. 12-15.

Table 2

U.S. Military Assistance to South Korea, 1949-68

(U.S. $ Million)

Fiscal Year	Total Military Assist. to Korea	Total Military Assist. to East Asia	% to Korea
49-52	11.7	160.7	7.2
53-57	527.8	2,403.7	21.9
58	331.1	627.8	52.7
59	190.5	606.7	31.4
60	190.2	501.6	37.9
61	192.2	495.4	38.8
62	136.9	523.3	26.2
63	182.5	651.8	28.0
64	124.3	563.7	22.1
65	173.1*	648.9	26.7
66	153.1*	535.6	28.6
67	149.8*	673.0	22.3
68	197.4*	1,026.9	19.2
Total 1953-61	1,431.8	4,635.2	30.9
Total 1949-68	2,560.6	9,419.1	27.2

*Excludes military assistance funding related to South Korean forces in Vietnam.

Source: SIPRI, The Arms Trade with the Third World (Paul Elek Limited, London 1971), pp. 146-147.

totaled 17,000, the Marine Corps 30,000, and the Air Force 23,000, the latter including 195 combat aircraft.[36] With this capability, South Korea felt strong enough to commit two infantry divisions to the defense of South Vietnam where they demonstrated effective fighting capabilities.

U.S. military assistance had significant implications economically as well. Under U.S. protection and with U.S. support, South Korea was able to devote the lion's share of its efforts to economic development. Because of U.S. assistance, for example, as late as 1965 roughly 62% of South Korea's defense budget of $112 million was covered by U.S. Military Budget Support (MBS) derived from economic assistance; South Korea itself provided only $41.5 million, or 1.5% of the South Korean GNP, from its own resources. In addition, the U.S. provided some $173 million in security assistance for a total of $243 million. This represented roughly 85% of total American and Korean spending on the ROK's defense.[37] Such aid freed scarce resources for development objectives. It also meshed well with South Korea's own strategy of focusing resources on economic development. Throughout this period the South Korean government consciously restricted the defense budget to 4% or less of GNP, while depending on the U.S. to equip and heavily fund the ROK forces.

In addition to this military assistance, the U.S. recognized from the end of the Korean War the need to complement such assistance with economic aid. This recognition was based on the belief that strengthening indigenous military forces was insufficient for countering Communist expansion. In the words of the Summary Presentation to Congress of the Proposed Mutual Defense and Development Programs for Fiscal Year 1965, ". . . perhaps more than in any other region, the history of the Far East since World War II has demonstrated that guns alone do not buy security."[38] Also required, U.S. leaders believed, was an effort to further economic development as a means for

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[36] IISS, *The Military Balance, 1968-69* (International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, 1969), p. 39.

[37] Oh, Kie Pyung and Oh, John K. C., "A Study on the Linkage Problems of Korean Foreign Policy in International Politics: With Special Reference to U.S.-Korean Relations," *The Korean Journal of International Studies*, Winter, 1979-80, p. 9.

[38] SIPRI, *The Arms Trade with the Third World* (Almqvist and Wiksell, Stockholm, 1971), p. 154.

reducing the kinds of internal unrest upon which Communism feeds. This linkage between economic assistance and national security was symbolized by Congressional passage of the Mutual Security Acts of 1953 and 1957, and the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. All of these reflected U.S. acceptance of responsibility not only for deterring, and if necessary defending South Korea from, any external attack, but for assisting it in its reconstruction efforts as well.

In line with this responsibility, the United States provided South Korea more than $3 1/2 billion in economic assistance between 1950 and 1968. As Table 3 indicates, this assistance was particularly significant in the period between 1954 and 1961 when the U.S. provided South Korea some $2 billion, nearly all on a grant basis. During this period, economic assistance financed roughly 70% of all South Korean imports; it equaled almost 80% of total fixed capital formation; and it represented 8% of South Korea's gross national product.[39] While these ratios began to decline with the South Korean shift to export-led growth in the mid-1960s, U.S. assistance remained substantial throughout the period. Coupled with the benefits accruing from the transfer of technology, U.S. economic assistance enabled South Korea to rehabilitate its economy following a devastating war and to create the industrial foundations necessary for the rapid, export-led growth that was to follow.

Along with U.S. acceptance of responsibility for South Korea's economic reconstruction came American intervention in the ROK's domestic political processes. This intervention was both most frequent and extensive in the area of economic policymaking. In the immediate postwar years, for example, the U.S. clashed repeatedly with the South Korean government over the mobilization and allocation of resources, and exerted strong pressure on behalf of devaluation. When discontent with South Korea's poor economic performance and leadership intransigence mounted in the late-1950s, the U.S. began to reduce its aid levels and curtail new investment projects in an

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[39] Mason, Kim, et al., op. cit., p. 185. The role of grants in financing South Korean balance of payments deficits during this period was particularly significant. See Hasan, Parvez and Rao, D.C., *Korea--Policy Issues for Long-Term Development* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), pp. 6-7 and 443-447.

Table 3

Relationship of U.S. Economic Aid to South Korean GNP
(unit: thousands U.S. dollars)*

ROK Fiscal Year	Economic Aid Received	South Korean GNP	Percent of GNP
1954	153,925	2,811,000	5.5
1955	236,707	2,963,000	8.0
1956	326,705	2,976,000	11.0
1957	382,893	3,204,000	12.0
1958	321,272	3,370,000	9.5
1959	222,204	3,500,000	6.3
1960	245,393	3,568,000	6.8
1961	199,245	3,741,000	5.3
1962	232,310	3,856,000	6.0
1963	216,446	4,195,000	5.2
1964	149,331	4,554,000	3.3
1965	131,441	4,821,000	2.7
1966	103,261	5,429,000	1.9
1967	97,018	5,852,000	1.7
1968	105,856	6,591,000	1.6
TOTAL	3,320,367	61,441,000	5.4

*Estimated from figures in Korean currency units.

Source: Bank of Korea, Economic Statistical Yearbook, 1973, cited in Han, Sungjoo, "The Republic of Korea and the United States: The Changing Alliance," op.cit., pg. 59.

effort to force the Korean government to agree to a series of annual stabilization programs. And when the new regime of Park Chung-hee scrapped these programs in the early 1960s and vastly stepped up spending and lending activities, the U.S. imposed rigid requirements on South Korea's domestic policies as conditions for continued economic aid.[40]

U.S. intervention in South Korea's policy processes was not confined, however, to the economic sphere. The U.S. frequently intruded into more strictly "political" areas as well. The United States played an obviously central role, for example, in the decision of President Rhee to accept the armistice arrangement ending the Korean War in 1953.[41] It played a similar, if less well-known, role in the resignation of Rhee in 1960 and the establishment of a civilian government three years later. The U.S. also played a significant role in foreign policy matters. This was most notably the case regarding the normalization of South Korea's relations with Japan and the dispatch of South Korean combat troops to Vietnam in the mid-1960s.[42] In the process, the U.S. helped perpetuate precisely the kind of dependence and "patron-client" relationship its aid policies had been designed to prevent.

Despite this enormous U.S. involvement in the decade and a half after the Korean War, there was in the latter part of this period a flagging of American interest in and concern with Korea. This was a consequence of three inter-related developments. First was a gradual change in the nature of U.S. threat perceptions. At the time of the Korean War, American strategic

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[40]Ibid., pp. 192-197.

[41]A recent account of one participant-observer illustrates something of the nature and extent of U.S. involvement during this period. According to this account, the U.S. seriously considered arresting Rhee in 1952-1953 because of his obstreperous behavior and placing South Korea again under American military government. Allegedly, this plan was code-named "Operation Ever-ready," indicating that it was a standby plan that could be put into operation at any moment. For details, see Oliver, Robert, *Syngman Rhee and American Involvement in Korea, 1942-1960* (Panmun Book Co., Ltd., Seoul, 1978), p. 413.

[42]Han, "The Republic of Korea and the United States: The Changing Alliance," op. cit., pp. 60-62.

planners saw the principal threat to U.S. global and regional security interests as one of *external* aggression--namely Soviet, and to a lesser extent Chinese, expansion. As suggested above, this perception was responsible for the renewed awareness of Korea's strategic importance, and for the change in its status to a "forward defense zone" in a strategy of "containment." While the basic commitment to "contain" communist expansion and deter aggression remained constant, the U.S. gradually came to see the threat more in terms of insurgency and *internal* aggression.[43] This change was partly the result of the growing recognition of overwhelming U.S. superiority at the strategic level; it also was partly the result of the evolving Soviet-American competition for influence in the Third World. Particularly noticeable in the 1960s after the advent of the Kennedy Administration, this gradual change led to an increasing focus in U.S. security policy upon countering insurgencies and "wars of national liberation."[44]

While this change had no effect on the basic commitment regarding Korea's defense, it did impact on U.S. policy toward Korea. As indicated in Table 2 above, U.S. military assistance, while remaining high in absolute terms, declined relatively over the course of this period as other requirements grew (from a high of $331 million or 53% of all U.S. military aid to East Asia in 1958 to $150 million or 22% of U.S. military assistance to the region in 1967).[45] As Table 3 suggests, economic aid decreased similarly (from a level of around $200 million or approximately 6% of South Korea's GNP between 1959-1962 to roughly $100 million or 1.7% of the ROK's GNP in 1967). These developments did not seriously impair Korea's military or economic development. Nor did they affect the U.S. capability to deter North

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[43]Halperin, op. cit., p. 50.

[44]See, for example, Hilsman, Roger, *To Move a Nation* (Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1967).

[45]Military assistance began to rise again (to roughly $200 million) in 1968. This assistance was provided, however, essentially as a quid pro quo for South Korea's dispatch of combat troops to Vietnam. For details, see U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *United States Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad. Hearings Before the Subcommittee on United States Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad of the Committee on Foreign Relations*, 91st Congress, 1977, esp. pp. 1532-1550.

Korean aggression. They did reflect, however, a relative decline in South Korea's importance in U.S. perceptions.

Second was a slowly developing change in the political culture of the American elites. This change, symbolized perhaps by the Goldwater fiasco of 1964, reflected the demise of the traditional, "anti-communist" right wing in America's intellectual life and the rise of a vocal new "left."[46] With this change came increasing doubts among the nation's elites about the continued efficacy, if not wisdom, of a "Pax Americana" orientation. With it also came the introduction of "morality" as an issue in American foreign policy. As the U.S. increased its military efforts in Vietnam in the mid-1960s, the political culture of important segments of the American elites turned increasingly in a "neo-isolationist" direction. As a result, support among U.S. elites for a continued heavy American involvement in the world perceptibly waned. This had fallout on Korea as well. By 1968, this waning of elite support for an active U.S. role in the world contrasted markedly with the level of official involvement and concern in Korea.

Third was a steady diminishment of interest in Korea on the part of the general public. This development had its roots in the widespread public exasperation with the lengthy but "limited" war in Korea, and the indeterminancy of the military "armistice" with which it ended. It was exacerbated by public images of South Korea, associated initially with the experience of war itself, that grew increasingly negative as economic growth floundered, political corruption and instability flared, and civilian rule gave way to military dictatorship. By the mid-1960s, U.S. public attitudes toward Korea were once again characterized largely by indifference. This gnawed at the extensive U.S. involvement in Korea from within, while a number of international and bilateral developments gradually weakened it from without.

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[46]Han, Yung Chul, "The United States and Korea: With Focus on America's Security Commitment to the South," *Korea Observer*, Summer, 1981, p. 128.

PERIOD III: DÉTENTE, INTERDEPENDENCE, AND U.S. RETRENCHMENT (1969-1979)

The decade from 1969-1979 represented a period of growing ambivalence in U.S. security policy toward Korea, sowing the seeds of doubt regarding the American commitment to South Korea's defense. This ambivalence can be traced in part to changes in the international environment. Among the changes with implications for U.S. policy toward Korea were the decline of the "Cold War," the rise of "détente," and the emergence of a more "multi-polar" international system. Particularly significant in this latter regard were the Sino-Soviet split and the emerging Sino-American rapproachement. These changes altered the way American policymakers perceived international relations, and made a reassessment of U.S. policy appear desirable.

Perhaps even more important were two developments relevant to Asia. One was the debilitating impact of the prolonged war in Vietnam on American public willingness to support military involvement in Asia, particularly on the Asian mainland. While the U.S. government recognized that continued American involvement in South Korea was essential to maintaining the deterrent against the North, vocal voices urging disengagement from Asia raised serious questions regarding American willingness to become involved in another Asian conflict. The other development was the increasing ability of South Korea to shoulder more of the burden of its own defense. With its prodigious economic growth and strengthened military capabilities, South Korea was able to assume a greater role in its own defense. Together, these developments made a reassessment of the U.S. policy appear not only desirable but essential.

Meanwhile, however, North Korea was engaged in a major military buildup. The origins of this buildup date to a decision made in December, 1962 in the wake of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the worsening of the Sino-Soviet split, and the deterioration of Soviet-North Korean relations, to give greater emphasis to military expansion even at the expense of economic construction.[47] This decision was bolstered

[47] For further details on the North Korean buildup, see Levin, Norman, *Management and Decisionmaking in the North Korean Economy* (N-1805/1-NA), The Rand Corporation, January, 1982), pp. 26-28.

further in the 1965-1967 period by the normalization of relations between South Korea and Japan, the U.S. escalation of the war in Southeast Asia, and the South Korean decision to dispatch combat troops to Vietnam. In the face of such developments, North Korea expanded its military efforts dramatically. According to official North Korean figures, defense spending climbed from roughly 3 percent of GNP to 6 percent of the national budget in 1962 to somewhere around 20 percent of GNP and 30 percent of the budget nine years later. At the same time, North Korea began extensive efforts toward developing an indigenous arms industry in line with a broad policy emphasis upon "self-reliance." Simultaneously, North Korea stepped up its military and ideological training of the general populace and revised its military doctrine toward an emphasis upon "democratic revolution." By the end of the 1960s North Korea had vastly stepped up its infiltration of the South, including an attempted assassination of President Park, in an intensified effort to precipitate social unrest and political instability. The dramatic seizure of the *Pueblo* in 1968 and shooting down of a U.S. EC-121 reconnaissance plane in 1969 accurately reflected the extent and intensity of North Korea's belligerence during this period. As a reevaluation of North Korea's military capability conducted by the U.S. intelligence community in 1977 and 1978 makes clear, this enormous military effort continued well into the 1970s.

In response to the major public debate that took place in the United States in the late 1960s in the wake of such conflicting trends, President Nixon ordered an overall review of U.S. defense policy shortly after his inauguration. Insofar as Asia was concerned, the review was motivated by a desire to bring U.S. military doctrine in line with actual capability. The hope was to thereby enable the U.S. to "remain committed in ways that we can sustain."[48] The review was

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[48] *U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970s, II: Building for Peace*, A Report to the Congress by Richard Nixon, President of the United States, February 25, 1971 (Harper & Row, 1971), p. 8.

also dictated, however, by the political pressures to avoid, if possible, future involvement in a land war with Asia. In the words of President Nixon, the review reflected a basic sense that the U.S. "must avoid that kind of policy that will make countries in Asia so dependent on us that we are dragged into conflicts such as the one we have in Vietnam."[49] Together, these motivations precipitated the first fundamental review of U.S. security policy in Asia since the Korean War.

The results of this review were significant in two key respects. First, they induced revision of American military doctrine from a two-and-one-half to a one-and-one-half war strategy. Implicit in this revision was a decoupling of China from the Soviet Union. This reflected a dramatic if belated recognition of the permanence of the Sino-Soviet rivalry, and a termination of the assumption in U.S. strategic planning that the United States would have to fight both Communist powers simultaneously.[50] Revision thus solidified on the planning level the movement to a lower defense posture, while making clear that the new posture would be oriented primarily toward Western Europe.[51]

Second, the results of the policy review engendered articulation of a new set of political principles designed to structure America's future international behavior. Subsumed under the rubric of the "Nixon Doctrine," these principles reflected U.S. resolve, in regard to Asia, to ensure that the problems of internal security and national defense would be ". . . increasingly handled by, and the responsibility for it taken by, the Asian nations themselves."[52] This suggested a reduction of the U.S. role in safeguarding Asian security. It also implied a re-examination of the nature of America's commitments.

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[49]Quoted in Kissinger, Henry, *White House Years* (Little, Brown & Company, 1979), p. 224.

[50]Ibid., pp. 220-222.

[51]Technically the U.S. stressed, regarding the "one" war part of the strategy, an ability to wage a major land war in *either* Europe or Asia. In practice, however, U.S. planners identified Western Europe as the principal theater of major American military involvement and relegated Asia to a clearly secondary position. Ibid., p. 222.

[52] President Nixon quoted in ibid., p. 222.

Although the United States pledged to "keep" its existing commitments, it would seek a "liquidation" of some past relationships and practices. This would be motivated by an effort to "strike a balance between doing too much and thus preventing self-reliance, and doing too little and thus undermining self-confidence."[53] While the U.S. would thus remain a "Pacific power," the principles ensured that the 1970s would be a period of readjustment and retrenchment in America's position in Asia. The hope was to thereby strengthen American public support for critical commitments such as Korea.

In line with this new orientation, the United States reduced its authorized level of military personnel in East Asia from 740,000 in January, 1969 to less than 420,000 in June, 1971. While the bulk of this reduction (265,000) came from Vietnam, it also involved over 50,000 troops from other Asian countries.[54] Korea was not spared in this overall retrenchment. Stressing that the situation in Korea had greatly changed since the decision was made in 1954 to maintain a military presence of two combat divisions, the United States withdrew one of the two divisions (nearly 20,000 troops) in 1970-71, reducing U.S. ground force levels to some 33,000 men.[55] There are some indications that plans were under consideration in 1974 for reducing American ground forces further to 20,000 but were temporarily shelved because of events in Southeast Asia.[56] Although the general retrenchment affected neither the U.S. treaty commitment to South Korea nor the deterrence strategy vis-à-vis the North, such plans made abundantly clear that the "Nixon Doctrine" would apply to Korea just as it would to the rest of Asia.

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[53] *U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970s, III: Building for Peace*, op. cit., p. 6.

[54] U.S. Department of State, *United States Foreign Policy, 1970-71: A Report of the Secretary of State* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971), p. 37.

[55] "Korea: The U.S. Troop Withdrawal Program," Report of the Pacific Study Group to the Committee on Armed Services, United States Senate, January 23, 1979 (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979), pp. 1-2.

[56] Barnds, William, *The Two Koreas in East Asian Affairs* (New York University Press, 1976), p. 195.

Along with the new American posture and emphasis upon a greater role by U.S. allies in their own defense, the United States elevated the importance of military assistance programs. Expanding security assistance would not only "enable nations whose security is important to us to deal with threats against them and to help each other to do so"; it would also enable the U.S. "in some instances to reduce our direct military involvement abroad" and thus "lessen the need for and the likelihood of the engagement of American forces in future local conflicts."[57] In this sense, the U.S. saw military assistance programs as key instruments in the implementation of the "Nixon Doctrine."

As an essential element in this implementive process, the United States agreed in 1971 to underwrite a five-year military modernization program for South Korea. This program was designed in part to compensate South Korea for the withdrawal of the Seventh Division. In part it was meant to rectify the growing imbalance between the forces of the South and North resulting from the latter's ongoing military buildup and force modernization. Involving a U.S. commitment of over $1 1/4 billion, the modernization program included such major weapons as F-4 Phantom aircraft, M-48 Patton tanks, armored personnel carriers, heavy artillery, and Honest John surface-to-surface missiles.[58] Although originally scheduled to be achieved in 1975, however, the program was not completed until 1977 due to inadequate Congressional funding. In the midst of the program, moreover, the U.S. shifted much of its military assistance from government grants to credit sales. This was in recognition of both the strengthened economic capabilities of South Korea and the political difficulty in the United States of attaining Congressional support for grant assistance.

On the positive side, the U.S. withdrawal and effort to restructure its relations with South Korea was beneficial in encouraging the ROK government to recognize the need for greater self-reliance. On the negative side, however, the U.S. actions raised widespread doubts about the reliability of the American commitment. Despite frequent

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[57] *U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970s, II: Building for Peace*, op. cit., p. 150.

[58] SIPRI, *World Armaments and Disarmament, SIPRI Yearbook, 1972*, (Almqvist and Wiksell, Stockholm, 1962), pp. 105 and 137-138.

reaffirmation of the U.S. intention not to withdraw any more major units, the South Korean government lacked full confidence in the United States. Seen in this light, the collapse of Vietnam in the spring of 1975 was a particularly traumatic experience for Korea.

In the wake of this collapse and a possible ensuing bid by Kim Il-sŏng to garner Chinese support for an attack on the South, President Park decided to dramatically boost the ROK's military capability. Under his direction, South Korea launched a Force Improvement Plan (FIP) designed to develop within 5 years an indigenous force structure capable of dealing effectively with a North Korean threat with only limited U.S. assistance. To accomplish this objective, South Korea raised the defense budget from 4 to almost 7% of gross national product. It also instituted a special defense tax to pay for the required improvements. As Table 4 suggests, the United States greatly assisted this effort, both through continued Military Assistance Program (MAP) deliveries and through rapidly increasing Foreign Military Sales (FMS) credits. One result was a significant

Table 4

U.S. SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO SOUTH KOREA ($ millions)

	FY 1973	FY 1974	FY 1975	FY 1976
FMS Orders	1.6	100.3	214.3	616.5
FMS Deliveries	2.4	13.3	70.9	161.4
FMS Credits	25.0	56.7	59.0	260.0
Commercial Sale Delivered	-	1.0	1.2	19.9
MAP Funded	296.6	91.1	78.2	59.4
MAP Delivered	264.7	91.7	134.1	175.6

SOURCE: DMS, *Foreign Military Markets* (Defense Marketing Services, 1976), p. 10.

expansion of South Korea's defense industry. Although nowhere near North Korean levels, South Korea was producing or co-producing by 1976 its own patrol boats, tanks, and M-16 rifles.[59] By 1978 it was successfully testing its first surface-to-surface missiles and experimenting with its own advanced weapons systems.

U.S. assistance, it should be emphasized, was designed to implement the "Nixon Doctrine": by strengthening South Korea's defense capability, the U.S. sought to improve its ability, and bolster its willingness, to accept a larger role in its own self-defense; in the process, South Korea would lessen the "burden" on the part of the United States and reduce the political and economic costs of the U.S. commitment. This would enable the U.S. to sustain its Korean involvement in the altered conditions of the 1970s. Over the course of the mid-1970s, however, a number of developments in Korea were making it difficult for the Administration to sustain support for its Korean involvement. Chief among these were the imposition of martial law by President Park in 1972 and the promulgation of the Yushin Constitution, the KCIA kidnapping in 1973 of former presidential candidate Kim Daejung, and other actions in 1974 limiting political dissent and popular opposition. Also important were allegations of KCIA activities within the United States. These developments tied together in a unique way America's weariness with its costly involvement in Asia at large and its moral concern with the state of human rights in Korea. In the process, they stimulated increasingly negative sentiments among the American public toward U.S. involvement in Korea in general and toward the South Korean government in particular.

As a reflection of this growing popular antipathy, Congress included in its fiscal 1975 aid package an amendment requiring that the last $20 million of that year's $165 million authorization for South Korea be withheld until President Park improved the human rights situation in that country.[60] This $20 million was never approved.

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[59] DMS, *Foreign Military Markets* (Defense Marketing Services, 1976), p. 6-7.

[60] Halperin, Abraham, "U.S. Options in Korea," Kim and Halperin, ed., *The Future of the Korean Peninsula* (Praeger, 1977), p. 186.

In reporting out the 1975 fiscal year authorization, a Congressional committee also suggested that the U.S. 2nd Division be withdrawn from its forward position north of Seoul and be relocated well to the rear. This reflected an effort to prevent automatic involvement of the U.S. in any military conflict, and to give the U.S. government time to consider whether or not direct military intervention by ground forces was necessary.[61] Partly because of such sentiments, the U.S. fulfilled only 69% of its military aid commitment to South Korea in the 1971-75 period; the remaining portion was carried over into 1976-77.[62] Congress was seriously considering another reduction in military assistance to South Korea for fiscal 1976 when President Park's wife was killed in an assassination attempt on the President in August, 1974. Coupled with the fall of Vietnam the following spring, this put a temporary halt to Congressional efforts to diminish the U.S. role in Korea.

As Table 5 indicates, however, the role of U.S. military assistance changed significantly during this period. While South Korea began in 1971 to purchase defense equipment under FMS programs, grant aid for operations and maintenance ended in 1974, and that for investment stopped two years later. A similar trend was evident in economic assistance. As Table 6 indicates, the U.S. role declined significantly during this period, with the U.S. share of total aid-financed imports falling precipitously after 1970-71 and loans becoming the dominant form of assistance. This is in contrast to the postwar decade when 95% of foreign economic aid to South Korea was supplied by the United States, and nearly all of this on a grant basis.[63] As Table 7 suggests,

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[61] Clough, Ralph, *Deterrence and Defense in Korea* (The Brookings Institution, 1976), pp. 57-58. The committee recommendation included the requirement that the division be withdrawn entirely from South Korea in 1976 were it not so re-positioned.

[62] Choi, Chang-yoon, "Korea: Security and Strategic Issues," *Asian Survey*, November 1980, pp. 1136-1137.

[63] Mason, Kim, et al., op. cit, p. 190. As a result of the switch from grants to foreign borrowing, South Korea's outstanding medium and long-term debt rose from about $300 million at the end of 1966 to roughly $7 billion one decade later. This debt burden was manageable because of a thirty-fold increase in export earnings over this period, but the basic situation was not without risk. Hasan and Rao, op. cit., p. 7.

Table 5

U.S. SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO SOUTH KOREA, 1971-1975 (Unit: $million)

Fiscal Year	Grant (MAP) Funded	/ Delivered	Training Grant	FMS Credit	/ Order	/ Del.	Total*
1971	521.0	411.7	5.4	15.0	.4	.4	432.1
1972	470.4	481.2	4.7	17.0	8.8	.4	502.9
1973	296.6	264.7	2.0	25.0	1.6	2.4	291.7
1974	91.1	91.7	1.5	56.7	100.3	13.3	149.9
1975	78.2	134.1	1.3	59.0	214.3	70.9	194.4
TOTAL	1,457.3	1,383.4	14.9	172.7	325.4	87.4	1,571.0

*Excludes U.S. military assistance funding related to South Korean forces in Vietnam.

**Total = MAP Delivered + Training + FMS Credit

SOURCES: SIPRI, *World Armaments and Disarmament--SIPRI Yearbook 1971*, pp. 146-147; DMS, *Foreign Military Markets, 1975*, p. 6-7.

Table 6

AID-FINANCED IMPORTS RELATIVE TO TOTAL IMPORTS, 1969-1975
(U.S. $ million and % of total imports)

		Aid-Financed Imports							
		Total				U.S. Share			
		Grant[a]		Loan[c]		Grant[b]		Loan	
Year	Total Imports	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%
1969	1,824	155	9	169	9	107	6	71	4
1970	1,984	187	9	101	5	82	4	51	3
1971	2,394	126	5	193	8	51	2	34	1
1972	2,522	66	3	342	14	5	0	194	8
1973	4,240	23	1	224	5	2	0	123	3
1974	6,851	30	0	186	3	1	0	20	0
1975	7,274	37		348	5				

SOURCE: Suh, Suk Tai, *Import Substitution and Economic Development in Korea* (Korea Development Institute, 1975), pp. 221-222; U.S. Grant Aid from Bank of Korea, *Economic Statistics Yearbook* cited in Mason, Kim, et al., op. cit., p. 206.

Notes: [a]Total grant aid includes Japanese grant funds.

[b]U.S. grant aid includes technical assistance costs in addition to commodity inputs.

[c]Loan aid includes loans from international organizations and public bilateral loans.

Table 7

RELATIONSHIP OF FOREIGN ASSISTANCE TO SOUTH KOREA'S FIXED CAPITAL FORMATION AND GNP, 1969-1975

Year	Percent of Fixed Capital Formation	Percent of GNP
1969	20	5.4
1970	15	3.8
1971	16	3.8
1972	22	4.5
1973	8	1.8
1974	5	1.3
1975	7	1.8

SOURCE: Bank of Korea, *Economic Statistics Yearbook and National Income of Korea, 1976*. Aid imports from Table 6 sources. Cited in Mason, Kim, et al., op. cit., pp. 207-208.

the decline in the U.S. aid role occurred at the same time that foreign economic assistance as a whole was playing a significantly reduced role in South Korea's economic development. Between 1969 and 1975, aid declined from 20% of fixed capital formation and over 5% of South Korea's GNP to 7 and 1.8% respectively. This reflected the structural changes that were occurring in South Korea's relations with the U.S. and with the world at large.

In ending MAP grant aid and emphasizing loans in both its military and economic assistance, the United States acknowledged that South Korea's economic capabilities had reached the point where it could bear the debt burden of loans on favorable terms. In the process, it effectively gave notice that the old "big brother" relationship was no longer relevant. Within the context of a continued U.S. security commitment to Korea, a new relationship, embracing military and economic as well as political adjustments, would need to be created. By withholding and manipulating foreign assistance in an effort to influence South Korea's domestic political evolution, however, the U.S. demonstrated difficulty in letting the old tutelary

relationship go. Congressional moves to re-position and withdraw the 2nd Division exacerbated this confusion. The move by South Korea in 1974-75 to expand its defense budget, strengthen its indigenous arms industry, and diversify its sources of supply reflected its deep concern over U.S. inconsistency and growing ambivalence.

This growing ambivalence became fully expressed, however, only later in the 1970s. Whatever the nature of American efforts to restructure relations with South Korea under the broad principles of the "Nixon Doctrine," the United States remained firmly committed prior to 1975 to its basic security commitment. Strains in the bilateral relationship related more to South Korea's difficulties with Congress than it did to any fundamental wavering within U.S. administrations. With the election of Jimmy Carter in 1976, however, came a U.S. president pledged to withdraw U.S. ground troops from Korea, to reduce U.S. weapons exports, and to make "human rights" a principal U.S. policy concern. These issues impacted directly upon South Korea and raised serious problems for the bilateral relationship.

Of greatest concern, of course, was Carter's decision shortly after taking office to withdraw all U.S. ground combat troops from Korea. The withdrawal was to be carried out in three phases and to be completed over a period of four to five years. Initially, one brigade of the Second Division and other support units totaling 6,000 men were to be withdrawn in 1978-79. In the second phase, logistic and other support units totaling 9,000 men were to be removed. In the final phase, over 1981-82, the remaining two brigades and the division headquarters were to be withdrawn. The Administration planned to maintain augmented air, intelligence and communications units in Korea indefinitely.[64]

A number of factors explain the Administration's withdrawal decision. Most directly, of course, the decision was designed to fulfill President Carter's election campaign commitment,

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[64] Sneider, op. cit., p. 130.

a commitment itself designed to exploit the post-Vietnam American concerns with further military involvement in Asia. The decision was also prompted by the strong desire of some of President Carter's principal advisors to avoid a situation where the United States would automatically become involved in ground warfare in the event of conflict on the Korean Peninsula.[65] A further factor, apparently, was the belief that Korea's large manpower and economic strength made the presence of U.S. ground forces neither necessary nor justifiable. To the extent that the decision was based upon military calculations, the presumption was that South Korea's ground forces--properly equipped by the United States and supported by U.S. tactical air and naval forces--could adequately counter any North Korean attack not involving the direct participation of China or the Soviet Union.[66] The ambiguity of the Administration's rationale for the decision, however, and the failure to apply the same reasoning to states like West Germany, conveyed the impression that the United States was once again relegating its Asian ally to a secondary position of importance. Compounding the problem was the fact that the decision was made without prior consultation with either Korea or Japan, indeed, without even full discussion within the Administration itself.

To compensate for the removal of U.S. ground troops, the U.S. planned a major expansion of arms transfers to South Korea. In tandem with the withdrawal plan, the U.S. pledged to provide: $275 million in FMS credits in fiscal year 1979 and a similar amount over the succeeding years of the withdrawal; $800 million worth of selected equipment from the withdrawing troops on a cost-free basis; and roughly $2.5 million worth of technical training to the ROK armed forces for operation of the newly-acquired defense equipment.[67] As a result of this commitment, the quantity and quality of arms transferred to South Korea in the initial years of the Carter Administration exceeded that of any previous administration in a comparable period.

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[65] Zagoria, Donald, "Why We Can't Leave Korea," *The New York Times Magazine*, October 2, 1977, p. 86.

[66] "Korea: The U.S. Troop Withdrawal Program," op. cit., p. 3.

[67] Ibid., p. 2 and 4.

This was despite the Administration's original commitment to reduce the general traffic in arms. Between fiscal years 1978 and 1979, South Korean FMS purchases rose from $390 million to $900 million, ranking the ROK behind only Saudi Arabia, Israel, and Egypt as an FMS customer.[68] In addition, direct military sales to Korea outside FMS were significantly boosted. Weapons involved in all these transactions included: TOW, Sidewinder, and Sparrow missiles; F-4 and F-5 fighters; C-130 transports; armored personnel carriers; and sophisticated radar communication equipment.[69] In 1978, the U.S. established a Defense Field Office to manage this huge volume of security assistance, monitor the delivery of equipment, and assist in its integration into the Korean armed forces.[70]

Congressional support for U.S. military and economic assistance to Korea was plagued, however, by a number of problems. Chief among these was a Korean influence buying scandal, subsequently dubbed "Koreagate," that came to a head in President Carter's first year in office.[71] The initial intransigence of South Korea regarding the testimony of one of the central figures in the scandal led the House Committee on International Relations to refuse to even consider President Carter's request to authorize the transfer of $800 million worth of equipment until the South Korean government was more forthcoming.[72] While a proposal to terminate all U.S. military assistance for South Korea was defeated, Congress moved to cut off $56 million in food aid in mid-1978 as a gesture of its irritation. Meanwhile,

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[68] U.S. Congress, House, Subcommittee on Foreign Operations and Related Programs, *Foreign Assistance and Related Programs: Appropriations for 1980; Hearings Before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations*, 96th Cong., 1st Sess., 1979, p. 707.

[69] DMS, *Foreign Military Markets, 1979*, pp. 10-14.

[70] Ibid., p. 5.

[71] For details on the scandal see *Investigation of Korean-American Relations, Hearings Before the Subcommittee on International Organizations of the Committee on International Relations*, House of Representatives, 95th Congress, June 22, 1977, July 20 and August 15, 1978 (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978).

[72] Han, Sungjoo, "South Korea 1977: Preparing for Self-Reliance," *Asian Survey*, January, 1978, p. 49. Subsequently the transfer was submitted to Congress and approved.

although U.S. credit sales went up, MAP totals continued to decline (from $60 million in fiscal year 1976, to $17 million in FY 1977, and to nothing in FY 1978) in accord with the general shift from grant aid to loans and credit guarantees.[73] Coupled with the Carter Administration's emphasis upon "human rights" and the troop withdrawal policy, these actions introduced serious strains in U.S.-ROK relations. They also suggested widespread ambivalence within the Administration about the importance of South Korea to the United States.

Over the course of 1978-79, a number of developments contributed to a halt in the trends of the previous years. One related to strong opposition to the Administration's withdrawal decision.[74] This opposition, particularly from America's Asian allies led by Japan and from increasing segments of the U.S. Congress and foreign policy community, reflected the widespread concern precipitated by the withdrawal decision regarding American willingness to risk a new military involvement in Korea or even elsewhere in Asia. Stressing the likely effect of the planned withdrawal on North Korean perceptions, as well as the more direct military impact on U.S. defense capabilities and the American-commanded joint defense structure in South Korea, the opposition warned of the potential consequences of the withdrawal program for stability in East Asia.

In the face of this opposition, President Carter agreed to leave two-thirds of the Division in Korea until 1981-82. The Administration further modified its decision by promising to review the withdrawal on two separate occasions: in the joint statement of the tenth U.S.-ROK Security Consultative Committee meeting in 1977; and in the Congressional authorization bill for security assistance in 1978.

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[73] Gilbert, Stephen, *Northeast Asia in U.S. Foreign Policy* (Sage Publications, 1979, p. 43.

[74] For the views of the opposition, see *Review of the Policy Decision to Withdraw United States Ground Forces from Korea*, Hearings Before the Investigations Subcommittee and the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives, July 13 and 14, 1977 (inter alia) (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978), *Korea: The U.S. Troop Withdrawal Program*, op. cit., and *U.S. Troop Withdrawal from the Republic of Korea: An Update, 1979*, A Report to the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, June, 1979, (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979).

The opposition on both military and political grounds remained strong, however, including among members of the Administration. Faced with this growing opposition, President Carter slowed down the phasing of the withdrawal in the spring of 1978, suspended it temporarily in February, 1979, and formally froze it the following July.

A number of factors beside the strong opposition were important in convincing President Carter to reverse his position on withdrawal. Clearly the critical factor was the re-evaluation of North Korean military strength conducted by the U.S. intelligence community in 1977-78. This re-evaluation revealed not only that the North Korean armed forces were significantly larger and stronger in terms of armor and firepower than previously believed, but were also offensively equipped and deployed. In the context of these new findings, the wisdom of U.S. withdrawal from the South became even more suspect. Also important were the rapid buildup of Soviet military, especially naval, strength in East Asia and the signing of the Soviet-Vietnamese Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation at the end of 1978. Together with the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia and the fall of the Shah of Iran, these developments significantly heightened U.S. awareness of the challenge posed by the Soviet Union. In the process, they raised the strategic importance of South Korea demonstrably in U.S. calculations.[75]

By October, 1979, the United States had put an end to its vacillation. It agreed to sell South Korea F-16 fighter-bombers, to co-assemble F-5 fighters in the ROK, and to deploy a squadron of A-10 close air support aircraft in South Korea. It warned North Korea that the U.S. would react strongly to any attempt to take advantage of the situation in the South following the assassination of President Park, and dispatched an aircraft carrier, its accompanying flotilla, and two AWACs to deter possible aggression. And it forcefully reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to the security of South Korea. As a symbol of its new posture, the U.S. earmarked $110 million for military construction for U.S. forces in Korea in fiscal 1981, more than

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[75]Lee, Chong-sik, "South Korea 1979: Confrontation, Assassination, and Transition," *Asian Survey*, January, 1980, p. 74.

three times the $33 million allocated in the previous fiscal year.[76] Clearly, the United States had come to realize it could not simply avoid its security responsibilities. Nor could it allow South Korea to go down the drain. At the same time, however, the U.S. failed to articulate a clear and coherent logic around which its relationship to Korea and a major security role could be predicated. As we proceed into the 1980s, the development of such a logic remains the central task of America's security policy.

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[76] For a critique of these and related steps, see Kim, Samuel, "United States Korean Policy and World Order," *Alternatives*, Winter, 1980-81, pp. 419-452.

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

The record of the American military role in the Republic of Korea is clearly a checkered one. There has been no consistent pattern, no clear, constant definition of American security interests in Korea, and no adequate public articulation of American policy. U.S. policy, at least as seen from the surface, has had a quality of ambivalence and vacillation.

Yet, appearances and perceptions can deceive. Except for the total withdrawal of U.S. combat forces from Korea in 1949, there has been both a sustained commitment to the defense of Korea and clearcut actions to support that commitment. Despite the withdrawal of one ground-force division in the early 1970s, there has been since the Korean War a substantial U.S. military presence in the Republic of Korea. Even the American role in the Vietnam War did not result in lessening to a dangerous level American forces in Korea. There has also been a demonstrated capability to rapidly reinforce that presence from bases elsewhere in Asia, particularly in Japan, as well as directly from the U.S. While the abortive Carter troop withdrawal policy was certainly unsettling, even it did not involve total disengagement of U.S. combat forces from Korea. Furthermore, the flow of U.S. weapons to the Korean armed forces, initially through guaranteed credits and direct sales, has been very substantial and sufficient to permit modernization of the Korean armed forces. Congressional actions and other efforts to reduce assistance have in the end not seriously impaired the buildup of the Korean armed forces.

From this perspective, one can say that the record of the American military role in Korea is in fact far better than its image. More important, the policy and actions thereto have accomplished their primary objective: the deterrence of a second North Korean attack against the South. Despite North Korean militancy and armed superiority over the South Korean forces, a combination of American and ROK military capability has effectively deterred the North from any large-scale military aggression. As a result, North Korea has restricted

its aggressive actions to probing incidents along the demilitarized zone, sporadic attacks against U.S. forces, and subversive efforts to exploit the situation in the South.

In this sense, the failures of the U.S. security policy in Korea have been less inadequacies in efforts to bolster and maintain the deterrent forces than inadequacies in policy conception and articulation. One consequence of these inadequacies has been to instill doubt in the minds of all Koreans as to the reliability of the American commitment to Korea. These doubts and uncertainties can only encourage the North to test the credibility of the American commitment, and to discourage the South, leading in some instances to unrealistic efforts on the latter's part to achieve military self-reliance. Another consequence has been the failure to generate broad public support for the commitment to Korea. This is reflected in Congressional equivocation regarding its support for U.S. policies toward Korea, cutting Korean aid on certain occasions and threatening even deeper cuts on others. Still, in the last analysis, it is worth remembering that the reversal of the Carter Administration ground force withdrawal plans was brought about as much by Congressional pressures as by opposition from U.S. allies.

What is needed for the future is to close the gap between action and perception and to articulate a coherent and consistent security policy toward Korea. In the first instance, the policy must leave no room for doubt as to the fundamental American commitment to the defense of the South, and to the strategy of deterrence against a North Korean effort to achieve "reunification" by force. It should be made clear that this policy serves U.S. interests. The policy must involve not only a clearcut willingness on the part of the U.S. to defend South Korea; it must also include sufficient U.S.-Korean capabilities to deter the North through the threat of committing major forces against any North Korean military action.

A related issue is how to configure the balance between U.S. and Korean forces to satisfy the deterrent objective. There need be no fixed level for the American military presence in Korea so long as there is sufficient combined capability to more than balance the North

Korean forces. Any reduction in U.S. forces must be accomplished, however, within this deterrent framework so as to leave no perception of American disengagement from its fundamental commitment to Korea.

The current modernization of the Korean armed forces is likely to permit some reduction in the U.S. military presence later in the 1980s, provided that the North Korean buildup does not keep pace with the expected strengthening of South Korean forces. A reversal of North Korean policy and acceptance of significant tension reduction measures could permit even greater reduction. In the final analysis, however, reductions in the American military presence should not risk misperception on the part of the North, the South, or the nations of Asia. The U.S. should recognize that the American military presence in Korea is a relatively cheap insurance policy against any resumption of hostilities.

A second major component of U.S. security policy to Korea concerns the appropriate combined role of American and Korean forces in the broader framework of Northeast Asian security. Too often in the past, the U.S. military commitment to Korea has been viewed only as a local, Korean problem. In fact, however, the U.S. position in South Korea is integral to the security of Japan and the broader Northeast Asian region. With the ongoing buildup of Soviet forces in the Pacific and East Asia, American bases and forces in Korea can play a larger deterrent and strategic role. In combination with the U.S., so too can South Korea. This strategic role has become even more important recently, given the inhibitions on U.S. military actions from Japanese bases and Japan's reluctance to assume a larger security role in the region. As the U.S. confronts the growing Soviet military threat in Asia, its position in Korea should be more clearly factored in to its regional and global security.

Since the Korean War, the U.S. military role in the Republic of Korea has been decisive. Combined with the increasingly powerful armed forces of the ROK, the U.S. has effectively kept the peace. It has also provided a steady flow of arms to the South Korean forces. There is adequate justification for these American actions in the uniquely strategic geographic location of Korea and the necessity to prevent

the outbreak of further conflict. Now is the time to articulate this in convincing fashion, and to implement it as the foundation of U.S. security policy.

The commitment to Korea, moreover, must be viewed from the framework of American global strategy. It should be recalled that American involvement in the Korean war stemmed as much, if not more, from global considerations as from local Korean considerations. The U.S. decision to commit its forces to the Korean War was a consequence of the desire to stem Soviet-sponsored aggression globally. Korea remains an integral element of the global strategy as an important point where Soviet and American interests directly clash. The basic and minimum objective of the U.S., as for the other three major powers involved in the Korean peninsula, remains to deny control over the full peninsula to adversary forces. The division of Korea serves this purpose, even though it subordinates the strong aspiration of Koreans for an independent, unified nation. With the enhancement of Soviet military power in recent years, particularly in Asia, and with its increased proclivity for exploiting targets of opportunity particularly along its border areas, the need to support South Korea and deter North Korean aggressive tendencies takes on added importance.

The United States thus has a stake in stability and deterrence on the Korean Peninsula that goes well beyond its local or even regional interests. Weakness in the southern part of Korea sufficient to encourage North Korean aggression supported by the Soviet Union would threaten these broader American interests. In fact, the American commitment to Korea may become even more critical given the uncertainties faced in the 1980s as a result of the adverse shift in the relative balance between Soviet and American forces in the Pacific. The American forces assigned to the Pacific, moreover, have assumed new major responsibilities in the Persian Gulf, further stretching American resources. It will not be sufficient to assure an adequate North-South military balance in terms of American interests since a future Soviet role in Korea encouraging and supporting a more aggressive posture by North Korea cannot be discounted. This contingency must be factored into American contingency planning.

Looking to the future, there are key danger points which must be taken into account. First, the greatest risk might ensue from a precipitous adverse change in American policy and military strength in the Korean peninsula, casting doubts on the reliability of the American commitment to Korea. A clear consequence would be certainly to encourage the North to believe renewed aggression both timely and militarily possible, and to leave clear doubts among other allies, particularly in Asia, as to the credibility and reliability of the American security commitments elsewhere. Second, as already noted, it cannot be discounted that the Soviet Union will encourage the North to move against the South, providing it with enhanced armaments and other forms of support. Particularly dangerous would be a scenario in which American forces in the Pacific would be drawn off to a Middle East or Persian Gulf conflict situation and leave the Asian interests more exposed to attack as a result of the drawdown of U.S. forces. Finally, unstable political conditions in either the North or the South, including those associated with succession of leadership, could lead to an increase in tension and possible outbreak of hostilities on the Korean peninsula. These contingencies, while not necessarily likely, are sufficiently serious to require careful American planning within its global strategy. They all clearly dictate a continued and reliable firm commitment to the Republic of Korea in order to deter any aggressive tendencies from the North or from a combination of the North and the Soviet Union.

The demilitarized zone dividing the North and South is heavily armed and patrolled, presenting the constant danger that local incidents could escalate to full scale conflict. Consequently, efforts should also be pursued to reduce, if possible, the risk of conflict in Korea. While unification is clearly a goal for the future, the basis for achieving it in the foreseeable near future is minimal. A more limited objective of reducing tensions on the Peninsula and seeking to minimize the risk of conflict is more feasible. The critical element in this situation will be a willingness on the part of both the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China to influence and even pressure North Korea to accept tension reduction

measures. It is also possible that North Korea's economic difficulties combined with its technological deficiences may induce it to shift resources away from the military effort and permit some reduction in tension. However, much will depend upon the willingness of its allies to move the North in this direction. The one factor which would tend to strengthen at least the deterrent and perhaps convince the North that an alternative should be pursued will be continued American recognition that its commitment to Korea is irreversible. Also a factor, perhaps, would be greater Japanese involvement in non-military support for the Republic of Korea. Such a Japanese role is compatible with the stake Japan has in maintaining the current balance in Korea and reducing the risk of conflict.