

THE IMPACT

OF US FORCES IN KOREA

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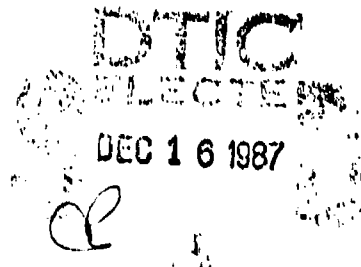
January 15, 1951
Lieutenant Colonel W.M. Hanes of Richmond, Va., Commanding Officer, X Corps Special Activities Group (right), and Major Tong Gulpai, Commanding Officer of the Group's Special Attack Battalion, inspect an old Korean fort near Mungkyong, Korea, which troops used in repelling an attack by Communist-led North Korean guerrillas.

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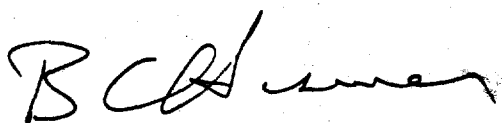
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FOREWORD

When the National Defense University opened its senior colleges to distinguished foreign military officers, Colonel Lee Suk Bok, Republic of Korea Army, was part of the inaugural class of NDU International Fellows. During his year at NDU he produced this study—a Korean perspective—of the impact of US forces on Korea and Korean society since 1945.

➤ Colonel Lee treats both the positive and negative effects, as he sees them, of the American presence in his country. He applauds, for example, the major US effort to train and reconstruct the Korean military after World War II. But he also criticizes the American failure to appreciate Korean antipathy toward the Japanese; the US forces, for instance, retained many aspects of military organization left over from Japanese colonial rule. He commends US successes in the Korean War, such as the Inchon landing, but he questions certain US decisions, such as the selection of an armistice negotiating site only 25 miles north of Seoul. In terms of regional strategy, Colonel Lee also frankly points out pros and cons. He perceives that successive US force reductions, for example, while raising fears about the US commitment, nevertheless have spurred the Koreans on to greater self-reliance in defense. The net effect of US forces in Korea, he concludes, has been positive because they have deterred war and maintained stability on the strategic Korean Peninsula.

For Americans in particular, Colonel Lee's analysis offers a better understanding of the strategic issues and explains the wide-ranging consequences of the US presence in his country. The National Defense University is pleased to publish this special insight into the history and culture of an important ally.



BRADLEY C. HOSMER
Lieutenant General, US Air Force
President, National Defense
University

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I. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The first landing of the US forces in Korea in 1945 occurred suddenly, without preparation. The division of the Korean peninsula had never been considered before it was decided, at a moment's notice, by a US Army officer. South Koreans had no chance to express their desires during the decision-making process. Their fate was decided for them, despite the existence of the Provisional Government of Korea in Exile.

To understand the role of the US forces in Korea it is necessary to examine briefly the historical background before turning to the first phase, from the initial landing to the division of the country. US officials overestimated the strength of the Japanese Kwantung Army in Manchuria. Secretary of War Henry Stimson estimated that the fighting would not end until the latter part of 1946, and that such operations might cost over a million casualties to American forces alone.¹

The development of the war in the Pacific did not augur well for significant American participation in Korean affairs in the summer of 1945. The American military planned an invasion of the Japanese home islands and only after the homeland was secured would turn their attention to Korea. The record at Potsdam clearly shows the unanimity of American military planners on the need for Soviet entry into the war against Japan. The Americans had a high opinion of the Japanese Kwantung army in Manchuria and thought that losses in an invasion of Korea would be greater than in a Kyushu invasion. They thought it better to leave Manchuria and Korea, and the inevitable losses there, to the Soviet land armies.² These speculations were all made moot by the signal events of August 1945. The United States dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6 and 9 August, Soviet forces quickly engaged Japanese forces on the Asian mainland, and Japan collapsed.

With the Japanese surrender imminent, the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee (SWNCC) met in the office of

Men of the 17th Infantry, 7th Division, US Army, the first troops to land in
Korea, March toward Jinsen.
Photographer: Tec 3 Garland Faircloth

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the Assistant Secretary of War to discuss the Korean problem. About midnight, 10-11 August 1945, Colonel Charles H. Bonesteel and Major Dean Rusk began drafting part of a general order that would define the zones to be occupied in Korea by American and Russian forces. They were given thirty minutes to complete their draft, which the SWNCC was waiting for.³ The State Department wished the dividing line to be as far north as possible, while the military departments, knowing that the Russians could overrun all of Korea before any US troops could land there, were more cautious. Bonesteel and Rusk wanted to follow provincial boundary lines north of Seoul, which would violate political divisions as little as possible and would place the capital city in the US zone. The only map immediately available was a small-scale wall map of the Far East, and time was pressing. Bonesteel noted that the 38th parallel passed north of Seoul and almost divided Korea into two equal parts. He seized on it as the proposed zonal boundary.⁴ This 38th parallel had never been the subject of international discussions among the war time leaders. Thus are the fates of nations determined.

On 8 September 1945 the vanguard of the US 7th Infantry Division arrived at the Korean Port of Inchon and began to disembark. The following day elements of the Division moved on to the capital city of Seoul, where the Japanese officially surrendered their authority in Korea. The dramatic collapse of Japan after the dropping of the atomic bombs and the USSR entry into the war had allowed little time for the occupation troops to be prepared properly for the problems ahead. Under the agreement, the Russian troops would accept the surrender of Japanese forces north of the 38th parallel and the US units would perform the same function to the south of the parallel. To the great majority of the occupation troops, Korea was little more than a place on the map—a temporary stopover before they returned home. The first arrivals had little knowledge of the land and the people they were destined to control.

Although US government officials had no concrete plans for dealing with the Korean peninsula when they came to administer it, missions were carried out best when the Americans had the opportunity for close immediate observation. They did

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a splendid job, but there were many areas (particularly where roles and deportment were concerned) which, for the sake of the future United States-Republic of Korea relations, should be re-examined. Despite many evaluations of US policies in the Republic of Korea, scant attention has been paid to the role of US forces in Korea. In the following pages the role of the US forces will be analyzed, from the Korean point of view, in chronological sequence from the time of the American troops' arrival in Korea.

ENDNOTES

1. Edward R. Stettinius, *Roosevelt and the Russians: The Yalta Conference* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1949), p. 47.
2. "Basic Military Objectives, Strategy, and Politics in the War against Japan," memo, by the Secretary of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 18 June 1945, in *Foreign Relations 1945*, Potsdam, Vol. I, p. 905.
3. J. Lawton Collins, *War in Peacetime: The History and Lessons of Korea* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1969), pp. 25-26.
4. Roy E. Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1961), pp. 2-3.



II. Independence (1945–1950)

The US occupation forces were tasked with the dual mission of disarming and repatriating Japanese nationals and preserving law and order until Koreans could themselves once again take over the responsibilities of government.¹ There were no concrete plans available for Korea but the Department of State said that the administration of civil affairs would be the responsibility of the respective commanders of the two zones in Korea. It soon became evident that reliance would have to be placed upon command ingenuity.² General MacArthur selected Lt. Gen. John R. Hodge as the Commanding General, US Army Forces in Korea (USAFIK), and assigned the US CCIV Corps, composed of the 6th, 7th, and 40th Infantry Divisions, as the occupation force.³

The Korean people expected a quick liberation and ensuing independence. They were not, however, adequately prepared for self-government and lacked trained administrators. The Korean economy was deteriorating as a result of the dislocation of the close economic ties with Japan. With an unbalanced economic structure on the one hand, and a nation divided physically by the US-Soviet occupation agreement and politically by internal factional groups on the other, the US troops began their mission in Korea.⁴

The US Army authority decided to retain the Japanese incumbents during the period of transition until the Koreans attained more political maturity and were able to take over the administrative machinery. Shortly after the surrender ceremony on 9 September 1945, General Hodge announced that the Government-General would continue to function with all of its Japanese and Korean personnel, including Governor-General Abe Nobuyuki.⁵ The foolishness of this decision was immediately apparent as a bitter wave of resentment swept the Republic of Korea (ROK). After 35 years of Japanese rule, Koreans wanted to erase all enemy control at once. In their

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November 9, 1950
Pak Chong Moon, Civil Affairs representative, organizes the people to form a
community self government at a village in Korea.

Photographer: Chitersen

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opinion, retention of the Japanese officials, even on a temporary basis, was unthinkable.⁶ By order of President Truman, conveyed through General MacArthur, General Hodge abandoned his original idea and began to replace the Japanese as quickly as possible with US or Korean personnel. Major General Archibald V. Arnold, commanding general of the 7th Division, replaced Abe and the title of the administration was changed from Government-General to Military Government.

Earlier, General Hodge had defended the use of Japanese personnel, predicting there would be "great difficulty operating with a sweeping removal of Japanese unless we are willing to accept chaos."⁷ General Hodge was not aware of the intense hatred of the Japanese that Koreans felt as a result of despotic Japanese colonial rule. He seemed to be concerned only with an easy and effective administration, and did not realize that any organization in which Japanese were involved had little chance of acceptance by the resentful Koreans.

Many Koreans still do not understand why the US authorities refused to recognize and utilize the Provisional Government of Korea in Exile located in China. This provisional government had been the center of independent activity through the years of Japanese colonial rule since 1919. Supported by Koreans, it was a functional organization dealing with various independent activities and most Koreans—in both the South and the North—respected the organization and its president, Kim Koo. The neglect of this organization was one of the fatal mistakes in the process of establishing a Republic of Korea. The exclusion of the Provisional Government diminished the credibility and legitimacy of the new South Korean government. Without the Provisional Government to strengthen its side the US military government lost the chance of a favorable negotiating position vis-a-vis the Soviets when dealing with the unification question at the US-USSR Joint Commission.

The Establishment of the Constabulary

Almost from the beginning, the occupational authorities recognized that a rehabilitated police force would not be adequate to meet the needs of Korean national defense. On 13

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November 1945, the Military Government created an office of the Director of National Defense with jurisdiction over the Bureau of Police and over a new Bureau of Armed Forces, comprising Army and Navy Departments.⁸

The Military Government recommended a modest development of Korean national defense forces to supplement a projected 25,000-man police force. For the Army and Air Force, there would be one corps of three infantry divisions, supported by essential service troops, and one transport and two fighter squadrons, together with ground components, totaling 45,000 men. The Navy and Coast Guard would be limited to 5,000 men.⁹

Washington postponed its decision until after the joint commission's negotiations between the United States and the USSR to work out the details of organizing a provisional Korean democratic government for all Korea and a trusteeship were concluded. Apparently, the United States did not wish to risk a misunderstanding with the Soviet Union. However, in Washington (the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee (SWNCC) did agree that the Korean National Civil Police should be furnished US arms and equipment so that eventually the US tactical forces could be relieved of their civil police function.¹⁰

Since the American occupation of Korea, the country had been beset by postwar restlessness and disturbances, and the Korean National Police were not able to handle the unrest without assistance from US troops. In December 1945, General Hodge asked Brigadier General Arthur S. Champeny, Director of National Defense, to come up with an interim plan. General Champeny suggested a police reserve of 25,000 men to be trained along infantry lines, and the plan was approved by General Hodge.¹¹ Brigadier General Champeny's alternate plan, called "Bam Boo," offered another way of providing South Korea with increased internal security forces. Bam Boo envisaged that, initially, one company would be formed in each of the eight provinces of South Korea. In each province the company would be expanded gradually up to one regiment of constabulary.¹² If the Military Government had waited for Washington's directive, what would have happened?

In the meantime, the Military Government decided to open an English language school at the Methodist Theological Seminary in Seoul, in order to overcome the formidable language barrier. Many of the students enrolled in the school came from the numerous private armies that had sprung up around the time of the Japanese surrender.¹³ The first instruction in the Military English School began with sixty candidates who were to become officers on 5 December 1945.¹⁴

These candidates came from some fourteen private armies. Classified by background, they proved to be from the former Korean Restoration Army in China, former Japanese officers in Japan and Manchuria, or student draftees, and former police officers nominated by the Chief of Police.¹⁵ But many members of the former Korean Restoration Army rejected the idea of participating in the new Korean armed forces with former Japanese officers. They asserted that only the former Korean Restoration Army could form the nucleus of a future Korean defense force.¹⁶

The majority in this class were former members of the old Japanese Army. The most important figure among the ex-Japanese officers was Ung-Joon Lee, a full colonel in the Japanese Army, who was acting as an adviser to the director of National Defense. Also influential in the selection of officers to lead the Constabulary was Young Duk Won, a lieutenant colonel of the Kwantung Army, who later became the first Korean commander of the Constabulary.¹⁷

Americans favored the more professional ex-Japanese officers over the less standardized old fighters from the Korean Restoration Army. The eclipse of the members of the Korean Restoration Army was probably inevitable once the US authorities began to rely on Koreans who had ranked high in the Japanese military. Handicapped by old age and lack of formal education and technical training in military science, these old fighters for Korean independence were ill-equipped to meet the demands of the US advisers who looked for young, progressive officers knowledgeable in Western ways, particularly those who had a working knowledge of English.

In a sense, the US preference for ex-Japanese officers over Korean Restoration Army officers reflected the Japanese view,

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acquired by Americans, that Japanese were superior to Koreans. It is perhaps true that the Japanese-trained officers were more thoroughly professional as soldiers than the resistance army irregulars, who had the love and trust of the people. In the initial phase, when the Military Government was established, the Korean Restoration Army asked to disembark with the authority of their title, but the request was refused by the Military Government and they were only allowed to land on an individual basis.

This was another fatal mistake in the process of establishing the government. Since the Restoration Army's request to land was refused and the Military Government later invited not only the Restoration Army but also former Japanese officers to the English School, some of the Restoration Army officers felt unable to collaborate without denying their whole scale of values. Some soldiers were unable to join the Constabulary because they did not wish to serve under officers who had once been in the Japanese Army. The Korean Restoration Army was under the Provisional Government of Korea in Exile. They had already completed hard training with the assistance of US Army OSS in order to conduct operations in Korea with the US Army when the chance might come. They were warriors from Manchuria, where they had fought against the Japanese since 1910, and Korean Japanese soldiers who escaped from the Japanese Army to join their own army.

The absence of the former resistance army in the new potential army officer group and the preference for ex-Japanese officers sundered the long military tradition of Korea, and diminished its credibility and legitimacy in the eyes of Korean people. Moreover, the lack of the spirit of fidelity affected the leadership of the officer corps, and the effect remained in the ROK Armed Forces for a long time. How could officers from aggressor/enemy nations become the proud bulwark of the new nation even though they were Koreans? The lack of tradition and a legitimate officer corps enfeebled the new army and, as US advisers pointed out, there was a serious problem of leadership.

According to the Bam Boo plan, the first regiment of Constabulary was established in Seoul during January 1946. Eight

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other regiments had been formed by November 1946.¹⁸ The Military Government selected a number of the private military groups who agreed with the Bam Boo plan to assume command positions in the Constabulary. Soon afterwards, all private military organizations were disbanded and the majority of the right wing organizations ended up entering the Constabulary, except one extreme rightist group, known as the Korean Restoration Army.

Ung-Joon Lee insisted that all the new recruits had to have their qualifications and identity checked in order to foreclose subversion from the left wing.¹⁹ Lee requested that new recruits for the Constabulary should submit to ideological examination. The very concept of ideological examination, foreign to US values if not practices, offended the advisers. Tokyo directed that men would be selected from all groups, including communists, in proportion to the various party strengths in South Korea.²⁰ Furthermore, for the Americans, ideological examination was impossible to handle administratively since very little knowledge was available concerning party affiliations. Consequently, no tests of recruits were permitted except physical examinations.²¹ Soon, barracks became places for ideological feuding, and terrorism between the leftists and rightists became commonplace.

Two years later, a Constabulary unit on Cheju island rebelled against the central government. The 14th Constabulary Regiment, which was ordered to suppress the communist insurrection by the government, revolted and occupied two cities in southern Cholla province. The 4th Regiment, dispatched to regain control, also joined the rebellion. This revolt spread to the Constabulary Regiment at Taegu. Although all these towns were captured by loyal troops within a week, several hundred rebel troops escaped to the almost impenetrable Jiri mountain area nearby and became guerrilla forces harassing the new government. Such incidents prompted civilian communists to join the guerrilla forces; many rural areas ruled by government by day were ruled by guerrillas at night.²² The Constabulary was subsequently purged of over 1,300 subversives.²³ Then the ROK leaders abolished the 14th Regiment for its shameful conduct and burned its colors. All units bearing the number 4,

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either alone or in combination, were redesignated and the use of the number was henceforth abandoned.²⁴ The new government continued to be harrassed by guerrilla activities until the Korean War.

The naive and idealistic US policy had an unfortunate effect on the fledgling government and army. The new army was unable to conduct the unit training systematically and effectively and the meager resources of the new government were wasted as a result. This was one of the many factors that encouraged the North Korean regime to provoke the Korean War. American officials should understand that their code of ethics and democratic idealism is not applicable in other worlds and especially in the communist world.

The military government also established a Korean Coast Guard. Smuggling and piracy continually plagued the Korean coastal area and the need for this additional security force was obvious. The Korean Coast Guard was established by American Army Infantry officers who were assigned to recruit, organize, and train the Coast Guard. They set up a training station at Chinhae, which had been a Japanese naval base, and on 8 February 1946 began recruiting in Seoul. The Korean Coast Guard lacked vessels and proper advisors in the opening phase. Later, the Military Government was able to obtain some boats from the US surplus in Manila.²⁵

In September 1946, 15 US Coast Guard officers and enlisted advisers arrived from the United States as a result of the Military Government's efforts. Captain McCabe was designated chief of the Korean Coast Guard by the director, Department of Internal Security, and he selected Captain Won il Sohn to become his counterpart. Captain Won il Sohn had a fine record in a foreign merchant marine and in the resistance against the Japanese occupation of Korea. Later, Sohn became the chief of the Korean Coast Guard.²⁶

Four bases were established for the operation of Coast Guard affairs, and in August 1948, US Coast Guard officers were replaced by qualified American civilians.²⁷ Under the guidance of experienced US Coast Guardsmen and civilians, however, the little Korean Coast Guard entered a period of relatively rapid progress.

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The number of advisers to the Constabulary during the September 1946–1948 period varied between four and ten officers, with the average hovering around six. Inexperienced Korean commanders were largely on their own and, without US assistance, they made limited progress.²⁸ Those Americans who remained with the Constabulary during these periods had much to keep them busy, and the response varied with the individual. Some advisers had to drive a total of 350 miles in order to complete a circuit of the units for which they were responsible.²⁹ In this period the Constabulary used Japanese rifles which were issued by the Americans. The latter had been directed to destroy Japanese equipment, except for examples used for intelligence research purposes and trophies, but they nonetheless set aside 60,000 rifles for the Constabulary.³⁰

However, restrictions limited the type of training. The Constabulary regiment could only conduct use of small arms, basic drill, and methods of internal security because the Constabulary organization was officially a reserve force for the National Police of Korea. However, some of the Constabulary regiments near US infantry regiments were trained on US weapons, including mortars and machine guns, by the advisers. These advisers saw the Constabulary as a nucleus of the future ROK Army and thought it important to provide a broader type of training.

After one year, the Koreans in all branches of the Military Government had learned quickly. General Archer L. Lerch, who succeeded General Arnold, felt that they were now ready to become less dependent upon US supervision. At his direction the Koreans became responsible for administration on 11 September 1946, and Americans in the Military Government were ordered to assume a strictly advisory status.³¹ The first Korean chief of the Department of Internal Security was Dong yul Lyh who had been a battalion commander in the traditional Korean army of the Yi dynasty.³²

The official shift of authority occasioned uncomfortable relations between Korean commanders and US advisers. When the Koreans tried to exercise their new authority, they found that their US advisers still exercised a degree of control unwarranted by their official positions as "advisers." The Koreans

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thought that they should control and command in reality, but were reluctant to be rude to their US advisers by rebuffing them when they went beyond a strictly advisory role. Not surprisingly conflicts of opinion between US advisers and their Korean counterparts increased in intensity and number.³³ In practice, until the Republic of Korea Government was established in August 1948, the US advisers continued to be the real bosses of the Constabulary even though on paper the Korean officers commanded all the regiments.³⁴ Yet, mere paper authority could never provide the experience and technical ability which the Korean leaders needed so desperately.

Meanwhile, on 15 June 1946, the Americans changed the title of the defense agency from Department of National Defense to Department of Internal Security because of Soviet sensitivity. Such changes, although cosmetic in US eyes, struck to the very core of Korean identity. Koreans in the Constabulary did not want to accept the words "internal security" considering their implication was much closer to "police" than "army." They had tried to avoid the concept of "police" and to express a symbol of "military" by translating it to an ambiguous "Tongwi-bu" (traditionally meaning "Department of the Army of Yi-dynasty").³⁵

In this way, relying on American linguistic limitations and Russian unfamiliarity with Korean history, the Koreans hoped to have their way. This also showed the extent of Korean ill-will towards the police after years of Japanese rule. US personnel often didn't understand Koreans' deep concern on the matters of "face" and moral obligations.

The Foundation of The Republic of Korea and Army

From the beginning of the occupation US policymakers pinned their hopes on a trusteeship to settle the knotty Korean problems. A seemingly constructive plan of trusteeship for Korea was worked out among the great power Foreign Ministers late in 1945 in Moscow. Under this plan a US-USSR Joint Commission was to be formed to make recommendations regarding the creation of a provisional government for all of Korea.³⁶

The Joint Commission held fifteen formal sessions, from 16 January 1946 to 5 February 1946, in Seoul. On 2 February

General Hodge reported that there was nothing in the attitude of the Soviets to show that they had any thought of unifying Korea. He said, "My best guess now is that north and south will never be really united until the Russians are sure that the whole will be soundly communist."³⁷ Washington, however, was not yet ready to abandon the policy.

A year later, in May 1947, the Joint Commission reconvened in Seoul as a result of Washington's efforts, but neither the Soviet nor the US negotiators would agree to change their stand. Convinced by this time of the futility of further negotiations with the USSR on this score, the United States decided to bring the question of Korean unification and independence to the attention of the United Nations General Assembly.³⁸

When Korea was occupied the planners had only some rather vague theoretical ideas of trusteeship, largely derived from Philippine experience. In this dream, the United States government at very high levels assumed that the Soviets would cooperate with its ally and friend from World War II. The immediate participants, members of the Military Government in Korea, could foresee the reality of Soviet intentions, almost from the beginning. Once the US government had committed its representatives who were qualified in this complicated area, their recommendations should have been given due weight because country experts could assess the situation correctly. Unfortunately, however, this simple truth is often forgotten.

In September 1947, the General Assembly agreed to consider the problem and almost immediately the USSR launched a campaign of obstruction. The Soviets first proposed that Soviet and US forces in Korea be withdrawn in early 1948, leaving the Koreans to organize their own government. The United States countered with the suggestion that first an election be held in both zones under the observation of the United Nations. Once this was done, the new government could make arrangements for the withdrawal of the foreign armed forces when Korean defense forces were ready to take over the responsibility for national security. Even though the General Assembly adopted the US resolution in principle, the efforts of its temporary commission to enter the Soviet zone in Korea were fruitless. In February 1948 the commission decided that it

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would observe elections in those parts of Korea to which it had access. On 1 March 1948, General Hodge announced that elections would be held in South Korea in May 1948.³⁹ Hence, free elections were held only south of the 38th parallel in May 1948; the National Assembly of South Korea was organized and Syngman Rhee was elected chairman. Later in the summer the Assembly adopted a constitution and elected Syngman Rhee South Korea's first President.

On 7 July 1948 the National Assembly of South Korea promulgated the Constitution of the Republic of Korea. This constitution reflected every idealism of an advanced democratic country's system, such as those of the United States, France, the Weimar Republic, and so forth. Because this constitution was enacted under the influence of the US Military Government in Korea, this was a natural result. But this constitution was not well adapted to a divided country where South Korea confronted a communist North Korea. The Constitution should have taken, in every way possible, account of the history, tradition, educational level of the people, indigenous situation, and culture. Because it did not do so, frequent changes had to be made in the Constitution and these further destabilized Korean society in its nascent state.

As the prospects for independence increased, interest in the future development of the Korean armed forces also mounted. The rapid demobilization of US forces after World War II and the cutbacks in military expenditures had led to manpower shortages in the armed forces and a close scrutiny of US commitments overseas. In October 1947, the US Department of the Army asked Generals MacArthur and Hodge for their recommendations on the Korean forces. Hodge proposed a South Korean Army of 6 divisions and 600 US advisers who could train the South Korean divisions within one year. But MacArthur considered the formation of a South Korean Army should be deferred until the UN expressed its wishes.⁴⁰ In February 1948, General MacArthur informed the Washington policymakers that the lack of training facilities, the dearth of competent Korean military leaders, and the diminishing capabilities of the XXIV Corps to provide the personnel and equipment for an army argued against such a move. Instead, he favored an increase in the Constabulary to 50,000 men and

the provision of heavier infantry type weapons from US sources in Korea and Japan.⁴¹

With the South Korean elections scheduled for May 1948, the North Korean Government announced the official birth of the Korean People's Army on 8 February 1948. The Joint Chiefs of Staff quickly authorized the augmentation of the Constabulary and the issue of infantry small arms, cannon, and armored vehicles (including the M-24 tank, and armored cars) as deemed appropriate.⁴² Meanwhile, the Joint Chiefs of Staff concluded that the United States "has little strategic interest in maintaining the present troops and bases in Korea." In view of the current shortage of military manpower, the occupation force in Korea, approximately 45,000 men, "could well be used elsewhere," they said. Withdrawal of these troops "would not impair the military position of the Far East Command," unless the Soviets subsequently established a base in South Korea from which they could mount an assault on Japan.⁴³ JCS views and the withdrawal from Korea were approved by Secretary of State George C. Marshall in September 1947.⁴⁴ With regard to withdrawal and the possible Soviet domination of that area, Washington stated that "every effort should be made to liquidate or reduce the US commitment of men and money in Korea as soon as possible without abandoning Korea to Soviet domination."⁴⁵ At this moment the Department of the Army considered that the establishment of South Korean armed forces was desirable because it would probably keep the United States out of a Korean civil war; it might prevent a Korean civil war; it would permit an orderly withdrawal of US forces from Korea; and it would aid in maintaining US prestige in the Far East.⁴⁶

The Joint Strategic Survey Committee (JSSC) told the JCS in January 1948:

Present information indicates that the withdrawal of US forces will probably result in communist domination, and it is extremely doubtful if it would be possible to build up the Constabulary in time and with facilities available ... to prevent Soviet encroachment. The eventual domination of Korea by the USSR will have to be accepted as a probability if US troops were withdrawn. However, an augmented Constabulary might be a temporary deterrent to overt acts by North Korean forces.⁴⁷

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By the time US support for the increased 50,000 men was revealed in March 1948, the strength of the force already approximated that mark.⁴⁸ Organized expansion also kept pace with recruiting. On 1 December 1947 three Constabulary brigade headquarters were established at Seoul, Taejon, and Pusan which assumed control over three regiments.⁴⁹

In April 1948 the National Security Council had reported to the president that the United States could do one of the three things: abandon Korea; continue to support Korea politically and militarily; or extend to the Korean Government aid and assistance for the training and equipping of their own security forces and offer extensive economic help to prevent a breakdown. The council recommended the last course, which the President promptly accepted.⁵⁰ Subsequently, on 8 April, the Department of the Army directed General Hodge to create conditions for a US withdrawal at the end of 1948 and to train and equip Korean security forces for the protection of South Korea from anything but an outright act of aggression from beyond its border.⁵¹ Therefore, General Hodge authorized the assignment of additional US Army officers to the Military Government and directed XXIV Corps units to set up schools to train the Koreans in the use of American equipment.⁵²

Under the South Korean constitution the president was commander-in-chief of the Korean armed forces. General Hodge and President Rhee began an exchange of notes leading to the transfer of authority from the United States Army forces in Korea to the newly constituted government. President Rhee wanted to take over all the military supplies, for he wanted a considerable enlargement of the Korean forces; Hodge insisted that much of the military stockpile was useless to the Korean Government.⁵³ *The formal inauguration of the Republic of Korea took place on 15 August 1948, the third anniversary of Korea's liberation from Japanese rule. At midnight on that day, the United States Army Military Government in Korea ceased its activities.*⁵⁴

On 24 August, the President and General Hodge signed an Interim Military Agreement under which the ROK Government would gradually assume command of the nation's security forces.⁵⁵ The agreement stipulated that the United States

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would continue to assist the Koreans in organizing, training, and equipping their forces until American troops were gone from the country. To facilitate this assistance the commanding General, USAFIK, would retain authority to exercise operational control over Korean forces until the agreement expired.

On 26 August 1948, Ambassador John J. Muccio arrived in Korea and General Hodge left the country the following day as his deputy, Major General John B. Coulter, succeeded him. All advisory personnel were assigned to the new Provisional Military Advisory Group (PMAG) under the command of General Roberts.⁵⁶ Since 15 August 1948, ROK officials had been referring to the Constabulary as the National Defense Army despite the disapproval of the United States. On 15 December 1948, the Korean Congress established the new ROK Armed Forces Organization, including Army and Navy, under the Ministry of National Defense.

The First US Forces' Withdrawal

On 15 September, the first phase of the approved withdrawal plan was put into effect and departing units turned over equipment to the Korean Government according to the Interim Military Agreement. The Constabulary, meanwhile, formed six more regiments and two more brigade headquarters.⁵⁷ On 2 October 1948, soon after the initial withdrawal of American troops, the fledgling South Korean government was plagued by sabotage, demonstrations, and armed insurrections in various localities. The Soviet Government announced withdrawal of its forces from North Korea by the end of 1948.

The rise of the North Korean Communist state and its eagerness to have all foreign troops leave the peninsula cast doubts upon the sagacity of the US withdrawal program. In view of the possibility of the communists using force to unify Korea while the ROK Government was weak and the ROK defense forces were not properly prepared to resist invasion, the US Department of State came to the conclusion in November that the continued presence of US forces would have a stabilizing effect upon the overall situation. President Rhee sent a plea to President Truman in November 1948, urging that the United States maintain an occupation force in Korea until the

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ROK forces were capable of dealing with any internal or external threat and that the US establish a military and naval mission to help deter aggression and civil war.⁵⁸

Ambassador Muccio endorsed South Korea's request. Both he and the commander of USAFIK thought that an invasion from NK was possible in the near future.⁵⁹ When the United Nations passed a resolution on 12 December 1948, calling for the complete withdrawal of American forces, more than 16,000 still remained on Korean soil. The JCS directed General MacArthur to scale down this figure as quickly as possible to the regimental combat team of 7,500 men.⁶⁰ The US XXIV Corps left Korea on 15 January 1949 for deactivation in Japan, leaving only the 5th RCT and Provisional Military Advisory Group.⁶¹

When, early in 1949, the JCS asked General MacArthur's advice on the possible effects of withdrawing and the best time to withdraw these remaining troops, General MacArthur recommended the remainder be withdrawn on 10 May 1949, the anniversary of the Korean election. He added that the US could not establish Korean forces in the South capable of stopping a full-scale invasion from the North, possibly supported by communist armies from Manchuria. If a serious threat developed, the United States would have to give up active military support of the ROK forces.⁶² General MacArthur's pessimistic view of Korea's chances of survival as an independent state implied that he had some knowledge of the capabilities of North Korean forces supported by the USSR and their possible intentions also. General MacArthur also told JCS that the United States did not have the facilities to train and equip Korean troops to the desirable point. This suggests that General MacArthur lacked the will to keep South Korea on the side of the free world. His comments on the inability of the United States to support Korea were not the response expected from the Commander of US forces in the Far East. Moreover, he had lost the spirit to protect freedom against communist expansionism. From that time on, Koreans have felt that US ineptitude was responsible for the division of the peninsula.

MacArthur underestimated Korea's potential capability. Why were the innocent Korean people confronted with this

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indifference? The overriding result was that, as a consequence of his recommendation, all other possible positive reviews at various levels were negative ones because MacArthur was the highest local authority and one of the US Army's most respected generals. Koreans later paid tremendous costs as a result of MacArthur's unfortunate judgment. However, General MacArthur closed his 52 years of military service making every effort to compensate, during the Korean War, for his original error. This is why the people of the ROK venerate his memory. The big, proud statue of General MacArthur in the port city of Inchon shows Korea's respect for their defender.

The US President's advisers reached the conclusion in March that the complete withdrawal of US forces by 30 June was politically and militarily desirable. They also advised the President to seek military assistance from the fiscal year 1949-50 and to establish a US military advisory group to assist in training ROK Armed Forces.⁶³ President Truman approved these recommendations on 23 March 1949. Between 8 May and 29 June the last US combat unit left Korea, leaving only a US Military Advisory Group.⁶⁴ The interim Military Agreement entered into by General Hodge and President Rhee on 24 August 1948 automatically lapsed, and the South Koreans assumed complete and full control of their forces.

As the US troops withdrew from Korea, the US Central Intelligence Agency stated that withdrawal would be followed by an invasion, timed to coincide with communist-led South Korean revolts. The invading North Korean Peoples Army would possibly be assisted by small battle-trained units from communist Manchuria.⁶⁵ Korea had become a symbol of US determination to resist Soviet aggression yet, despite four years' strife against communism, it had now become a forgotten land.

Military Training and Education

Americans had long been aware that the ROK Army's greatest weakness was in leadership, a deficiency that had to be overcome before the ROK army could function efficiently on its own. Many Korean officers did not appreciate or accept the responsibilities inherent in their commissions while commanders and staff officers at all levels were deficient in professional knowledge. A great many were more interested in

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maintaining positions in the officer class than in performing their duties as officers.⁶⁶

Many advisers who were in Korea during that period said that the difficulties stemmed, no doubt, from Korea's background, but it is likely that the Constabulary's early years, which had been marked by restrictions on training, by a poverty of equipment, and a shortage of American advisers, were also responsible.⁶⁷ There was some justification for both points of view. Americans, however, continue to have difficulty in understanding that the deficiency originated with the formation of the officer corps. The exclusion of the Korean Restoration Army as a cadre of the new Korean Army caused a severance from Korean military tradition instead of a linkage with the Korean historical background. Lack of knowledge of either Korean history or the outcome of the years of Japanese occupation gave Americans an incorrect overall impression of Korea.

Before the establishment of KMAG, US military advisers had set up eight military schools in South Korea: a combat intelligence school, schools for the Constabulary's signal, engineer, artillery, ordnance, military police, and band personnel, and a so-called Korean Military Academy. These had been formed with a minimum of facilities, too few trained Korean instructors or American advisers and, according to later KMAG estimates, they had not produced graduates who were qualified by acceptable standards. Faced with the grim realities of guerilla warfare, Korean commanders had been understandably reluctant to spare officers and men for military schooling.⁶⁸

The oldest among the schools was the Korean Military Academy, a direct "descendant" of the English Language School, set up by the US Military Government in December 1945, and later the Korean Army's Officer Candidate School. The Language School, renamed the Korean Constabulary Training Center in May 1946, had served as the Constabulary's OCS until 15 August 1948, when it was redesignated as the Korean Military Academy. The OCS courses were varied, ranging from one week to one year in duration.⁶⁹

There were serious areas of concern, especially regarding staff officers' inefficiency and the ignorance of ROK army commanders. The KMAG decided to establish the staff college not

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only to instruct Korean officers in the performance of general staff duties, but also to orient commanders on the proper employment of staffs.⁷⁰ In order to reach as many senior ROK officers as possible, they set up a special senior officers course for regimental and division commanders and their executive officers, and for the chiefs and executives of the Army staff sections, to run in eight-week (three weeks in Infantry school and five weeks in the staff college) cycles, beginning in December 1949. The KMAC staff exerted as much pressure as possible upon the Korean Army Staff.⁷¹ Thirteen major schools were in operation by the end of 1949, with the greatest advisory effort devoted to the Infantry and Staff Schools.⁷²

Besides attending the schools in Korea, Korean officers were also studying at service schools in the United States. A colonel and five lieutenant colonels had left Korea on 14 August 1948 to attend the US Infantry School and on 18 July 1949 a second group of five officers attended the Infantry and the Artillery Schools respectively.⁷³

Another KMAC program approved by the Department of the Army involved sending thirty-three Korean officers to Japan as observers with the Eighth US Army units. This gave Korean officers an opportunity to observe over a period of time the administrative and training methods employed by US units. The group arrived in Yokohama on 15 April 1950 and was scheduled to remain there for three months.⁷⁴

Early in 1950 the chief of KMAC recommended a four-year academic course for the Military Academy, beginning in June 1950. The course was patterned closely after the US Military Academy's curriculum and was approved by President Rhee. A class of 350 cadets entered the Academy on 6 June 1950. Upon graduation they were to be awarded Bachelor of Science degrees and commissioned as second lieutenants in the ROK Army.⁷⁵ The cadets entered the Academy just 20 days before the Korean War and, after participating in combat near the academy as cadets, members of the class were commissioned as second lieutenants a few months later.

The KMAC's mission was to organize, administer, equip, and train the Korean Security Forces, which consisted of the

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Korean Army, the Korean Coast Guard, and the Korean National Police.⁷⁶ In carrying out this mission, the advisory group assigned a US officer to each key position in the Korean national defense establishment, from the Minister of National Defense down to battalion level. This was called the "counterpart" system.⁷⁷ US and ROK colleagues had desks in the same offices, inspected troops together, attended social functions together, and otherwise shared intimately all daily tasks and problems. As a result, the advisers acquired as great a personal pride in their own units as did their Korean counterparts and there was much competition between the Americans.⁷⁸

After assuming defense responsibility, four ROK divisions occupied the military sector along the 38th parallel, the others, scattered, were engaged in anti-guerrilla operations. This made it difficult to conduct unit training from squad to regimental level systematically. Exceptionally, the anti-guerrilla operations offered some degree of live training. The KMAG formed teams to inspect training and urged ROK officers to participate in the program. ROK officers were preoccupied with the continuous infiltration of guerrillas along the 38th parallel and guerrilla activity in the interior. Lt Col. Bartosik, who was a member of the board to expand KMAG, wrote to Robert K. Sawyer that Korea was considered a very undesirable assignment, and those officers on duty in Korea wanted to get out.

Nevertheless, advisers concerned with education and training did very valuable work assisting the fledgling ROK Armed Forces. Most Korean officers, under the influence of their advisers, had become aware of the new army system. The Koreans became better officers and their leadership qualities were enhanced. Moreover, the education provided the chance to set up a new tradition by learning new technology. The efforts of the responsible advisers provided a cornerstone of the present Korean Armed Forces.

US Military Assistance

When the last US regimental combat team departed Korea in June 1949, it left behind nearly \$40 million worth of small arms, machine guns, light artillery, jeeps, and light trucks.⁷⁹

In March, following a review of the US policy with respect to Korea, the Security Council had concluded that the United

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States should complete the equipment of the ROK Army to its then current level of 65,000 men. In addition, certain arms and vessels should be turned over to the Korean Coast Guard and a six-month stockpile of maintenance supplies be made available to the Korean Government. The estimate was about \$1.5 million and delivery was virtually completed by the end of 1949.⁸⁰

The National Security Council also decided to seek legislative authority as a part of military assistance to free nations. On the basis of this conclusion, the Republic of Korea was included among those nations marked for US military aid under the Mutual Defense Assistance Act of 1949, signed by President Truman on 6 October 1949. An amount of \$10.2 million was allocated to South Korea for fiscal year 1950, mainly in the form of maintenance materials and spare parts.⁸¹

The decision not to include tanks, 155mm howitzers, and certain other heavy items of equipment was made, in part, because the items could not be fitted into the dollar limitations of the military aid program for Korea, and in part because KMAG staff felt that the roads and bridges of South Korea did not lend themselves to efficient tank operations. There is evidence (based possibly on a remark by President Rhee to Secretary of the Army Kenneth C. Royall in February 1949), that some Americans feared the Republic of Korea would embark upon military adventures of its own into North Korea if it had "offensive-type" equipment. However, it is much more likely that terrain factors and dollar limitations were actually responsible for the United States' failure to furnish this type of equipment.⁸² Had the US advisers known that Russia had transferred tanks to North Korea, where the terrain is much rougher than in the south, what would their rationale have been?

No one understood that the South Koreans' slogan "Advance to the North and make unification" was devised mainly to encourage the morale of the soldiers and people of South Korea. Obviously, no one could actually go to the North with inferior and ill-equipped troops. Moreover, the nation's long tradition of never meddling with other countries' affairs would have deterred any such move. Though they loved peace, even the scholar and the farmer would stand firm, determined to defend the nation against any illegitimate aggression, whatever

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the lack of materiel. If North Korea attacked South Korea, it would be at communist, not Korean instigation. As the JCS had already concluded their strategic mission in Korea, the ROK Army was conceived as being for internal security only, with no need of heavy weapons like tanks and fighter airplanes.

At that time the ROK economy was deteriorating. The supply of tanks, and the necessary spare parts, would have necessitated a much greater allocation of military aid. This was not forthcoming as there were many calls for US military assistance worldwide. Korea had to do without tanks. The KMAG and the US embassy both agreed with President Rhee's request for more military aid for air and naval forces. Ambassador Muccio insisted that sufficient funds should be allotted to bring the ROK's total military assistance in the fiscal year 1950 to \$20 million.⁸³

On 31 December 1949 General Roberts, KMAG chief, outlined specific recommendations proposing F-51, T-6, C-47 aircraft, 3-inch guns for navy vessels, more signal and engineering equipment, 105mm howitzers, and additional machine guns and mortars, worth \$9.8 million. But the plans were never carried out.⁸⁴ When the North attacked, on 25 June 1950, less than \$1,000 worth of equipment had been actually received while \$350,000 worth of spare parts were en route.

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III. THE KOREAN WAR (1950–1953)

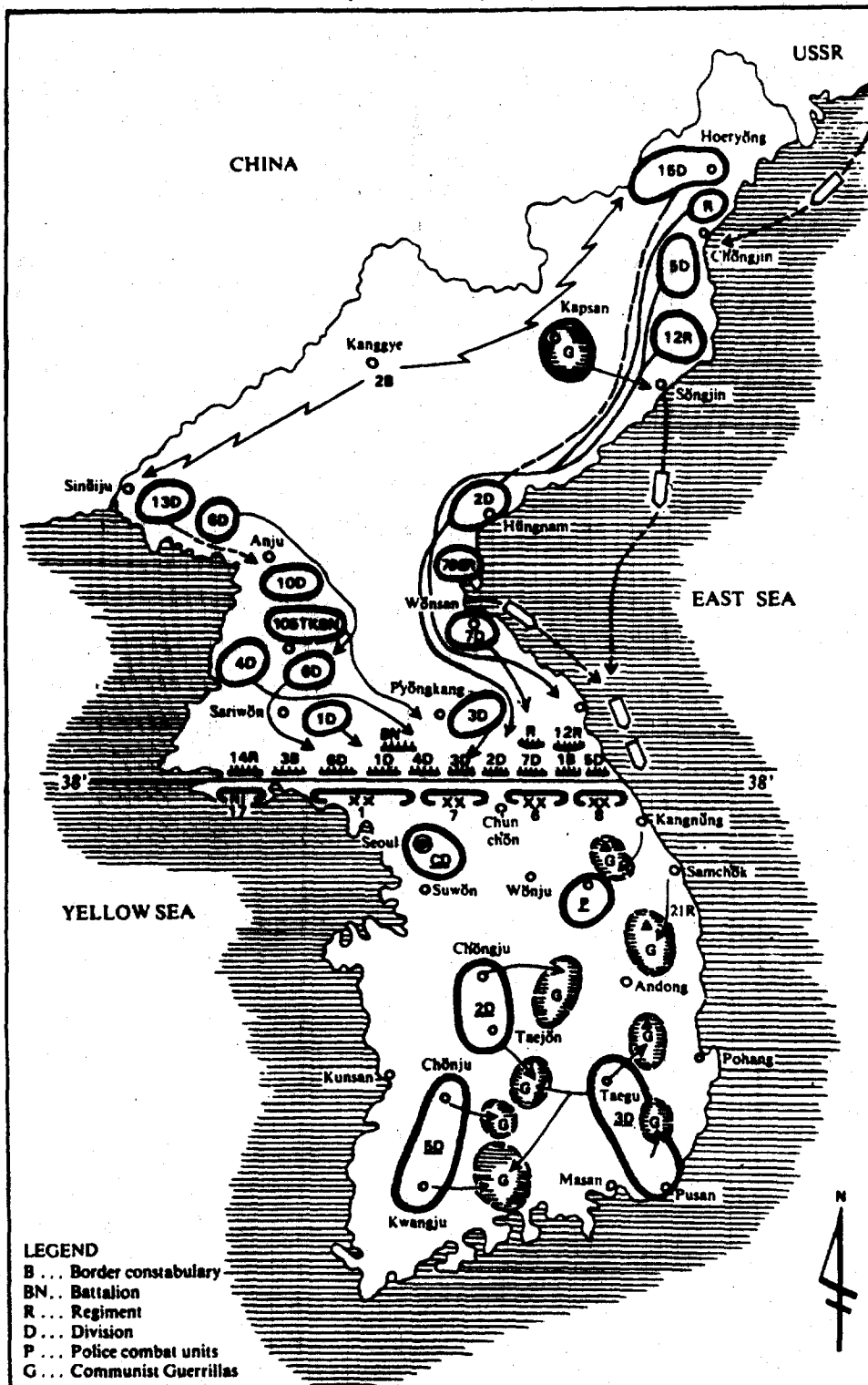
North Korea's Preparations for Attack

In Moscow on 17 March 1949, Kim Il-sung and Soviet Foreign Minister Vyshinsky concluded the Korea-Soviet Economic and Cultural Treaty, effective for ten years. The treaty was basically aimed at guaranteeing Soviet economic activities in North Korea.¹ It was believed that Kim Il-sung asked Stalin to support his plan to launch a military attack on the South Koreans and that Stalin told him to come back with a concrete blueprint for the assault.² It was thought that the Soviets did not conclude a pact of friendship and mutual defense with North Korea in order to convince the South Koreans that the North Koreans would not launch an all-out attack against the Republic of Korea. Instead, a secret treaty of mutual defense was concluded between Communist China and the North Korean regime under Soviet protection on 17 March 1949. An organization of the Nationalist Chinese government in Shanghai reported the contents:

Communist China would be obliged to defend North Korea from any form of aggression. An attack on either of the two parties signatory to the treaty would be repulsed by joint action; and Communist China would supply North Korea with weapons, material, and military personnel from Manchuria and northern China during the period from 1 July 1949 to 30 August 1950.³

The secret treaty between Communist China and the North Koreans seemed to result from the Soviet policy of expansionism. While it is true that the Soviets played a decisive role in the birth of the Chinese Communist regime, Stalin distrusted Mao's China and was against a strong Chinese government. Seen thus from a Soviet standpoint the Korean War, apart from dispersing the US influence heavily concentrated in

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THE MILITARY SITUATION IN KOREA
 (Before June 25, 1950)



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Europe, assisted the fundamental Soviet intention of severing any possible linkage between the West and Peking. A permanent pro-Soviet regime might be created by encouraging Communist China to become a primary hostile force against the United States.⁴

China regarded the communization of the whole Korean peninsula as the best means of freeing itself from the threat of aggression from the United States, whose forces were based in Japan. In order to liberate Taiwan, a military conflict on the Korean peninsula would be conducive to diminishing US influence in Taiwan.⁵ The Chinese also feared that were Taiwan allowed to use air bases in South Korea this would pose a serious threat to the PRC. Therefore, the North Korean invasion plan suited the interests of Communist China.⁶

The Russians made the judgment that complete seizure of the Korean peninsula was a precondition for their ultimate aim to dominate Japan. Nevertheless, the United States did not recognize the strategic importance of South Korea and completed its troop withdrawal by June 1949.⁷

On 5 January 1950, President Truman announced that the United States would take no military action, direct or indirect, to help the Nationalist forces of Chiang Kai-shek hold Formosa (Taiwan) against the expected attacks of the Chinese Communists. Despite heavy criticism from the Republican members of Congress, Secretary of State Dean Acheson followed this declaration with the statement, a week later, that the United States would fight to defend Japan, Okinawa, and the Philippines, but that the new nations of Asia were on their own.⁸ Both Formosa and the ROK were placed outside the US forward defense line in the realm of open territory for the communists. Acheson's statement no doubt served to encourage more ambitious communist plans for future action. It appears that the communists had obtained convincing evidence that the United States would not take positive countermeasures to any military provocation on the Korean peninsula, even though the United States would not remain indifferent.

In support of the North Korean People's Army, the USSR formed a special military mission under the command of

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General Shtykov, who was Soviet Ambassador to Pyongyang. The mission comprised more than 40 high-ranking Soviet military leaders, including General Katukov and Lieutenant General Kubanov, both experts in armored warfare, and Admiral Zakharov, an intelligence specialist. Leaving Moscow toward the end of December, they arrived at Pyongyang in mid-January 1949, inspecting Korean units in Manchuria on the way.⁹

The purpose of the special military mission was to modernize the equipment of the North Korean Army in preparation for an invasion of the South and to reinforce and reorganize its units by bringing into North Korea those Korean units which had fought under the banner of Communist China—in short, the mission shouldered the task of organizing an excellent army within 18 months (by June 1950), to replace the Soviet occupation forces which had left the country.¹⁰

About one month after Secretary of State Dean Acheson announced the US forward defense line concept, on 14 February 1950, the USSR and Communist China concluded a 30-year Sino-USSR Friendship Alliance and Assistance Agreement. There is a strong possibility that the PRC and the USSR agreed beforehand on the invasion of South Korea by the North Koreans.¹¹

In late 1949, Korean units serving with the PRC entered North Korea en masse and were formed or were integrated into units of the People's Army. The 15th Chinese Army Group with the 38th, 39th, 40th, 42nd, and 50th Chinese Armies were scheduled to deploy along the Korea-China border by July 1950. All these facts represent an eloquent testimony to the fact that the North Korean invasion of the South was perpetrated with advance knowledge and consent from Communist China and the USSR.¹² Meanwhile, Kim Il-sung, in his New Year message for 1950, vowed "1950 will become a year of unification; and may glory shine upon our people, who are marching toward victory. Long live unified Korea!"

Combat Power Comparison

The Soviet occupation forces rendered every kind of assistance to communist leaders in the North as they attempted to communize the Korean peninsula. They provided the Security

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Corps with Japanese rifles, and released Korean nationals from the Soviet army for service in the Security Corps. The People's Army, fully equipped with the latest Soviet firearms, had been established with two divisions and one mixed brigade by 8 February 1948, proof positive of the Soviet military assistance policy for North Korea.

The Soviets had a high priority plan for building a powerful tank unit in North Korea, remembering the important role their tanks had played in World War II. In June 1950 part of the Soviet mission withdrew from the North after a 185-day tour of duty. By March 1950 North Korea had successfully completed all war preparations including the establishment and combat training of ten infantry divisions, one tank brigade, an air division, and various other special units.¹³

In March 1950 an operational exercise dubbed "thrusting into the enemy fortress and infiltration from behind the enemy" which included two infantry divisions, tank units, and one mechanized infantry division was conducted. Those responsible for this exercise were reportedly greatly satisfied with the excellent conduct of the operation.¹⁴ All offensive exercises at various levels up to corps level and joint operations had been effectively completed while ROK Armed Forces were occupied mopping up communist guerrillas secretly dispatched to the ROK. The South Koreans were not even conducting operational exercises on the battalion level. Already inadequate resources were being wasted, and the government destabilized.¹⁵ The combat power status of the ROK and North Korea just before the war is shown in table 1.

Invasion

There were 874 clashes between two armies along the 38th parallel before June 1950.¹⁶ With regard to guerrilla activities, the South Korean Workers' Party initiated, in February 1948, armed struggles to obstruct the 10 May 1948 General Election, and these armed struggles were expanded steadily. After the Army mutinies by leftist soldiers in the Yosu, Suncheon, and Taegu areas in October 1948, the remnants had hidden in the Chirisan-Taebaksan area and established a guerrilla warfare zone with local leftists. These guerrillas were also reinforced by

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an infiltrated guerrilla force from North Korea, numbering some 2,400, controlled remotely by North Korea.¹⁷ Most of the guerrillas were destroyed by the ROK Army and police force, but North Korea, for propaganda purposes, exaggerated their activities and the exaggerated accounts of guerrilla achievements played some part in prompting the North Korean authorities to decide on their southward invasion.

TABLE 1. COMPARISON OF NORTH KOREAN AND ROK
COMBAT POWER ON THE EVE OF THE KOREAN WAR

Classification	North Korea	ROK
Infantry divisions	10 divisions (30 regiments) 5 divisions were from Communist China Most high-ranking officers were from the USSR and China	8 divisions (22 regiments) 1 artillery battalion per division (91 pieces)
Tank Units	1 tank brigade 242 tanks (T-34) self-propelled artillery Mechanized Infantry Regiment (560 side cars)	None (27 armored cars)
Air Force	1 air division 211 airplanes 4 AK-9 and IL-10	8 liaison planes 14 training craft
Navy	30 vessels 3 bases	28 vessels 5 bases
Total strength	ground: 182,860 naval: 13,700 air: 2,000	ground: 95,000 naval: 8,800 air: 1,800

Table compiled by the author from material available in Kim Chum-kon, *The Korean War 1950-53* (Seoul, Korea: Kwangmyong Publishing Co., Ltd., 1980), pp. 179-192

On 30 May 1950, in the second National Assembly election, President Rhee gained less than one-third of the total votes. Political unrest resulted, providing a favorable

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opportunity for North Korea's invasion. On 10 June 1950, six division commanders out of eight divisions and the Director of Operations Bureau, ROK Army Headquarters, were reshuffled, affording the North the perfect moment to launch an attack.

On 10 June 1950, the National Security Department of North Korea held a secret military leaders' conference with division and brigade commanders under the pretext of large-scale field training.¹⁸ From this moment the invasion was in train. All units were placed in their offensive position by 23 June 1950. Meanwhile, from early June, frontline divisions repeatedly sent warnings to ROK Army Headquarters on the movements of the People's Army. They failed to attract high-ranking policymakers' attention because it was assumed that such movements of North Korean troops were part of a series of psychological operations designed to threaten the South in connection with the North's deceptive peace offensive. On 23 June 1950, the emergency alert which had been issued on 11 June was lifted because no specific threat was observed. Suspended leaves and passes for soldiers were permitted from 24 June and most high-ranking officers, including some frontline commanders near Seoul, were attending a party until late at night in celebration of the opening of an officers' club at Army Headquarters.¹⁹

The People's Army of North Korea commenced a surprise attack all along the 38th parallel at 0400 hrs, 25 June 1950.²⁰ The operations plan called for the overrun of South Korea with the brunt of the attack along the Seoul-Pusan highway linking Uijongbu, Suwon, Taejon, and Taegu. Both flank areas of the trunk line were designated as subsidiary offense lines from which actions were to be mounted to cover the major attack line all the way down to Pusan, the final destination. The 3rd and 4th Division of the 1st Corps were the main attack force in the center, with support from the 203rd Tank Regiment. The 1st and 6th Divisions were the subsidiary attack units along the Kaesong-Munsan-Seoul line, while the 2nd and 7th Divisions of the 2nd Corps were to march through the Hwa Chon-Chun Chon-Hong Chon line as subsidiary attack forces in the eastern area. Thus, the main forces of the 2nd corps (2nd and 7th

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Divisions) were to cut the retreat route of the South Korean troops near Seoul along the Suwon-Inchon line.²¹

The ROK Army was deployed as follows: the 17th Regiment from the Capital Division was stationed on the Ongjin Peninsula in the far west, the 1st Division was guarding the Kaesong-Munsan district, the 7th Division was defending the Unchon-Yonchon area, the 6th Division was checking the Chun Chon-Inje area, and the 8th Division was containing the east coast and Samchok area. The Capital Division was in Seoul and the 2nd, 3rd, and 5th Divisions were conducting anti-guerrilla warfare in the south.

In spite of being outnumbered and having no effective antitank weapons, ROK Army units conducted furious battles in a do-or-die spirit. The ROK 1st Division and 6th Division destroyed some enemy tanks by organizing human-bomb teams. The enemy 2nd Division, tankless, lost 40 percent of its troops and most of its artillery pieces to the ROK 6th Division in the eastern area. They could barely take Chun Chon on the morning of 28 June after the retreat of the 6th Division in an orderly manner. As a result of this failure, the North Korea 2nd Corps commander and 2nd Division commander were replaced and the 2nd Division was reorganized into the 12th Division on 3 July.²² However, lack of coordination in the Uijongbu-Pochon district between the ROK 2nd and 7th Divisions made for a sudden collapse in the general defense line. This caused the loss of major defense forces from Seoul and precipitated the fall of Seoul early on the morning of 28 June.

In the meantime, the US Military Advisory Group believed that the ROK Army could contain and repel an invasion, unless there were Chinese Communist Forces' participation. They had learned that the North Koreans had completed regimental level training while actually the North Koreans already had finished a corps level joint exercise.²³ Unfortunately, the US advisers wrongly believed that the North Korean forces were less well trained than they really were. The US advisers' assessment might well be regarded as over-optimistic or just hopeful, but probably they were influenced by the Minister of National Defense, Shin Song Mo, who used to boast of future victory over any aggression from the North.

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Formation of UN Forces

On 25 June, President Rhee called in the chairman of the UN Commission on Korea and requested a UN resolution and also asked US Ambassador Muccio for more arms and ammunition. KMAG sent an urgent message to General MacArthur, requesting an emergency ten-day supply of ammunition without delay.²⁴

Upon receiving an official report from Ambassador Muccio, the US State Department requested the UN Security Council to be urgently convened. President Truman hastily returned to Washington from his hometown, Independence, Missouri, for a series of top-level military and diplomatic conferences, establishing the principle that the United States would assist the ROK and repel the invading troops. President Truman further instructed General MacArthur to send arms to the ROK forces.²⁵

The UN Security Council adopted a US-proposed resolution (with the Soviet delegate fortunately absent), calling for an immediate ceasefire; requesting the UN Commission on Korea to observe the execution of this resolution; and calling upon all members to render every assistance to the UN in the execution of the resolution.²⁶ North Korea refused to accept the resolution.

While President Truman ordered General MacArthur to assist the ROK with US air and sea forces, the Security Council of the UN adopted a US-proposed resolution on 7 July, recommending that such forces and other assistance be made available to a unified command, and requesting that the US designate the commander of such forces.²⁷

President Truman accepted the resolution and announced the appointment of General MacArthur as the Commander in Chief of the UN forces as of 8 July, authorizing him to use the UN flag. Based on this resolution, Great Britain, France, Australia, and 13 other countries sent military forces to Korea. The multinational UN force in Korea was the first of its kind in world history.

The Second US Forces' Disembarkation

Owing to their lack of river-crossing equipment the North Koreans wasted valuable time before the Han River defense

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line until 3 July. The hastily reorganized ROK Army withstood the attack of North Korean forces without tanks at the Han River defense line until that day. During the following retreat toward the south, ROK forces performed delaying operations with the KMAC advisers' active participation. Without these efforts in the moment of crisis, the US aid from Japan might well have arrived too late to have saved the ROK.

General MacArthur made an inspection tour of the Han River defense line on the morning of 29 June and recommended that US ground forces should be sent, in addition to air and naval support. With President Truman's approval, General MacArthur ordered Lieutenant General Walton Walker, the Commander of the US Army in Japan, to move the 24th Division to the Korean front. The 1st battalion (Task Force Smith) of the 21st Regiment was air-lifted to Pusan from Japan on 1 July as an advance unit. On 2 July the unit left Pusan for Taejeon, and so became the first US unit involved in the Korean War.

On 5 July, Task Force Smith arrived north of Osan, and its appearance boosted the morale of the ROK Forces a great deal. But the task force, too, was overrun before it could mount any effective action against the advancing enemy tanks, adding to the confidence of the North Koreans who had now smashed even the "invincible" American forces. However, the People's Army was annoyed by the unexpected participation of US troops.

As the main elements of the US 24th Division completed landing in Korea—Major General Dean, Division Commander, was concurrently commander of the US forces in Korea—it was agreed between General Chong Il-Kwon, ROK Army Chief of Staff, and General Dean that the US forces, which had excellent firepower, would take care of the Seoul-Pusan trunkline and areas to the west, where the People's Army was applying its main offensive, and that ROK forces should defend the east. The US forces staged a delaying action while waiting for the landing of more US ground troops. With the movement of the 8th US Army Headquarters from Japan to Taejeon on 9 July, the main elements of the 28th Army were thrown into battle.

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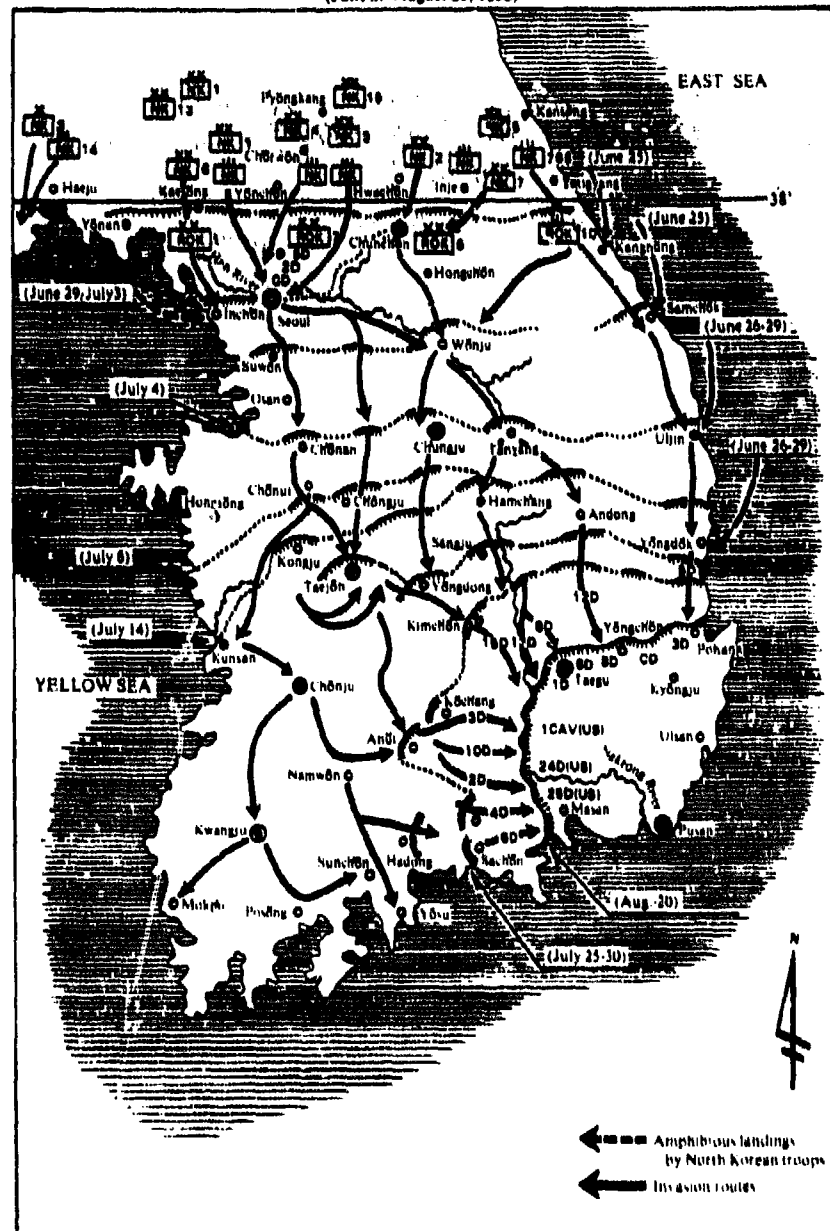
On 15 July President Rhee transferred operational command over the ROK forces to the UN Force Commander, enabling the Eighth US Army Commander to control and command ROK forces from 17 July. Thus, the US and ROK forces were able to take united, well coordinated actions against the enemy under the banner of the United Nations. The action taken by President Rhee was inevitable in view of the seriousness of the situation.

The 24th Division retreated to successive positions from the Kumgang River line on 12 July to Yongdong on 19 July. The US 1st Cavalry Division landed at Pohang on 18 July and drove to Yongdong, on the following day, to the rear area of the 24th Division. The US 24th Division deployed on 18 July along the Sangju-Kimchon line to support the ROK troops, which were reorganized into three divisions out of five divisions of the ROK 1st Corps. On 25 July, the battle strength of the People's Army consisted of ten infantry divisions and one tank division, whereas the UN side comprised five ROK divisions refitted into the Capital, 1st, 3rd, 6th, and 8th Divisions and three US divisions.

General MacArthur, who flew to Taegu on 27 July, sternly expressed his determination to defend Korea by saying, "A repetition of Dunkirk should not happen in any case." General Walker established an operational plan "to defend the Nakdonggang River defense line [often called the Pusan Perimeter] by all means," and both the ROK and US forces made a strategic withdrawal to the inner Pusan Perimeter by 1 August.²⁸ The US forces were to defend the western part, from near Masan to Waegwan, along the Nakdonggang River. The ROK forces took charge of the eastern part, from Waegwan to Yongdok, on the east coast. Kim Il-sung's directive was that "Pusan should by all means be occupied by 15 August at the latest." However, the North Korean Army couldn't break the new defense line.

At dawn on 15 September, the historic and much debated Inchon landing operation, involving 261 UN vessels, was carried out successfully. The landing units, including the US 1st Marine and 7th Division and the ROK 1st Marine and 17th Regiment, were formed under the name of the 10th Corps.

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INITIAL DEVELOPMENTS OF THE KOREAN WAR
 (June 25-August 20, 1950)



Source: Kim Chum-kon, *The Korean War 1950-53* (Seoul, Korea: Kwangmyong Publishing Co., Ltd., 1980), p. 227. Copyright © 1973, 1980 by Kim Chum-kon. Reprinted with permission.

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The capital city of Seoul was recaptured on 28 September, 98 days after it fell. In the meantime, the ROK and US forces along the Nakdonggang launched a massive counterattack at 0900 hrs, 16 September. The US 1st Corps (US 1st Cavalry, 24th Division, with ROK 1st Division), the US 9th Corps (US 2nd and 25th Divisions), the ROK 1st Corps (the Capital and 3rd Division) and the ROK 2nd Corps (6th and 8th Divisions) took part in counteroffensive operations.

A call to surrender, addressed to Kim Il-sung, by General MacArthur on 30 September was ignored, so the UN forces continued to march northward, after crossing the 38th parallel on 1 October. The US decision to cross the parallel and unify Korea won tacit UN approval, and UN forces swept north to the Yalu. Pyongyang was taken on 20 October; Chosan, near the Korea-China border, on 26 October.

In commemoration of crossing the 38th parallel on 1 October the ROK government designated that day as ROK Armed Forces Day. When the ROK 1st Division Commander, General Pak Son-Yup, advanced to the Pyongyang, his home town, he wanted to be the first unit commander to capture the enemy capital city, but he had no idea how to accomplish the desired objective. He later confessed to his ROK Army College students that his KMAG adviser had suggested every maneuver and had helped with supporting units from US corps headquarters. As a result of the advice and assistance, Gen. Pak Son-Yup was indeed the first commander to enter the enemy capital city of Pyongyang after its capture. This incident demonstrates the immaturity of the ROK Army commanders and the usefulness of the KMAG advisers.

ROK officers, who study the art of war, are still puzzled by the ill-conceived pursuit operations into North Korean territory. The Korean people cherished a desire for the unification of their country. General MacArthur's goal was the destruction of the last remnants of the North Korean People's Army, and the pacification of the entire peninsula. Though he never expressed such sentiments, it seemed to the ROK military that General MacArthur was perhaps seeking to atone for his original mistaken strategic assessment of Korea. As a military man,

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MacArthur's philosophy was expressed in the phrases "victory—immediate and complete," and "there's no substitute for victory," sentiments reflected in Congress and at West Point.

When General MacArthur sensed the threat from Manchuria, he recommended the destruction of the Yalu bridges and the bombing of the enemy's bases in Manchuria, but this recommendation was disapproved by the US government. Had the North Korea People's Army driven up the Yalu they would have been able to withdraw into Manchuria unscathed. They then could have penetrated UN forces again at will. Even if the PRC had not intervened in October 1950, they had already shown themselves ready to support every North Korean initiative with 400,000 troops. The border between Korea and the PRC would have been extremely difficult to defend, and the ROK Army was still untried in the performance of its role. Total disaster was a very real possibility.

It was almost winter and the terrain was very rough. "General Winter's" defeat of Napoleon and Hitler must never be forgotten. The UN forces did not take sufficient account of the North Korean terrain which is very steep, with tortuous mountain ranges separated by deep valleys. This terrain complicates enormously not only supply but also command and control. Furthermore, this area is the North Koreans' home ground.

In any case, there was very little chance of victory in a situation that was far worse than that of the Inchon landing operation. The Chong Chon River and the Hungnam line constitutes one of the narrowest bottlenecks of the Korean peninsula. In the sixth century, at the time of the Koguryo dynasty, General Uljimundok destroyed, with small forces, some two million invading Chinese troops along the Chong Chon River. The modern history of Korea would have been different, had the UN forces stopped their advance at this line. The Chong Chon River line has excellent lines of communication, with Wonsan harbor in the east and Chinnampo harbor in the west.

North of Chong Chon River region the population was small and had bombing of the industrial complex been carried out the potentiality to sustain war capability, in terms of manpower especially, would have been weakened. In the long run, North Korea would have proposed armistice had things gone

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badly and surrender had things gone well. The potential for disaster was not grasped by the ROK Army staffs because of their immature strategic capability and their enthusiastic concentration at that time on unification.

When General MacArthur told the Department of the Army on 31 July that he planned to reequip the ROK Army on a current basis, Ambassador Muccio and General Walker disagreed with General MacArthur's staff estimate. Ambassador Muccio offered his view to the Secretary of State, arguing that the United States should arm as many able-bodied South Koreans as possible without regard to the pre-war limitation. The ambassador and the general felt that the South Koreans should make the largest possible contribution of manpower to help defeat the North Koreans and to save US lives.²⁹

On 9 August, General MacArthur authorized General Walker to increase *at once* the strength of the ROK Army to any level he deemed advisable and practicable. The Eighth Army Commander submitted a plan for activating five new ROK divisions, along with the corps and army units needed to support a ten-division ROK Army. Within six weeks, the 7th, 11th, and 5th ROK Divisions had been activated, and activation of the 9th and 2nd Divisions was being implemented. The ROK 26th Regiment had been activated and entered combat in less than a week after its activation was ordered.³⁰

On 9 August, MacArthur directed General Walker to fill up each US company and battery with 100 ROK soldiers. This happened during preparation for the Inchon landing operation to fill up the under-strength US divisions in Korea. The Korean soldiers were designated the Korean Augmentation to the US Army, or KATUSA, a designation which has continued to the present time.³¹

On 26 October, the 26th ROK Division, moving from Hamhung toward the Changjin Reservoir, took eighteen prisoners from the Chinese Communist 124th Division. When the US Marines came up to relieve the ROK Army a few days later they picked up prisoners from a fresh Chinese division, the 126th. The Chinese troops kept their movements well concealed, moving mostly at night, mostly on foot. At the end of

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October, reports came from several different quarters concerning the presence of large concentrations of troops. Yet all through this period, because they didn't want to believe the Chinese presence, Washington and the Far East Command reported that there was still no firm indication of Chinese intervention, but only some Chinese volunteers under the North Korean People's Army. Even front unit soldiers were far more concerned with the proper set-up for the planned "Homecoming Parade" in Tokyo than with these persistent stories of Chinese intervention. On 1 November, the US Cavalry Division and the ROK 1st Division engaged with the 115th and 116th Division of the Chinese 39th Army just north of Chong Chon River. This occasioned the first official acknowledgement of a Chinese presence.³²

However, General MacArthur didn't hear intelligence estimates for the Communist Chinese forces' intervention status as well as he did for their intervention possibility. General MacArthur's eagerness to accomplish his designated mission, the destruction of the last remnants of the North Korean People's Army, didn't change. The collapse of the ROK I Corps and severe damage to the US 2nd Division, together with Communist Chinese force's pressure on all fronts, made General MacArthur decide on withdrawal, to prevent being outflanked, on 28 November. The Communist troops recaptured Seoul on 4 January 1951. The ROK-UN Forces, heavily outnumbered, continued to retreat gradually down to the Osan-Samchok line, employing delaying tactics.

With regard to retrograde movement, the 1st Marine Division, under X Corps, created a historical precedent. Upon the ROK I Corps' collapse, overwhelmed by the numerous Communist Chinese forces, the Marine Division was directed to withdraw, with the authorization to abandon any equipment that might slow it down.

Under the severe weather conditions with temperatures 25 degrees below zero, with the threat of nine Chinese divisions near them, impossible road conditions—a narrow, winding single-track dirt and gravel path that crawled through forbidding cliffs and ridges—the Marine Division conducted its retirement

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successfully, with most of its equipment, from Yudamni, near Changjin Reservoir, to Hungnam.

The retirement was more of an attack than a retreat for it was necessary to attack often to take commanding heights to protect the units against a superior enemy. The Marines crept, clawed, and fought their way, smashing road blocks, beating off attacks from either side of the road, attacking and seizing hills along the route. General Smith's courageous leadership and extreme forethought averted complete disaster. The ROK forces continue to appreciate this historic retrograde movement in the Korean War. "A capable general is one who can conduct retrograde operations successfully."

The continuing retreat was attributable to the lack of fighting spirit in the US Army and in some untried ROK soldiers who were panicked and outnumbered by Chinese Communist forces. General Matthew B. Ridgway, who succeeded General Walker (who died in a traffic accident), concentrated all his efforts to correct these problems and to get more combat power. On 25 January, the UN forces undertook a counter-offensive operation after a 2 month-long retreat. They proved they had regained the traditional US fighting spirit and the performance of the ROK forces was greatly improved. On 15 March, UN forces recovered the capital city of Seoul.³³

However, even energetic General Ridgway also considered withdrawal when he had intelligence of possible Soviet intervention in late March 1951. He foresaw the likely outcome "if the Soviets intervene with their military forces to their current capabilities" or "if the Communist Chinese Forces and North Korea People's Army exercise their full capabilities at the same time."³⁴ This meant that he would not permit any possible decimation of his troops. His attitude is understandable, but as a field commander, he left something to be desired in the way of determined will. Proposals for withdrawal, in this case, would be dealt in the GHQ in Tokyo or JCS level. Unnecessary fear of the Soviets was too deeply embedded in US society which feared heavy troop losses at Soviet hands. South Koreans, at that time, believed the Soviets would not dare to attack the United States, guardian of the free world. The Soviets also

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feared that the odds were not with them. Do you remember President Kennedy's action in the Cuban crisis, and the result?

The United States feared the weight of Soviet might in Europe and China; this fear was the by-product of negative thinking and adversely affected US strategy. Had the Soviets intervened in the Korean War, the US forces would have withdrawn. Had the Soviets attacked Japan, would the US troops have been withdrawn from Japan, one wonders?

When General MacArthur had almost given up Korea before the Korean War, he hardly expected to commit US forces in Korea later. But the eventual struggle cost more than a determined policy to deter the war would have done. Korea should understand the depth of the US fear of the USSR and how the US government pays careful attention to public opinion trends in America.

On 20 March 1951, the JCS informed MacArthur of the President's willingness to settle the Korean issue on the basis of a return to the general line of the pre-war boundary. General MacArthur's strong desire to bomb Manchuria and to disembark Taiwanese forces on Mainland China were deemed likely to enlarge the war, escalating it to an unmanageable level that threatened World War III. MacArthur's absolute determination to achieve his goal of military victory resulted in the president's decision to relieve the general of his command. This great soldier-statesman faded away, but his soldier spirit will be forever revered by the Korean people.³⁵ General Ridgway took command on 11 April 1951.

On 23 April, President Rhee made a request to General Ridgway that the United States would arm and equip ten additional divisions at the critical moment when the disastrous defeat of a ROK Division was endangering the whole UN forces. General Ridgway, with General Vanfleet (the new 8th Army Commander), Ambassador Muccio, and President Rhee concluded that the ROK Army's preliminary needs were leadership and training, not manpower and equipment. On 15 May, each branch school began an officers' basic course and an advanced course with JUSMAG officers' assistance. Only after armistice talks had begun and the front was static could Korea

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secure the time, personnel, and facilities to build and train a sound army.³⁶

In the offensive operation, General Ridgway issued orders forbidding the troops to advance beyond the Wyoming line (Imjin and Han River-Chorwon-Hwachon-Taepori). From 21-29 April, UN pilots had flown 7,420 missions and the incessant pounding of big guns had pockmarked the whole face of the countryside. It was General Van Fleet's aim to expend fire to as great extent as possible, rather than flesh and blood.

North Korean and the Communist Chinese forces, now facing unfavorable conditions in the war, had the Soviet delegate to the UN, Jakob Malik, propose a cease-fire. On 23 June, General Ridgway broadcast to the Chinese High Command, stating that if it was ready for a cease-fire, the UN command would be willing to send representatives to discuss an armistice. Actual negotiations were opened on 10 July in Kaesong, just south of the 38th parallel. After the armistice discussion took place, General Ridgway notified his subordinate commanders that UN forces would conduct no major offensives but would seek to retain the initiative through the use of strong patrol and local attacks designed to seize key terrain which would extend their observation capabilities and curtail the enemy's. The 8th Army made full use of its overpowering advantage in the air and in artillery of every caliber.³⁷

A strategic mistake was made when the armistice talks opened. The western front was near Munasan and the Panmunjon area, which is less than 25 miles north of Seoul. When North Korea named the city of Kaesong as a meeting place, the UN forces should not have accepted the proposal, because UN forces could not advance further toward the North. The capital city of Seoul is not only the capital city of South Korea, but of all Korea. Seoul has been the capital city of Korea since the Yi dynasty, 500 years ago. Since Seoul is too close to the Communist threat, in fact, within range of long-range artillery gun or rocket attack, it is very vulnerable in terms of security, politics, economy, and social stability. Nevertheless, the ROK government does not wish to move its capital to another city, not only because of the cost that would be entailed but also because of

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the psychological importance to the nation of the old, legitimate capital city.

In attempting to defend Seoul against most probable enemy actions, protective measures are very limited. There is no space to trade for time and flexibility. We still do not understand why UN forces accepted the meeting place at Kaesong while giving up further advances on the western front. The Communists never propose a cease-fire unless they are weak, or the situation unfavorable. North Korea was the invader that should have been punished in the name of all the free world. The sacrifice of the lives of 94,950 men, including 33,000 US troops, was never compensated for. The front line of the Western forces should have been drawn *north* of the Yesong river to dominate the hills. Also, the meeting place selected should have been off the sea coast, either aboard ship, or on a small island, not in the middle of the combat zone, since this prevented an ROK advance.

While the armistice talks were dragging on, additional artillery battalions of the ROK Army were being activated to make four, rather than two battalions of artillery in the infantry division. On the fighting front, many of the UN forces' offensive operations, now in the eastern and east central sector, were carried out almost entirely by ROK troops, while US troops in the west sent out combat patrols. Conditions on the battle front grew to resemble the fighting in World War I, with deep-dug emplacements, trenches, barbed wire defenses, and an extensive outpost line where most of the action took place. By the end of 1952, two-thirds of the front line troops consisted of ROK Army units which had developed into a capable and self-sufficient fighting force under General Van Fleet's new, intensive training program.

The US Air Force, as well as other UN forces' squadrons, attacked the enemy rear area, devastating it. When peace seemed so close, near the end of May, June, and July 1953, the Chinese launched their final offensives aimed at the ROK Army positions. This time the ROK Army, on the whole, defended itself effectively.

At 1000 hrs on 27 July, General Harrison for the United Nations, and Nam Il, for the Chinese and North Koreans,

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signed the armistice agreement. The shooting stopped at 10 o'clock in the evening the same day. It was three years, one month, and two days since the struggle began. At that time, the US ground force strength had been reduced from its peak of 302,000 personnel, while the ROK forces had increased from less than 100,000 to 590,911.³⁸

The Communists will not provoke a struggle when they feel the cost is too expensive to be ignored. President Rhee's strong objection to the armistice was overcome when he was reluctantly persuaded by the firm promise of a Mutual Defense Treaty between the two countries and considerable economic and military aid.

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IV. THE POST-WAR PERIOD

The Mutual Defense Treaty

The Mutual Defense Treaty between the Republic of Korea and the United States of America was signed 8 August 1953, and entered into force on 17 November 1954. When President Rhee voiced strong objections to the armistice, the US government promised, in addition to the treaty, large-scale economic and military aid, and an increase of twenty Army divisions and naval air forces in compensation.

The treaty increased the stakes for the United States in defending Korea. US involvement in the Korean War had resulted in a special US interest in the country. Having made an enormous sacrifice in terms of lives and materiel, the United States now could not accept a Communist victory on the Korean peninsula without a serious loss of prestige and credibility. Korea had come to have a symbolic significance to the United States over and above its strategic value. President Rhee told the people of Korea, after signing the treaty, that since the Treaty of Peace, Amity, Commerce and Navigation between the Yi dynasty of Korea and the United States of America in 1882, this was the first instance of a mutual security treaty between Korea and the US government and the most significant development in our independent history.¹

The Mutual Defense Treaty provided the basis for the presence of US forces in Korea (USFK); consultation on security; military aid for strengthening military power; and support should an attack occur. The core articles of the treaty, which contains six articles, are:

Article 2: The parties will consult together whenever, in the opinion of either of them, the political independence or security of either of the parties is threatened by external armed attack, separately and jointly, by self-help and mutual aid, the parties will maintain and develop

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appropriate means to deter armed attack and will take suitable measures in consultation and agreement to implement this treaty and to further its purposes.

Article 4: The Republic of Korea grants, and the United States of America accepts, the right to dispose United States land, air, and sea forces in and about the territory of the Republic of Korea as determined by mutual agreement.

Some Koreans consider that the treaty's conditions imply a certain US reluctance to commit US forces automatically. Response provisions are so much weaker than the NATO ones. Koreans also worry about the different interpretations of the treaty made by successive US administrations. Koreans believe that the US presence in Korea fulfills the terms of the treaty, but they question whether the United States has the will to come to Korea's defense.

In February 1968, when Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance came to Korea as a US presidential envoy to discuss the *Pueblo* incident, the two countries agreed to hold Security Consultative Meetings (SCM), to review the security status on the Korean peninsula annually. These annual meetings have enhanced the credibility of the Mutual Defense Treaty, but during the Nixon and Carter administrations meetings were used to announce the US determination to withdraw the USFK unilaterally. Since the first meeting on 27 May 1968, in Washington, DC, the SCMs have, on the whole, been very useful to the security of Korea.

On 7 June 1976, the first Field Training Exercise, "Team Spirit 76," was conducted as a joint ROK-US combined air, naval, and ground exercise. It tested the loading and reception plans for out-of-country augmentation forces. Such exercises have continued successfully from that time and have increased in size. They demonstrate and strengthen the will of the Mutual Defense Treaty and are designed:

- (1) to deter another war by North Korea,
- (2) to provide a field training opportunity above the level of division size for both the ROK and the United States,
- (3) to develop appropriate tactics for the Korean environment, and

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- (4) to enhance the deployment capability of US augmentation forces.

The Second Withdrawal (1954–1955)

On 26 December 1953, President Eisenhower announced the gradual withdrawal of US forces in Korea and stated that two divisions would withdraw shortly. Three days later, Secretary of State Dulles warned that US bombing of Communist China was a possibility if a Communist invasion were launched again. He said also that this withdrawal was in line with the new defense strategy. The ROK government insisted on a reconsideration because of the sharp increase in North Korean forces—for example, the amassing of 400 combat aircraft. At this time, the United States maintained 8 divisions with 327,000 soldiers, while Korea had 14 divisions with a strength of 450,000 troops.

On 6 May 1954 the United States dispatched General Van Fleet, former 8th US Army Commander, to discuss the force improvement of the Korean Armed Forces. An agreement between the two sides arranged for the transfer of equipment from the withdrawal units and it was decided to expedite the improvement of the Korean Armed Forces. The 45th and 40th US Divisions withdrew between March and June 1954 with some air force units. In August 1954, the Department of State announced the withdrawal of four more divisions, along with the withdrawal of 200,000 Communist Chinese forces from North Korea.

The ROK National Assembly called a night session and passed a resolution objecting to the US forces' withdrawal. Furthermore, citizens' demonstrations against the withdrawal occurred throughout the Korean peninsula. The Korean people were shocked to find the withdrawal going so rapidly. Even some US representatives, like the Chairman of the Armed Services Committee of the House, dissented from the withdrawal and asserted that force improvement and upgrading the training to enable South Korea to repulse an unprovoked Communist attack, should precede the US withdrawal from Korea.² However, the withdrawal plan was implemented between September 1954 and May 1955. The 1st Marine Division was the last unit to be withdrawn.

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The remaining Eighth Army configuration was the I Corps (Group), the "Shield of Seoul," responsible for defending the critical western corridors into Korea; the 24th US Infantry Division on the line of the 18.5-mile west-central sector of the DMZ; and the 7th US Infantry Division in the I Corps (GP) reserve. The balance of the 50,000-man ground force structure in 1955 was comprised of a corps artillery element, air defense units, a logistic command, and area support and service units.³

Later, in 1954, the Korean Army completed 5 more infantry divisions' activation making a total of 19 divisions and 3 more corps headquarters, a total of 5 corps headquarters to command relevant divisions. Thus, most parts of the DMZ area were transferred to the ROK Army.

The North Korean military forces and economy had been almost completely destroyed by the war. Even though North Korea concentrated on reconstruction, with military and economic support from the Soviets and Communist China right after the war, it was not a big threat to the US forces except for the increasing number of combat aircraft.

The Mutual Defense Treaty entered into force in November 1954 when some of the US forces in Korea were leaving. A practical, rather than symbolic US forces' presence still existed in Korea. However, Korea remembered the first withdrawal of the USFK in 1949, which caused the Korean War. The relatively poor support for the Korean Armed Forces compared to Communist countries' patronage of North Korea accounted for the North Koreans feeling bold enough to invade the South. The ROK was not sure whether the United States could keep her promises. This was the main reason why Korea objected to the second withdrawal. In addition, Koreans were worried about the deterioration of their economic situation.

The Third Withdrawal (1971)

The ROK sent troops to Vietnam not as an ally of South Vietnam, but as an ally of the United States. The prime reason for South Korea's decision to send combat troops to Vietnam was its desire to prevent the weakening of the US security commitment in Korea and, if possible, to strengthen it. US military

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assistance to Korea had been getting progressively smaller and advanced military equipment that had been promised to the Korean Armed Forces was not forthcoming on time. For example, Hawk and Nike Hercules air defense missile systems did not arrive as scheduled. Most significantly, there were reports of US plans for a possible transfer to Vietnam of one or more divisions of Korean-based troops in the event that additional troops from US allies were not available for combat.⁴

For this reason, a promise from the United States that it would not reduce its troop levels in Korea was the major concession sought by the Seoul government during negotiations leading to the dispatch of the first combat troops to Vietnam. Eventually, General Dwight E. Beach, the US Commander in Korea, and Ambassador Winthrop G. Brown jointly assured the government in a July 1965 letter that "the US decision that there would be no reduction in US force levels remained unchanged," and that "no US troops would be withdrawn without prior consultation with the Republic of Korea."⁵ When US Vice President Hubert Humphrey visited Korea in February 1966 and President Johnson came in November 1966, they assured the Korean president that the existing US troop level would be maintained.⁶

When the Nixon administration replaced the Johnson administration's concept of foreign policy, it was announced in a foreign policy statement made in July 1969 at Guam, later known as the "Nixon Doctrine." In July 1970, the US ambassador notified Korean Prime Minister Jung of the possibility of the withdrawal of one US division and that there would be further consultations about withdrawal.⁷ US advocates of troop withdrawal from Korea argued that the United States should not maintain a position that might entail automatic involvement in a land war in Asia. South Korea, they said, no longer possessed sufficient strategic value for the US ground troops to serve as a tripwire there. Neither the Soviet Union nor China wished another war to break out in Korea, and they would, therefore, restrain North Korea. These advocates argued further that the South Korean economy was becoming strong enough to permit Korea to provide for its own security, and that even without ground troops in Korea, the United States

would be able to support the Korean Armed Forces, if necessary, with air and offshore forces.⁸

The South Korean government, on the other hand, vehemently opposed US troop withdrawal plans. It feared that this withdrawal might be the beginning of a complete military pullout. It argued that a serious military imbalance between North and South Korea existed and that a premature withdrawal of US troops would tempt North Korea to try a military venture against the South. The South Korean government warned further that the two Koreas would become involved in an expensive and dangerous arms race that might lead to the development of nuclear capabilities. Withdrawal also would increase Japanese doubts about the credibility of US security commitments to Asia, and Japan would then pursue either rapid rearmament or accommodation with the Soviet Union's active military buildup in the Far East. The ROK's strategic value to the United States increased, not only for the defense of Japan, but also for US security. They suggested that a unilateral disengagement would deprive the United States and the Republic of Korea of the opportunity to bargain with the Communist side for the stabilization of the Korean situation. Finally, they stressed that the People's Republic of China, as well as most other countries in East and Southeast Asia, did not wish to see an early withdrawal of US troops from Korea. They contended that troop withdrawal would have a serious adverse effect on the ROK's continued economic growth, thereby depriving it of the opportunity to increase its military capabilities.⁹

At the third ROK and US Security Consultative meeting on 22 July 1970, held in Hawaii, the two countries agreed on three issues:

- (1) In order to improve the defense capabilities of Korea, considerable US military aid should be maintained.
- (2) It would be desirable to develop defense industries in Korea.
- (3) A plan to move some air force units from other US bases to the base in Korea should be developed and the United States would provide some Navy S-2 type aircraft in a short period of time.

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However, this agreement did not meet Korea's requests for military aid and items of combat materiel. The ROK government asserted this as a prerequisite for withdrawal. On 24 August 1970, US Vice President Agnew came to Korea to solve the stalemate on the withdrawal issues politically. The ROK asked the United States for a guarantee of security to precede the troop withdrawal. Agnew said that security questions would be discussed later at the meeting of military leaders.

On 6 February 1971, the ROK and US governments announced simultaneous agreement between the two countries on the matter of the USFK withdrawal and the modernization plan for the ROK Armed Forces. According to this agreement, the 7th US Infantry Division was pulled out of Korea as of 27 March 1971, leaving behind the memory of its 24-year presence in Korea. The 2nd Infantry Division was relieved by the ROK Army division from its area of responsibility in the DMZ area during March 1971 and was given the mission of reserve of the 8th US Army. All the 155-mile DMZ area was now defended by the ROK Armed Forces for the first time in the 18 years since the armistice, except for the Joint Security Area for the Armistice Committee at Panmunjom.

With the withdrawal of the US division, US I Corps (Group) changed its organization into I Corps (Group) ROK and US, with the first combined headquarters in Korean history. The staff was drawn from ROK and US officers on a half-and-half ratio. The remaining US combat troops were the 2nd US Infantry Division, the 38th Air Defense Brigade, the 4th Missile Command, and some I Corps (ROK-US) Group's separate, subordinate units.

Up to this point the ROK Armed Forces had relied on the US forces and their military aid too heavily. There had been some military leaders who could not do anything without the assistance of the US forces. This tendency had been present from the beginning of the ROK forces' establishment and was accelerated by the Korean War. Habitual assistance from the US military adviser, training by the US instructor, study at a US military school, and the basic field manual (which was translated directly from the US manual) seemed to result in a mental attitude in some Korean officers that can best be described as passive and dependent.

Ironically, the presence of the USFK itself was partly the reason for the United States neglecting to foster Korea's defense industry, in contrast to the strengthening of the North Korean heavy industrial capability after the withdrawal of the Communist Chinese forces in 1958. Fortunately, the US withdrawal forced the ROK government and the soldiers of the ROK forces to realize the importance of self-reliance. As an aftermath of the withdrawal, they began to think about Korean-style tactics, fostering the military economy, producing a weapon system and a defense policy. Furthermore, the ROK government tried to initiate contacts and a dialogue with North Korea and to open discussion with the USSR and the PRC in an attempt to stabilize the Korean situation.

All of these matters developed from the Korean involvement in the Vietnam War in an effort to prevent the withdrawal of the US forces in Korea. A sense of self-confidence was acquired in the course of the ROK's involvement in Vietnam. Obviously, one major source of that confidence was its rapidly expanding economy, which grew by some 70 percent between 1965 and 1970, a growth fueled, in part, by Vietnam-associated earnings. In addition, Korea also received a big psychological boost from its experience in Vietnam where the ROK's remarkable military success developed in an independent and autonomous environment. Though it would take time to reach the North Korean level of readiness, Korea had created a firm springboard. Koreans learned, when faced with inconsistent US foreign policies, the most precious lesson that self-reliance was the only way to survive.

The Fourth Withdrawal (After 1977)

In 1977, the Carter administration came to power with a campaign promise of troop withdrawal that proved to be unrealistic, and with an inadequate understanding of the strategic premises on which the troop withdrawal plan was based. Members of the Carter administration were shaken by the disclosure of a heavy military buildup undertaken during the 1970s by both North Korea and the Soviet Union. These disclosures only reinforced the concern of many US congressional and military leaders who already had serious misgivings about the troop

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withdrawal plan. Although President Carter eventually abandoned the plan, deciding in the spring of 1979 to "hold in abeyance" any further withdrawal of combat troops from Korea, the damage had been done. Mistrust and disappointment pervaded the traditionally cordial relationship between the two allies.¹⁰

In February 1981 the new US President Reagan invited Korean President Chun as the first formal state guest. The Chun-Reagan meeting, which took place at the White House on 2 February, glowed with a warm, fresh confirmation of the US defense commitment to South Korea. It produced a joint communiqué in which President Reagan assured Korea that "the United States has no plan to withdraw US ground combat forces from the Korean peninsula," while confirming that it would "make available for sale to Korea appropriate weapons systems and defense industry technology necessary for enhancing Korea's capability to deter aggression." On President Chun's return to Korea on 7 February, Chun declared that the main result of the visit was "the restoration of trust," implying that it had been missing during the previous years.¹¹

When President Carter notified the ROK of his withdrawal policy to pull out the USFK gradually for the next four to five years in March 1977, at the tenth Security Consultative Meeting, the ROK government accepted the withdrawal decision as a *fait accompli*, and only insisted on the condition of "first complement, withdrawal later." The ROK government knew that opposition against the withdrawal was of no use.

In fact, North Korea had been exerting every effort to increase combat equipment and to increase the numerical strength of its forces. As a result of those efforts in 1977 they were superior to the ROK in tanks, artillery, and combat aircraft with an over two-to-one ratio. Superiority in the number of troops was achieved through bringing down the conscription age from 18 to 16. North Korea was able to produce submarines, tanks, and self-propelled artillery while the ROK had only reached a military industrial level capable of producing mortars and howitzers.

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Surprisingly, on 19 May 1977, the *Washington Post* reported Major General John K. Singlaub's critique on his President's withdrawal plan. He, the Chief of Staff the Eighth United States Army, said that if the US ground forces were withdrawn on the schedule suggested it would lead to war. The *Washington Post* added that all the US generals in Korea criticized the withdrawal plan bitterly. General Singlaub also expressed his opinion that the military people who understood the situation should make the decisionmakers grasp the realities. President Carter fired General Singlaub, but this incident initiated the US Congress's movement in opposition to the withdrawal plan.¹² General Singlaub was applauded not only by most of the US soldiers in Korea but by the entire Korean people. Koreans considered him a brave soldier and a true patriot and they admired him. The general's attitude and that of the US soldiers in Korea encouraged the Korean people.

Nevertheless, South Korea had been investing 6 percent of its GNP, or one-third of the government budget, for the Improvement Force Program. It will take long years to overtake the North Koreans because they never stop the improvements, which are believed to require 24 percent of their GNP. If we assume that the ROK will be capable of defending itself in the early 1990s and could be of equivalent strength with the North Korean Forces by the early 2000s, clearly the period between now and the early 1990s will be the most dangerous one for the ROK facing a possible North Korean military venture. If they do not seize the propitious moment, the North Koreans may lose forever the chance to unify the Korean peninsula by force on terms favorable to North Korea. The forceful unification of the two Koreas on Communist terms is the paramount goal of North Koreans. They have been mobilizing all their resources for this goal since 1945. The lure of this prospect has enabled Kim Il-sung to drive North Korea for the last 40 years. If he gives up this goal, then his power will be at an end. Therefore, the presence of USFK is essential until the 1990s.

As Mark L. Urban said at the conclusion of his article, "The North Korean People's Army" in the *International Defense Review* in 1983,

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North Korea is a state which for three decades has been maintained on a war footing, a society crippled by the burdens of its war preparation where any dissent is ruthlessly crushed. In recent years, the North Korean people's army has overtaken the ROK Army in manpower, as well as consolidating and expanding its traditional advantage in heavy equipment. Units of the large unconventional warfare force are poised to infiltrate the South on missions that would cause chaos and divert a considerable amount of the ROK defensive effort. The greatest single deterrent to another attack on the ROK is not the ROK Army but the presence of American troops and tactical aircraft and with them 680 nuclear warheads. The decision to commit US troops in 1950 was taken in five days; in a future conflict, assuming US troops were withdrawn, the North Korean forces would be so well prepared that the White House might not have five days in which to make up its mind.

Lastly, the Korean people still don't know whether the United States tried to gain corresponding concessions to ease the tensions from North Korea, the People's Republic of China, and the Soviet Union or if the United States simply prepared to withdraw unilaterally without any corresponding action on the part of the Communists. In addition, significant changes of command took place as a by-product of the trial withdrawal, in the combined forces command, for example. Unfortunately, an incident, the result of naive efforts by Koreans to influence the decisionmaking process in the United States to prevent the troops' withdrawal from Korea (the so-called "Korea gate"), marred the relationship between the United States and the ROK during the mid-1970s.

Some withdrawal of US forces in Korea took place without regard to Carter's plan. The US 38th Air Defense Brigade, which was composed of a Nike Hercules battalion and Improved Hawk battalions, transferred its combat equipment to the ROK Army during the period 1977 to 1982 and deactivated. Thus, medium and high altitude air defense became the sole responsibility of the ROK Army. In addition to this, the US 4th Missile Command, which consisted of Honest John Rocket Battalions and a Sergeant missile battalion, also transferred its

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Honest John rocket battalions' equipment to the ROK Army and deactivated. These two occasions were accepted by the South Korean government with reciprocal understanding and showed the reasonably flexible attitude of the Korean government.

The Incidents Related to North Korea

The Pueblo Incident. On 23 January 1968 North Korea seized the US intelligence ship *Pueblo* which was in international or disputed waters. When the captain, Commander Lloyd Bucher, radioed for relief, he couldn't get any support. In a sense, no one in Korea or Japan had authority to support him. No US naval vessel had ever been seized since the Civil War. Furthermore, this incident took place just two days after the North Korean assassination attempt on President Park.

President Johnson sought to intimidate North Korea and force the release of the vessel and crew by a show of force with nuclear-powered aircraft carriers. However, the basic thrust was to use diplomatic action, not the exercise of power. Things went from bad to worse. The United States contacted North Korea 28 times, but the ROK was never included in the negotiations. Finally, 82 crew members and one body were returned to the Free World through Panmunjom after eleven months' captivity. The United States apologized to North Korea for intruding into territorial waters and for spying activities.¹³

The US failure to act forcefully in the *Pueblo* affair, as well as its refusal to permit the ROK Army to strike back in retaliation for the North Korean assassination attempt, raised questions about the US determination to repel aggression in Korea if it ever became necessary. The US reputation for invincible power and will had suffered badly. As a result, the Korean government felt less intimidated than before in dealing with the United States.¹⁴ One thing should not be overlooked: because the United States had paid little attention to the North Korean assassination attempt it could not fully take advantage of it in dealing with North Korea over the *Pueblo* incident.

The Shooting Down of the EC-121. On 15 April 1969 North Korea shot down the US reconnaissance aircraft EC-121 over

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the East Sea (Sea of Japan). North Korea insisted that the EC-121 had invaded Korean territorial air space. Soviet Navy destroyers helped the search operation but there were no survivors among the 31 crew members. The US Congress called for retaliation by all means. President Nixon seriously considered retaliation, but it never materialized and the incident only brought another show of force. As an aftermath, three Phantom squadrons were dispatched to reinforce the air power of the ROK Air Force.¹⁵ Why could not the United States take proper measures against these acts of terrorism? Is the United States too big for that? Does it mean that any further provocation by North Korea will be dealt with in the same manner as before? The United States did not seem to have any precise plan for retaliation to teach the North Koreans a lesson, short of developing an all-out war.

A Savage Ax Attack. On 18 August 1976 two US Army officers were savagely murdered, and nine other UN Command personnel injured at Panmunjom when attacked by thirty North Korean guards wielding axes, ax handles, and metal pipes. The two officers were the first fatalities in the Joint Security Area since the 1953 Armistice. The UN Command soldiers were supervising and providing security for five Korean service corps personnel trimming a poplar tree when the attack occurred. ROK and USFK troops were placed on increased alert status in the aftermath of the incident at Panmunjom. North Korea followed by ordering its military into full combat posture. The United States sent aircraft carriers, a squadron of Phantom fighters, and a F-111 squadron to Korea for a show of force according to custom.

On President Ford's orders, on 21 August a 110-man UN Command task force cut down the poplar tree which was the focal point of the incident. During the hour-long operation, Guam based B-52 bombers and F-111 fighter-bombers were overhead while a 300-man US-ROK Quick Reaction Force hovered in helicopter gunships south of the DMZ. On the same day, in a private session at Panmunjom, the North Korea Senior Member gave the UN Command representative a "regretful" message from Kim Il-sung. At first, the UN Command announced that the message could not be accepted due to its

lack of sincerity but one day later the letter was accepted by the UN Command.¹⁶ In the aftermath of the incident, North Korea removed their four guard posts from the southern part of the JSA and from that time on the forces of the UN and North Korea were separated. The Military Demarcation Line (MDL) in the conference and administration area was emphasized by a two-inch high concrete strip. Newsmen were granted freedom of movement around the immediate conference site.¹⁷

This incident revealed, once more, the limitations of US military demonstrations. The North Korean act of terrorism was apparently forgiven by the United States. The ROK observed the US actions with dismay and raged to see inappropriate demonstrations of force. The question was asked: If the ROK had sufficient power, would North Korea dare to act so provocatively toward the United States?

Change of Command

Combined Forces Command. The ROK-US Combined Forces (CFC) was officially activated on 7 November 1978. Designed to act as an interim mechanism by which the operational control of the ROK armed forces would, in part, be returned to the Koreans, the CFC arrangement in effect replaced the Taejon Agreement of 1950, through which President Rhee had placed the entire ROK forces under the control of General MacArthur's United Nations Command. The new CFC structure enabled top ROK military officers to participate in operational decisionmaking.¹⁸

This organization was brought up at the 10th ROK-US Security Consultative Meeting (SCM) when the United States gave notice of Carter's withdrawal policy, and in July 1978, the ROK and the United States agreed on the organization and function at the 11th SCM. The United Nations Command thus maintains its function only as an Armistice Signatory. Accordingly, the Korean peninsula seemed to decline even in symbolic status from worldwide to binational interest.

Half of the staff positions are filled by Korean officers, headed by a US four star general who puts on the hat of Commander of Eighth Army and UN Command. A Korean four star general is deputy commander. The setting up of the new

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establishment suggested the possibility of transferring the operational control gradually to the Koreans. Since the activation of the CFC, the United States tends to ask the ROK for the cost-sharing for ROK-US facilities in Korea under the title of Combined Defense Improvement Program.

The Combined Field Army. On 14 April 1980 I Corps (ROK-US) Group (originally formed in 1971) was redesignated as Combined Field Army (ROK-US). The new name more accurately represents the size, scope, and operational tasking of the command and does not affect its overall organizational structure or its mission to defend the western sector of the forward area. The command is headed by a US three star general and is staffed half by ROK and half by US personnel. Because its commander observes and monitors the ROK combat units under his operational control closely, he can influence the military tactical and strategical thought of ROK officers in a practical way.

For example, Lieutenant General Vaught, who was the commander of CFA in 1982, introduced dynamic defense concepts to the ROK. This brought about a significant change in military strategic thought from passive to active, from defensive to offensive. There were many excellent US commanders, like the aggressive General Hollingsworth, who influenced ROK soldiers. In 1983, a part of the area of responsibility of CFA was transferred to the ROK Army.

UNC Deactivation Contemplated

On 3 July 1971, Major General Rogers, Chief of UN Command Military Armistice Committee, suggested to an Associated Press reporter that his job should be turned over to a Korean in order to facilitate the contact between the ROK and North Korea.¹⁹ It was believed that the suggestion was unconnected with the Nixon Doctrine and the withdrawal policy of the USFK. However, the suggestion was premature and did not materialize.

On 27 June 1975, just before the 30th United Nations General Assembly, the United States introduced the Western resolution that, if North Korea and the People's Republic of China consented to the transfer of the functions and responsibility of the United Nations Command to the US and ROK

March 12, 1982
Geon Cha, Korea . . . Two members of Combat Support Co., 1st Bn., 35th
Inf., 25th Inf. Div., examine a large wooden religious statue while on patrol in
the Republic of Korea (ROK) Army Special Forces Training Area. The soldiers
are participating in the joint ROK/US training exercise Team Spirit 82.
Photographer: Al Chang

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Armed Forces, the UNC could be deactivated voluntarily as of 1 January 1976.²⁰ The UN flags were withdrawn from all the military facilities except the UN Command and the Panmunjom area where they had been flying since July 1950. Even though the resolution was not accepted by the Communist countries, it implied the possibility of deactivation when the situation warranted.

An Exceptional Unit

When the military revolution took place on 16 May 1961, there were no military units which were not under the operational control of the UN Command. General Cater B. Magruder, commander of the UN Command, was dissatisfied with the Revolutionary Force, which got out of his control when the delegate of the Revolutionary Force explained the necessity in circumstances that had to do with a purely internal South Korean problem. After consecutive contacts between the US forces and the Revolutionary government, on 26 May 1961 they agreed that:

- (1) The commander in chief UN Command exercise the operational command authority in the defense of Korea against Communist invasion;
- (2) The Marine brigade and 6th Corps artillery (major revolutionary force with special forces brigade) should be returned to their defensive mission by the UN Command operational plan;
- (3) The UN Command agreed the Capital Security Command (later activated) should be placed under the direct control of the Korean government.²¹

The Capital Security Command thus became an exceptional unit which was not under the operational control of UN Command.

Behavior

When, in September 1970, Dean K. Froehlich from the Human Resources Research Organization wrote a technical report for the Chief of Research and Development, Department

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of the Army, with the title of "Military Advisors and Counterparts in Korea" (a study of personal traits and role behaviors), he concluded, "The Koreans want their advisors to display more often an interest in becoming knowledgeable about the country's language, history, economy, customs, and the feelings of the Korean people."²²

South Korea has never said "Yankee go home!" Korea's attitude to the Americans in Korea, however, demonstrates not only the Korean's fondness for Americans but also the traditional Korean hospitality. The customs and values that derive from Confucianism make it incumbent on Korean hosts to deal with guests hospitably. Some Koreans blame Americans for behavior which they despise. Americans do not often put themselves in Koreans' shoes. The ability to do this occasionally is very important in working effectively with Koreans, and it reduces the chances of friction or misunderstandings.

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V. THE US FORCES' INFLUENCE ON KOREAN SOCIETY

The Armed Forces in Korea Network

The American Forces in Korea Network (AFKN) began broadcasting to the American soldiers in the front lines on 4 October 1950, immediately after the recapture of Seoul. From September 1951 it expanded and broadcast in nine languages for the sixteen countries participating in the Korean War. In 1957 six local stations were established and eight relay stations were also installed to ensure better reception throughout the ROK. In September 1957 AFKN started to transmit TV and in July 1977 it introduced color screens.¹

Since the US forces' disembarkation in 1945 a new, democratic political system and a new social system have been imposed on Korea. These were suddenly introduced to Korea which, throughout 500 years of the dynasty, had never experienced a cultural period under foreign influence that would have helped Koreans adapt to the changes brought from the West. The new political systems were undeniably reasonable and an improvement on those experienced under the dynasty or under Japanese colonial domination. Democracy was, consequently, welcomed with enthusiasm by all South Korean people. However, Koreans were not ready to adopt democracy and the sudden change resulted in chaos. US humanitarianism was good beyond compare in Koreans' eyes in contrast to the past, but it accelerated and added to the chaos in the country.

The South Korean people did not know how to deal with the sudden innovations. In addition to the facets of American culture assimilated through the attitude of soldiers, movies, and music, a considerable shock resulted from the collapse of

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traditional Korean morale. The AFKN was and is one of the foremost channels of American culture. The AFKN has influenced Korean society by disseminating US culture and introducing various features of US society. The traditional Korean culture had already been severed and partially destroyed by the Japanese colonial policy and this had resulted in a loss of morale. Therefore, when the AFKN was established Korean culture and society were already in a very vulnerable state. Consequently, the AFKN played a big role in producing new attitudes, hobbies, and a new way of expressing one's feelings, in addition to helping students learn English. It was good to learn to understand the United States but, at the same time, the new enthusiasms had an adverse effect on the rehabilitation of Korean culture. The mixture of old and new cultures was frequently indigestible. It widened the gap between young and old. The question must be asked: is there any way to reduce the influence on Korean society of this broadcasting?

The Dollar Economy

Three big factors affected the Korean economy when the USFK came, creating a dollar economy: Korean employment in US agencies, the effects of post exchanges, and local procurement.

Korean Employment in US Agencies. In December 1977, 36,000 Korean employees worked in US units; with the total US forces numbering 42,000, this was a considerable number. When the US 7th Infantry Division was withdrawn the US authorities fired 16,000 Korean employees.² How many Korean employees lost their jobs in 1954 when the second withdrawal was implemented can be estimated. In addition to these employees, large numbers of Koreans, in many different walks of life, relied on US soldiers near US bases for their livelihood—for example, the owners and employees of bars, tailor shops, laundries, gift shops, brothels, and so on. In those days, the South Korean economy was considerably smaller than it is today and the Korean government did not have the capability to absorb unemployment caused by the US withdrawal. Sometimes, South

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Korean newspapers would report the suicide of a family caused by poverty, starvation, and unemployment.

US economic aid was concentrated too much on relief measures and consumer goods (80 percent) rather than on production and reconstruction (20 percent). The unemployment problem was solved gradually by the mid-1960s and reduced drastically by the mid-1970s, as the Korean economy developed from the time of the Military Revolution in 1961.

Post Exchanges. The effect of the post exchange (PX) economy had both positive and negative aspects. PX goods were leaked into Korean society by US soldiers for the purpose of earning money for their entertainment expenses in the early years. Later on, blackmarketeers collaborated with PX employees and mass leakings occurred. These leakings from the PX were referred to as the "PX economy." When the PX economy prevailed, about 60 percent of total sales was believed to flow into Korean society. On the positive side, the PX economy provided the materials which were in short supply in the ROK economy and thus it prevented post-war inflation.

On the negative side, the PX economy created confusion in the ordered Korean environment, fostering a taste for unbridled consumption and hindering domestic industries. It created various social abuses such as conspicuous consumption, foreign tastes, and the manufacturing of fake foreign goods. Since a US-ROK Status of Forces Agreement was concluded in 1966, ROK and US joint efforts have combined to prevent the leaking of PX goods. In 1975 the US authorities restricted use of the PX to dependents, and agreed to punish those who were selling and buying merchandise leaked from the PX. Nevertheless, the PX economy still hides underground, even though it has diminished. This fact shows clearly how difficult it is to cure bad habits once they have become rooted in society.

Local Procurement. Local procurement of the necessary material for USFK was begun in 1955 when the official foreign exchange rate was established. Previously, all materials had come either from the continental United States or Japan. However, at that time South Koreans were not properly prepared to sell

May 1980
Songtan Up, Republic of Korea . . . Ms. Tae Sun Pak, a social worker
employed by the Osan AB Chapter of the Amerasian Association, talks to a
child of a Korean woman and an American serviceman.
Photographer: TSgt. Curt Eddings

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goods and services to the USFK. The people of the US procurement agency even had to teach Koreans how to cultivate sanitary vegetables, how to follow US procurement specifications, and other procedures. The great construction companies such as Hyundai, Daelim, which now compete with advanced countries in the international market, got their start in construction work for the USFK. The ROK government realized the significance of military supply for the United States and from 1962 onward supported the growing firms positively. The earnings of the military supply and service contract firms were almost equivalent to the total amount of the exports of all of Korea in the early years.

TABLE 2: COMPARISON OF EARNINGS FROM
EXPORT AND MILITARY SUPPLY

			Unit million \$
Years	GNP	Export	Military Supply
61	2,103	40.9	38.4
62	2,315	54.8	34.0
<u>77</u>	37,429	10,046.5	<u>140.0</u>

Source: Bank of Korea

The military supply contracts for the USFK stimulated the development of the South Korean economy in many ways. For example, because US forces emphasized the sanitary cultivation and treatment of food supplies, this attitude stimulated the improvement of the Korean diet. Furthermore, a lot of military supply contracting firms became big companies and were able to create a tremendous number of jobs.

Social Consequences of the War

Relations between men and women in Korea were formerly very discreet. Moreover, until the time of the US forces' arrival, intimate relations between foreign men and Korean

women were regarded as almost sinful. For example, in October 1945 there was a show to welcome the US forces and when a female sang, the Korean audience ridiculed and blamed her for singing before foreigners. As a result, the show couldn't continue.³ However, starvation and the death of husbands in the war ruined the old customs, traditions, and ethics. Many women sold their bodies to US soldiers in order to survive.

Mixed Blood

As a result of tragic wartime circumstances many Korean women became the prostitutes of Western troops. Babies of mixed blood became a social problem. There are believed to be about twenty-five thousand children of mixed blood in Korea.⁴ The cherished desire of these unhappy children is adoption by the American parent because in the United States they would not be discriminated against, whereas they were treated with contempt by the homogeneous Korean society. Those of mixed blood do not even have to perform compulsory military service with other Korean youths. Fortunately, many children of mixed blood have been adopted, but quite a number are still living in Korea under the shadow of their mixed heritage.

Transcultural Marriage

As Korean society gradually became more open, marriages between the American soldiers and Korean women increased. Many Korean women who married American soldiers were employees of US forces' units who had chances to contact and understand American soldiers, and some were women who were having difficulty in finding a Korean husband. Women who were divorcees or widows faced this problem, unlike their contemporaries in the United States. Approximately sixty thousand marriages have taken place, with an annual rate of about 3,000 marriages. Some of these marriages face problems as a

May 1980
Songtan Up, Republic of Korea . . . A young Amerasian girl cries. Amerasian children are those children of mixed Korean-American heritage (whose fathers have often returned to the United States), and are not generally accepted by the Korean people.
Photographer: TSgt. Curt Eddings

THE US FORCES' INFLUENCE ON KOREAN SOCIETY



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result of different cultural backgrounds and diverse behavioral patterns. In such cases neither the American nor the Korean partner might be wholly to blame for the breakdown of the marriage.⁵

However, the majority of transcultural couples achieve a happy married life and Korean wives invite their families to the United States from Korea to bring solace and ease their stress in a new, strange world. This practice has caused considerable immigration, since quite often a Korean wife will bring three family members to the United States.

ENDNOTES

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VI. THE FUTURE ROLE OF THE USFK

The Perspective for Withdrawal

With every change in US administration, there are always some changes in the policy of the USFK. Koreans would like to see a firm and consistent US policy. Therefore, a long-range plan, agreed bilaterally, for the withdrawal or presence of the USFK is desirable. Once the long-range plan for the USFK is established, it is not fixed forever. Within the plan's framework, however, there should be discussion between the two countries whenever the situation changes.

Identified below are seven potential developments which, if they became fact, would contribute in varying degrees to an environment which could permit, without adverse political and military repercussions, a mutually agreed withdrawal of US forces from Korea. They are listed in a general order of priority.

- (1) Fulfillment of the ongoing and future modernization of the ROK armed forces to the degree that a stable military balance is maintained between South and North.
- (2) Conclusion of a peace treaty and a nonaggression pact between the two Koreas.
- (3) Guarantees by the four major powers (the United States, the Soviet Union, the PRC, and Japan) of the independence and security of the two Koreas.
- (4) Reciprocal bilateral recognition between each of the four major powers and the two Koreas.
- (5) Simultaneous admission of the two Koreas to the United Nations.
- (6) Exchange of formal diplomatic relations between the two Koreas.

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- (7) Formal acceptance by North Korea of the ROK as a successor to the United Nations Command as a party to the Armistice Agreement, accompanied by North Korea's acknowledgment of the legitimacy of the ROK as a government.¹

William M. Carpenter expressed the view that the first three of the above conditions would clearly have the greatest impact on the creation of an environment in which US force withdrawal could be accomplished without significant adverse impact. The remaining four conditions are individually of somewhat lesser weight, although, as necessary steps towards making the higher priority conditions possible, their accomplishment should be fostered in all ways that opportunity and specific initiative make possible. As a negotiating strategy, it is considered appropriate for the United States to begin with the last item and work upward, culminating with the formal peace treaty between the two Koreas.

If many US decisionmakers agreed with Dr. Carpenter's idea, it would be very dangerous. Superficially it appears to be reasonable and feasible. However, it does not underscore that equivalent military power of the two Koreas must be a precondition. Without equivalent military power, any other conditions are useless in dealing with Communists, because Communists never hesitate to break an agreement according to their needs, as history has shown. All the conditions can be pursued to reach better status but nothing should be connected to the withdrawal except conditions of equivalent military power. North Korea will be unlikely to accept any of the above conditions from (2) to (7) while they think they can venture a military attack to reunify the Korean peninsula.

The ROK's lack of self-defense capability has stimulated and tempted North Korea's provocative desire. Also, the military balance in the Korean peninsula, based on ROK-US Combined Combat Power, hinders the political negotiation because North Korea insists on the withdrawal of the USFK before any further negotiations can take place. If some political negotiation were to take place now it would be only a temporary arrangement, deceitfully arrived at by the North Koreans. But

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when the ROK achieves an adequate defense capability in the 1990s real political negotiations can be undertaken. It is worth discussing now whether certain changes might be made at that future time which would improve the ROK's stature internationally and in comparison with North Korea. For example, would it be possible to substitute a Korean general for a US general as chief of the armistice committee of the UN Command? Would there be any problem in changing the commander position of the ground component under the Combined Forces Command from a US general to a Korean general? These questions, and whether it would be feasible to proceed without regard to North Korea's probable opposition, would be worth discussion at future SCM meetings.

If the ROK achieves a military capability equivalent to that of North Korea in the 2000s, the presence of US forces in Korea, especially US ground forces, will not be necessary for the purpose of defense against North Korea's provocation. The broader US strategic goals, such as checking Soviet expansionism, will remain. The United States may need to stay in Korea for other reasons. In this case, the ROK will agree with the United States, according to Article 4 of the Mutual Defense Treaty, but it will not want to be hindered in conducting negotiations with North Korea toward unification. Will the UN Command and Combined Forces Command still need to exist in this time frame? We can expect new arrangements in the relationship between Korea and the UN Command, CFC, and USFK in this period.

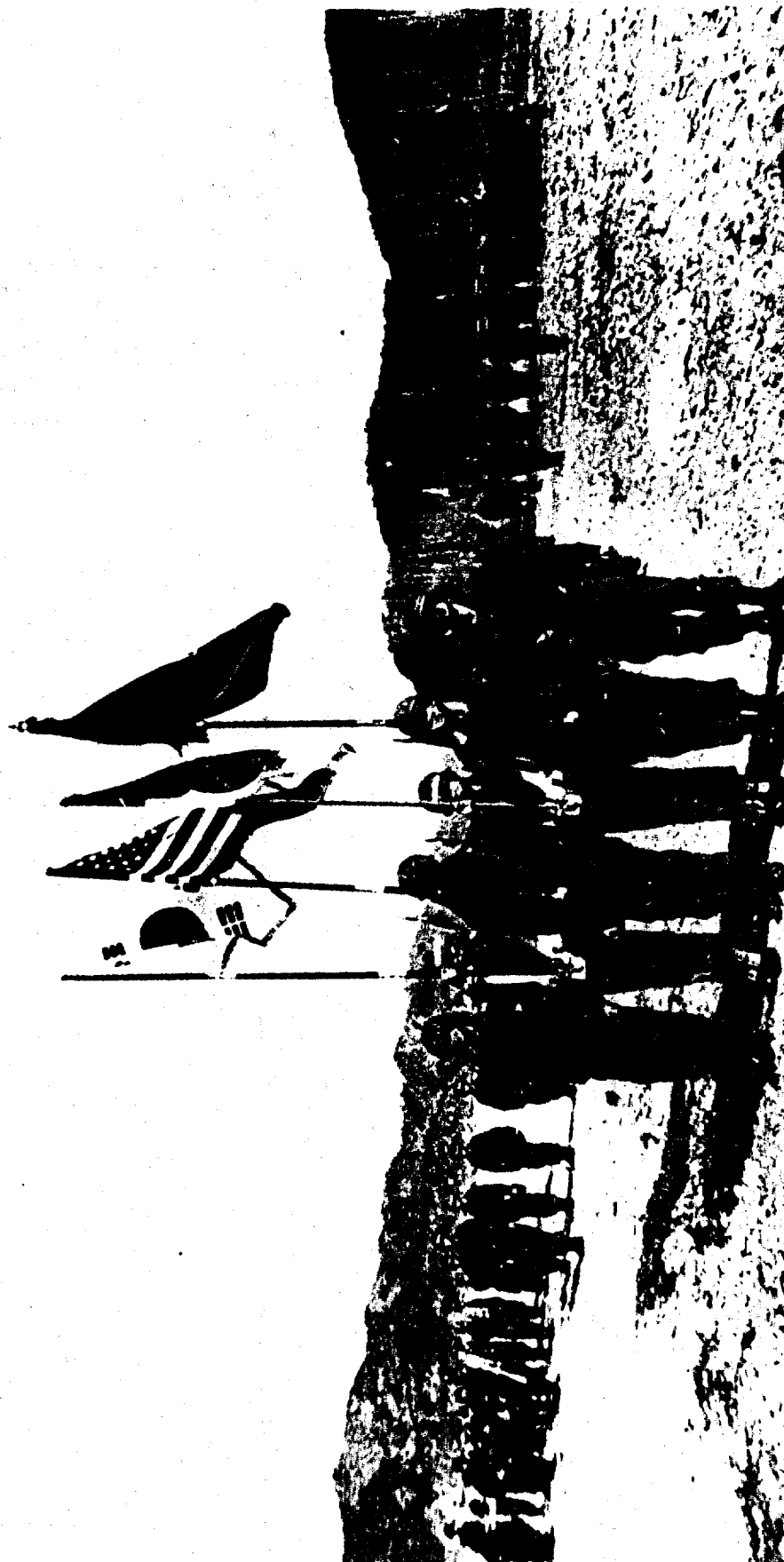
The Present Role of the USFK

Headquarters, USFK in "The US Military Experience in Korea, 1872-1982" stated under the title of "Why we are here":

Since the armistice there has been a continuity of US commitment to a peninsula which is one of the most strategic confluences in the world. US Ambassador to Korea Richard Walker in 1982 called Korea an "epicenter . . . where the three largest nuclear powers of the world meet, where the three greatest industrial giants meet, where four of the most populous countries meet." Given this strategic importance the United States, as a global power, has realized its responsibility to preserve peace here and stabilize

March 11, 1983
Hongchon, Republic of Korea The 25th Infantry Division is placed under the ROK Army's command as an Operational Control ceremony takes place during the joint training exercise Team Spirit 83.
Photographer: Al Chang

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the Asian balance of power. The security of Korea is linked to the security of Japan, a key ally in the Pacific. Any alarming tremors in Korea will upset the Asian balance and have repercussions in Western Europe and other points around the world. The ROK is a critical key to western interests in Asia, interests which encompass US-People's Republic of China (PRC) rapprochement; improved Chinese-Japanese relations; efforts to persuade Japan to assume a larger defense role in the area; the growth of ASEAN as an influential economic cooperative; and countering the Soviet buildup in the region. If the United States succeeds in these interlinked policies, the waning of US influence in East Asia following the Vietnam War will be halted and a new balance favoring the interests of the Free World achieved. The Eighth US Army and US Forces, Korea, are a deterrent which is factored into this regional and global strategy.

All the above defines cogently the role of the USFK. In addition, the ROK for its part views the role of the USFK as:

- maintaining the balance of power among the big powers in Northeast Asia in order to check Soviet expansionism in the Asia/Pacific region, and to protect Japan from containment by the USSR and the PRC;
- deterring war in the Korean peninsula, preventing North Korean adventurism, and suppressing any excessive ROK military actions against North Korea;
- protecting the US political and economic interests in the Northeast Asia region;
- demonstrating symbolic determination to defend the Asia and Pacific area;
- contributing to the security of Western interests by dispersing the Soviet military power in Northeast Asia, and maintaining the security of Northeast Asia; and
- contributing to the development of the ROK by assisting the development of the ROK economy, by developing the military skill of the ROK Armed Forces, and by stabilizing South Korean society.

However, the USFK, in the eyes of Koreans, has had effects that are partly adverse. The presence of the USFK

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provokes improved military power in North Korea and tempts the North Koreans to resort to nuclear armament, and the USFK slows the development of self-reliant defense policy and military strategy in the ROK. The USFK causes an unbalanced military power structure within the ROK armed forces. The Soviet and PRC have been forced to support North Korea as a counterweight to the presence of the USFK. The presence of the USFK is used by the United States as leverage to intervene in the ROK's internal affairs. Finally, the US forces cause some cultural friction in Korean society.

The Future Role

The role of the USFK is unlikely to change greatly in the future. The USFK should assist the ROK to play a bigger role in the defense of the Korean peninsula. Were the ROK's power equivalent to North Korea's, the United States could concentrate its power on checking the Soviets. This is the short cut and the best way to ease the tension in the Korean peninsula and to bring the North Koreans to a frame of mind ready for political negotiation.

ENDNOTE

1. William M. Carpenter, *The Maintenance of US Forces in Korea*, SRI International (Arlington, VA.: Strategic Studies Center, June 1975), pp. 14-15. This executive summary was prepared for the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Planning, Department of the Army.

VII. SUMMING UP

Korea, as one of the most strategic confluences in the world, has a special relevance to the global balance of power. It is the only place where the direct interests of four major world powers interact. Korea is geographically critical in the Far East, being a peninsula where the conflicting interests of several major powers have met for centuries. The peninsula has been thought of by the Japanese as "a dagger pointed at the heart of Japan." With equal logic it has been seen as "a hammer ready to strike at the head of China." For the Soviet Union, Korea commands the port of Vladivostok.¹

When US forces disembarked in Korea in 1945, neither the US government nor the US forces knew much about the strategic importance of the Korean peninsula. Nevertheless, the US government provided no detailed, clear direction to the USFK, whose members did their best to carry out their mission of disarming the Japanese and preserving law and order until Korea could take over. However, the lack of understanding of the history, culture, and way of thinking of Koreans, and, particularly, Korean sentiments against the Japanese, delayed the planned political process while repeated trial and error ensued. With no understanding of the peculiarities of Korea, from the beginning of the occupation to the first withdrawal of the US forces, the US military government was simply attempting to implant American ideals and democratic principles.

Chaos came, with continual demonstrations. Within two months of the arrival of the US military government there were as many as 250 groups formed by political parties and military factions. Such was the emergence of democracy in the new Korea under the control of US military government.

The pursuit of idealism led to some fatal mistakes in the process of establishing a ROK government and army. The first mistake was not utilizing the provisional Government of Korea in Exile for the better administration of Korean society, law,

and order. The provisional government would have been useful for the better outcome of a US-USSR joint commission to unify the Koreas. With the use of the provisional government, trusteeship might not have been necessary. The exclusion of the Government of Korea in Exile later diminished the credibility and legitimacy of the new ROK government.

Second, the exclusion of the Korean Restoration Army officers from the new ROK officer corps was an error. The exclusion of the former resistance army officers and the preference for young ex-Japanese officers sundered the long military tradition of Korea and caused the lack of legitimacy and leadership in the Korean Army for some considerable time.

Third, allowing communists into the South Korean constabulary made the barracks an ideological battle ground and caused the Communist revolts within the constabulary. This was, in a sense, a provocation for the war because the North Koreans overestimated the effect of the communist revolts in the South.

Finally, the first withdrawal of the USFK without sufficient strengthening of the ROK armed forces brought about the Korean War. This was a result of the US forces' ignorance of the strategic importance of the Korean peninsula—a fact which was highly appreciated by the USSR and the PRC.

However, the efforts of the Military Advisory Group in Korea (KMAG), devoted to activating and training the ROK Army soldiers and units, should always be appreciated by Koreans. The creative work of these men from 1945 to 1948 in activating the Constabulary merits high praise. During this time the US government continued to postpone the decision for the recommendation of the 45,000-man Korean national defense force. Local observation in the field of USFK personnel showed them what needed to be done, whereas the higher echelons of the government merely procrastinated.

As for the Korean War, two questions still perplex Korean analysts. One is, "Why didn't the UN forces stop at the line of the Chong Chon River and Ham Heung, which is one of the narrowest necks on the Korean peninsula and was the site of

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the defeat of two million Chinese invaders 1500 years ago?" If the UN forces had stopped at this line, history would have been changed. The other question is, "Why did the UN command accept Kaesong or Panmunjon as the place for armistice negotiations when it is only 25 miles north of Seoul and below the 38th parallel?" This decision gave very limited choices to the ROK, whose forces were necessarily concentrated around Seoul.

During the long struggle, two occasions greatly encouraged South Koreans. One was the Inchon landing operation, which was a typical example of General MacArthur's greatness, and scarcely to be outclassed anywhere in military history. Again, the Changjin Reservoir retreat operation was conducted splendidly by the US 1st Marine Division and is another outstanding example of military action. Even though it was a retreat, not a victorious offensive operation, it is reviewed by all Korean armed force units every winter to remind them of the strong spiritual element in combat power.

After the Korean War, the ROK relied too much upon the USFK until the third withdrawal of the USFK in 1971, which left only one US division as a ground force. Ironically, the presence of the USFK itself caused negligence in the fostering of the ROK armed forces. The disappointing US withdrawal gave the ROK government and soldiers a chance to realize the importance of self-reliance. The ROK government was stimulated to promote self-reliance in the field of defense industries, tactics, and defense policy with experience of the Vietnam War behind them. Though the ROK has exerted every effort to improve its military strength with US assistance, it will still take time to catch up with the North Koreans' buildup. Carter's withdrawal policy forced the ROK to make a drastic improvement in its armed forces, but a big gap still existed and the continual presence of USFK is still needed today.

Hopefully, in the early 1990s, the ROK will be capable of defending itself. North Korea may fear to lose the last chance to unify the Korean peninsula forever by force. When the ROK is equivalent in combat power with North Korea, possibly even before the turn of the century, new arrangements between the ROK Armed Forces and the UN Command, CFC, and USFK

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will be in order. Regarding the presence of the USFK, the long-range plan should be prepared by bilateral agreement *now* to avoid inconsistent USFK policies such as are to be seen whenever a new US administration comes to power.

The US forces in Korea had the greatest impact on Korean society, greater than any other foreign presence in her history. Even the Japanese had less influence on Korea in their 35 years of colonial rule than the US forces, who were never autocratic, did. The USFK brought a new wind, "American style." The new wind created a whirlwind of democracy in the political and social systems. The modernizing trends clashed with intolerant customs and primitive industries. South Korea's whole culture and lifestyle were Westernized. As a result, some old Korean standards of good morality and customs are dying away, unfortunately. American cowboy movies, broadcasting, Christian churches, pop music, relief material, PX goods, books, magazines, soldiers' attitudes, transcultural marriages—all were suddenly introduced into Korean society. Besides, those Koreans who could work for the US military government emerged from obscurity: the men who had studied in the United States during the days of Japanese colonial rule were picked up rather than pure independent activists. This was another circumstance that affected Korean society and Korean values a great deal. Similar favoritism exists today, to some degree. However, as a result of the American forces staying in Korea, many job opportunities opened up, helping the very poor ROK economy. The US local procurement policy helped the fragile government economy in another way during the early postwar years.

The US forces in Korea have deterred another war in the Korean peninsula and have clearly enhanced stability in Northeast Asia. The danger in the Korean peninsula is not simply that in the near future North Korea might launch a massive military attack against the South, either on its own initiative or at outside instigation. The real danger is that the Soviet Union will never be content with the preservation of rough equilibrium between the Communist sphere of influence and the Western sphere. The Korean peninsula provides a decisive flank that obstructs the Soviet Union's designs to encircle the PRC and Japan. As the ROK Armed Forces progressively gain

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the capability for self-defense against North Korea, US forces in Korea can begin to concentrate their efforts on checking Soviet expansionism—starting in the 1990s, with any luck.

ENDNOTE

1. See V. Zaicivok, *Geography of Korea*, tr. Albert Perry (New York: International Secretariat, Institute of Pacific Relations, 1952) for details of the strategic location of the Korean peninsula.

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**THE IMPACT
OF US FORCES IN KOREA**

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