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"Rhee-straint": The Origins of the U.S.-ROK Alliance[1]

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ABSTRACT

There is a vast literature that examines the American containment approach to communism throughout the Cold War era. However, few authors focus on the flip side of U.S. Cold War policy: constraint. In addition to their distaste for communism, Americans also feared "rogue" anti-communist allies dragging the U.S. into a larger-scale war with their common communist enemies. This fear especially applied to the South Korean authoritarian state under Syngman Rhee, who harnessed rabid anti-communism both to legitimize his rule and to try to embroil the U.S. in further conflict on the Korean peninsula. In order to exercise greater influence over such "rogue allies" as Syngman Rhee's South Korea, the U.S. opted to pursue strong bilateral alliances in East Asia, where they feared entrapment the most. As a result, solid relationships like the U.S.-ROK alliance came to dominate the East Asian security architecture, leaving little space for East Asian multilateralism to take root.

Keywords: U.S.-ROK alliance, Korean War, hubs and spokes, bilateral security architecture, power play, rogue allies, Syngman Rhee, Asian multilateralism

Introduction

On this 60th anniversary of the Korean War, we remember those who paid the ultimate sacrifice for freedom against communist aggression. As General Colin Powell stated at a recent event in New York City, the Korean War is neither "forgotten" nor a war that ended in stalemate. All one needs to do is glance at the gleaming skyscrapers of Seoul, the educated youth, the affluent society, and the vibrant civil society to conclude that this war ended in all-out victory for South Korea as it stands today. It is a model of peaceful and prosperous democracy, and a beacon of hope for those in the North who one day hope for a better life.

The 60th anniversary also celebrates the strength of the alliance between the United States and the Republic of Korea (ROK). Today, this institution stands as one of the most successful examples of what the Cold War was fought over. Starting out as a temporary and pragmatic alliance between two countries that had nothing in common but a common enemy, the U.S.-ROK alliance is today a partnership based on common values and prosperity that operates around the world and contributes to the public goods of the international community.

I have written often on the successes of the U.S.-ROK alliance.[2] Now, however, I write on the origins of the alliance and the rather unusual circumstances under which it came into being. As noted above, this was not a relationship of deep friends when it was first formed. It was a relationship of convenience, at best. But in addition to fighting a common enemy, I argue in this paper that there was another element to this alliance that is often missed in the scholarly literature. This element was significant because it also impacted the way the United States pursued a network of bilateral alliances in East Asia rather than pursuing alternative means of organizing security.

Multilateral security was pursued in Europe, Southeast Asia, and the South Pacific in the form of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO), and the Australia-New Zealand-United States treaty (ANZUS), but it was not pursued this way in Korea or East Asia. What was different about East Asia was the discrete and exclusive postwar relationships that the United States cultivated with each member of the region. Famously referred to by John Foster Dulles as the "hub and spokes" system, this bilateral method of organizing security still constitutes the most striking and enduring element of the architecture of East Asia to this day.

I argue that the reason bilateralism rather than multilateralism emerged in Asia as the dominant security structure has to do with the alternative restraint rationales behind American postwar planning in Korea and East Asia. The United States created alliances to contain the

Soviet threat, but a congruent rationale for the "hub and spokes" alliance network was to *constrain* anti-communist allies, like Korea, that might engage in aggressive behavior against adversaries that could entrap the United States in an unwanted larger war. The desire to control against such an outcome was amplified by a belief in the domino theory in Asia--that the fall of one small country could trigger a chain of countries falling to communism. Alliances in Europe were also about establishing control, but the extent of this control was limited to shaping the postwar political development and economic recovery of these countries under the U.S. and NATO security umbrella. In Korea and Northeast Asia, however, the United States encountered the additional problem of potential "rogue allies" – that is, rabidly anti-communist dictators who might start wars that could embroil the United States in a larger, unwanted conflict on the Asian mainland as Washington was gearing up for a protracted global struggle against the Soviet Union. As will be explained, the U.S. calculated that restraint of these pro-West dictators was best exercised, sometimes harshly, through direct bilateral contact rather than through some region-wide consensus-based multilateral mechanism. East Asia's security bilateralism today is therefore a historical artifact of American rationales for constructing alliance networks in Asia at the end of World War II.

Elsewhere, I have argued that the power-play rationale informed American intentions vis à vis the U.S.-Republic of China (ROC) and U.S.-Japan alliances.[3] In this article, I focus on Korea. The United States established alliances with the ROK not only to defend against communism, but also to inhibit a highly unpredictable government from provoking conflicts with North Korea and mainland China (respectively) that might embroil the United States in a larger war on the Asian mainland. In order to minimize the risks of entrapment by adventurist allies, Washington chose to exercise direct, sometimes draconian, control by creating economic and political dependency of the smaller state. American planners understood that they could not have exercised similar control in a larger multilateral regional framework that would have diluted U.S. material and political influence. In Europe there were some concerns about states dragging the United States into a larger war with the Soviet Union (e.g., Germany over Berlin), but not nearly of the same intensity as in Asia where authoritarian leaders of questionable legitimacy like Syngman Rhee used rabid anti-communism both to validate their rule and to draw the United States into their parochial conflicts. Thus, Europe posed fewer obstacles to forming a more complex, multilateral security organization, while in Asia the U.S. did not see the need for a larger multilateral security framework in Asia.

Washington best exercised control bilaterally.

The power-play theory makes contributions to the work on multilateralism and the uses of power. It augments the prevailing causal proposition in the literature put forward by liberal institutionalists and foreign policy internationalists that multilateral structures and rules constitute the best way to control power and dampen unilateralist inclinations.[4] Many have argued, for example, that embedding China in multilateral rules and institutions offers the most prudent path for managing the country's rise and integration in the international system. Others have argued that American power and leadership is most effective when the United States allows itself to be bound by multilateral institutions and rules that it helped to create in the postwar era. Supplementing these views, I show that power asymmetries "select" for the type of structures, bilateral or multilateral, that work best for control. If small powers try to control a larger one, then multilateralism works. But if great powers seek control over smaller ones, multilateralism is highly inefficient. Bilateral control is a more direct and effective means of exercising control.

The Puzzle

The United States pursued multilateralism in the immediate postwar years – albeit less well-defined than NATO – in the formation of SEATO in 1954 and the creation of ANZUS in 1951. [5] In East Asia by contrast the only security artifice of significance was the network of bilateral alliances, otherwise known as the "San Francisco system" or "hub and spokes" centered on the United States, with no apparent connections between them: the U.S.-Japan mutual defense treaty of September 1951; the U.S.-Republic of Korea defense treaty of October 1953; and the U.S.-Republic of China (Taiwan) security treaty of December 1954. [6]

Power Play

I argue that the reason the United States opted for bilateralism rather than multilateralism in Asia has to do with the "power play" behind U.S. alliance formation. The power play relates to the use of alliances, as Paul Schroeder once described, as *pactum de contrahendo (*pacts of restraint).[7] It is the creation of an asymmetrical alliance tie--hence security dependency of the lesser state--for the purpose of inhibiting the smaller ally's unilateral actions. I argue that in East Asia, the United States created alliances not just for containment but also as a means of constraining potential "rogue" allies from adventurist behavior that might drag the U.S. into unwanted larger military contingencies in the region or that could trigger a domino effect with Asian countries falling to

communism.[8] In Europe, the United States had less concern about smaller countries lashing out against the Soviet Union and entrapping the United States in a larger, perhaps nuclear, war. In Asia, there were real concerns about unpredictable authoritarian leaders doing such things for domestic legitimacy and as a means of securing more American support. President Dwight Eisenhower's expressed exasperation with one of his Asian allies in the early 1950s captured the nature of this concern: "…when you say that we should deliberately plunge into war, let me tell you that if war comes, it will be horrible. Atomic war will destroy civilization….The kind of war I am talking about, if carried out, would not save democracy. Civilization would be ruined…That is why we are opposed to war."[9] Secretary of State John Foster Dulles reiterated the same concerns when asked by an Asian ally for a "small war" to tip the balance in his direction. Dulles explained the dangers inherent in such an idea: "Any 'little war' as proposed by [you] would not only turn world opinion against the U.S. but also would inevitably escalate into a general, full-scale war with the Soviet Union, 'unleashing such terrible weapons'….that it would destroy civilization."[10]

Who Controls Whom?

All alliances are about shaping the participants' behavior. But power asymmetries between allies determine how control operates within alliances.

Alliances are not just institutions of like-minded, equal parties defending against an external threat, they are also *pactum de contrahendo*. Institutionalists view multilateral alliances today as means by which allies can restrain, curb, and modulate the power of the United States or China. This makes sense, but the obverse of this mantra is also true. Tight, bilateral alliances can be used to amplify and channel power significantly in favor of the patron power over smaller subjects.

US Postwar Visions in Asia

As the United States contemplated its postwar commitments in Asia, the Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower presidencies contended with two problems. The first was the problem of potential "rogue allies" in Asia–those with pro-West inclinations, but with unpredictable authoritarian leaders (Korea and Taiwan) or unreformed domestic institutions (Japan) who could lead to unilateral aggression, entrapping the United States in a larger war. The second was a deeply held belief in the domino theory in Asia--that is, the fall of one unstable Asian country could trigger a chain reaction leading to the collapse of the whole region to China and the Soviet Union. In order to avoid such outcomes,

Washington created deep, tight bilateral alliance ties that fostered material and political dependency of the ally on U.S. patronage. This was the only way to achieve the extraordinary level of control necessary for Washington to overrule another nation's sovereign right to use force. Expanding these alliances to a larger multilateral network in Asia was neither necessary nor desired because it would have diluted the ability to control the allies and would have offered little marginal value in terms of enhanced defense and deterrence.

Korea: Rhee-straint

The Republic of Korea's first president, Syngman Rhee (1948-1960), made no secret of his aspirations for unifying the Korean peninsula. Rhee's official policy was "*pukch'in t'ongil*" ("march north for unification"), which was explicitly a policy of unification by force that did not accept peaceful coexistence with North Korea.

Rhee knew no restraint. He urged U.S. occupation commander General Hodge that the United States should leverage its nuclear monopoly to force the Soviets to withdraw from their half of the peninsula. The fiery Korean leader once proposed a military plan that pooled Taiwanese and South Korean forces for a ground assault on mainland China, backed by U.S. airpower, to roll back communism.[11]

After the American entry into the Korean War in June 1950, Rhee saw the war as an opportunity to unify the peninsula. In a letter to Truman in July 1950, he called for starting the "victorious march north," arguing that it would be "utter folly to attempt to restore the status quo ante, and then to await the enemy's pleasure for further attack when he had time to regroup, retrain, and reequip. The time has come to cut out once and for all the cancer of imperialist aggression…by the world communists…."[12] When the United States entered into armistice negotiations for a ceasefire, Rhee openly opposed a cessation of hostilities. The ROK leader chided the Americans asking how "you can win from a political conference by persuasion, what you could not win on the battlefield by force?"[13] In April 1953, Rhee demanded that Eisenhower withdraw U.S. troops from the peninsula if an armistice was to be signed, and blustered that the ROK would rather fight alone against the North Koreans, Chinese, and Soviets than have a ceasefire. Rhee undertook destructive actions purposefully designed to reignite hostilities with the North. The most provocative of these occurred in June 1953 when he unilaterally released 25,000 prisoners of war held in the South. This extraordinary act constituted a deliberate attempt to undermine the armistice talks (of which the repatriation of POWs was a major point of negotiation).

Overthrow or Underwrite?

The United States faced a similar entrapment fear with Korea as it had with Taiwan. Washington was hypersensitive to becoming entrapped as a result of its ally's reckless actions. It had no use for a wider conflagration in Asia and also feared that any failed action by Rhee could collapse the government and set off a domino effect in the region. An alliance with South Korea consequently had three functions. First, it was part of a network of alliances and military installations designed to ring the Soviet threat in the Pacific. Second, the alliance deterred a second North Korean attack, with American ground troops serving as the "tripwire" guaranteeing U.S. involvement. And third, the alliance implicitly bound and restrained the South from adventurism.

The restraining rationale became evident immediately in U.S. postwar planning. Both U.S. Ambassador to Korea John Muccio and Secretary of State Dean Acheson were wary of Rhee's constant talk about "march north" and "unification or death." Muccio's cables to Acheson in 1949 framed the dilemma: "We were in a very difficult position, a very subtle position, because if we gave Rhee and his cohorts what they wanted, they could have started to move north the same as the North stated to move south. And the onus would have been on us…"[14]

U.S. General Mark Clark was so concerned about ROK unilateralism that he complained about being engaged in a two front diplomatic battle--with the communists at Panmunjom and with Rhee in Seoul--and that the "biggest trouble came from Rhee."[15] Dulles was equally worried about Rhee's constant entreaties for just a "little more war" to liberate the North, and told the ROK leader plainly that his pleas for a so-called "little war" would inevitably escalate to a U.S.-Soviet confrontation, potentially unleashing nuclear weapons that could destroy not just the Korean peninsula, but civilization itself."[16] Eisenhower summed up U.S. fears of entrapment regarding the ROK: "[Rhee] wants to get his country unified, but we cannot permit him to start a war to do it. The consequences would be too awful. But he is a stubborn old fellow, and I don't know whether we'll be able to hold him in line indefinitely."[17]

Prior to the formation of the mutual defense treaty, the United States government initially contemplated an overthrow of Rhee as an option in dealing with his intransigence.[18] But the Americans soon learned that the only way to restrain the ROK was to threaten the very things that Rhee valued most from the United States. American officials initially did this by threatening to withdraw from the United Nations Command. Robert Bowie, the State Department's Policy Planning director at the time of the armistice talks, observed the dangers of not adopting such a

tactic: "[not to] threaten Rhee with the possibility of UNC withdrawal eliminates the most effective weapon at our disposal for dissuading Rhee from taking unilateral action."[19] Acheson and Dulles were wary of providing any tanks or other offensive weaponry to Rhee.[20] Dulles in particular opposed the transfer of jet aircraft as part of the U.S.-sponsored military modernization program in Korea on the grounds that these "mobile instruments of war" should not be given to a country that "has a vested interest in starting a third world war."[21] Dulles wanted Rhee to commit--as Chiang Kai-shek had done--to not using the planes against the North without explicit permission from the United States.

Similarly, as the United States withdrew four divisions from the peninsula at the end of the Korean War, the question arose as to how much equipment would be left behind as part of Korean military modernization. The Koreans, naturally, wanted it all, but defense secretary Charles Wilson stated in blunt terms the prevailing U.S. concern: "Well, we will try to figure out what we think you need, what we think we can let you have, and tell you what it is….Of course, frankly, we don't want to give you enough equipment so you start the war up again."[22] Once the defense treaty was signed, the United States leveraged the new alliance to restrain Rhee from unilateral acts against the North. In November 1953, Vice-president Richard Nixon went to Seoul to deliver a letter to Rhee from Eisenhower stating that the United States would not resume hostilities and that his administration would not submit the mutual defense treaty to Congress for ratification unless Nixon received Rhee's "explicit confirmation" that he would not act independently.[23]

Operational Command – Eisenhower's Contingency Plan for Rhee

American archives reveal the extent to which the preoccupation with controlling the ally went beyond routine alliance management. Washington's desire to restrain ROK leaders from acting on their ambitions was so intense that the U.S. opted to retain operational command authority of all forces on the peninsula within the alliance.[24]

The rationale for the United States holding operational command authority was not just for war-fighting efficiency, but also to keep a leash on unilateral aggressive acts by the South Koreans.[25] It became standing policy that any unilateral ROK military actions would prompt Washington to the severest of actions including the immediate cessation of economic and military aid, disassociation of the UN Command from support of ROK actions, and even the use of American military forces to impose martial law. NSC 5817, entitled "Statement of U.S. Policy Toward Korea" (August 11, 1958), stated that if the ROK unilaterally

initiated military operations against Chinese or North Korean forces in or north of the Demilitarized Zone, then: 1) UN Command ground, sea, and air forces would not support such operations directly or indirectly; 2) the United States would not furnish any military or logistic support for such operations; 3) all U.S. economic aid to Korea would cease immediately; and 4) the UN Commander would take any action necessary to prevent his forces from becoming involved in the renewal of hostilities and to provide for their security.[26]

In White House deliberations in the late 1950s, President Eisenhower went so far as to say that the United States would covertly support new leadership, forcibly remove Rhee, or even abrogate the alliance.[27] Eisenhower argued:

> ...if we became aware that President Rhee was moving north to attack North Korea, we would simply have to remove Rhee and his government...Such a move would simply have to be stopped. Again Secretary Herter agreed with the President but asked how we proposed to keep the Communists from counter-attacking and seizing South Korea. The President stated with emphasis that everything possible must be done to stop a unilateral South Korean move on North Korea before it started, including deposing Rhee. Thereafter, if South Korea wanted to go on to commit suicide, we would say go ahead and do it....If ever this attack on North Korea occurred, the President said that the military alliance between the U.S. and the Republic of Korea would be broken at that moment.[28]

Retaining operational control of ROK forces therefore was as much a tool of alliance restraint as it was a tool of deterrence and war-fighting. This sort of command arrangement could not have been put into place in a multilateral alliance system. It was unique to Korea and to the bilateral alliance institution.

Missed Opportunities for Asian Multilateralism?

A "hard test" for the power-play theory requires looking not merely for evidence of U.S. efforts to consolidate bilateral alliances, but for the *absence* of American efforts to achieve multilateralism in Asia with pro-West allies like the ROK. There is clear evidence that despite incentives to pursue multilateralism in Asia, Washington opted against this because doing so would be detrimental to power-play objectives.

After the formation of NATO, Asian leaders sought to craft a "Pacific Pact." In the spring of 1949, the ROK and Philippines raised the issue with the State Department, arguing that such a pact would enhance

security, economic growth, and development in Asia.[29] In July 1949, Philippines president Quirino hosted a summit with Chiang Kai-shek endorsing the Pacific Pact proposal; the following month, Syngman Rhee hosted a summit with Chiang, and called for a conference of Asian leaders in the Philippines to advance the idea.[30]

Given the multilateralism model followed in Europe, one would have expected the United States to embrace an anti-communist bloc in the region confronting communism. But the United States showed decided apathy at these proposals. Secretary of State Acheson tried to preempt the discussion as early as March and May 1949, stating unambiguously that the United States was not interested.[31] He argued that NATO was the result of a long deliberative process; that Western European powers had carefully developed their plan for collective defense before asking for US help; and (most revealingly) the U.S. viewed NATO as a two-way street, but the Pacific Pact would amount to a unilateral security commitment that could only entrap the United States.[32] Acheson saw Chiang's inclusion as especially dangerous.[33] The day prior to Rhee's hosting Chiang in the port city of Chinhae, American officials met secretly with the ROK president, counseling him to abstain from committing to any collective defense pacts with China or the Philippines.[34] In Washington (at the same time as the Chiang-Rhee summit), Quirino was told by State Department officials in bilateral consultations not to even raise the pact during his visit.[35] As Calder observed, "[M]ultilateral institutions only undermined the leverage of the United States, which lay precisely in the absence of alternative mediators….It was convenient that Asians could not talk with one another very deeply."[36]

After the dismissal of the Quirino-Rhee-Chiang Pacific Pact idea, Washington discouraged another opportunity for Asian multilateralism with the outbreak of the Korean War. During the war, Chiang offered General MacArthur 33,000 of his best equipped troops for dispatch to the peninsula within five days to fight communist aggression, which MacArthur reported back to Washington that he was more than willing to accept after the Chinese intervention in late 1950 shifted the tide of the war. December 1951 intelligence and military planning assessments concurred favorably with the idea of rotating two divisions of Nationalist forces through Korea.[37] After MacArthur, Generals Matthew Ridgway and Mark Clark also supported the idea, as did U.S. military officials in charge of operations in Taiwan.[38] Chiang's offer was effectively a realization of the U.S. postwar vision--an ally in the region that was willing to contribute to a multilateral security effort and share the burden of beating back communism.

The United States consistently rejected every proposal for bringing Nationalist troops into the Korean War. Truman, Acheson, and Secretary of Defense George Marshall expressed clear concerns that Chiang's motive was to extend the peninsular war to Taiwan and China, bringing the U.S. into full scale combat on the Asian mainland. Truman explicitly rejected the idea and sent Averell Harriman to the region in August 1950 to clamp down on both Chiang and MacArthur.[39] A memo from the top Asia diplomat in the State Department in 1952 to Secretary-designate John Foster Dulles laid out U.S. entrapment anxieties: "The introduction of Chinese Nationalist troops into Korea would immediately throw Korea into the Chinese civil war and would make it much more difficult, if not impossible, for us to maintain the position that we have so far maintained that in any political talks on Korea after an armistice there would be no discussions of any matters outside of Korea."[40] The United States rejected this opportunity for security multilateralism in Asia, and instead sought through bilateral channels to exercise even tighter control over its allies.

Conclusion

More work needs to be done on the legacies of the American preference for bilateralism in East Asia. As noted above, this led to Japan's recovery but also its isolation and absence of reconciliation with the region. The history of bilateralism in continues to hamper Japanese foreign policy as it unsuccessfully seeks broader initiatives (e.g., a permanent UN Security Council membership) because it cannot acquire the support of its Asian neighbors.

Power-play control rationales clearly are less relevant for U.S. relationships with Taiwan and the ROK today, but the bilateralism that emerged from these ties remains deeply ingrained in the thinking of successive postwar generations in all countries, which naturally weakens the enthusiasm for new multilateral structures. The bilateral architecture continues to work and is buttressed by a level of comfort that makes these institutions difficult to uproot. The fact that many of the new "pluralateral" structures developing in the region, such as U.S.-Japan-ROK, U.S.-Japan-Australia, the "Quad" (U.S.-Japan-India-Australia), and the Six Party Talks (U.S.-Japan-ROK-China-Russia-DPRK), are largely built off the underlying alliance structure attests to how old ways of thinking die hard. The legacy of these initial American choices are significant and deserving of more study. These choices created certain mentalities--domestic notions of legitimacy and normalcy about how security was best maintained--that continue to be unique to East Asia.

Notes:

[1] Thanks to Mike Brown for coining the term, "Rhee-straint."

[2] Victor Cha, "Outperforming Expectations: The U.S.-ROK Alliance," in Kurt Campbell et al., *Going Global: The Future of the U.S.-ROK Alliance* (Washington, D.C.: CNAS, February 2009).

[3] See "Powerplay: Origins of the U.S. Alliance System in Asia," *International Security* Winter 2010. For an interesting study of Taiwan-U.S. relations, see Steven Goldstein, "The United States and the Republic of China, 1949-1978: Suspicious Allies," APARC Working Paper, February 2000, Stanford University.

[4] On alliances, multilateralism, and hegemonic controls of power, see Paul Schroeder, "Alliances, 1815-1945: Weapons of Power and Tools of Management," in Klaus Knorr ed., *Historical Dimensions of National Security Problems* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1976), pp. 227-62; Joseph Grieco, "Understanding the Problem of International Cooperation: The Limits of Neoliberal Institutionalism and the Future of Realist Theory," in Robert Baldwin ed., *Neorealism and Neoliberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 301-338; G. John Ikenberry, "Is American Multilateralism in Decline?" *Perspectives on Politics*, vol. 1, No. 3 (September 2003); Joseph Nye, *The Paradox of American Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Ethan Kapstein and Michael Mastanduno eds., *Unipolar Politics: Realism and State Strategies after the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); William Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," *International Security*, vol. 24, No. 1 (Summer, 1999), pp. 5-41; Steve Weber, *Multilateralism in NATO: Shaping the Postwar Balance, 1945-1961* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1991); Ikenberry, "America's Imperial Ambition," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 81, No. 5 (September-October, 2002); Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment Revisited," *National Interest*, No. 70 (Winter, 2002-03), pp. 5-17; and other works cited below.

[5] Ralph Braibanti, "The Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty," *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 30, No. 4 (December, 1957), pp. 321-41, 327-8. SEATO was less well-developed as a multilateral institution than NATO because there was some resistance from Southeast Asian countries to superpower-led alliances linked to anti-colonial norms, nationalism and non-alignment. Still, the multilateral structure in this subregion was distinct from the bilateral one to the north. See Amitav Archarya, "Why is there no NATO in Asia: The Normative Origins of Asian Multilateralism," Working Paper, Harvard Center for International Affairs.

[6] John Duffield, "Why is there No APTO?" *Contemporary Security Policy*, No. 22 (August 2001), p. 70.

[7] Schroeder first used this term in 1976 to describe how alliances serve as tools of management in addition to deterrence ("Alliances, 1815-1914," p. 230).

[8] Thanks to Mike Brown for the term "rogue allies."

[9] Minutes of Discussion, President Eisenhower and President Rhee, July 27, 1954, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-54, Korea*, vol. XV, Part 2, pp. 1839-1847. Hereafter cited as *FRUS*.

[10] Stephen Jin-Woo Kim, *Master of Manipulation: Syngman Rhee and the Seoul-Washington Alliance 1953-1960* (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 2001), p. 177.

[11] Robert Oliver, *Syngman Rhee and American Involvement in Korea, 1942-1960* (Seoul: Panmun, 1978), p. 48.

[12] President of the Republic of Korea (Rhee) to President Truman. Restricted. 19 July 1950 in *FRUS, 1950, Korea*, vol. VII, pp. 429-30.

[13] *Syngman Rhee Through Western Eyes* (Seoul: Office of Public Information, 1954), p. 2.

[14] State Department 895.00 file, box 946, Muccio to Butterworth, November 1, 1949: Truman Library, Muccio oral history interview no. 177, December 27, 1973, cited in Bruce Cumings, "The Structural Basis of 'Anti-Americanism' in the Republic of Korea," paper presented at the Conference on Korean Attitudes toward the United States, Georgetown University, January 30, 2003, n. 33.

[15] Chang-jin Park, "The Influence of Small States Upon the Superpowers," *World Politics*, vol. 28, No. 1 (October, 1975), p. 97.

[16] Kim, *Master of Manipulation*, p. 177.

[17] Ibid., pp. 175-76.

[18] Plan EVERREADY was devised in 1952 and called for the arrest of Rhee and declaration of martial law in the name of the United Nations. See ibid., pp. 90-91.

[19] Ibid., p. 141.

[20] Cumings, "Structural Basis," n. 33.

[21] Kim, *Master of Manipulation*, p. 181.

[22] Meeting of the Military Subcommittee, 28 July 1954. Folder: Minutes of Meetings, July 1954, United States and Republic of Korea, Box 11 Correspondence File, 1953-54. Far East Command, cited ibid., p. 179.

[23] Dulles to Nixon, November 4, 1953. Folder John Foster Dulles, Chronological, November 1953 (5), Box 5 JFD Chronological Series, Dulles Papers; Eisenhower to Rhee, November 4, 1953. Folder: Rhee, Syngman 1953-57 (4), Box 37 International Series Anne Whitman Files/Dwight Eisenhower Presidential Library.

[24] I believe this is the first analysis of the "restraint" aspect of the U.S.-ROK

alliance that utilizes longstanding declassified documents from the Eisenhower administration about U.S. contingency plans on South Korean governments.

[25] Operational command authority dates back to the Korean War when Rhee (July 14, 1950) gave authority over Korean forces to the commander in chief of UN Forces. After the mutual defense treaty (October 1953), the two governments signed a memorandum of understanding confirming this arrangement (November 1954). In 1961, this understanding was delimited to UN control over ROK forces only to defend against an external communist invasion.

[26] NSC 5817, "Statement of U.S. Policy Toward Korea," August 11, 1958 in *FRUS, 1958-1960; Japan, Korea,* vol. XVIII, Document 237, p. 485.

[27] The provision regarding covert support of alternative leadership to Rhee was first contained in a president-approved revision of a 1953 NSC policy document on Korea (NSC 170/1 Annex A). See NSC 170/1, "US Objectives and Courses of Action in Korea," November 20, 1953, in *FRUS, 1952-1954, Korea,* vol. XV, Part 2, pp. 1620-1624. The revision stated: "To select and encourage covertly the development of new South Korean leadership prepared to cooperate in maintaining the armistice, and if Rhee initiates or is about to initiate unilateral action, assist such new leadership to assume power, by means not involving overt U.S. participation until and unless U.S. overt support is necessary and promises to be decisive in firmly establishing such new leadership." This provision was considered extremely sensitive and circulated only to the secretaries of State and Defense, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and director of Central Intelligence. Subsequent National Security Council policy reviews on Korea made reference to the annex (later known as annex F) as regular practice, but the actual contents were kept separate. The provision about U.S. unilateral abrogation of the treaty came about in deliberations a couple of years later on revising NSC 5817, which was then standing policy on Korea (revised as NSC 5907).

[28] Memorandum of Discussion at the 411th Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington June 25, 1959 Document 277, ibid., p. 569.

[29] Telegram, Charge in the Philippines (Lockett) to the Secretary of State. Confidential. 22 March 1949; and Telegram, Charge in the Philippines (Lockett) to the Secretary of State. Confidential. 24 March 1949 in *FRUS, 1949, The Far East and Australiasia,* vol. VII, Part 2, pp. 1125-27. Memorandum of Conversation, Director of the office for Far Eastern Affairs (Butterworth) with Dr. John M. Chang, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, Mr. Niles W. Bond, Assistant Chief, Division of Northeast Asian Affairs. Secret. 8 April 1949; Memorandum of Conversation, Counselor of the Embassy in Korea (Drumright). Confidential. 28 May 1949. Ibid., pp. 1141-42; 1145-46.

[30] Telegram, Charge in the Philippines (Lockett) to Secretary of State. 12 July 1949, ibid., pp.1152-55; Telegram, Ambassador in Korea (Muccio) to Secretary of State. Priority. 8 August 1949, ibid., p. 1184.

[31] For the formal public statement to this effect, see *Department of State Bulletin*, vol. 20 (January-June, 1949), p. 696.

[32] David Mabon, "Elusive Agreements: The Pacific Pact Proposals of 1949-1951," *Pacific Historical Review*, vol. 57, No. 2 (May, 1988), pp. 147-78, p. 151.

[33] For more on the U.S.-Taiwan dynamic, see Cha, "Powerplay," and Goldstein, "The United States and the Republic of China."

[34] Telegram, Ambassador in Korea (Muccio) to the Secretary of State. Top Secret. Priority. 3 August 1949, in *FRUS, 1949, The Far East and Australia*, vol. VII, Part 2, pp. 1181-82.

[35] Charles Dobbs, "The Pact that Never Was: The Pacific Pact of 1949," *Journal of Northeast Asian Studies*, vol. 3, No. 4 (Winter, 1984), pp. 29-42 and p. 34.

[36] Calder, *Pacific Defense*, p. 194.

[37] U.S. intelligence assessments at the time judged that China could not capitalize on Taiwan's military position if these proffered forces were diverted to Korea. See Memorandum of Conversation by the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Rusk) and Chinese Ambassador (Koo). Confidential. 3 July 1950 in *FRUS, 1950, Korea*, vol. VII, pp. 285-86.

[38] John Garver, *The Sino-American Alliance* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1977), pp. 47-48.

[39] Extracts of Memorandum of Conversations, Mr. W. Averell Harriman, Special Assistant to the President with General MacArthur, Tokyo, 6 and 8 August 1950. Top Secret. *FRUS, 1950, East Asia and the Pacific*, vol. VI, pp. 427-30.

[40] Memorandum, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Allison) to John Foster Dulles. Secret. 24 December 1952 in *FRUS, 1952-1954, China and Japan*, vol. XIV, p. 119.

Reactions of the Sino-Soviet Bloc to the U.S.-ROK Alliance

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ABSTRACT

Covering and possessing an impressive chunk of the earth in both geographical and demographic terms, the relationship between two great continental powers (one Asian and one Eurasian) has always had a significant impact on Northeast Asia and beyond. At the same time, the Sino-Soviet relationship has been closely keyed to and shaped by two other great maritime powers (Japan and the United States) in Northeast Asian geopolitics. In the first half of the twentieth century, Japan had the greatest impact on Sino-Soviet relations, and the United States has played the largest role since the end of World War II.

This article explores the rise and fall of the Sino-Soviet alliance—and the rise of the Sino-Russian strategic partnership in the post-Cold War era—and its fitful interaction with the U.S.-ROK alliance over the years, with primary attention to the first two decades of the Cold War. The Korean War served as the first testing ground for the alliance. After the war, however, as Nikita Khrushchev moved the USSR away from Stalinism, the alliance waned and eventually turned into enmity and conflict that lasted until Mikhail Gorbachev's revolution in foreign policy. Gorbachev provided running room for the slow but steady process of Sino-Soviet rapprochement-cum-renormalization in the late 1980s that morphed into a new "strategic partnership" in the 1990s. In the background of these relations has stood North Korea on one side and the United States—with its relationships with South Korea and Taiwan—on the other.

Keywords: China, the Soviet Union, the United States; the Republic of Korea, Sino-Soviet Alliance; US-ROK Alliance

Introduction

To revisit the checkered history of the Sino-Soviet alliance—and its reactions to the U.S.-ROK alliance—is to be confronted with multiple contradictory forces with several paradoxical consequences. First, there was no interaction of any kind during the Korean War (1950–1953), the most sanguinary phase of East-West conflict as well as the first and only hot war between the United States and the People's Republic of China (PRC) during the Cold War, with some three million casualties. The Sino-Soviet bloc—formalized with the signing of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance (hereafter SSA) on February 14, 1950—predated the outbreak of the Korean War by more than four months, whereas the U.S.-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty (hereafter USROKA), signed on October 1, 1953, followed the end of the Korean War in July 1953. Second, the SSA, though formally expired in April 1980, lasted for only about eight years as a working alliance system, while the USROKA survived the end of the Cold War, lasting more than a half century. Since the longevity of most alliances is better measured in years than in decades,[1] the SSA seems like more a "normal" alliance than does the USROKA. Alliance longevity is not the same as alliance success. Like General MacArthur's old soldiers, some old alliances never die; they just fade away.

Third, thanks to the Korean War, the SSA was greatly strengthened in the short run (1950–1957) and weakened in the long run as it planted seeds of suppressed humiliation-cum-resentment for the not too distant future. Fourth, while Washington remained as the most crucial factor in the rise and fall of the SSA (and especially the former), the USROKA, at least the South Korean component, remained largely a secondary derivative variable. For the making of the Sino-Soviet socialist bloc, the United States served at once as both the most cohesive and the most divisive element. This is hardly surprising since the relationship between two great continental powers (one Asian and one Eurasian) has been closely keyed to and shaped by two other great maritime powers (Japan and the United States) in Northeast Asian geopolitics. In the first half of the twentieth century, Japan had the greatest impact on Sino-Soviet relations, and the United States has played the largest role since the end of World War II. Hence, one cannot track and evaluate the strategic significance of the evolving Beijing-Moscow relationship without assessing the influence of the U.S. factor and the triangular relations among the three powers. Fifth and most paradoxically, the slow but steady process of Sino-Soviet rapprochement-cum-renormalization in the 1980s that morphed into "strategic partnership" in the 1990s can be dated as far back as April 3, 1979, when Beijing informed Moscow of its

decision not to renew the 1950 alliance treaty[2] and simultaneously offered normalization talks.

All of this bespeaks the twists and turns on the turbulent trajectory of the Sino-Soviet and Sino-Russian relationship over the years.[3] This article tracks and evaluates the rise and fall of the Sino-Soviet alliance—and the rise of the Sino-Russian strategic partnership in the post-Cold War era—and its fitful interaction with the U.S.-ROK alliance over the years, with primary attention to the first two decades of the Cold War and with insights gained from recently released Chinese and Russian primary (documentary) materials.[4]

The Making of the Sino-Soviet Alliance

Even before the establishment of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949, Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leaders began to actively pursue building a formalized alliance relationship with the Soviet Union. Having already adopted the "lean-to-one-side" policy as the first basic foreign policy line on June 30, 1949,[5] CCP leaders clearly perceived a need for such an alliance for ideological, economic, and strategic reasons. The dire economic conditions, the need for a defensive and deterrent shield against American intervention, the lack of a viable "third road," and the requirement of international recognition and legitimation—all of these factors forced CCP leaders to assume the disquieting role of anxious supplicants in pursuit of a security alliance treaty with the Soviet Union.

Against this menacing backdrop and two days after Mao had made his lean-to-one-side pronouncement, Liu Shaoqi, one of Mao's closest colleagues, was dispatched to Moscow to convey Mao's commitment to the lean-to-one-side policy as well as to solicit Stalin's help for the People's Liberation Army (PLA). During the course of this visit Stalin agreed to help the PLA in gaining control of the strategically vital province of Xinjiang as well as providing Yak fighters and heavy bombers. However, there is no indication in available Chinese materials that the Korean problem came up in Liu's talks with Stalin.

Mao made his first foreign trip to Moscow in mid-December 1949 and stayed for nine weeks, personally negotiating the terms of an alliance treaty with Stalin. That it would require nine weeks of Mao's precious time away from Beijing when it should have taken no more than a few days to complete such a short six-article agreement suggests that this was indeed the first protracted struggle—or what Mao later characterized as a "series of struggles"[6]—for the fledging three-month old People's Republic.

Mao had few bargaining chips. Strategically and ideologically, he had already cast New China's lot with the socialist camp led by the Soviet Union, as there was no "third road." And yet Stalin, according to Mao's 1962 recollection, "was not willing to sign" an alliance treaty. Stalin stressed that concerning Taiwan "There is no need for you to create conflicts with the British and the Americans."[7] Instead, Stalin initially adopted a "grabbing with two hands" approach. With one hand Stalin would grasp and safeguard all the concessions he had extracted from the Chinese Nationalists (the Guomindang, GMD) five years earlier via the 1945 Sino-Soviet treaty he had signed with the Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek) regime, while at the same time suppressing the idea of an anti-American alliance treaty with the other hand. In his first meeting with Stalin on December 16, 1949, Mao stressed the imperative of establishing international peace for China's domestic economic recovery and reconstruction:

> The most important question at the present time is the question of establishing peace. China needs a period of three to five years of peace, which would be used to bring the economy back to prewar levels and to stabilize the country in general. Decisions on the most important questions in China hinge on the prospects for a peaceful future. With this in mind the CC CCP [Central Committee of the Communist Party of China] entrusted me to ascertain from you, Comrade Stalin, in what way and for how long will international peace be preserved.[8]

Indeed, the United States was present at creation as the "invisible third partner"[9] at the Stalin-Mao summit in Moscow adding both cohesive and contentious elements in the making of the SSA. The differing attitudes of Mao and Stalin on how to respond to the U.S. threat stemmed from their differing assessments of the likelihood of a U.S. attack against their countries. While Moscow assessed American plans for Japan's rearmament as a looming threat, Beijing asserted that the United States was actually plotting to subvert the victory of the Chinese Revolution by providing support for the GMD on Taiwan and also by actively organizing and funding counterrevolutionary groups on the mainland. To the Chinese, Washington's anti-PRC actions spotlighted the urgent need for a formalized Sino-Soviet alliance as soon as possible.[10]

Korea was Mao's second-order priority and as such it was not on the agenda in any of the official Mao-Stalin summit talks in Moscow.[11] Strategically, the Soviet Union's main concern was preventing the

reemergence of Japan as a military rival in the region. The course of Russo-Korean history followed a sinusoidal wave of development in which three different Russias (Imperial Tsarist Russia, Soviet Russia, and post-Soviet Russia) have interacted with and affected three different Koreas (Chosun Korea, Colonial Korea, and Divided Korea). Imperial Russian intrigue in Chosun Korea began in the mid-nineteenth century and reached its zenith in the final decade of that century. Then Japan gained ascendancy, through the military defeat of the Russian Empire, and Russia would remain clear of the colonized Korean peninsula until the Soviet Union's mid-twentieth-century entrance on the northern half of the peninsula, an event which helped create the third Korea: divided Korea. It was in this historical and geostrategic context that Korea was important, because the peninsula had been the major battleground of the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905 and the staging ground for Japanese incursions on the Asian continent afterward.[12] A June 1945 report from the Far Eastern Department of the Soviet foreign ministry stated that "Japan must be forever excluded from Korea, since a Korea under Japanese rule would be a constant threat to the Far East of the USSR."[13] For Stalin Korea was still important not only because it was part of the security belt on Soviet eastern flank but also because it could serve as a springboard for Japan's invasion.[14]

After the prolonged and wary negotiations in Moscow, the newly established PRC and the Soviet Union finally concluded and signed on February 14, 1950 six agreements, including most importantly the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance, the linchpin of the new Sino-Soviet bloc-cum-alliance system. The main objective of this six-article treaty was to forge a socialist solidarity in East Asia as a counterweight against the clear and continuing possibility of a Japanese-American anti-Communist alliance network in East Asia. In both the preamble and article 1, the central objective was stated in terms of Stalin's first priority of "preventing the resumption of aggression and violation of peace on the part of Japan or any other state [the United States] which would unite with Japan directly or in any other form in acts of aggression." But article 5 incorporated and presaged China's Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence (FPPC) (also known by its Indian name panch shila), which were first embodied in the Sino-Indian Treaty (April 29, 1954) and ceremoniously confirmed in a joint declaration that Premier Zhou Enlai signed with Prime Minister Nehru (June 18, 1954). In stark contrast, the six-article USROKA treaty has nothing remotely resembling the FPPC, even as article 4 stipulates the asymmetrical nature of the alliance: "The Republic of Korea grants, and the United States of American 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."

The Stalin-Mao summit ended with mixed bag outcomes for the Chinese delegation. Beijing got the promise of Soviet military assistance in case of "aggression on the part of Japan or any other state [the United States] that may collaborate in any way with Japan in acts of aggression." Moscow also agreed to provide a loan of $300 million over five years (at a concessionary interest rate of 1 percent) plus construction aid in building fifty massive heavy industrial projects (and eventually thrice that number) as well as military aid in essential areas such as the construction of a PRC air force and development of long-range artillery.[15] But Beijing failed to get Mongolia or aid to "liberate" Taiwan, let alone a joint revolutionary strategy for East Asia.

Worse, the Soviet side forced the Chinese into the demeaning role of desperate supplicants, and Stalin, especially, missed no opportunity to lord over his Chinese visitors. At one of six Stalin-Liu meetings in the summer of 1949, for example, Liu presented a six-hour report on China's political realities repeatedly depicted as on the road to becoming the Soviet Union. On Stalin's personal copy of the report are a dozen 'Da!'s written in Stalin's handwriting after each and every passage that acknowledged China's subordinate position.[16] For those in the Chinese delegation who had not experienced Stalin's Russia firsthand, it was a rude reminder of the hegemonic Soviet socialism, presaging the rhetorical shape of ideational conflict to come in Sino-Soviet relations.

That said, however, the Sino-Soviet alliance stood out as the most significant challenge to Western capitalist supremacy in three centuries. Covering an impressive chunk of the earth in both geographical and demographic terms, it posed a threat that could not be waved off amid rising Cold-War tensions.[17] In the context of these tensions, the SSA meant for the fledgling People's Republic an opportunity for enhanced security and a countering force to the perceived survival threat coming from the United States. In addition this represented a promise of beefing up Chinese military, political, and economic capabilities following a long decline. As well, the seemingly mighty Sino-Soviet alliance stood out in the 1950s in sharp contrast to the untidy asymmetrical alliance relationships that the United States had created with such putative Cold War anti-communist allies as Japan, South Korea, and the GMD on Taiwan.[18] From the American perspective, the SSA was a failure of the State Department objective of driving a wedge between the two Communist powers. President Eisenhower voiced this failure in the spring of 1950: "I believe Asia is lost with Japan, P[hilippine] I[slands], N[etherlands] E[ast] I[ndies] and even Australia under threat. India itself

is not safe!"[19]

Testing the Sino-Soviet Alliance in the Korean War

The first major test for the Sino-Soviet alliance came just six months after it had entered into force (April 3, 1950) when, in October 1950, the Chinese leadership encountered an agonizing decision-making process about sending Chinese troops—the so-called "Chinese People's Volunteers" (CPV)—to enter the Korean War. From Beijing's perspective, such a test not only allowed Mao and his comrades to test the outer possibilities and limitations of the alliance for China's national security and status drive; it also provided them with a valuable opportunity to better assess how the alliance would actually strengthen and consolidate the new socialist bloc unity in Asia. China's Korean War experience, consequently, would profoundly influence Mao's strategic thinking about the future of the Sino-Soviet alliance and the future of Sino-American relations.

As revealed by new Russian and Chinese sources, however, the idea of initiating the war came directly from Kim Il Sung, who began lobbying for a Soviet-backed invasion as early as March 1949 with the assurance that it would take no more than three days to "liberate" the South, leaving the United States no time to intervene. Stalin rejected this plan on the grounds that such war could trigger a direct armed conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union, that it was therefore not necessary or too risky, that North Korean forces could cross the 38th parallel only as a counterattack, that the Chinese Civil War was still unresolved, and that the North Korean military was still weak and ill-prepared.[20] It was not until April 1950 that "the Soviet dictator explained to Mao Zedong that it was now possible to agree to the North Koreans' proposal 'in light of the changed international situation.'"[21] The victory of the Chinese Communist Party and the establishment of the People's Republic of China in October 1949, the successful test of the Soviet atom bomb in 1949, the withdrawal of American troops from South Korea in June 1949, and U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson's January 1950 speech at the National Press Club, excluding both Korea and Taiwan from the American defense perimeter in Asia—all of "the changed international situation"—led Stalin to change his mind and to give the final go-ahead, but still on the condition that Mao Zedong agreed. Nonetheless, there is no evidence of any joint Sino-Soviet planning of military operations before the outbreak of the war on June 25, 1950.[22]

When the course of war reversed dramatically after U.S. troops landed at Inchon on September 15, however, Stalin's attitude regarding

Soviet military assistance, especially Soviet air support, changed. He became more determined than ever to avoid a direct military confrontation with the United States. In a telegram to Chinese leaders dated October 1, Stalin pointed out that the situation in Korea was grave and that without outside [Chinese] support, the Korean Communist regime would collapse. He then asked the Chinese to dispatch their troops to Korea. It is worth noting in this connection that he did not mention what kind of support the Soviet Union would offer China, let alone touch on the question of Soviet air support.[23]

The decision to send the CPV to Korea was certainly the most difficult one that Mao and his fellow CCP leaders had to make in the first year of the PRC. Even after Mao had issued the formal order to enter the war on October 8, he twice postponed the deadline in the wake of the Soviet renege on the promised air support. Faced with the massive American counterattack in mid-September, Mao too hesitated. He told Stalin on October 2 that China would not send its troops to fight in Korea, since such a giant intervention meant that "our entire plan for peaceful reconstruction will be completely ruined, and many people in the country will be dissatisfied."[24] It took a direct request from Stalin to Mao, as well as a series of meetings between the Soviet leader and a Chinese delegation headed by Zhou Enlai and Lin Biao in the Crimea on October 9-10, to get the Chinese to change their minds. On October 13 Mao informed Soviet Ambassador Roshchin that China would send troops to Korea.[25]

China's entry into the war immediately altered the balance of power on the Korean battlefield. With Mao's approval, Marshal Peng Dehuai adopted a strategy of inducing the enemy troops to march forward and then eliminating them by superior forces striking from their rear and on their flanks. On October 25, the Chinese People's Volunteers (CPV) initiated its first campaign in Korea, suddenly attacking South Korean troops in the Unsan area. In twelve days, South Korean troops were forced to retreat from areas close to the Yalu to the Chongchun River. Starting on November 25, Chinese troops began a vigorous counteroffensive. Under tremendous pressure, US/UN troops had to undertake what Jonathan Pollack has called "the most infamous retreat in American military history."[26] By mid-December, the CPV and the reorganized Korean People's Army (KPA) troops had regained control of nearly all North Korean territory.[27]

After thirty-seven months of fighting, the United States suffered 137,250 casualties—36,940 killed in action; 92,134 wounded; 3,737 missing in action; and 4,439 prisoners of war.[28] The South Koreans lost 400,000 troops, with a huge civilian loss as well; and combined North

Korean and Chinese casualties were close to two million. Property damage on both sides of the DMZ was enormous. The destructive U.S. bombing of North Korea left almost nothing standing anywhere in the country. The war, therefore, left North Koreans with enormous fear, resentment and hatred of the United States, which has been exacerbated by the continued presence of UN/US forces in South Korea. The war was the defining event of North Korean identity formation. Whereas the 1950 invasion etched into the minds of the American policymaker and public an image of North Koreans as aggressive communists who must be deterred and stopped at any cost, North Koreans view the United States intervention in the Korean War and subsequent military presence on the Korean peninsula as yet another example of great-power interference in Korean affairs. More than two decades after the end of the Cold War, the United States and North Korea remain technically at war and mired in Cold War ideological conflict.

At long last, the Korean War was brought to an inconclusive end (armistice), signed at Panmunjom on July 27, 1953 largely through Beijing's diplomatic efforts after Stalin's death, with the Kremlin being paralyzed by a serious succession crisis.[29] China wanted to reach a negotiated settlement by late 1952 but was unable to bring Stalin around to its position. From Stalin's perspective, the protracted war and stalemate produced multiple geostrategic advantages and benefits for the Soviet Union. It tied down American forces while providing first-hand intelligence on American military capabilities. It drained American economic and political resources, making Washington much less likely to launch a full-scale war against the Soviet Union. Above all, it deepened Beijing's dependence on Soviet political, military and economic assistance, thus lessening "the danger that Mao would follow the path of Marshal Tito in Yugoslavia, an eventually that ranked among Stalin's greatest fears, second only, perhaps, to a premature war with the US."[30]

By any reckoning the Korean War was the single greatest system-transforming event in the early post–World War II era, with the far-reaching catalytic effects of enacting the rules of the Cold War zero-sum game as well as congealing the patterns of East–West conflict across East Asia and beyond. It was the Korean War that brought about such defining features of the Cold War as high military budgets (e.g., a quadrupling of U.S. defense expenditures), and the crystallization of East–West conflict into a rigid strategic culture dependent on a Manichean vision of stark bipolarity.[31] In addition the Cold War sparked the proliferation of U.S. bilateral alliance treaties with Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, South Vietnam, the Philippines, and Thailand—hub and

spokes of the San Francisco System—as well as an ill-conceived and short-lived multilateral security organization, the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). And yet, by dint of its timing, its course, and its outcome, as the diplomatic historian William Stueck argues, "the Korean War served in many ways as a substitute for World War III."[32] This notion of the Korean War as a proxy for a World War III is supported by recently available Russian archival sources.[33]

The parameters for managing a superpower conflict established by the two sides during this war remained in force for the rest of the Cold War. Similarly, both the Sino-Soviet alliance and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), created shortly before war began in Korea, took concrete shape in the course of this first hot civil-cum-international war. And the Korean War provided the concrete content and shape for the Sino-Soviet relationship that the Moscow summit had failed to produce.[34] Beijing also believed that the SSA was one of the crucial factors that prevented U.S. extension of the Korean War into Chinese territory. Indeed, the SSA not only covered Beijing's backbone and helped the CPV through the Korean War without the conflict spreading to its territory. Even after the war, the alliance provided both protection and prestige as Beijing launched its diplomatic debut at the 1955 Bandung Conference of Afro-Asian newly independent countries.[35]

The drawn-out negotiations in Korea, lasting from July 1951 to July 1953, led many within the U.S. government to conclude that negotiations with Communists were pointless and perhaps even self-defeating, a stance that contributed to the militarization of U.S. containment policy. President Eisenhower was anxious to wrap up the 1953 Korean negotiations as quickly as possible and he threatened to use nuclear weapons against China if the prisoner repatriation issue was not resolved promptly. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, along with Eisenhower, long held that it was this nuclear threat that pushed China to a breakthrough in the negotiations, and this claim had a long-term effect on U.S. thinking on "nuclear diplomacy."[36]

The two superpowers loomed large in the conception, development, and final success of the Chinese bomb. U.S. nuclear threats were an initial catalyst for engendering the national will and consensus that in a nuclear world China without the bomb does not count or could not really stand up. This national will was well reflected in Foreign Minister Chen Yi's statement that China had to build the bomb at any cost, "even if the Chinese had to pawn their trousers."[37] Beijing's nuclear quest dovetailed its changing relations with Moscow, evolving from dependency (1955-1958) to interdependency (1959-1960) and finally to self-reliance (1960-1964). North Korea's nuclear strategy too has been significantly shaped

by perceived U.S. nuclear threats since the early 1950s, portending quest for a self-reliant existential nuclear deterrent for the DPRK.[38]

Particularly significant, but not sufficiently acknowledged, is the role of the Korean War in the creation of Cold-War identity in Northeast Asia and beyond.[39] For both Koreas, the experience of the Korean War initiated a decisive shift in identity politics from the competition of multiple identities to the dominance of the Cold-War identity. While the Korean War accelerated and completed the process of Cold-War identity construction, decades later the end of the Cold War and the collapse and transformation of the communist world failed to turn inter-Korean identity politics around.

The United States, too, owes to the Korean War the crystallization of its Cold-War identity, which in turn gave birth to an American strategic culture that thrived on a Manichaean vision of global bipolarity and the omnipresent communist threat. Similarly, until the latter half of the 1980s, Soviet strategic culture was anchored in and thrived on its own Cold-War identity. The simplicity of a stark bipolarized worldview provided an indispensable counterpoint to the quest for superpower identity and security in the region dominated by American hegemony. It is worth noting in this connection that some elements of U.S.-USSR rivalry during the Cold War had more to do with the promotion of national identity as status competition than with the promotion of any identifiable "national interest."

As for China, although its troops suffered huge casualties in the Korean War, Beijing succeeded in forcing the strongest superpower on earth to compromise in Korea and to accept China's representatives as equals at the bargaining table. No one in the West would ever again dismiss China's power as General MacArthur had in the fall of 1950. Indeed, the Korean War confirmed for the national self and "significant others" that China could stand up against the world's antisocialist superpower for the integrity of its new national identity as a revolutionary socialist state. In reviewing fifty years of Chinese diplomacy, Beijing still calls the Korean War a war of aggression launched by the imperialists to strangle the new People's Republic. The Chinese performance in Korea is still publicly exalted as "a world miracle in which the weak vanquished the strong," even as "the signing of the Korean armistice rewrote the history of Chinese diplomatic negotiations which [prior to the coming of the PRC] had always ended with sacrifice of China's national interests."[40] By successfully forcing the strongest nation on earth to compromise in Korea and to accept China's representatives as equals at the bargaining table, Beijing had successfully overcome the hundred years of national humiliation (from

the 1840s to 1940s) and its appropriated national identity as the "Sick Man of Asia."

The newly established People's Republic of China almost single-handedly rescued Kim Il Sung's regime from extinction, but at inordinate material, human, and political cost. In addition to over 740,000 casualties[41]—including Mao's eldest son, Anying—China missed the opportunity to "liberate" Taiwan, was excluded from the United Nations for more than two decades, and lost twenty years in its modernization drive. On the other hand, China's performance in Korea was also a source of heightened stature and influence in world politics. Sino-DPRK relations were consolidated in November 1953 when Kim Il Sung led a large delegation to Beijing and negotiated agreements for long-term military, economic, and cultural cooperation. Beijing promised $200 million in aid for reconstruction during the next three years, only $50 million less than committed by Moscow.[42] In addition, Chinese troops remained in North Korea for five years following the war, helping with reconstruction projects.

During the long Cold War years, Chinese leaders reiterated the immutability of their "militant friendship" with North Korea. Premier Zhou Enlai and Marshall Zhu De used the metaphor of the closeness of "lips and teeth" to describe the strategic importance of Korea to China as a cordon sanitaire against hostile external power.[43] The militant revolutionary "alliance sealed in blood" (xiemeng) during the Korean War, formalized in a 1961 treaty, sustained China's one-Korea (pro-Pyongyang) policy for more than three decades.

Despite or perhaps because of the extreme dependence on the Soviet Union in the preparation of North Korea's invasion, the balance of great-power influence shifted from Moscow to Beijing, due in no small measure to the Chinese intervention in October 1950. The deepening Sino-Soviet conflict gave Kim Il Sung more leverage opportunities and space than could be realistically considered under the Sino-Soviet alliance. The Soviet army that had successfully maneuvered Kim Il Sung into power failed to return, while the CPV intervened to rescue the fledgling socialist regime on the verge of collapse and stayed on until 1958, marking the end of Soviet domination and the beginning of Chinese influence.

The Korean War crystallized the bifurcation of China-Korea relations into two pairs: North Korea with the People's Republic on the one hand and South Korea with Nationalist China (Taiwan) on the other, so that Cold-War tensions first across the Korean de-militarized zone (DMZ) and second across the Taiwan Strait constantly reinforced one another and were pulled into the orbit of US-USSR rivalry and became

its ideological derivatives.[44] It remained an unspoken geostrategic assumption that each of the two Chinas and each of the two Koreas would of necessity align with one or the other superpower. The triangular relationship among North Korea, South Korea, and China during the 1950s was thus characterized by amity on one side of the triangle (between China and North Korea) with enmity on the other two sides (between South Korea and each of the other two). The global ideological-strategic context calcified these dynamics as the U.S.-USSR rivalry allowed little running room for Sino-ROK rapprochement.[45]

The Unraveling of the Sino-Soviet Alliance

One of the many unexpected and paradoxical consequences of the Korean War was that the Sino-Soviet alliance was greatly strengthened in the short run and weakened in the long run. The alliance received a shot in the arm from China's intervention in the Korean War, consolidating the Moscow-Beijing axis on a foundation of shared values and shared fears. The war against American troops in Korea shaped and cemented the alliance in ways that neither Beijing nor Moscow could have predicted in 1950. By creating a sense of accomplishment on the Chinese side and a sense of socialist solidarity with the Soviet Union that had stood by them, the Korean War bolstered the relationship between the People's Republic and the Soviet Union.[46]

The years of 1953 to 1956, in retrospect, should be regarded as a golden age of the Sino-Soviet alliance. During this short-lived honeymoon period, the scope of Soviet economic, technological, and nuclear aid increased considerably. More than 10,000 Soviet specialists were sent to China, while some 10,000 Chinese engineers, technicians, and skilled workers, and about 1,000 advanced scientists received further training in the Soviet Union. In 1959, a year that saw the biggest increase in Sino-Soviet trade, nearly 50 percent of China's total trade was with the USSR.[47]

At least up to Khrushchev's de-Stalinization speech at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in 1956, Beijing's publicly proclaimed policy was one of setting in motion a tidal wave of learning from the Soviet Union, as made manifest in an editorial from Renmin Ribao (People's Daily, Beijing):

> To industrialize our country, the primary issue before us is to learn from the Soviet Union. . . . we must get going a tidal wave of learning from the Soviet Union on a nationwide scale, in order to build up our country . . . "follow the path of the Russians."[48]

We find Khrushchev resisting—and yielding to—Chinese pressures

for more aid with the plea that the Soviet Union was still "hungry and poverty-ridden from the war" [World War II] and Mao demanding—and resenting—more Soviet aid. Paradoxically, the rise of substantial Soviet aid in the post-Stalin years was a consequence of China's increased self-confidence and greater political and ideological leverage in Communist intra-bloc politics. Yet such a relationship with an uneven distribution of costs and benefits could not persist too long. In Beijing's eye, Moscow by 1959 had failed to meet expected alliance obligations (indeed, litmus tests) in the second Taiwan Strait crisis, the Sino-Indian conflict, and a united front against American imperialism. Symbolically and strategically, the "perfidious" Soviet letter of June 20, 1959, in which Moscow cancelled the 1957 Defense Technical Accord, marks the rupturing of the "spinal cord" of the alliance. All subsequent attempts to put the alliance back on track proved to be of no avail.

The Sino-Soviet conflict was a drawn-out process, evolving by fits and starts in several phases before its purported final rupture in 1964. Khrushchev's de-Stalinization speech opened a Pandora's box, introducing polycentric tendencies to a Communist world hitherto united by the ultimate ideological authority and supreme leadership in the Kremlin. In addition, Khrushchev introduced several doctrinal innovations (e.g., the demise of the inevitability of war and peaceful coexistence as the general foreign policy line) that would fuel the Sino-Soviet conflict for the next twenty years. Still, Sino-Soviet disputes between 1956 and 1960 were largely confined to esoteric intra-bloc communications. From 1960 onward, the dispute began to escalate from ideological to national security issues, reaching the point of no return by early 1964. On February 4, 1964, Beijing publicly accused Moscow of having violated the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance with the unilateral decision to withdraw (in 1960) 1,390 Soviet experts working in China, to tear up 343 main and supplementary contracts on the employment of experts, and to cancel 257 projects of scientific and technical cooperation.

The official Chinese account from 1964 to 1965 (and also in the post—Mao era) generally accepts the Twentieth CPSU Congress in 1956 as "the root from which stems all the evils done by the Khrushchev revisionists" and situates the main causes of the split in (1) Soviet demands that would have harmed Chinese sovereignty (meaning Khrushchev’s request to set up a Sino-Soviet joint fleet and radio station for Soviet submarines in the Pacific in 1958), (2) Soviet hegemonic behavior in the management of inter-socialist relations within the Communist bloc, and (3) Soviet pressures and sanctions against China, ranging from breaching contracts, withdrawing experts, and pressing for

the repayment of debts to beefing up military forces along the border.

Against this backdrop, the Chinese started publically expressing their suppressed resentment and views on a host of issues, especially on the burden sharing and equal partnership during the Korean War. The demand that China pay for all the military support Beijing had received during the war made the Soviets seem more like arms merchants than genuine socialist bloc allies, especially compared to what the United States had done for its junior allies during the first decade of the Cold War. In 1964, Beijing made known its suppressed views on the Soviet "burden sharing" during the war: "We made tremendous sacrifices and spent enormous sums of money for military purposes . . . We have paid all the principal and the interest on the Soviet loans we obtained at that time, and they account for a major proportion of our exports to the Soviet Union. In other words, the military supplies provided China during the 'Rest America, Aid Korea' war were not free aid."[49] Beijing also revealed that of a total of $1.34 billion borrowed in the 1950s, fifty percent was incurred during the Korean War and that many of the weapons sold were out of date. The total cost of the war to the Chinese was $10 billion.[50]

Even during the heyday of Sino-Soviet bloc solidarity, Mao and his close comrades were uncomfortable with its appropriated identity as the junior partner in asymmetrical alliance relationship with Stalin. As Chen Jian and Yang Kuisong argue, in the wake of Stalin's death in 1953, "Beijing's pursuit of an elusive 'equality' would cause friction with the new Soviet leadership."[51]

The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, the 1969 Sino-Soviet military clashes on Zhenbao Island, and the ensuing Soviet threat to launch a preventive attack on Chinese nuclear installations refocused minds in Beijing and Washington on fresh strategic thinking about the changing correlation of forces in Northeast Asia. This transformation led China to abandon the dual-adversary policy as it sought to improve U.S.-Chinese relations in order to offset the escalating Soviet threat.[52]

With Sino-Soviet conflict escalating to military clashes and border war in 1969, Moscow took several measures to isolate China, including the not-so-subtle hint at the possibility of a nuclear strike, the anti-China proposal for an Asian Collective Security System, and the 1971 treaty with India.[53] Meanwhile, China was seeking strategic alignment with the United States to balance against the Soviet Union even as the United States was seeking an exit from the quagmire of the Vietnam War. Thus, the rise and fall of the strategic triangle (tripolarity) was closely keyed to the rise and decline of Soviet power relative to that of the United States.[54]

Throughout the 1960s, both Beijing and Moscow were too preoccupied in fratricidal polemics, geostrategic tit for tat schemes, an intense arms race and border fortification, and occasional border violence to be able to pay much attention to the U.S.-ROK security alliance. While the United States still remained "the invisible third partner" in Sino-Soviet relations, after 1958 the U.S. factor became secondary to the Sino-Soviet dispute.[55] Beijing's "relations" with South Korea remained antagonistic due to the enmity generated during the Korean War as well as by South Korea's staunch anti-Communist stance. China stressed a special relationship with North Korea, except during the heyday of the Cultural Revolution (1967-69), one that was often dubbed an "alliance sealed in blood" (xiemeng). On the other hand, South Korea sustained a very amicable relationship with Taiwan, China's archenemy, not only through their firm commitment to the USROKA but also via close personal ties between Jiang Jieshi and Syngman Rhee and Park Chung Hee.[56]

The Sino-American rapprochement in 1970–1972—also known as the "Nixon in China Shock" in much of Asia, especially in Japan—came to serve as the chief catalyst (and a force multiplier) for China's belated grand entry into the United Nations and UN Security Council as one of the five permanent members in late 1971. By 1978 bipolarity had been not so much destroyed—at least not yet—as shifted and mutated into a U.S.-Soviet-China strategic triangle. For all practical purposes the Cold War was almost over by the late 1970s but it would take the 1989 Sino-Soviet summit and renormalization to deliver the final blow. On April 3, 1980 the Sino-Soviet alliance treaty formally expired, three months after U.S. Defense Secretary Harold Brown visited Beijing, where he suggested that China and the United States planned to "facilitate wide cooperation on security matters" in order to remind others that "if they threaten the shared interests of the United States and China, we can respond with complementary actions in the field of defense as well as diplomacy." A quasi-alliance seemed at that stage to have come into being, even as outgoing Carter administration officials were suggesting that discussions with the Chinese on military matters had become "almost like talking to an ally."[57]

During most of the Cold War, Beijing and Moscow had virtually no ideological or strategic space in which to deviate from the special relationship with Pyongyang. However, with the ascendancy of Deng Xiaoping as China's paramount leader at the historical Third Plenum in December 1978, his "reform and opening policy" in 1979, and then his inauguration of "an independent foreign policy line" in 1982, Beijing's

one-Korea policy began to be “de-ideologized,” if not completely decoupled from the great-power dynamics.

The Rise of Sino-Russian Strategic Partnership[58]

Gorbachev’s Soviet Union was the single greatest factor in the reshaping of China’s strategic context for the two-Koreas decision in at least three separate but mutually inter-penetrable ways—the end of Cold War bipolarity, Sino-Soviet renormalization, and Soviet-ROK normalization with the consequent removal of a possible Soviet veto standing in the way of Seoul’s "long march" and grand entry into the United Nations. By addressing nearly all of Chinese and American security concerns through a series of unprecedented unilateral actions, Gorbachev removed beyond recall the strategic raison d'être of the Sino-Soviet-U.S. triangle. “All of this had happened by 1990,” as Robert Levgold aptly put it, “two years before the collapse of the Soviet Union, and largely as the result of the revolution that Gorbachev brought about in his country's foreign policy. . . . In the end, the demise of the triangle, which had been a profound manifestation of the old order, became one of the profoundest manifestations of its passing."[59]

When the Sino-Soviet conflict ended so did the logic of the strategic triangle in global politics and Sino-Soviet competition in North Korea. The rapid progress in Moscow-Seoul relations, coupled with an equally rapid decompression of Moscow-Pyongyang relations has taken the sting out of the long-standing ideological and geopolitical Sino-Soviet rivalry over North Korea. On September 1, 1990, for example, Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen and Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze agreed following their extensive behind-the-scenes discussion in the city of Harbin that "without a solution to the Korean Peninsula question, it is impossible to achieve genuine security and stability in Northeast Asia" and that "the dialogue between North and South parts of Korea is important in the easing of the tensions."[60] Previously, ever since the deepening of the Sino-Soviet conflict from the early 1960s to the mid-1980s, Kim Il Sung opted for the strategy of making a virtue of necessity by pursuing an indeterminate line. Indeed, central to North Korea's independent foreign policy was Kim Il Sung's extraordinary ability to manipulate his country's relations with China and the Soviet Union in a flexible and self-serving way, always attempting to extract maximum payoffs in economic, technical, and military aid but never completely casting his lot with one at the expense of the other. However, the end of Cold War bipolarity has meant that Pyongyang's leverage in Moscow and Beijing has substantially dissipated.

A significant shift has also occurred in Moscow's attitudes toward

the U.S. military presence in South Korea. Some politicians even argued that U.S. troops played a deterrent role against a flare-up of an uncontrollable conflict between the two Koreas while at the same helping to limit or constrain Japanese military expenditures. Unlike in the past, Gorbachev's Soviet Union started to advance its own ideas for a settlement. Untying the Korean knot became an important foreign policy goal. By the time Gorbachev went to China in May 1989 to fully normalize relations, there remained virtually no traces of Sino-Soviet competition over North Korea.[61] As well, there occurred a new turning point in Moscow's strategic perceptions of the two Koreas in the mid-1990s following changes inside Russia—the Chechen war and the rise of nationalism. That said, however, the Kremlin still views the situation on the Korean peninsula in the context of its regional and global relations with China and the United States.[62]

Paradoxically, the two great continental powers that had never been able to agree on the same Marxist ideology now found it both desirable and feasible to forge a new post-Cold War "strategic partnership," despite or perhaps because of the absence of shared ideological precepts. This was first proposed in the form of a "constructive partnership" by Yeltsin in September 1994 at the inaugural presidential summit in Moscow; it was then elevated to a "strategic partnership for the twenty-first century" during Yeltsin's April 1996 summit in Beijing, unsurprisingly in the wake of China's confrontation with the United States over Taiwan and in the context of President Clinton's reaffirmation of a strengthened Japanese-American security alliance, and finally formalized in a "Treaty of Good Neighborly Friendship and Cooperation" in July 2001 (reportedly at Beijing's initiative).[63]

What's in, of, and by the Sino-Russian strategic partnership (SRSP)? According to Li Jingjie, the director of the East European, Russian, and Central Asian Studies Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) in Beijing, the SRSP is not confrontational, not an alliance, not a united front, and is not directed against any third country. Rather, it is "a long-term, stable, mutually cooperative relationship based on the principles of peaceful coexistence."[64] In fact, Chinese and Russian leaders repeatedly assert that they reject all military alliances as Cold War relics and that their strategic partnership does not hinder the development of cooperative relationship with other countries including the United States.[65] On the day that South Korean President Lee Myung-bak arrived in Beijing to establish a Sino–South Korean "strategic partnership," for instance, the spokesman for the Chinese foreign ministry remarked, "The Korean-U.S. alliance is a historical relic. . . . We should not approach current security issues with military alliances

left over from the past Cold War era."[66] Such a characterization of America's Cold War alliances in general and the U.S.-Japan alliance in particular has become Beijing's standard rhetoric or practice in the post-Cold War era, as it has emphasized the necessity of leaving behind the military alliance mindsets in favor of a more cooperative regional and global multilateral security model.[67]

The SRSP is said to necessitate discarding Cold-War logic and replacing it with a new security outlook and model. Thus, China and Russia have successfully resolved their long-standing border dispute following officially recognized international law principles, and in a spirit of give-and-take signed, in May 1991 and September 1994, two agreements regarding their mutual borders. In November 1998 China and Russia declared that following the conclusion of the boundary demarcation work on the eastern and western sections, the countries had precisely demarcated their borders for the first time in their history.

Since China and Russia emphasize economic development and reform to enhance domestic stability and legitimacy, they do require a peaceful external environment free of threats to their sovereignty and territorial integrity, especially on their borders. They have no choice but to work together to transform their "near abroad" environment safe and peaceful. Since 1992 dozens of Beijing-Moscow summit meetings and high-level diplomatic meetings have produced numerous geostrategic and geoeconomic agreements, including one to delimit the eastern borders and initiate border demarcation (1991); the Five-Year Military Cooperation Pact (1993); an agreement on mutual nonaggression, mutual detargeting of strategic weapons, and no first use of nuclear force (1994); and agreements on trade, oil and gas development, and cultural cooperation in 1997. Russia and China also joined in opposing NATO expansion, U.S. withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, the U.S. missile defense program, humanitarian interventions, expanded 1997 guidelines of the Japanese-American security alliance, and participation of the Central Asian republics in NATO's Partnership for Peace and joint military exercises.[68]

The SRSP is also said to be the joint pursuit of "a multipolar, just, and rational international order, which is to say common opposition to the present (U.S.-dominated) "unipolar world." Both countries seek to strengthen the role of the United Nations and oppose any attempts to use any other international organization to replace it. From 1995 to 1996 Moscow came to realize that any true strategic partnership with the United States and any promised economic assistance were illusory. The United States on the one hand strove to support Russia's market reform and democratization process and on the other tended to view Russia as a

latent threat that should be mitigated through an expansion of NATO. China in that period was similarly viewed by the United States as posing a latent threat, one that must be hard balanced by strengthening U.S.-Japan alliance, even while comprehensive engagement with China was propounded. American foreign policy thus presented Moscow and Beijing with the same strategic challenge, as was noted and acted out in a meeting between Jiang Zemin and the Russian foreign minister as they recognized their common interest in "opposing hegemonism and supporting the direction of world peace. In short, the accelerated development of contradictions and the sudden collapse of "the revolution of high expectations" in the Russo-American relationship brought the Sino-Russian strategic partnership into existence.[69]

If the Sino-Russian strategic partnership is not a hard balancing alliance, what is it? With its emerging influence and growth in soft power, China's relationships with the rest of the world have undergone subtle but significant transformations. Soft balancing is a distinctively post–Cold War and post-9/11 concept.[70] Since the coming of the ABC (All But Clinton) administration with its unilateral triumphalism, second-tier major powers such as China, France, Germany, India, and Russia have abandoned traditional "hard balancing" based on countervailing alliances and arms buildups. Instead, second-ranking major powers, especially China and Russia, have adopted "soft balancing" strategies through coalition building and diplomatic bargaining within regional and global multilateral institutions—mainly within the United Nations—to constrain the power as well as the threatening behavior of the United States as a sole superpower.

This was part of a broader trend for the United States in reconstructing its post–Cold War national identity as a lonely superpower. As Samuel Huntington observed in 1999 in a trenchant critique of creeping U.S. unilateralism, "On issue after issue, the United States has found itself increasingly alone, with one or a few partners, opposing most of the rest of the world's states and peoples. … On these and other issues, much of the international community is on one side and the United States is on the other."[71] Although Huntington spoke of tendencies present in the 1990s during the Clinton administration, it was not until the election of George W. Bush that U.S. unilateralism became a fully refurbished national identity as well as a fully deployed weapon of American exceptionalism. In its first two years, guided by runaway unilateralism-cum-exceptionalism, the Bush Administration decided to trash multilateral treaties and treaties-in-the-making one after another: the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the Land Mine Treaty,

the Kyoto Protocol, the treaty to establish the International Criminal Court (ICC), the Geneva Conventions, and a draft treaty on international small arms sales. In May 2002, the Bush Administration took the unprecedented step of "unsigning" the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court by informing the U.N. Secretary-General of its decision not to be party to the treaty, claiming that the United States had no legal obligation arising from President Clinton's signature on December 31, 2000. In short, the Bush administration exemplifies in extreme form the notion of American exceptionalism that is often presented as an aspect of a newly minted U.S. national identity.

There is little doubt that China is challenging—and soft balancing against—U.S. unilateral triumphalism. Active Chinese participation in regional and global multilateral institutions represents a growing recognition that the U.S. unilateral, hegemonic world order can best be constrained through the soft forces of globalization and multilateralism.[72] Against this backdrop the Sino-Russian strategic partnership converged on the notion of soft balancing as more cost-effective ways and means of constraining U.S. power without harming their multidimensional economic ties with the world's greatest economic power. The veto power that both China and Russia hold in the UN Security Council is "pivotal to this strategy" as it denies the UN's collective legitimation of U.S.-led interventions.[73]

Unlike Russia, however, China and the United States are joined at the hip as Beijing holds nearly $800 billion of U.S. treasury bonds even as the United States remains China's largest export market. China's relative immunity to the world's pernicious economic woes since 2008 and the evident symbiotic relationship between the Chinese and U.S. economies are giving rise to much talk of a shift from U.S. dominance to a new multipolar or U.S.-China bipolar era. The United States has already become China's most important trade partner, accounting for ten times as much trade as with Russia. With such limited and uneven economic stakes, and without mutually agreed strategic objectives or common foes, just how powerful can this strategic partnership be in the uncertain years ahead?

In short, balance of power theory, rooted in hard-balancing strategies such as arms buildups and alliance formation, does not seem to explain the current Sino-Russian strategic partnership behavior. And yet, the Sino-Russian strategic partnership has widened and deepened, leading some scholars to call the first decade of the post–Cold War era the best period in the checkered history of Beijing-Moscow relations.[74]

Conclusion

Many key events of the Cold War center on the relationship between China and the Soviet Union. First, the Sino-Soviet alliance was a key event—perhaps the key event—in redefining and reshaping the global strategic parameters of the first half of the Cold War in general and the Korean War in particular. Then the Sino-Soviet split played a similar role in redefining and reshaping the global strategic parameters of the second half of the Cold War in general and the Second Vietnam War in particular. And following the Cold War the Sino-Russian strategic partnership seemed made ready to play a key role in the shaping of a post-Cold War world order.

What is most striking about the Sino-Soviet and Sino-Russian relations over the years is the extent to which the United States has remained the most crucial factor—the invisible third partner—in the rise of the Sino-Soviet alliance, while the U.S.-ROK security alliance, at least the South Korean component, remained largely a secondary derivative variable. Throughout the 1960s, both Beijing and Moscow were too preoccupied with managing or fueling the Sino-Soviet conflict to be able to pay much attention to the U.S.-ROK security alliance. While the United States still remained "the invisible third partner" in Sino-Soviet relations, after 1958 the U.S. factor became secondary to the Sino-Soviet dispute. Sino-Russian rapprochement-cum-renormalization leading to the strategic partnership and joint soft balancing is among the most paradoxical developments of the post-Cold War era, seemingly turning the wheel of Beijing-Moscow relationship full circle.

And yet, the Sino-Russian strategic partnership or soft balancing is not preprogrammed destiny. As shown in all the twists and turns on the turbulent trajectory of the Sino-Soviet and Sino-Russian relationship over the years, alliance or alignment behavior as well as hard balancing and soft balancing is highly contingent and contextual. Alliances play functions other than balancing; they may serve as instruments for binding, restraining and managing junior members. Common ideology may sustain alliances but only as long as the ideological tenets do not themselves become a contentious issue. The Sino-Russian strategic partnership cannot help but lie within wider and deeper geostrategic contexts in East Asia with its hub-and-spokes San Francisco system firmly in place.

Most ironic and revealing in the final analysis is that if the United States as the invisible third partner has driven Beijing and Moscow into a closer strategic partnership and joint soft balancing, it could as easily prize them apart by pulling out all the stops. After all, Beijing and

Moscow, especially the former, have a major economic stake in cooperating with the United States as the world's largest economy.

Notes:

[1] Ole R. Holsti, "Military Alliances," in Mary Hawkesworth and Maurice Kogan, eds. *Encyclopedia of Government and Politics,* vol. 2, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 1012.

[2] According to article 6, "the present treaty will be valid for thirty years. If neither of the contracting parties gives notice one year before the expiration of this term of its desire to renounce the treaty, it shall remain in force for another five years." Hence, the 30-year treaty formally expired on April 3, 1980. For an English text of the treaty, see Jerome Alan Cohen and Hungdah Chiu, *People's China and International Law: A Documentary Study,* vol. 2 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1974), pp. 1166-1167.

[3] The *locus classicus* on this subject is Lowell Dittmer, *Sino-Soviet Normalization and Its International Implications, 1945-1990* (Seattle, Wash.: University of Washington Press, 1992).

[4] See Sergei N. Goncharov, John W. Lewis, and Xue Litai, *Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao, and the Korean War* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993); Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War: The Making of the Sino-American Confrontation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); Odd A. Westad, ed., *Brothers in Arms: The Rise and Fall of the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1945-1963* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998)*;* and Lorenz M. Luthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008).

[5] Mao's lean-to-one-side policy statement reads in part: "Externally, unite in a common struggle with those nations of the world which treat us as equal and unite with the peoples of all countries. That is, ally ourselves with the Soviet Union, with the People's Democratic Countries, and with the proletariat and the broad masses of the people in all other countries." Cited in Chen Jian and Yang Kuisong, "Chinese Politics and the Collapse of the Sino-Soviet Alliance," in Westad, ed. *Brothers in Arms,* p. 247.

[6] Dittmer, *Sino-Soviet Normalization and Its International Implications,* p. 164.

[7] Odd A. Westad, "The Sino-Soviet Alliance and the United States," in Westad, ed. *Brothers in Arms,* p. 170.

[8] See "Record of Conversation, Stalin and Mao Zedong, December 16, 1949," ibid., p. 314.

[9] Goncharov, Lewis, and Xue, *Uncertain Partners,* pp. 104, 217.

[10] Westad, "The Sino-Soviet Alliance and the United States," pp. 167-170.

[11] Luthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split,* pp. 33-34.

[12] Stephen Kotkin and Charles K. Armstrong, "A Socialist Regional Order in Northeast Asia after World War II," in Charles K. Armstrong et al., eds., *Korea at the Center: Dynamics of Regionalism in Northeast Asia* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 2006), p. 112.

[13] Ibid., p. 112.

[14] Goncharov, Lewis, and Xue, *Uncertain Partners*, p. 213.

[15] Odd A. Westad, "Introduction," in Westad, ed. *Brothers in Arms*, p. 11; see also Shu Guang Zhang, "Sino-Soviet Economic Cooperation," ibid., pp. 189-225.

[16] Ted Hopf, "Identity Relations and the Sino-Soviet Split," in Rawi Abdelal et al., eds., *Measuring Identity: A Guide for Social Scientists* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 304.

[17] Westad "Introduction," pp. 1-2; Rosemary Foot, *The Practice of Power: US Relations with China since 1949* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), p. 115.

[18] Ibid., pp. 114-115.

[19] Cited in Westad, "Introduction," p. 2.

[20] Kathryn Weathersby, "To Attack or Not to Attack? Stalin, Kim Il Sung, and the Prelude to War," *Bulletin of Cold War International History Project*, vol. 5 (1995), pp. 1-9; Kathryn Weathersby, "The Korean War Revisited," *The Wilson Quarterly*, vol. 23, No. 3 (Summer, 1999), pp. 91-95. See also Goncharov, Lewis, and Xue, *Uncertain Partners*, pp. 150-151, 213; Chen and Yang, "Chinese Politics and the Collapse of the Sino-Soviet Alliance," pp. 250-251; and Westad, "The Sino-Soviet Alliance and the United States," p. 171.

[21] Weathersby, "The Korean War Revisited," p. 93.

[22] Niu Jun, "The Origins of the Sino-Soviet Alliance," in Westad, ed., *Brothers in Arms*, pp. 47-89.

[23] Chen and Yang, "Chinese Politics and the Collapse of the Sino-Soviet Alliance," p. 252.

[24] Westad, "Introduction," p 13.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Jonathan D. Pollack, "The Korean War and Sino-American Relations," in *Sino-American Relations, 1945-1955: A Joint Assessment of a Critical Decade*, Harry Harding and Yuan Ming, eds. (Wilmington, Del.: SR Books, 1989), p. 224.

[27] Chen, *China's Road to the Korean War*, pp. 211-223.

[28] Ministry of National Defense, *ROK-US Alliance and USFK,* rev. ed. (Seoul: Ministry of National Defense 2008), p. 8.

[29] Mineo Nakajima, "Foreign Relations: from the Korean War to the Bandung Line," in Roderick MacFarquhar and John K. Fairbank, eds., *The People's Republic*, part 1: *The Emergence of Revolutionary China 1949-1965* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 281.

[30] Weathersby, "Stalin, Mao, and the End of the Korean War," in Westad. ed., *Brothers in Arms,* pp. 109-110.

[31] See Robert Jervis, "The Impact of the Korean War on the Cold War," *Journal of Conflict Resolution,* vol. 24, No. 4 (December, 1980), pp. 563-92.

[32] William Stueck, *The Korean War: An International History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press 1995), p. 3.

[33] Weathersby, "Stalin, Mao, and the End of the Korean War," p. 91.

[34] Westad, "Introduction," p. 12.

[35] Sergei Goncharenko, "Sino-Soviet Military Cooperation," in Westad, ed. *Brothers in Arms,* p. 145.

[36] Weathersby, "Stalin, Mao, and the End of the Korean War," p. 90.

[37] Cited in John Wilson Lewis and Xue Li-tai, *China Builds the Bomb* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1988), p. 130.

[38] For analysis along this line, see Samuel S. Kim, "North Korea's Nuclear Strategy and the Interface between International and Domestic Politics," *Asian Perspective,* vol. 34, No. 1 (2010), pp. 49-85.

[39] For a more detailed discussion along this line, see Samuel S. Kim, *The Two Koreas and the Great Powers* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 2-4, 49-52, 114-115, 239-242.

[40] *Renmin ribao* [People's Daily], September 3, 1999, p. 1.

[41] According to one official Chinese estimate, combat casualties were more than 360,000 (including 130,000 wounded) and noncombat casualties were more than 380,000. See Zhang Aiping, chief compiler, *Zhongguo Renmin Jiefang Jun* (China's People's Liberation Army), vol. 1, Contemporary China Series (Beijing: Dangdai Zhongguo Chubanshe, 1994), p. 137.

[42] Stueck, *The Korean War,* p. 362.

[43] David M. Lampton and Daniel Ewing, *The U.S.-China Relationship Facing International Security Crises: Three Case Studies in Post-9/11 Bilateral Relations* (Washington, D.C.: The Nixon Center, 2004), p. 45; Russell Spurr, *Enter the Dragon: China's Undeclared War against the U.S. in Korea, 1950-1951* (New York: Newmarket Press, 1988), pp. 62-63.

[44] See Jae Ho Chung, "Korea and China in Northeast Asia," in *Korea at the Center*, pp. 202-203.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Westad, "Introduction," p. 14.

[47] Shu Guang Zhang, "Sino-Soviet Economic Cooperation," pp. 202, 211.

[48] *Renmin ribao*, February 14, 1953.

[49] Nakajima, "Foreign Relations: From the Korean War to the Bandung Line," p. 277.

[50] Ibid., p. 278.

[51] Chen and Yang, "Chinese Politics and the Collapse of the Sino-Soviet Alliance," p. 259.

[52] For the contending explanations of the Sino-Soviet split, see Luthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split;* Allen S. Whiting, "The Sino-Soviet Split," in MacFarquhar and Fairbank, eds., *The People's Republic*, pp. 478-538; and Donald Zagoria, *The Sino-Soviet Conflict, 1956-1961* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992).

[53] Muthiah Alagappa, "International Politics in Asia: The Historical Context," in *Asian Security Practice: Material and Ideational Influences* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998), pp. 93-94.

[54] For the concept of "strategic triangle," see Lowell Dittmer, "The Strategic Triangle: An Elementary Game-Theoretical Analysis," *World Politics*, vol. 33, No. 4 (July, 1981), pp. 485-515. For the rise and fall of tripolarity, see Robert S. Ross, ed., *China, the United States, and the Soviet Union: Tripolarity and Policy Making in the Cold War* (Armond, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1993) and Dittmer, *Sino-Soviet Normalization and Its International Implications*, pp. 147-255.

[55] Whiting "The Sino-Soviet Split," p. 478.

[56] Chung, "Korea and China in Northeast Asia," pp. 203-204.

[57] Foot, *The Practice of Power*, p. 140.

[58] See Li Jingjie, "Pillars of the Sino-Russian Partnership," *Orbis*, vol. 44, No. 4 (Fall, 2000), pp. 527-539; Lowell Dittmer, "The Emerging Northeast Asian Regional Order," in Samuel S. Kim, ed., *The International Relations of Northeast Asia* (Boulder, Colo.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), pp. 331-362; and Lowell Dittmer, "The Sino-Russian Strategic Relationship: Ghost of the 'Strategic Triangle?'" in Yufan Hao et al., eds., *Challenges to Chinese Foreign Policy: Diplomacy, Globalization, and the Next World Power* (Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 2009), pp. 87-113.

[59] Robert Legvold, "Sino-Soviet Relations: The American Factor," in Robert S. Ross, ed., *China, the United States, and the Soviet Union: Tripolarity and Policymaking in the Cold War* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1993), p. 87.

[60] *Beijing Review* (September 17-23, 1990), pp. 12-13.

[61] Evgeny P. Bazhanov, "Korea in Russia's Post-Cold War Regional Political Context," in *Korea at the Center,* pp. 214-226; Evgeny P. Bazhanov, "Soviet Policy toward the Asia-Pacific Region: The 1980s," in Gilbert Rozman et al., eds., *Russian Strategic Thought toward Asia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2006), pp. 47-48.

[62] See Alexander Lukin, "The Russian Approach to China under Gorbachev, Yeltsin, and Putin," in *Russian Strategic Thought toward Asia,* pp. 139-166 and Vasily Mikheev, "Russian Strategic Thinking toward North and South Korea," ibid., pp. 187-204.

[63] Dittmer, "The Sino-Russian Strategic Relationship."

[64] Li, "Pillars of the Sino-Russian Partnership," p. 538.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Michael Ha, "Chinese Official Calls Korea-US Alliance 'Historical Relic,'" *Korea Times*, May 28, 2008.

[67] Scott Snyder, *China's Rise and the Two Koreas: Politics, Economics, Security* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2009), p. 175. See also Fei-ling Wang *Tacit Acceptance and Watchful Eyes: Beijing's Views about the U.S.-ROK Alliance* (Carlisle Barracks, Penna.: Strategic Studies Institute, January 24, 1997) and Robert Sutter, "China's Approach to the US-ROK Alliance--Background, Status, Outlook," *International Journal of Korean Studies*, vol. 10, No. 2 (Fall/Winter, 2006), pp. 125-142. For the single best book on China's security behavior in regional and global multilateral security institutions, see Alastair Iain Johnston, *Social States: China in International Institutions, 1980-2000* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008).

[68] Dittmer, "The Sino-Russian Strategic Relationship," pp. 96-97.

[69] Li, "Pillars of the Sino-Russian Partnership," p. 536.

[70] See Robert A. Pape, "Soft Balancing against the United States," *International Security*, vol. 30, No. 1 (Summer, 2005), pp. 7-45 and T. V. Paul, "Soft Balancing in the Age of U.S. Primacy," *International Security*, vol. 30, No. 1 (Summer, 2005), pp. 46-71.

[71] Samuel Huntington, "The Lonely Superpower," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 78, No. 2 (March/April, 1999), p. 41.

[72] Samuel S. Kim, "China and Globalization: Confronting Myriad Challenges and Opportunities," *Asian Perspective* vol. 33, No. 3 (2009), pp. 74-75.

[73] Paul, “Soft Balancing in the Age of U.S. Primacy,” pp. 58-59.

[74] Dittmer, “The Emerging Northeast Asian Regional Order," pp. 335-336 and Li, "Pillars of the Sino-Russian Partnership," pp. 538-539.

Cooperation of U.S. and South Korean Air and Ground Forces during the Korean War[1]

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ABSTRACT

An examination of the cooperation that existed between the air and ground forces of South Korea and the United States in the years leading up to the Korean War and in the early stages of the Korean War shows that there were many issues. The United Stated neither trained nor equipped the South Korean military with the forces or the equipment needed to defend itself against an attack from a well-trained and well-equipped North Korean People's Army. To be sure, there were also many readiness issues with U.S. forces The U.S. advisors to South Korea also lacked the language and cultural skills necessary to provide support to what was then an ally that was attempting to rebuild itself from the ravages of Japanese occupation and was struggling for legitimacy and survival. There are many lessons that can be learned today from this experience. Among them are better cultural understanding of an ally, better vision and planning for military forces, and improved cooperation at the highest levels of alliances.

Keywords: Korean War, NKPA, Soviet Union, Cold War, U.S.-ROK Alliance, South Korean Army, U.S. Army, U.S Air Force, U.S. Marine Corps, Military Readiness.

Introduction

The 60th anniversary of the Korean War marks an extremely important moment in American history. The Korean War was a wake-up call for American foreign policy. Despite the fact that World War II had been essentially a two-front war for Americans (Europe and Asia), much of the emphasis for supporting allies and for rebuilding nation-states went to Europe, not Asia (with Japan being the exception for obvious reasons). Americans knew very little about Korea—certainly far less than they do now. American government officials posted to Korea immediately after the war did not speak Korean for the most part, did not have a background or knowledge of Korea, and often did not even have background or experience in Asia at all.[2] This lack of knowledge—exhibited in both State Department and military personnel—would have an effect on cooperation between the United States and Korea as Washington looked to rebuilding a nation (partitioned artificially) ravaged by Japanese occupation and supporting a brand new government.

The focus of this article will be on cooperation between the air and ground forces of the United States and South Korea. As such, it will be necessary to focus on how the Americans helped to train and equip the forces of its ally. The only truly effective way to do this will be to conduct a "compare and contrast" of the key things that the Soviets did to prepare air and ground forces in North Korea, with an appropriate and matching analysis of how the United States did this with South Korean forces. I will not focus on all of the issues—and there are many. Rather, I will focus on what I consider to be some of the key issues involved in the training and equipping of the North Korean air force (NKAF) by the Soviets, and contrast that with how the United States did the same thing with the ROK air force (ROKAF). I will also compare and contrast how the Soviets trained and equipped (some of the key issues) the North Korean People's Army (NKPA), and contrast that with how the Americans trained and equipped the ROK army (ROKA), again focusing on what I believe to be some of the key issues.

While it is extremely important in my view to examine, compare, and contrast some of the key ways that the United States and the Soviet Union prepared (or failed to prepare) their allies in the North and South militarily, because much of the fighting throughout the entire war was carried out and led by American forces, it will be interesting to address the readiness and capabilities of U.S. forces in the years (1945-1950) before Washington obligated them to participate in the Korean War. Thus, I will examine the readiness for combat operations in Korea of

U.S. Air Force, Army, and Marine units. I will also discuss the role that U.S. airpower played in the early weeks of the war, and follow that up by conducting an examination of the role that U.S. ground power played in the early weeks and months of the war. I will complete my examination of the role of ground and air units by looking at how the United States "adjusted in mid-stream," or to be exact, how flexibility played a role in the war. The focus of this essay will be on the early phases of the war. Finally, I will conclude with some lessons learned from the Korean War for current and future warfare.

Soviet and U.S. Preparation of NKAF and ROKAF 1945-1950: A Sharp Contrast

The North Korean air force originally consisted of pilots who were either in Japanese or Chinese aviation units. It was originally founded as the Sinuiju air corps and the first class of 80 aviators graduated in 1946. In February 1948, the Korean Peoples Air Force (which I will continue to call NKAF throughout this paper) was formally established. From the very beginning, NKAF was trained and equipped by the USSR. Soviet advisers were involved in the training and indoctrination of North Korean officers and enlisted men from 1945 to 1949 (many North Korean pilots were also trained in the USSR). The Soviets began providing the Yak-20 and Po-2 trainers to the North Koreans by the end of 1948. By 1949, the training and equipping of the NKAF had truly intensified. The North Koreans were equipped with a small but efficient number of piston-driven aircraft. Key among these aircraft were the combat tested Il-10 attack aircraft, and the Yak-9 fighters. The North Koreans were also given numerous training, transport, and liaison aircraft. By 1950 as the North Korean government was gearing up for a full-scale war, the NKAF consisted of at least 210 aircraft, including at least 93 Il-10 attack aircraft, and 79 Yak-9 fighters. NKAF was organized into an air division (Soviet style), consisting of 2,200 men, and commanded by a major general.[3]

In sharp contrast to the focused build up, training, and equipping that the North Korean air force received from the Soviets, almost no formal training of ROKAF pilots was conducted by the United States between 1945-1950. In the years before the Korean War, the ROKAF only possessed 60 aircraft, all trainers: L-4's, L-5's, and T-6's. This rendered the ROKAF completely incapable of air interdiction, close air support, or strategic bombing missions. The very first aircraft that the ROKAF received that were capable of conducting any type of combat mission other than on an ad hoc basis were 10 P-51 fighters that they received from the U.S. Air Force in July of 1950.[4] Part of the problem for the

ROKAF was that President Truman refused to provide President Rhee with requested fighter and attack aircraft. Truman feared that a build-up of ROK combat power could lead to aspirations of an attack on the North.[5] Of course, the Soviets did not take this position with their North Korean allies. As stated above, the North Korean air force was given a small but effective air force that was then trained in Soviet doctrine and equipped with effective Soviet aircraft.

The results of the sharply contrasting styles that the United States and the Soviet Union used to deal with the two air forces of the divided Korean Peninsula were quite compelling. As North Korean attack aircraft swept down on South Korean military units, towns and cities, the South Korean air force literally had no fighters to interdict them. North Korean fighter aircraft were able to fly the skies over the entire peninsula limited only by the amount of fuel that they could carry. This also meant that South Korea could not provide close air support for its ground forces desperately trying to hold back North Korean forces driving down the Korean peninsula. This significantly enhanced the ability of NKAF not only to support its troops in offensive combat, but also to fly bombing missions against essentially unprotected South Korean towns, cities, industrial and agricultural centers, and military units. In short, the South Koreans had no real air force to speak of when war broke out in 1950, while the North Koreans had an air force capable of attack, fighter, and limited troops transport missions. This stark difference in capabilities led to an overwhelming advantage in airpower for North Korea in the early stages of the war before UN intervention.

More Sharp Contrast: The Equipping of ROK and North Korean Ground Forces

The reasons behind the philosophy and vision in the way the United States and the Soviet Union equipped the ground forces of their respective allies on the Korean Peninsula are really quite uncomplicated. The Soviet Union very quickly established a government in North Korea led by Kim Il-sung that was both brutal and well organized. It was centered on both the party and the military, and was based on an established ethos of men who had previously been guerrilla fighters against the Japanese during World War II.[6] In sharp contrast, the South Korean government was in many ways quite weak in the years from the end of World War II to the beginning of the Korean War in 1950. Those in government and in the military did not have the credibility of having fought against the Japanese as guerillas. In fact, during the early years of its occupation, the United States Army made the big mistake of placing former Japanese collaborators in positions both in the government and

the military.[7]

The poor initial decisions made by U.S personnel as they helped establish a government in South Korea were among the factors that led to a very weak, unstable government, and one that was not viewed as truly legitimate by much of the populace in the country. This was important in the interwar years on the Korean Peninsula. The government in North Korea ruled the country, initially with heavy advice and support from the USSR, and with a Soviet-style iron hand. Thus, the army could focus on building itself up (again with strong Soviet support) for offensive operations against the South. In sharp contrast, the government in South Korea was, almost from the beginning, beset with instability and even uprising problems. Thus the South Korean military was from 1945 to 1950 viewed by the United States as more of a police force to keep order below the 38th parallel and the help keep the government in power. As former ambassador to South Korea John C. Muccio has stated, "Well, you have to bear in mind that the United States during military government days devoted no time at all towards developing the ROK militarily. They did concentrate on a police force aimed towards maintaining internal security, but very little was done in training and organizing military; an army or navy."[8]

Soviet support for North Korean ground forces equipping was perhaps most evident if one examines armor and artillery. The reason that these two elements are so important is that if combined with lethal airpower, the maneuver forces can move quickly and take ground—especially if their opponent does not have forces and equipment that can counter them. This was exactly the case with North Korea. The Soviets equipped the NKPA with enough tanks to initially form a brigade (about 120 tanks), and eventually (by June 1950) a full division of armor. The tank the North Koreans were equipped with (and trained to use) by the Soviets was the T-34 - a battle tested, rugged, and efficient weapons system in armor warfare at the time. The North Korean (Soviet supplied) tanks were put in the newly formed 105th Armor Division, which was formed from the nucleus of the 105th Armor Brigade (upgraded to a division because of the addition of another tank regiment by June 1950).[9]

Modern armor (for the time) was not the only way that the Soviets trained and equipped the North Koreans with effective and lethal weapons later used for an attack on the South. The North Koreans had seven combat-ready infantry divisions ready for attack into the South by June 1950. About a third of North Korean combat forces had experience fighting for Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) against the Nationalists in China, and this experience helped add to the readiness of the army. Within each division was a variety of artillery systems vital for inflicting

casualties and pushing through defenses. As Roy Appleman said in his excellent work, South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu:

> The artillery support of the North Korean division in 1950 closely resembled that of the older type of Soviet division in World War II. A division had 12 122-mm. howitzers, 24 76-mm. guns, 12 Su-76 self-propelled guns, 12 45-mm. antitank guns, and 36 14.5-mm. antitank rifles. In addition, the regiments and battalions had their own supporting weapons. Each regiment, for instance, had 6 120-mm. mortars, 4 76-mm. howitzers, and 6 45-mm. antitank guns. Each battalion had 9 82-mm. mortars, 2 45-mm. antitank guns, and 9 14.5-mm. antitank rifles. The companies had their own 61-mm. mortars.[10]

The way the United States trained and equipped the ROK army was starkly different from the way the Soviets to the North were helping their allies. The primary advisory unit to the South Korean military was known as the "Korea Military Advisory Group" (KMAG). This group of about 500 personnel was the core unit used to provide weapons and training to South Korea, and stayed in the ROK after the U.S. occupation force was withdrawn in 1949. The South Korean army had eight infantry divisions by June of 1950, but because (as discussed earlier) the United States was focused more on helping South Korea to build a military that Washington felt would be more of a "police force," these divisions did not have much of the combat equipment needed, not only for offensive operations, but for defensive operations should they have to fight a war against the well-equipped North Korean army.[11]

The largest caliber of artillery that the South Korean army had was an older version of the 105mm howitzer, and it had no armor shield for artillery crews. But the South Koreans also had no tanks, no medium artillery, and no recoilless rifles. In addition, the few bazookas and anti-tank weapons that the South Korean army did have when the war began in 1950 were highly ineffective against the armor on the North Koreans' T-34 tanks. It was not a situation where the South Koreans did not realize their lack of capabilities. In fact the ROK government had requested tanks. To once again quote Appleman's book, "In October of 1949 the ROK Minister of Defense had requested 189 M26 tanks but the acting chief of KMAG told him the KMAG staff held the view that the Korean terrain and the condition of roads and bridges would not lend themselves to efficient tank operations. About the same time a KMAG officer pointed out to Ambassador Muccio that the equipment provided the ROK's was not adequate to maintain the border, and he cited the fact that North Korean artillery out-ranged by several thousand yards the

ROK 105-mm. howitzer M3 and shelled ROK positions at will while being out of range of retaliatory fire."[12]

The vision, philosophy, training, and equipping of forces that the Soviet Union and the United States applied to their two allies reflected two very different styles of supporting an ally, in what would prove to be the first "proxy war" of the Cold War. If one looks at the evidence that is now widely available today, it becomes obvious that United States intelligence assets either did not know about the lethal weapons systems that the Soviets gave to the North Koreans, or did not think the North Koreans would ever attack the South. Regardless of the reasoning behind the failure to equip South Korea with the weapons systems needed to defend themselves against the North, the fact is now evident that this was a mistake. When the war broke out in 1950, the South Koreans were almost completely incapable of doing anything to stop the division of tanks the North Koreans had, or of matching up with the medium and heavy artillery each NKPA division was equipped with. This situation, combined with the fact that the South Koreans had no real air force to match up with North Korean fighter and attack aircraft, and did not have nearly the combat training or experience of most North Korean units, was a recipe for disaster in a conflict with the DPRK. This lack of capability is perhaps summed up best by award-winning historian Allan Millet, who says: "The American troops departed South Korea and left nothing behind that could stop a brigade of T-34-85 tanks covered by Soviet artillery and accompanied by tough, veteran Korean infantry. The 'puppet army' might be able to chase guerrillas and abuse villagers, but it was ill prepared to stop tanks with its small arms and limited numbers of antitank artillery."[13]

Supporting an Ally: Readiness of U.S. Airpower for the Korean War

As I have discussed earlier, the South Koreans had no air force or airpower capable of carrying out any of the missions necessary for sustained combat operations. Thus, left the mission in the early weeks and months of the Korean War was left to UN and U.S. airpower. For the purposes of this article I will focus on some of the challenges facing U.S. airpower in the early weeks and months of the war. Because the United States in essence has three services who conduct air combat operations, I will address each of them separately: the Air Force, the Navy, and the Marine Corps.

The primary responsibility for U.S. Air Force operations in the Far East in the years leading up to the Korean War fell to Far Eastern Air Forces (FEAF). This command was tasked with a wide variety of missions, but as a result of cutbacks did not train for all of them. The

results of this budget shortfall were rather striking. In 1949, FEAF flew 350 anti-aircraft artillery tracking training missions, but only 14 close-air support training missions. By 1949, few aircraft in FEAF were configured for close-air support, and most of the famous (for their exploits during World War II) close-air support piston-engine aircraft P-51s were in storage. The transition to the F-80 occurred in 1949. The F-80 was certainly a faster aircraft than the P-51, but it had shorter dwell time. This meant that in a conflict, the F-80 would be far less effective for close-air support than the already proven P-51. Training and aircraft reflected the Air Force philosophy at the time that the main threat to prepare for was the Soviet Union, so there was no need to prepare for small wars that were considered unlikely to occur.[14] In what would prove to be a disastrous mistake in the early weeks of the Korean War, the Air Force had decided that it did not need forward air controllers for combat missions (primarily close-air support) and thus got rid of its "FAC's" in the late 1940s prior to the Korean War. This mistake was of course quickly realized in the early days of fighting during the Korean War, and the Air Force had to once again press "FAC's" into service, using the "Mosquito" airborne forward air controller system.[15]

Naval aviation was also severely limited by budget shortfalls in the interwar years between 1945 and 1950. Carrier warfare was severely underfunded in the post-World War II years as a result of the "peace dividend." The Navy was engaged in squabbles with the Air Force over budge and funding for major systems as American policy makers sought to adjust to major paradigm shifts in foreign policy and the "new world order" that was a result of the end of World War II. Nevertheless, Navy pilots engaged in training that would be useful for combat missions in the skies over Korea. This can, in my view, be attributed to the "nature of the beast." Naval aviators are trained for both air interdiction missions and close-air support missions. This would prove to be important for them, particularly in the early weeks and months of the Korean War.[16]

The Marine Corps experienced the largest cuts of any service following World War II. Aviation was no exception. On a shoestring budget, Marine Corps planners focused on close-air support for amphibious operations, land-based operations, and the support of littoral operations from expeditionary airfields and carriers. In what would prove to be a vital aspect of operations later in the Korean War, the Marines also focused on the integration of helicopters into combat and combat support operations. Marine pilots in 1950 were well trained, often still flying aircraft left over from World War II, and prepared to fight a war that involved supporting troops on the ground at all levels. This too would prove to be very important when it came the early

operations in the Korean War. Close-air support was then and is now the primary focus of the Marine Corps aviation mission.[17]

If one is to examine the evidence, it appears clear that there was both rivalry among the services and (particularly in the Air Force) a lack of focus on the kinds of missions that would prove to be vital for the Korean War. The United States was convinced after World War II that the "peace dividend" meant it could severely cut back on the budgets for all of its military services. As it became apparent that the Soviet Union had no intention of disbanding its military forces, the focus then became strategic forces that could meet the Soviet military threat.[18] This is not to say that the Soviet threat was not real or that preparation and readiness to meet that threat was not a vital mission. But a failure (again particularly on the part of the Air Force) to understand that military forces must still be prepared to fight smaller wars—and more traditional conflict—resulted in airpower not being ready to meet the North Korean military air threat as effectively as most would have hoped in the early days and weeks of the Korean War. The Marine Corps and the Navy in the interwar years continued to focus largely on more tactical missions, perhaps as much as anything because of budget concerns. Thus, while U.S. airpower did have a significant impact in the early days and weeks of the U.S. entry into the Korean War, its effectiveness was limited by the lack of planning for tactical warfare and close-air support missions exhibited by the Air Force in the time span of 1945-1950.

Supporting an Ally: Readiness of U.S. Ground/Marine Forces for the Korean War

Because there were a great number of factors affecting the readiness and capabilities of American ground power prior to the Korean War, space does not allow me to address all of them, or even a major portion. Thus, the focus of this article will be on two key units that played vital roles in the early stages of the war, and throughout. These two units, widely written about in numerous historical accounts, are the 1st Marine Division and the U.S. Army 7th Infantry Division. I will address the many challenges these two key units faced in the years leading up to the Korean War, and then briefly examine how this affected their ability to carry out effective combat operations.

The 7th Infantry Division was originally assigned occupation duty in Korea after the conclusion of World War II. By 1948 after elections had been held, all or most elements of the division had been pulled back to occupation duty in (mostly) northern Japan. The assignment in Japan was largely garrison duty. There was little time for actual field training, and the duty in Japan was far easier than most G.I.'s would have

expected. The units in Japan were also experiencing the same budgetary problems that all of the U.S. military was forced to go through in the interwar years and thus had little money for field training for a war that was not expected.[19] When the war began units were pulled piecemeal from the 7th Infantry Division, and this took away from unit cohesion, morale, experience, and troop strength. In the early days and weeks of the Korean War, the 7th Infantry Division contributed key personnel to the 24th and 25th and the 1st Cavalry Divisions as they loaded out to Korea.[20] Thus, when the 7th Infantry Division was called on to move out as a division for the landing at Inchon, it was literally down to 50-percent strength. In order to bring the division up to personnel strength, it was augmented by 8,600 Korean Augmentation to the US Army (KATUSA). These raw recruits had literally been pulled off of the streets of the towns and villages of South Korea and shipped to Japan for training. For many of them, this training was no more than two weeks of "orientation" training. Most spoke no English, and none of them had any training in amphibious warfare.[21] If one can imagine the leadership challenge that that the division commander faced, try to imagine commanding a division where 40 percent of your troops don't speak your language, have almost no formal combat training, and you are leading them into a highly complicated, volatile, combat environment.

In the interwar years the Marine Corps ground units faced all of the same challenges that their aviation brothers had. President Truman had a strong bias against the Marine Corps, and once is quoted to have said that "the Marine propaganda machine rivaled Stalin's." From a peak strength of nearly half a million men at the end of World War II, the Marine Corps strength was down to 74,279 men by early 1950. By 1950, the Marine Corps was still using World War II equipment, even uniforms, and training and deployment budgets had been cut to the bone. To the credit of the Marine Corps, and its leadership, this did not matter. July 1950 found a Marine Corps that was combat ready and a Marine Reserve that was comprised largely of World War II veterans. In 1950, though small, the Marine Corps was quickly able to contribute efficient combat power in the form of the 1st Marine Provisional Brigade to the fight at the Pusan perimeter. For the landing at Inchon, the brigade was pulled out of the Pusan perimeter (after contributing to some quite ferocious fighting), and reformed as the 5th Marine Regiment. The 1st Marine Regiment was hastily assembled from posts and stations throughout the Corps, as well as recalled reservists (many combat veterans), the 7th Marine Regiment only existed on paper in 1950 and included pulling in Marines who were deployed "on float" in Europe. These three regiments would then form the 1st Marine Division—the division that spearheaded

the landing at Inchon.[22]

A "compare and contrast" of the 1st Marine Division and the 7th Infantry Division shows two units that sharply varied in both readiness and capabilities. Despite huge budgetary concerns, slashed personnel, and equipment that was mostly older than that of the other services, in 1950, the Marines were trained and ready to go to war. This is a textbook example of how a military service can overcome challenges faced in tough political and economic times. That said, many of the problems encountered by the 7th Infantry Division at the beginning of the Korean War were the fault neither of the commanders or the troops who were in the various regiments. The 7th Infantry Division was placed on occupation duty that tended to reduce the readiness of its troops. When the war broke out, the piecemeal way that units were pulled out of Japan to support other divisions in Korea tended to take away from the cohesion of the division and depleted its personnel strength. Finally, being augmented (by almost 40 percent) with poorly trained Korean troops almost right before going into combat was not the kind of reinforcement that the division needed as it went into the tough fighting in Inchon and Seoul.

U.S. Air and Ground Power in the Early Weeks of the War

In the early weeks of the war—once UN forces joined the fight—U.S. Air Force and Navy air was effective in taking out some armor and artillery units. When U.S. troops arrived, the largest portion of sorties focused on close air support, and remained so until the end of the war. The North Korean air force was effectively destroyed within the first few weeks of U.S. entry into the war.[23] Air to air combat missions did not again become an issue until 1951, when the famous "MiG Alley" confrontations occurred.[24]

Weaknesses of early U.S. Air Force combat missions were many. In the opening weeks of the American entry into the war, the Air Force had no effective forward air control system in effect. In these early stages of the conflict, there were no airfields for U.S. Air Force combat aircraft to take off from on the Korean peninsula. Thus, in the beginning, all combat sorties for the Air Force originated in Japan. This was an issue for F-80s that because of the long flight time did not have long dwell time for air to air interdiction or close air support combat missions. P-51s were quickly pressed into service, as extra P-51s were acquired from the Air National Guard (the P-51 piston-driven aircraft had longer dwell time). FEAF quickly adapted to the situation by using many of the older P-51s which could remain over targets longer. This remained important until airfields on the Korean peninsula could later be procured as UN

forces took back much of the geography of the Korean peninsula. By mid-July, the Air Force had developed use of the T-6 aircraft for forward air controller missions, and this ad hoc usage proved effective. U.S. Air Force airlift and airdrop capabilities proved to be effective almost immediately.[25] The proximity of the Pusan perimeter to airfields in Japan was ideal for both air interdiction and close air support missions. FEAF interdiction missions focused on taking out key rail and highway targets. Interdiction had to take a back seat to close air support because of the intensity of the battle in the Pusan perimeter. Nevertheless, interdiction had an enormous impact on the capabilities of the NKPA to fight UN forces.[26]

Navy aviation was able to join the fight early from the decks of carriers deployed on the coastline of the Korean peninsula. Many Navy pilots were already experienced at flying both counter-land/sea and counter-air missions, which was part of naval doctrine. Initially, key weaknesses the Navy had included small numbers of aircraft, and a small number of carriers to participate in combat operations.[27] The Marine Corps mission for its aviation units lent itself to the Korean War. The Marine Air-Ground concept and the fact that Marine officers were trained to use that concept effectively meant that USMC aircraft provided the most effective close air support during combat operations, particularly during the early phases of the war. That said, command and control problems existed between the Marines and Air Force units, though these issues were worked out later in the war.[28]

Ground and Marine forces in the early weeks of the war faced perhaps the toughest missions. The readiness and capabilities of 7th Infantry Division have previously been described. As units were pulled piecemeal from the division the readiness was hurt even more than it would have been because of the circumstances described earlier. To exacerbate the issue, the first unit to go toe to toe with the NKPA (Task Force Smith), was badly outgunned and undermanned compared with the armor and infantry forces it faced. The first ground battle in Korea with U.S. forces occurred near Osan on July 5, 1950. It has been described as follows:

> Fire from two American 75 mm recoilless rifles did not damage the advancing T-34s. No anti-tank mines had been brought along, and anti-tank guns, a vital part of World War II armies, were no longer used. As the tanks continued, the Americans opened up with the 2.36 inch bazookas. These weapons were quickly obsolete in World War II and predictably could not penetrate the T-34s' frontal armor. They were even of questionable use against the weaker areas of the tanks.[29]

The battle of Osan was the first ground combat engagement that Americans were involved in, but as more units quickly were called into action, U.S. combat power began to build up. Of course, despite this, UN forces were pushed back to what is now famously known as the Pusan perimeter. It was at the Pusan perimeter that U.S. Marines first saw action. The 1st Marine Provisional Brigade, comprised of the 5th Marine Regiment and supporting Marine Air Group, almost immediately had an impact. Part of the reason for this was because the Marines brought weapons with them that were capable of taking out North Korean tanks, medium and heavy artillery, and advancing infantry forces. Marine artillery, tanks, and aviation proved to be effective against the NKPA, until the brigade was pulled out to once again fight with the rest of its division at Inchon.[30] Of course, UN forces, the majority of which were U.S. and ROK forces, did manage to hold on at the Pusan perimeter. It was this brave defensive action that allowed the 1st Marine Division and the 7th Infantry Division to land at Inchon, disrupt and destroy NKPA lines of communication, take Seoul, and turn the tide of the war.31 There is no arguing with success—and allied forces proved that they could adjust in mid-stream.

Lessons Learned from the Korean War for Future Warfare

The Korean War is a classic example of keeping in mind the saying, "Don't lose sight of the forest for the trees." The U.S. Air Force was preparing for large-scale nuclear conflict with the USSR and did not anticipate fighting wars on a smaller scale or against a "more primitive" though well-armed (by the Soviets) enemy. It is apparent from the Korean War that proper readiness for airpower should include doctrine and training for a wide variety of conflicts. The same lessons apply to the U.S. Army. Focused on Europe more than Asia, funding and manning of units in the Far East led to a gap in capabilities and readiness that would prove quite costly in the early weeks of the war.[32] The Marines did not have these problems, but only because the Marine Corps had been largely overlooked in the interwar years by high-level defense officials and was so small that many thought it might actually cease to exist as a service. The need for a Marine Corps in any conflict the United States would face was never again called into question after the Korean War.

When it comes to cooperation between allies, particularly the United States and South Korea, there are also valuable lessons that can be learned by examining the pre-Korean War years and the early weeks and months of the conflict. When providing training and equipment to an important regional ally, the United States must look not only at the

internal situation of that ally but also at the readiness and capabilities of that ally's main threat—in this case North Korea. Certainly this applies today. North Korea, despite its dire economic woes, has spent 30 to 50 percent of its GDP on maintaining a military than can legitimately threaten the South.[33] Thus, when senior South Korean officials tell the United States that they have gaps in their ability to defend against the North Korean threat—as they did in 1949-1950—the United States would be wise to listen to them. This has relevance in the current context of Korean peninsula issues as the debate of transfer of wartime operational control from a unified command to a split command (scheduled for 2012) is in reality based on an analysis of whether or not the South Korean military has the capabilities to carry out the roles and missions called for should a split command structure come into effect in 2012.[34]

Finally, the importance of understanding an ally's culture, politics, and motivations are highly important in the military context. The United States had few advisers between 1945 and 1950 who could speak Korean, had an Asian background, or who understood the history and politics of the Korean peninsula.[35] This led to many mistakes in Washington's early dealings with South Korea—and one hopes that these mistakes have been alleviated in today's context of modern East Asian affairs.

Notes:

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[1] The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Marine Corps Command and Staff College, the Marine Corps University, or the United States government.

[2] For an excellent analysis of the challenges facing the early American occupation of South Korea in 1945 and how the United States military met those challenges, see William Stueck and Boram Yi, "'An Alliance Forged in Blood': The American Occupation of Korea, the Korean War, and the US–South Korean Alliance," Journal of Strategic Studies, vol. 33, No. 2 (April, 2010), online at http://pdfserve. informaworld.com/943432__921637609.pdf.

[3] See Gordon L. Rottman, Korean War Order of Battle: United States, United Nations, and Communist Ground, Naval, and Air Forces, 1950-1953 (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Praeger, 2002), pp. 169-170.

[4] For an excellent analysis of the ROK air force prior to the beginning of the Korean War, see Jim Givens, "Republic of Korea Air Force (ROKAF)," in The Korean War, March 15, 2010, at www.korean-war.com/AirWar/ROKAF.html.

[5] See James F. Schnabel, United States Army in the Korean War, Policy And

Direction: The First Year (Center Of Military History, U.S. Army, Washington, D. C., 1992), online at www.history.army.mil/

books/pd-c-02.htm.

[6] For more on how former guerrilla fighters helped to form the ethos of the government and the army in North Korea, see Dae-sook Suh, Kim Il-sung: The North Korean Leader (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), pp. 98-101.

[7] See Kim Young Sik, "The Left-Right Confrontation in Korea – Its Origin," Association for Asian Research, November 17, 2003, at www.asianresearch.org/articles/1636.html.

[8] "Oral History Interview with John C. Muccio," Harry S Truman Library and Museum Transcript, Harry S Truman Library and Museum Homepage, December 7, 1973, www.trumanlibrary.org/

oralhist/muccio3.htm

[9] Roy Appleman, South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu (Center of Military History, United States Army, Washington, DC, 1961), at www.kmike.com/Appleman/Chapter2.htm.

[10] Ibid.

[11] "The Korean War: The Outbreak," Center of Military History, United States Army, Washington, DC, 1961 (September 13, 2006), at www.history.army.mil/

brochures/kw-outbreak/outbreak.htm.

[12] Appleman, South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu.

[13] Allan R. Millett, The War for Korea, 1945-1950: A House Burning, (Lawrence, Kans.: University Press of Kansas, 2005), p. 229.

[14] For more on the readiness and capabilities of the U.S. Air Force FEAF units, see Wayne Thompson and Bernard C. Nalty, Within Limits: The U.S. Air Force and the Korean War (Dayton, Ohio: Air Force History and Museum Programs, 1996), pp. 2-18.

[15] See "Mosquito Airborne Controllers," National Museum of the U.S. Air Force, 2010, at www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=15079.

[16] See Thomas J. Cutler, "Sea Power and Defense of the Pusan Pocket, June-September 1950," in Edward J. Marolda, ed., U.S. Navy in the Korean War (Annapolis, Md: Naval Institute Press, 2007), pp. 2-4.

[17] For details about the budgeting issues the Marine Corps faced after World War II, and how planners and senior officers adjusted their operations to ensure the readiness and capabilities of aviation units, see Victor H. Krulak, First to Fight: An Inside View of the Marine Corps (Annapolis, Md: Naval Institute Press, 1984), pp. 5-113.

[18] See James Schlesinger, "European Security and the Nuclear Threat Since 1945," Rand Corporation Paper, April 1967, at www.rand.org/pubs/papers/2008/

P3574.pdf.

[19]See Karl H. Lowe, "America's Foreign Legion: The 31st Infantry Regiment at War and Peace," 31st U.S. Infantry Regiment, 2010, at http://31stinfantry.org/Documents/Chapter%2009.pdf.

[20] Harry G. Summers, "The Korean War: A Fresh Perspective," The Korean War, June 10, 2008, at www.rt66.com/~korteng/SmallArms/24thID.htm.

[21] See Lowe, "America's Foreign Legion."

[22] Krulak, First to Fight, pp. 120-140.

[23] See Pamela Feltus, "The Korean War," U.S. Centennial of Flight Commission, 2000, at www.centennialofflight.gov/essay/Air_Power/korea/

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[24] John T. Correll, "MiG Alley," Air Force-Magazine, vol. 93, No. 4 (April, 2010), online at www.airforce-magazine.com/MagazineArchive/Pages/2010/

April%202010/0410alley.aspx.

[25] See "Mosquito Airborne Controllers" and "Korean War: The First Major Air War After World War II," Air Force Armament Museum, at www.afarmamentmuseum.com/korean_war.shtml.

[26] Roger F. Kropf, "The U.S. Air Force in Korea: Problems that Hindered the Effectiveness of Airpower," Airpower Journal, Spring, 1990, online at www.airpower.au.af.mil/airchronicles/ apj/apj90/spr90/3spr90.htm.

[27] Cutler, "Sea Power and Defense of the Pusan Pocket," pp. 5-51.

[28] See: "Korea," History of Marine Corps Aviation," 2008, at www.acepilots.com/usmc/hist14.html, and Kropf, "The U.S. Air Force in Korea."

[29] "Task Force Smith," Return to Korea, 2006, at www.johnsmilitaryhistory.

com/tfsmith.html.

[30] See John C. Chapin, Fire Brigade: U.S. Marines at the Pusan Perimeter, Korean War Commemorative Series, (Washington DC: Marine Corps Historical Center, 2000), online at www.koreanwar.org/ usmckorea/PDF_Monographs/

KoreanWar.FireBrigade.pdf.

[31] See Carl H. Builder, Steven C. Bankes, and Richard Nordin, Command Concepts: A Theory Derived from the Practice of Command and Control (Santa Monica, Calif.: Rand Corporation, 1999), pp. 73-87.

[32] See Cliff Staten, "U.S. Foreign Policy Since World War II: An Essay on Reality's Corrective Qualities," American Diplomacy, July 30, 2005, online at www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/ item/2005/0709/stat/

staten_reality.html.

[33] "Kim Jong-il Gets 20% of N. Korea's Budget for His Own Use," Chosun Ilbo, April 12, 2010, at http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2010/04/12/20

10041200587.html.

[34] For more analysis on the debate regarding the transfer of wartime operations control in the South Korea-U.S. military alliance that was scheduled for implementation in 2012 (but has now been postponed), see Bruce E. Bechtol Jr., "The U.S. and South Korea: Prospects for Transformation, Combined Forces Operations, and Wartime Operational Control: Problems and Remedies," International Journal of Korean Studies, vol. 13, No. 2 (Fall/Winter, 2009), pp. 71-96.

[35] See Robert D. Ramsey III, Advising Indigenous Forces: American Advisors in Korea, Vietnam, and El Salvador, Global War on Terrorism Occasional Paper 18 (Fort Leavenworth, Kans.: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2006), online at www.cgsc.edu/carl/download/csipubs/ramsey.pdf.

Coming to South Korea's Aid:
The Contributions of the UNC Coalition

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ABSTRACT

Soon after the North Korean invasion on June 25, 1950, the United Nations Security Council called for assistance to defend the South. Though South Korea and the United States carried the vast majority of the responsibility and costs of the war, 15 countries provided direct military assistance to the UN effort in Korea. This article examines the motivations and contributions of these 15 countries that joined the United States and South Korea in the United Nations Command.

Keywords: Korean War, United Nations Command, NATO, South Korea

Introduction

On June 25, 1950, North Korean troops and tanks rolled across the 38th parallel in a bid to reunify the peninsula. After receiving word of the invasion, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) passed a resolution that called for a halt to the hostilities and for North Korea (Democratic People's Republic of Korea – DPRK) to withdraw its forces back across the 38th parallel. When it was clear that Pyongyang would not heed the UN call, the Security Council passed another resolution that called on members to provide assistance to repel the North Korean attack and restore peace and security in Korea. Subsequently, the UN formed the United Nations Command (UNC) to organize member contributions for the UN response to North Korean aggression, and authorized the United States to take the lead of the UNC. Many countries offered assistance of some type, but in the end, a total of 16 countries sent military assistance to join the UNC in defending South Korea. Five others sent medical units and other countries contributed financial support along with assistance in the implementation of a trade embargo on North Korea.

Why did these states join the UN effort to defend South Korea? What was the degree of their involvement and what impact did their assistance have on the outcome of the war? What challenges did a 16-member coalition face as an operational force? What impact did this coalition have on the UN's first major effort at cooperative security since the creation of the organization? These are important questions whose answers provide a better understanding not only of the Korean War but also of the benefits and challenges of fighting any major conflict with a coalition, particularly if it is an ad hoc coalition rather than an established alliance or multilateral security organization.

Many works have been published on the United States and its involvement in the Korean War.[2] This article examines the motivations and contributions of the other 15 countries that joined the United States in defending South Korea. Though the Republic of Korea (ROK) and the United States carried the vast majority of the responsibility and costs of the war, the participation of other countries provided some combat assistance and were significant contributions for some contributors, particularly considering the size of some of these countries, the other responsibilities they had, and the fact that the suffering they endured during World War II was only five years in the past. In addition, the political implications of their contributions were also important, demonstrating that this was an international effort at collective security, not an example of U.S. imperialism as some alleged. However, for most

who contributed to the UNC effort, their motivations had little to do with protecting South Korea, a distant land with few interests at stake. More often, their participation was an effort to advance other priorities that they believed were linked to the conflict or could be advanced by their participation in a war where they had few intrinsic interests. The remainder of this article will review the events that led to the formation of the UNC, the motivations of the 15 non-ROK, non-U.S. participants for offering assistance to the UNC, the specific contributions made by each, and the implications of participation by these states.

Forming the Coalition

After the North Korean invasion began, U.S. officials soon notified UN Secretary-General Trygve Lie. Lie believed the issue should be brought before the UN Security Council since this was a serious violation of the UN Charter and its prohibition of military aggression. The UNSC passed Resolution 82 with a vote of nine in favor, none opposed, and one abstention from Yugoslavia. Prior to the formal deliberations of the UNSC, Secretary-General Trygve Lie discussed the invasion with the Security Council delegates from Egypt, India, and Norway who had not received formal instructions from their government. Secretary-General Lie believed that on the strength of his arguments, the delegates from Egypt and India decided to vote in favor of the resolution. Later, upon receiving formal instructions, the delegates changed their subsequent votes to abstentions regarding UN actions in Korea.[3]

Resolution 82 recognized that "the Government of the Republic of Korea is a lawfully established government having effective control and jurisdiction over that part of Korea." It called for an immediate end to the hostilities, and for a complete North Korean withdrawal to the 38th parallel.[4] The resolution concluded with an appeal to UN members to "render every assistance to the United Nations in the execution of this resolution and to refrain from giving assistance to the North Korean authorities."[5] A key player missing during these Security Council deliberations was the Soviet Union. The Soviets were boycotting the Council over its refusal to seat the People's Republic of China (PRC). The Soviet representative, Jacob Malik, was thus unavailable to veto this and subsequent resolutions on the Korean War. Yugoslavia had offered a different resolution for UNSC consideration but it merely invited North Korea to participate in talks. This measure was defeated by a vote of 6 to 3.

For many at the UN as well as for U.S. leaders, the need for a prompt response to this aggression recalled memories of World War II, Czechoslovakia, and the appeasement that occurred at the Munich

conference in 1938. According to President Harry Truman:

> This was not the first occasion when the strong had attacked the weak. I recalled some earlier instances: Manchuria, Ethiopia, Austria. I remembered how each time that the democracies failed to act it had encouraged the aggressors to keep going ahead. Communism was acting in Korea just as Hitler, Mussolini, and the Japanese had acted. … If this was allowed to go unchallenged it would mean a third world war, just as similar incidents had brought on the second world war.[6]

Lie, a Norwegian national, concurred and noted: "this to me was clear-cut aggression—apparently well calculated, meticulously planned, and with all the elements of surprise which reminded me of the Nazi invasion of Norway—because this was aggression against a 'creation' of the United Nations."[7] Truman maintained that the DPRK invasion made "it plain beyond all doubt that Communism has passed beyond the use of subversion to conquer independent nations and will now use armed invasion and war."[8] In the end, Truman provided an unvarnished assessment to U.S. Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, "we'v [sic] got to stop the sons of bitches no mater [sic] what."[9] Truman was also determined that the efforts taken to defend South Korea come under UN authority. UN leadership, at least in name, would blunt criticism that Washington was undertaking this operation unilaterally and simply as an act to advance U.S. interests. Moreover, UN participation meant Washington would receive help from UN member states and would not have to carry the military burden alone. However, despite these early indications that it would be a UN effort, General Douglas MacArthur's contacts with the UNC in the early months of the war were minimal, and the UN rarely interfered with UNC operations.[10] Thus, the war effort was largely a U.S.-ROK operation.

When it was clear North Korea would not heed the call to cease hostilities and withdraw to the 38th parallel, the UNSC passed a second resolution. On June 27, 1950, UNSC Resolution 83 called on UN member states to "furnish such assistance to the Republic of Korea as may be necessary to repel the armed attack and to restore international peace and security in the area."[11] A rapid response was becoming exceedingly crucial as Seoul would fall to the DPRK invasion the following day. President Truman had already responded by ordering U.S. troops into action and Secretary-General Lie believed U.S. actions were "fully within the spirit of the Council's resolution of June 25."[12] The June 27 resolution passed by a vote of seven in favor and one opposed. Yugoslavia provided the only "nay" while Egypt and India

chose not to cast a vote —present but not voting— since they were still awaiting instructions from their home government. Surprisingly, the Soviet Union continued its boycott of UN proceedings and again, it was not present to veto the resolution. At the time, there were eleven members on the UNSC, five permanent members and six non-permanent members. (The number of non-permanent members was increased to 10 in 1965.) Seven "yes" votes with a "yes" or abstention from all permanent members was required for a measure to pass. Moscow criticized the validity of Resolution 83 given that Taiwan/Republic of China was casting the seventh and deciding vote instead of the PRC. As a result, the Soviet Union maintained the resolution had only six legitimate votes, which was insufficient for passage. Moreover, some argued that Moscow's absence from the Council was equivalent to a veto which would have voided both Resolution 82 and 83. These arguments carried little weight in the UNSC. Taiwan/Republic of China was the recognized holder of the UNSC seat and Secretary-General Lie noted that Moscow's absence did not automatically constitute a veto. Instead, consistent with UN practice, he maintained it was equivalent to an abstention.[13]

After passage of the June 27 resolution, UN Secretary-General Lie notified member governments of the need to assist South Korea in its struggle to defend itself. On June 29, President Truman ordered General Douglas MacArthur to send naval and air forces from his Far East Command in Japan to assist ROK troops. It soon became evident that the UN would need to create some type of organization to coordinate any military assistance that member states would provide to South Korea. On July 7, the UNSC passed another measure, Resolution 84, which established the United Nations Command under the leadership of the United States. The resolution also called on Washington to designate a U.S. officer as UNC commander and authorized the unified command to fly the UN flag during its operations in Korea. The following day, the United States designated General MacArthur, who was commanding U.S. Army Forces Far East in Japan, as commander of the UNC. In July, ROK President Syngman Rhee signed the "Pusan Letter" that gave the UNC operational control (OPCON) of all South Korean forces. While technically the military forces that came to South Korea's defense were under the UN flag, the troops were largely under the control of the United States military. Even during the extensive combined operations of World War II, the troops remained under their individual national command authority though extensive coordination occurred among commanders. Thus, the command arrangements of the Korean War were unique in modern warfare.[14]

The Korean War caught most in the international community off guard and occurred only five years after World War II had ended. Many governments had already begun to draw down their armed forces after several years of bloody conflict. The militaries of some governments were deeply immersed elsewhere such as British involvement in Southeast Asia and Hong Kong along with its occupation duties in Germany. The French were similarly busy with occupation duties in Austria and Germany in addition to conflicts in Algeria and Indochina.

When the call went out for UN support, there was reluctance in the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) for broad, international participation. President Truman wanted as many UN members as possible to contribute to the effort. However, the JCS wanted forces that would be more than token gestures and would truly add to the military effectiveness of UNC efforts. There were also concerns that language, dietary restrictions, culture, and a lack of equipment could detract from the ability to integrate these forces into larger U.S. units. Egypt and Afghanistan made early offers to contribute forces but were turned down due to these concerns.[15] Taiwan also made an early offer of over 33,000 troops but was rejected for fear their participation might spark PRC involvement in the conflict. Taiwan's forces were poorly trained and lacked proper equipment, and the United States would need to provide transportation for these troops. This was problematic since moving them would tie up planes and ships that could be better used elsewhere.[16] The U.S. State Department challenged the Pentagon's reluctance to use foreign forces, especially if countries from Asia could be convinced to participate. Criticism from the communist world was already surfacing against the U.S./UN operation. International allies demonstrated that this was a global effort at collective security that helped to bolster the legitimacy of the UN. Thus, even if these foreign contingents added minimal military benefit, the political value of these allies was considerable.

Eventually, the JCS set a list of criteria for participation. Ground units had to be at least the size of a battalion and possess the appropriate support units. The battalion needed to be fully equipped and arrive in the field with 60 days of supplies.[17] The State Department wanted Washington to assume the cost of outfitting and transporting these troops to Korea if countries offered units, but the Defense Department opposed this plan, fearing the precedent it might set. In the end, State and Defense compromised agreeing to help fund the contribution of troops if the countries agreed to repay the U.S. Treasury later.[18] After the war, collecting these payments often became a sensitive political issue that took years to resolve.

These restrictions eliminated many smaller countries that were

willing to provide forces, including several from Latin America generating a fair amount of resentment in the region.[19] Eventually, 29 countries provided some type of help to the UNC effort, including military and medical assistance, economic aid, or the imposition of a trade embargo. Of the countries that offered to help in some form, 16 provided direct military assistance to South Korea via the UNC: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Ethiopia, France, Greece, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Philippines, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Motivations for Joining the UNC

Member states offered to assist the UN's efforts to defend South Korea for a variety of reasons including political, economic, and security motives. Many of the motivations were also unique to the individual country. These contributions were tempered by constraints on the resources they had available along with the need to fulfill other commitments. Most importantly, states joined based on a careful assessment of their national interests at stake which often had very little to do with protecting South Korea.

One of the primary motivations for joining the UNC was security. Though the communist threat for UNC members varied from domestic insurgencies to fears of a Soviet or Chinese invasion, many states saw the North Korean attack in a similar light as the United States. This was global communism on the move, and it required a collective security response to halt its expansion. Concern for the spread of communism was an important motive for Greece and Turkey. From 1946 to 1949, the Greeks, aided by the United States and Britain, fought a civil war against communist insurgents who were supported by Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Albania. Government forces prevailed and became a staunchly anti-communist government in Athens. Turkey similarly felt threatened by communist subversion and Soviet interference. Both Athens and Ankara became a focal point of U.S. containment strategy under the Truman Doctrine that provided assistance to countries that were resisting the spread of communism. Turkey and Greece were so important to U.S. containment efforts that, according to Spalding, "If Greece was lost, Turkey would become an untenable outpost in a sea of communism. Similarly, if Turkey yielded to Soviet demands, the position of Greece would be extremely endangered."[20] To address these security concerns, both countries had tried to obtain entry into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) but were unsuccessful. In Turkey's case, the Pentagon had been reluctant to extend the NATO security guarantees to this region. Both countries believed that responding to the U.S./UNC

call for assistance would improve their chances of eventually being admitted to NATO. In fall 1950, both were given associate status to the organization and after further pressure, Turkey and Greece were admitted as full NATO members in October 1951.

Related to the concerns for communist expansion, there were those who desired increased security ties with the United States to address these fears and believed providing assistance to the UNC would help them obtain this goal. An example was Australia, which was one of the closest in the UNC to Korea and was very anxious to secure a formal security agreement with the United States. Canberra was determined to have a pact with Washington that did not include the British in an effort exert some degree of independence from London. The Korean War also exacerbated the potential threats to Southeast Asia, especially to Malaya from communist expansion, that were closer to home. In fact, before committing units to Korea, the Australian government sent bombers to Malaya and Singapore to shore up defenses there. K.C.O. Shann, the head of the Australian delegation to the UN argued:

> It is proper that the Australian people should understand that, if southern Korea falls under the domination of Communist imperialism, the strategic picture of Asia as it affects Japan and the whole of the area of the North-West Pacific will undergo a radical change and will increase the dangers to the whole of South and South-East Asia. The Australian Government, in recent months, has directed attention to the need for a Pacific Pact. This need becomes more urgent in the light of what is now taking place in Korea.[21]

In fact, Australian leaders argued that had a pact been in place prior to the Korean War, Washington would have been in a far better position to respond since it would not have to deal with the conflict alone. Australia hoped that a quick response to the U.S./UN request for troops would help curry favor with Washington. Consequently, Australia's efforts had less to do with helping South Korea than it was largely for the interests of Australian-U.S. relations. Canberra was one of the first to pledge troops to the UNC and hoped that as a result, the United States would be more willing to move toward a formal alliance and provide more aid. Percy Spender, Australian ambassador to the United States, told Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies that "any additional aid we can give to the US now, small though it may be would repay us in the future one hundredfold. My personal view is that we must scrape the bucket to see what we can give"[22] As a result, Gavan McCormack maintained: "ANZUS has been for Australia the most conspicuous and long-lasting

fruit of the Korean commitment. … and it is clear the Australian case [for a security agreement] only began to be treated seriously in Washington after the Australian troops had been committed in Korea. … The pact thereafter constituted the central plank of Australian foreign policy for the ensuing decades. Its origin in the Korean War is often forgotten."[23]

New Zealand was also interested in a security deal with the United States and had a similar desire to demonstrate its independence from Britain but also from Australia. According to McGibbon, "New Zealand's Korean War effort was seen as secondary to its primary defence role of preparing an expeditionary force for deployment in the Middle East, in case outright war broke out with the Soviet Union."[24]

If Australia and New Zealand wished to establish a regional security alliance with the United States, participation in the UNC effort in Korea was almost mandatory. However, the Korean War may also have been crucial in increasing U.S. awareness of the threat of communist expansion in Asia, and hence, the importance of a pact with Canberra and Auckland. Indeed, Trevor Reese notes: "Although the Australian and New Zealand governments were in accord with the United States regarding the North Korean attack as part of communism's grand design in Asia and the Pacific, they attempted to use the Korea war to apprise the United States of their value as allies in the Pacific pact for which they were working."[25] But it is not clear that their military performance so impressed Washington that U.S. leaders felt the alliance was a necessity.[26] In any event, the three parties concluded the ANZUS treaty in September 1951.

For those who were already members of the NATO, providing assistance to UN efforts in Korea also had security and political benefits. The NATO treaty was signed on April 4, 1949 and its twelve founding members included Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States. NATO's priority was the defense of Europe, but the attack in Korea, which NATO members also assumed was orchestrated in Moscow, demonstrated the increased danger of communist expansion, not only in Europe but globally. According to Robert Osgood, "The outbreak of the Korean War in June, 1950, temporarily destroyed the West's confidence in the assumption that America's atomic striking power would deter the Soviet Union from instigating overt military aggression."[27] Communism also threatened the Asian interests of some NATO members. While the organization was not obliged to respond to aggression in Korea under NATO, many of its members believed they had a duty to respond. In addition, the leaders of

NATO countries believed this was a test of collective defense, and providing assistance to the U.S./UN effort in Korea would help to ensure greater U.S. support for Europe. Thus, according to Osgood, "momentarily, Western Europe shared America's drastic reappraisal of Soviet intentions."[28] However, as the war dragged on, NATO leaders also began to fear that U.S. strength was being sapped by the Korean conflict and might hurt Washington's ability or willingness to defend Europe. The major players in NATO, especially the United Kingdom and France, also hoped that involvement in Korea would give them greater influence in the prosecution of the Korean War effort.[29]

Thailand and the Philippines had similar motives in trying to improve their standing in Washington's eyes. Manila wanted a formal security commitment from Washington along with greater financial assistance. The Philippines and the United States have a long relationship that dates back to 1898 and the Spanish-American War. During World War II, the Philippines experienced a brutal occupation by Japanese forces. Philippine leaders hoped to secure a formal security agreement with the United States to ensure Washington would come to its defense if attacked again, perhaps next time by communist China. Philippines President Elpidio Quirino had another goal in mind. The Philippine economy was in desperate straits and needed continued U.S. aid. However, President Quirino had been receiving extensive criticism from the U.S. Congress and press that it was squandering the aid it had already received. Thus, contributions to the U.S. effort in Korea could mollify the criticism, increase the aid flow the Philippine economy desperately needed, and cement a formal security guarantee with the United States.[30] On August 30, 1951, U.S. and Filipino representatives signed the mutual defense treaty that remains in effect today.

The North Korean invasion and subsequent participation by China raised fears in Bangkok as well for the dangers of communist expansion in the region. Consequently, the Korean War quieted domestic opposition in Thailand that was resisting closer ties with Washington. Thai leaders sent ground troops to the fight along with 40,000 metric tons of rice for relief efforts in Korea. It was hoped that these gestures would prompt the United States to furnish a formal security guarantee along with more military and economic aid. It was not long before U.S. aid to Thailand picked up and on October 17, 1950, officials from both countries signed the U.S.-Thai Mutual Defense Treaty.[31]

South Africa had perhaps one of the most unique reasons for offering assistance to the UNC. In 1948, elections in South Africa had brought the National Party and Prime Minister Daniel Malan to power. Soon after, Prime Minister Malan proceeded to implement the racial

segregation policy of apartheid throughout the country. South African leaders believed that a contribution to the UNC might ease criticism that was building in the UN along with calls for economic sanctions. Malan also believed that a South African contribution to the UNC would provide greater influence in the UN to assert its claim to Southwest Africa, the former German colony. Known today as Namibia, after World War I, the Treaty of Versailles declared Southwest Africa to be a League of Nations mandate territory to be administered by South Africa. Following World War II, the region became a UN Trust Territory after all League mandates were transferred to the UN. South Africa opposed the transfer to the UN and refused to recognize the country's independence, claiming it as South Africa's fifth province. Though South Africa's contribution of an air force fighter squadron was an effective fighting force, it did little to advance Pretoria's political goals in the UN or elsewhere.

Ethiopia's motivation for joining the UNC was also somewhat unique among the other members. In October 1935, Italy under Benito Mussolini invaded Ethiopia from Eritrea and Italian Somaliland, Rome's colonial possessions in Africa. Both Italy and Ethiopia were members of the fledging League of Nations that was created after World War I. Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie appealed to the League for aid. Though the League unanimously condemned Italy for the attack, it failed to do anything but pass a resolution. A year later, Emperor Selassie gave a speech before the League of Nations where he pleaded again for help and when exiting the podium after the speech lamented, "It is us today, it will be you tomorrow."[32] For Ethiopia, its participation in the Korean War was a statement of its view of the importance of collective security.

However, Ethiopia also had other reasons for joining the UNC. At the time, the UN was deliberating over the future of Somaliland and Eritrea, and Ethiopia was very interested in acquiring Somaliland. Assistance to the UN might increase its influence in future UN deliberations over this issue. Emperor Selassie also hoped his offers of support would result in the equipping of two to three Ethiopian divisions by the United States that would also improve his leverage in future discussions over these regions in East Africa.[33]

Contributions of the Coalition Members

The contributions made by the individual members of the UNC were as varied as their motivations. Most provided infantry units but others also contributed ships and a few contributed fighters and air transport planes. The remainder of this section will provide a brief overview of the individual state contributions made to the Korean War coalition. In

most cases, the original soldiers and ships committed to the war did not serve during the entire length of the conflict as assets were rotated through the Korean theater on a regular basis. For example, New Zealand sent a total of six frigates to help with UNC naval duties but only two were in action in Korean waters at any given time.[34]

Australia. With the exception of the United States, Australia was one of the first countries to respond to the UN call for assistance and provided the greatest commitment in proportion to its population. Canberra sent one infantry battalion, a naval force that included its only aircraft carrier, two destroyers, and one frigate, and one fighter squadron and one air transport squadron. The Royal Australian Air Force No. 77 Squadron, a fighter squadron that flew the P-51 Mustang was the first to arrive. The squadron made up the bulk of Australian fighter strength and was a welcome contribution to UNC air power. These forces were stationed in Japan and were working with the U.S. 5th Air Force, making them familiar with U.S. tactics and procedures.[35] Upon arrival, these aircraft supported the defense of the Pusan perimeter. North Korean forces were already having difficulty maintaining their long logistics lines into the south; along with U.S. aircraft, the Australians were instrumental in making matters worse for the North Koreans and blunting their offensive around Pusan.[36] General Walton Walker, the commander in charge of defense of the perimeter declared afterward, "that if it had not been for the air support that we received from the Fifth Air Force we would not have been able to stay in Korea," and Australians were part of this effort.[37] According to another source, "there can be little doubt that the air forces probably exercised greater influence on the outcome of the war during the perimeter period than at any time between 1950 and 1953."[38] Throughout the war, Australian air support provided an important boost to UNC airpower.[39] Australia's contribution of air power increased further with the arrival of the aircraft carrier HMAS Sidney in October 1950 and its contingent of British Hawker Sea Furies and Fairey Fireflies.

Australian ground troops arrived in September 1950 and were attached to the U.S. 24th Infantry Division until they became part of the Commonwealth Division that included Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada, and New Zealand. India was also part of the division but provided a medical unit and no combat troops. The Australian battalion was assigned to the Pusan perimeter and was part of the breakout that continued on across the 38th parallel. They had their first major combat operation in November 1950 near Pyongyang and later, participated in the Battle of Gapyong Valley where it earned a U.S. Presidential Citation. Australian soldiers also fought in Operation Commando in

October 1951 where they captured two hills after suffering heavy casualties. As the war ground into a stalemate, Australian troops held a series of trenches along the Imjin River for the remainder of the war. Australian forces had 339 killed and 1,200 wounded during the Korean War. (See Table 1)

Belgium/Luxembourg. The Belgian government raised an elite, volunteer unit, the 1st Belgian Battalion consisting of over 900 men. The battalion was supplemented by a 44-man platoon from Luxembourg to form the BELUX battalion. The unit saw its first action in March 1951 and its heaviest fighting at the Battle of the Imjin River where it was cut off and surrounded by Chinese forces. After a failed rescue attempt, the BELUX battalion was able to slip past Chinese lines. The battalion received a presidential unit citation for its actions during this engagement. The unit also participated in the failed attempt to rescue the British Glosters in April 1951. In addition to the ground units, Belgium also supplied seven DC-4 transport aircraft to the war effort. For Belgium, 101 lost their lives in action with 350 wounded and five missing while Luxembourg had two killed in action.

Canada. After initially hesitating to join the UNC, Canada opted to send several units to support the defense of South Korea: the 25th Army Infantry Brigade consisting of three infantry battalions, one artillery regiment, and one armored regiment; three destroyers; and one air transport unit. The destroyers and air transport planes were the first to arrive in July 1950 and quickly joined the defense of the Pusan perimeter. The destroyers bombarded enemy positions on the perimeter and protected sea lanes while the air transport planes brought supplies from Japan to Pusan. Later, the destroyers provided escort duty during the Inchon landing and the No. 426 Transport Squadron flew long-range supply missions throughout the war from McCord Air Force Base in Washington State to Haneda Airport in Japan. Canadian fighter pilots also flew with the 5th U.S. Air Force and downed 20 enemy planes.

The infantry brigade arrived in December 1950 and later became part of the Commonwealth Division. Canadian troops fought their first engagements in spring 1951 at the Battle of Gapyong Valley during the Chinese spring offensives. Canadian troops received a U.S. Presidential Citation for their help protecting U.S. soldiers during Gapyong. Canadian soldiers established a good record in Korea and were largely self-sufficient, possessing their own engineers, medical personnel, and logistics, though they did receive Sherman tanks from the United States.[40] In spring 1952, Canadian troops, along with British soldiers were sent to bring order to the UNC prison camp on Koje Island. The Canadian and British officers were appalled by what they saw and

protested to UNC officials regarding the poor conditions in the camp. Moreover, Canadian officers were not pleased that their soldiers were even used for this kind of duty and argued that prior authorization from Ottawa should have been sought before sending them to Koje. Estimates vary, but between 300 and 500 Canadians were killed in combat in Korea and 1,200 were wounded.

Colombia. The only contributor from Latin America, Colombia sent one infantry battalion, the 1st Colombian Battalion, and one frigate, the Almirante Padilla. The frigate was the first to be sent, leaving in November 1950 and arriving in Korea in February 1951 after refitting in San Diego. The ship participated in coastal blockade duty on the West coast as part of a contingent of British, Canadian, and U.S. ships.[41]

Soon after, the Colombian government offered an infantry battalion of 1,000 men and 83 officers. The government later told UN officials that if needed, it would provide an entire division that could be equipped with arms purchased from the United States.[42] The battalion arrived in Korea in June 1951 and was attached to the U.S. 24th Infantry Division. The following year, the unit was transferred to the U.S. 7th Division where it saw its heaviest action during the Kumsan offensive and in the defense of Old Baldy (Hill 266). During the defense of Old Baldy in the Winter/Spring 1953, the 3rd Colombian Battalion, a relatively inexperienced unit that had rotated to Korea in November 1952, was overrun by a full Chinese division. The battalion was later reinforced by a U.S. company but still had to fall back in the face of this onslaught.

Colombian forces acquitted themselves well, earning 18 U.S. Silver Stars and 25 Bronze Stars with V. along with other decorations.[43] These soldiers also received numerous honors from the Colombian government. Colombian casualties, mostly from the defense of Old Baldy, included 141 killed, 610 wounded and 69 missing in action.

Table 1: Military Contributions of the Member States to the UNC

	Ground Troops	Other Assistance	Killed/Missing	Wounded
Australia	1 infantry battalion	1 aircraft carrier 2 destroyers 1 frigate 1 fighter squadron 1 air transport squadron	339	1,200
Belgium	1 infantry battalion	1 air transport unit	101/5	350
Canada	1 infantry brigade *	3 destroyers 1 air transport wing	300-500	1,200
Colombia	1 infantry battalion	1 frigate	141/69	610
Ethiopia	1 infantry battalion	---	122	526
France	1 infantry battalion	1 frigate	287/9	1,350
Greece	1 infantry battalion	1 air transport squadron	196	543
Luxembourg	1 platoon	---	2	
Netherlands	1 infantry battalion**	1 destroyer/frigate	122	645
New Zealand	1 artillery regiment	2 frigates	46	79
Philippines	1 regimental combat team	---	112/16	299
South Africa	1 fighter squadron	---	34	---
Thailand	1 regimental combat team [2,100]	4 frigates 1 cargo ship 1 air transport squadron 3 medical service units	134	959
Turkey	1 infantry brigade	---	750/173	2,068
United Kingdom	2 infantry brigades 2 artillery regiments 1 armored regiment	1 aircraft carrier 2 cruisers 8 destroyers 1 hospital ship	700	4,000***
United States	7 Army Divisions 1 Marine Division	Army and corps HQs Logistical and support forces 1 tactical air force 1 combat cargo command 2 medium bomber wings 1 naval fleet	53,686/4,759	92,134

Source: T. R. Fehrenbach, This Kind of War, p. 305 and Sandler, The Korean War, pp. 154-163; and Varhola, Fire and Ice, pp. 127-150.

* The Canadian brigade consisted of 3 infantry battalions, 1 artillery regiment, and 1 armored regiment.
** The Netherlands battalion was undersized containing only 636 men.
*** The number of wounded for the United Kingdom also includes those taken prisoner of war.

Ethiopia. Emperor Haile Selassie sent one infantry battalion to Korea—the Kagnew Battalion or Conquerors Battalion. The unit was

formed largely by volunteers from the Emperor's personal bodyguard. These soldiers were a welcome addition because they were British-trained and most were fluent in English. The troops trained during their three-week ocean journey to reach Korea. The Kagnew Battalion did not arrive in Korea until June 1951 and were attached to the U.S. 7th Division, 32nd Regiment. According to one Ethiopian veteran of the Korean War, "we went with Americans to the front line and fought together. From that, we helped a great nation, Korea, to survive. When we were in the frontline, I admired the American Army. They were very good Soldiers. When they fight, they fight. When they enjoy, they enjoy. I liked that."[44] Two fresh Kagnew battalions rotated into Korea during the conflict at different times. The unit contributed to important engagements at Triangle Hill during Operation Showdown in late 1952 and at Pork Chop Hill in spring-summer 1953. The unit claimed to never have had a member taken prisoner or left behind on the battlefield.[45]

The Kagnew battalion earned a solid combat record and was well-known for its close combat skills. The unit did have some difficulties. A number of the officers were Ethiopian elites whose arrogance sometimes meant they worked poorly with the UNC. These individuals were eventually removed and returned home, allowing those that remained to excel on the battlefield. The Ethiopians had 122 killed and 526 wounded.

France. Though the French were already busy in Indochina and with occupation duties in Germany, Paris sent a volunteer battalion of well-trained reservists and active duty soldiers who had significant combat experience. The battalion was commanded by a highly-decorated general who accepted a reduction in rank from general to lieutenant colonel to command the unit. The group arrived in November 1950, equipped with U.S. weapons and equipment, and later reinforced with a ROK company. The battalion was attached to the U.S. 23rd regiment of the 2nd Division and fought major engagements at Wonju, Twin Tunnels, Heart Break Ridge, the Iron Triangle, and during the 1951 spring Chinese offensive among others. The unit received three U.S. presidential unit citations for its work at Chipyong-ri and Hongchon with two presented personally by General MacArthur. The battalion was well known for its tenacity and prowess with the bayonet. A particularly effective tactic entailed the following: "Digging two parallel lines of ditches, the Frenchmen would allow the communists to take the first ditch, then before their enemy could consolidate, the French troopers would leap from the second in a surprise mass thrust, skewering the communists with their needle-sharp bayonets."[46]

The French also sent one frigate, the FMS La Grandiere. Upon

arrival to Korea in September 1950, the ship participated in Task Force 90 that supported the U.S. amphibious landing at Inchon. In November, the French ship left Korean waters and returned to Indochina to support French operations there. French casualties were disproportionally high at 262 killed, 1,008 wounded, and 9 missing. Ten Frenchmen were taken prisoner but survived relatively well during the war since their Chinese guards chose most of them to be camp cooks.

Greece. The Greek government sent two contingents, one infantry battalion (named the Royal Hellenic Expeditionary Force), and an air transport unit, the 13th Hellenic Air Force Squadron. The infantry battalion was composed of conscripts and volunteers from the regular Greek army. Many of these individuals, particularly the officers, were veterans of the 1946-1949 Greek Civil War that pitted the Greek government that was supported by the United States and the United Kingdom against communist insurgents. The troops arrived in December 1950 and were attached to the U.S. 1st Cavalry Division. The Greek troops earned a respected combat record and received several citations. According to one source, "In their first major action, the Greeks repelled an attack on Hill 381 using grenades, rifle butts, bayonets and bare hands when their ammunition was exhausted. They held the hill, preventing the Chinese from surrounding nearby UNC troops."[47] The Greek unit was valued by the UNC because interoperability was relatively easy since it used U.S. weapons and already had U.S. advisers in addition to its officers having good command of English. Greek soldiers were also accustomed to the rough terrain and cold winters of Korea; for many of them, Korea was just like home. In spring 1952, a company of the Greek troops was sent to join the Canadians and British in helping put down the prison riots in the UNC POW camp on Koje Island.

Greece also sent an air transport unit, the 13th Hellenic Air Force Squadron, that flew eight C-47 aircraft. The squadron arrived in late 1950 and flew its first mission in December, evacuating 1,000 wounded Marines from the 1st Division near the Chosin Reservoir. Their performance in this action earned them a presidential unit citation for their bravery. Greek forces had approximately 196 killed and 543 wounded.

Netherlands. Providing support for the defense of South Korea was a difficult proposition for the Netherlands. The small military was already involved in fighting a difficult guerrilla insurgency in Indonesia so there were few forces it could spare. Consequently, the government shifted an undersized infantry battalion of 636 soldiers from operations in Southeast Asia to Korea. The unit arrived in late 1950, was attached to the U.S. 38th Infantry Regiment of the 2nd Division, and saw its first

action at Wonju in December. At this engagement, the Dutch forces made a determined stand against a Chinese assault that earned them a presidential unit citation. The battalion later fought in Operation Roundup in February 1951, helped to stop the spring Chinese offensive in 1951, and the following year, fought in the Iron Triangle along the 38th parallel. The unit was also sent to Koje Island to help suppress the prison riots. Despite going from the tropical climate of Southeast Asia to the Korean winter, Dutch forces fought well and built a solid reputation, earning a number of citations from its own government along with those from South Korea and the United States.

In addition to these ground forces, the Dutch government decided that it could spare one navy destroyer for operations in Korea. The HNLMS Evertsen arrived in Korean waters in July 1950 and proceeded to participate in screening duty during the Inchon landing. Two other destroyers and three frigates rotated through Korea during the war performing a number of duties on both the east and west coasts including patrols, blockades, bombardment, and carrier escort duty. Several of the ships received ROK presidential unit citations and two ships received the honor twice. The Dutch contingent suffered approximately 122 killed and 645 wounded with most of these born by the land forces.[48]

New Zealand. The government of New Zealand provided both land and ground units to the defense of South Korea. The first to arrive in July 1950 were two frigates and in September, these ships assisted in the Inchon landing as a screening force. After Inchon, the New Zealand ships served on the west coast providing shore bombardment and blockade duties. The ground forces consisted of an artillery regiment, which was an all volunteer force that arrived in December 1950 and later became part of the Commonwealth Brigade. Australia had pressed New Zealand to commit an infantry battalion but it did not do so, partly in an effort to avoid more casualties.[49] The unit, also known as "Kayforce," fought well in the Battle of Gapyong, providing highly accurate artillery fire in support of UNC operations, despite the fact that the unit had little experience. The unit's contributions to the engagement were important in blunting the Chinese assault. In the end, the Kayforce "came together to produce a fighting machine which achieved high standards of efficiency and competence."[50] In addition, "they earned the respect, and more often than not the admiration, of the men, both Commonwealth and American, who served alongside them in Korea."[51] New Zealand casualties were relatively light, 46 killed and 79 wounded, since it provided no infantry units.

The Philippines. The contribution from Manila, one motorized battalion combat team (BCT), arrived in Korea in September 1950, one

of the earliest ground units to reach the peninsula. The unit of 1,500 soldiers was one of the better equipped including Sherman tanks, howitzers, and their own trucks. They were attached to several U.S. units and later to British and Canadian units. The Philippine BCT saw heavy action during the 1951 Chinese spring offensive and during the battle of Gloster Hill where their tanks attempted to relieve the British Gloucester Regiment from its desperate predicament but failed. The unit received various unit and individual citations for its actions during the war with 112 killed, 299 wounded, and 16 missing.

South Africa. The other country from Africa to provide military support for the defense of South Korea was South Africa. Unlike Ethiopia, South Africa did not provide ground forces and instead, sent a fighter squadron, the 2nd Squadron, also known as the "Flying Cheetahs." The squadron arrived in Korea in November 1950 in Pyongyang, which was now held by UNC forces after the reversal that followed the Inchon landing. The unit's early assignments included supporting UNC troops as they advanced through North Korea and then to protect those soldiers and Marines in the retreat that followed China's entry into the war. The weather conditions during this period were extremely harsh and made flying very difficult. Since the 2nd Squadron was relatively small, and unable to conduct independent operations, it was attached to the U.S. Air Force 18th Fighter Bomber Wing of the 5th USAF. Upon arriving in Korea, the Flying Cheetahs flew P-51D Mustangs, an earlier and slower version of the plane that restricted the unit to largely ground support missions.[52] Later, they transitioned to the F-86 Sabre and relocated to Osan Air Base, helping to fly raids on Pyongyang in the last five months of the war.

The 2nd Squadron established an excellent reputation during the war receiving presidential unit citations from South Korea and the United States. In addition, some members received individual decorations for bravery from South Africa and the United States. In all, over 800 Flying Cheetah pilots flew more than 12,000 sorties during the war. Thirty-four personnel were killed and nine taken as POWs with all repatriated at the end of hostilities.

Thailand. The Thai government was the first country from Asia to offer assistance and sent several units to help in Korea. For ground forces, they sent a regimental combat team (RCT) from the Royal Thai Expeditionary Force. The RCT, consisting of approximately 2,100 soldiers and later nicknamed the "Little Tigers," arrived in Korea in early November 1950 and were assigned to the US 1st Cavalry Division. The Thai ground troops that arrived in Korea were lacking in training and equipment. Later, the Thai forces helped to cover the UNC retreat from

Seoul after Chinese forces entered the war. In spring 1951, the Little Tigers saw heavy action during two Chinese offensives and in October-November 1952, they seized and then held Pork Chop Hill from an assault by the Chinese 39th Army in November. Eventually, Thai forces turned the hill over to units from the U.S. 7th Division, which found scrawled on bunker walls by Thai troops, "Take good care of our Pork Chop."[53] The troops were not considered particularly aggressive but earned several citations for bravery.[54]

Thailand also contributed other units including four frigates, a cargo ship, an air transport squadron consisting of three C-47s, and three medical service units. The four frigates arrived in early November 1950 and operated out of Japan furnishing escort and patrol duty on the east coast of Korea. The air transport unit also operated out of Japan flying multiple missions with the C-47 Skytrain. Finally, the medical units consisted of a group stationed in Pusan, a mobile surgical hospital, and an air medical team that conducted medical evacuations. Thai troops had 134 killed and 959 wounded.

Turkey. The Turkish government sent an infantry brigade of approximately 5,200 men, one of the largest UNC contributions. The unit arrived in October 1950 and was equipped largely with U.S. weapons. Attached to the U.S. 25th Infantry Division, the Turkish brigade developed a reputation as fierce fighters who were adept at hand-to-hand and bayonet combat.[55] As a result of their proficiency with a bayonet, General Matthew Ridgeway is reported to have ordered all UNC infantry to affix bayonets during combat. The brigade fought its most intense engagement in November 1950 when it was hammered by a Chinese offensive around Kunu-ri. Commenting on the Turkish performance, then 8th Army Commander, General Walton Walker maintained:

> The Turkish Brigade … has, by the great courage it has displayed and the delaying actions it fought continuously for 4 days, prevented the defeat and annihilation of the Army. In the 2 days' fighting … the strength of the enemy forces in the sector held by the Turkish Brigade was 6 divisions. Despite this, the enemy was unable to penetrate our lines. The Turkish Brigade, together with the 2nd U.S. Division, secured the necessary time to avert the complete encirclement of the whole 8th Army.[56]

The unit was in a difficult position yet refused to fall back suffering over 1,000 casualties. After this engagement, only a few of the brigade's companies were combat-ready.[57] A refurbished unit fought again in spring 1951 against the Chinese spring offensive. In 1952, the brigade

patrolled the area around Heart Break Ridge and in May 1953 did some heavy fighting around Munsan-ri.

The Turks provided the 4th largest contingent of troops after South Korea, the United States, and the United Kingdom. The troops were well known for their ability to withstand hardship, especially as POWs in Chinese camps. Despite their reputation as ferocious fighters, Turkish troops were reported to lack discipline and organization.[58] In addition, language difficulties often complicated Turkish involvement in UNC operations. Approximately 750 Turks were killed in action, 2,068 wounded and 173 were missing in action.

United Kingdom. After South Korea and the United States, the United Kingdom was the largest contributor to the Korean War effort. London sent 2 army brigades that included some of its most famous units, such as the 1st Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment, known more commonly as the Glosters. In addition, the British ground force contingent included two field artillery regiments and one armored regiment. Some of these units began arriving in August 1950 and were sent immediately to fortify the Pusan perimeter. After the breakout at Pusan, British units advanced north and when China entered the war in November 1950, they helped the U.S. 2nd Division to fight its way back south. Later in the war, they were reinforced by the Australian, New Zealand, Canadian, and Indian medical units to form the Commonwealth Division. British soldiers saw ferocious combat on many occasions in Korea. One of the most well-remembered examples was the stand of the Glosters on Hill 235 during the spring Chinese offensive in April 1951. Severely outnumbered, the Glosters held the hill, now known as "Gloster Hill," for several days during the Battle of the Imjin River before only a remnant of the unit was able to escape. General James Van Fleet praised the Glosters, noting that it was "the most outstanding example of unit bravery in modern warfare."[59] Their effort along with that of others helped to blunt the Chinese offensive.

Soon after the UNSC authorized military assistance for South Korea, the United Kingdom dispatched naval units to Korea that included one light aircraft carrier, two cruisers, and eight destroyers along with Marine and support units. Later, the British also sent a hospital ship. Throughout the war, the Royal Navy conducted a variety of operations that included attacking North Korean torpedo and patrol boats, escort and patrol duties, air attacks on inland targets, and submarine patrols. The UK and U.S. navies had a good record of cooperation and the British force was given much of the west coast to patrol independently. The Royal Navy conducted several dangerous naval operations including sailing up the Taedong River in bad weather to evacuate troops in spring

1951.[60] British forces on land and at sea suffered approximately 700 killed and 4,000 wounded or taken prisoner.

Five countries —India, Denmark, Italy, Norway, and Sweden— declared their neutrality in the conflict but sent medical units to assist the UNC while providing far less assistance to North Korea. (See Table 2). India sent the largest non-U.S. medical unit, the 60th Field Ambulance and Surgical Unit that served with the Commonwealth Division and accompanied them on their operations during the war. The Indians conducted helicopter medevac operations and parachuted into combat zones to provide medical assistance. According to Sandler, "the Indian doctors and medics, each airborne-qualified and a veteran of the bitter fighting in Burma during the Second World War, provided such good service that troops from Allied units that had their own perfectly adequate medical support facilities would often attempt to obtain treatment from the 60th."[61] In August 1953, the Indians left the Commonwealth Division to oversee the screening of DPRK and Chinese POWs who were refusing repatriation.

Table 2: Medical Contributions to the UN Effort

	Contributions
India	Field Ambulance and Surgical Unit
Italy	77 Red Cross personnel
Norway	Mobile Surgical Hospital
Sweden	Medical Detachment
Denmark	Medical Detachment Red Cross Hospital Ship

Denmark provided the next largest commitment, contributing a 100-person medical detachment and in March 1953 sending a Red Cross Hospital Ship. The Danish contingent initially treated only UNC personnel but later, began serving ROK civilians as well. Norway contributed a mobile surgical hospital, NorMASH, that arrived in June 1951. The unit operated a 200-bed field hospital north of Seoul near Tongduchon. Sweden sent a 154-person medical team in September 1951 that set up a field hospital in Pusan that eventually grew to hold 450 beds. Similar to Denmark, both Norway and Sweden began the war treating exclusively UNC casualties but by the end, also served civilians. Finally, Italy contributed 77 Red Cross personnel in November 1951 who spent their time operating a hospital in Seoul.

Three countries pledged support: Iran—two ambulance units; Pakistan—one infantry regiment; and Lebanon—one infantry battalion. However, these countries did not fulfill their commitments. In the case of Pakistan, its leaders argued that UN support for their position on

Kashmir would have been helpful in obtaining Karachi's assistance.

In October 1950, when victory over the North Koreans appeared imminent, there were doubts that UN members needed to provide further support to the war effort. UNC members that had initially pledged certain levels of support began to question whether all of it was needed since the war would soon be over. For example, the British considered holding back an armored regiment, the 8th Hussars, from deploying with the British 29th Infantry Brigade believing that amount of armor would no longer be necessary in these last phases of the war. However, U.S. military leaders were able to convince the British that the war was far from over and the armor was still needed.[62]

Yet others continued to hesitate about providing a larger contribution to the UNC. By late October 1950, there were approximately 9,000 troops from five countries serving in the UNC with US and ROK forces. When pledges came in from other countries, the number could increase to 36,000, a number Major General Charles Bolté believed was too high. In his view, 15,000 would be sufficient because "the problem is to reduce logistic burdens on the United States and at the same time retain the political advantages of multinational United Nations representation."[63] The Joint Chiefs of Staff concurred, supporting a request for the cancelation of offers to send battalions from Belgium, the Netherlands, and France, the New Zealand artillery battalion, an additional Australian battalion, along with reductions to the forces sent by Canada and Greece. However, China's entry into the war and the rapid change in fortunes on the battlefield for UNC troops reversed the calls to reduce UN support for the war. By January 1951, a number of complaints surfaced that UN members were not doing enough, and the JCS recommended to the Department of State to increase its efforts to obtain more assistance.[64]

As the war dragged on, the U.S. military and Congress began calling for more assistance from U.S. allies and UN members. The lack of increased UN help was partly Washington's fault. The United States had imposed criteria that for some countries was very difficult to meet. The momentum for international support in the early days of the war was squandered by awkward handling of early offers to come to South Korea's assistance. When the war began to go well in the fall of 1950, the United States relaxed its efforts to recruit assistance, believing the war would be over soon and no further help would be necessary. For example, the Greeks had offered a brigade at the start of the war but the Defense Department discouraged the full deployment so that in the end, despite the initial offer, Athens sent only a battalion.[65]

In February 1951, the United States began to push for more help from its allies. By then, however, the initial enthusiasm for the war

effort had dwindled as the casualties mounted and the conflict became more controversial internationally and in many of the potential donor states, making it far more difficult to acquire additional support. In addition, there were other reasons why enlisting help for the war effort was difficult. First, World War II was hardly a distant memory. Many countries were overcoming the economic devastation of years of conflict in Europe and Asia, and their publics were tired of war. Supporting a war effort that for many was far off and did not pose a direct threat to their security evoked little enthusiasm. Second, many of the countries that might have been sufficiently strong to provide greater assistance had serious commitments elsewhere. The European allies had responsibilities to the newly formed NATO alliance while Britain and France had occupation duties in Germany and Austria. Moreover, some of these European states remained mired in conflicts against various insurgencies in their former colonial possessions. These states and others had their own problems that made it difficult to contribute more or contribute at all to the defense of South Korea. Third, most of these potential contributors were plagued by the "tyranny of distance" located far from the Korean peninsula. Transportation and logistics were daunting propositions for even the more powerful states. Finally, some countries were sympathetic to the U.S. position but for various reasons could not support Washington openly. For example, Yugoslavia had been leaning toward the U.S. position but had maintained a policy of independence toward Washington and Moscow. Given its proximity to the Soviet Union and some of its allies, Yugoslavia could not openly support U.S. efforts to defend South Korea.[66]

The United States also exerted considerable effort to recruit more support from Latin American countries. Colombia had been an early volunteer but Washington hoped it could coax others into joining Bogota. However, this was a difficult undertaking from the start. Most of these countries were poor with few resources to train, equip, and transport units thousands of miles away. Some countries requested large amounts of U.S. military aid in return for sending troops to Korea. The U.S. offer to fund military units while expecting reimbursement later galled many Latin American leaders and did little to make joining the Korean War effort appealing to these countries. Hemispheric relations had often been difficult with Latin American leaders feeling neglected by Washington. Many felt there was little reason for them to join the U.S. call for military operations that seemed to have little to do with their own security concerns. In the end, Washington was able to obtain only a few additional commitments, such as Canada's increase from a battalion to a brigade and New Zealand's strengthening of its artillery regiment. The

United States and South Korea continued to bear the lion's share of the war effort.

The coalition took one more united effort in conjunction with the Korea War. After hostilities ended and the armistice was signed, the sixteen countries that fought in Korea concluded the "Greater Sanctions Agreement" which stated that any further unprovoked Communist aggression in Korea would not be tolerated. If the peace were broken again by North Korea, "the consequences of such a breach of the armistice would be so grave that, in all probability, it would not be possible to confine hostilities within the frontiers of Korea."[67] Though an ominous threat, it is not clear what these countries would have been willing to do, if anything, to implement the agreement should the armistice be violated.

Assessing the Coalition's Efforts

The overall contribution of military forces provided by the non-Korean, non-U.S. portion of the UNC was relatively small in numbers. By July 9, 1951, these elements of the UNC furnished approximately 6.3 percent of UNC forces while South Korea and the United States provided 23.3 percent and 70.4 percent respectively.[68] U.S. leaders believed that international support for the UN collective security action was an important substitute for a plethora of individual security commitments. Since both the United States and the UN played a major role in the creation of South Korea, both had a responsibility to defend the ROK.[69] We now turn to an assessment of the impact of the non-ROK, non-US participation in the following areas: forming the coalition; military effectiveness; political importance; and changes to NATO.

Forming the coalition. The birth of the UNC was in many respects new ground being explored in international politics. For the first time, a young organization mobilized under the banner of collective security to protect a state that, while not a member of the UN, had been created under a UN resolution and UN guidance. Yet, in other ways, the UNC was an old concept where states band together to confront an adversary based on a common threat perception or common interests. Indeed, many of these states had only recently participated in the intense coalition warfare of World War II. As was the case with the formation of previous coalitions, the process and motivations were intensely political. States had a variety and often, multiple reasons for joining the UNC. In some instances, states believed it was proper to support a fellow state that was assaulted by overt aggression, particularly since the invasion was a dangerous signal of communist expansion. States were also ready to support the fledgling UN and the collective security it stood

for in its first major test since its formation after World War II. The UN was still in its infancy and hopes remained high for the organization's success. However, for most in the UNC coalition, including the United States, participation was based on an assessment of the national interests at stake and often this had little or nothing to do with Korea.

In the United States prior to June 1950, Korea per se had been relatively low on Washington's list of interests because the stakes –an assessment of the costs and benefits—was not sufficiently high. The war suddenly raised Korea's standing and the stakes involved because this was the location where communist forces chose to test containment. Thus, "Korea was now on the front line of American efforts to halt the spread of Communism."[70] Perhaps typical of the motivations for aiding the UNC were those of New Zealand as summarized by McGibbon:

> New Zealand responded to the crisis not out of any direct interest in the Korean situation but rather in support of its international obligations under the United Nations Charter. Like all the sixteen states which contributed to the United Nations command, New Zealand had its own motivations and reasons for fulfilling those obligations, not all of which had to do with the more elevated precepts of international order.[71]

This is an important concept of a collective security organization. States may not always have vital interests at stake yet are obligated to provide support nonetheless. The responsibility is part of the membership in the organization and because, as Haile Selassie lamented, "you may be next."

In a number of instances, states joined the UNC to curry favor with the United States while strengthening its security ties with Washington and obtaining larger amounts of U.S. financial and military assistance. In the cases of Greece and Turkey, their leaders believed its assistance would improve relations with the United States to facilitate their efforts to join NATO. Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, and Thailand also believed participation was an important path to obtaining a formal security treaty with the United States. Others like South Africa and Colombia had little at stake in South Korea but viewed participation as a way to advance other goals. In the end, it was a complex mix of interests, both political and security that explained the formation of the UNC coalition.

For today's security environment, building international coalitions remains an increasingly necessary task to address transnational security challenges. The CTF-151 counter-piracy operation off the coast of Somalia, U.S./NATO operations in Afghanistan, and ongoing

international peacekeeping operations all point to the continued need for international coalitions supported by the procedures and institutions to make them function smoothly and effectively. A U.S. officer noted the following regarding the coalition during the Korean War:

> [Korea] furnishes a great testing ground for inter-allied relationships, a problem we will continuously meet at all levels in any future war. These experiences and lessons gained and formed should be passed on as soon as possible … We certainly have many favourable instances of inter-allied cooperation in Korea. We have to depend on our allies — let us learn how now before it is too late.[72]

Military effectiveness. Grey notes that there are five important operational variables for coalition warfare that require agreement for the proper and effective functioning of the coalition: strategic policy; command of the forces in the field; combat effectiveness; supply and logistics; and the financing of military operations.[73] In these areas, the results of the Korean War were somewhat mixed, as one might expect. Given the relative numbers of the UNC contribution, the ROK and the United States carried the majority of the military load. Most of the infantry contributions from UNC members, the most valued in a ground-centric conflict, were battalion size or less. Only the United Kingdom, Turkey, and Canada contributed larger units, though some also provided naval forces in addition to their ground contingents. However, relative to the size of some of the countries, their contributions were greater than might initially appear. Despite the relative size of some units in comparison to South Korea and the United States, some international forces played important roles in particular battles and suffered significant casualties, most notably the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, France, and Turkey, though the casualties of others were not insignificant either. Several studies maintain that U.S. soldiers had relatively high regard for their UNC allies. According to one source, "Their praise of the allies—the French, Thais, Turks, and Abyssians [Ethiopians]—was far removed from the grousing about allies that had marked most previous wars. Most Americans, privately, would admit the U.N. troops were better than they were."[74] A study of the Commonwealth contribution to the war maintained, "In Korea it was US Army units which attracted the most criticism for failure in combat and which led to the small formations from the Commonwealth and other UN forces continually being placed in dangerous tactical situations above and beyond that which they should have been called upon to face."[75]

However, a U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff report in 1964 providing

advice to President Johnson during the Vietnam War cautioned against too much reliance on allies. The report maintained the United States "had NO significant support in Korea, other than verbal. Except for the South Koreans themselves, the US did essentially all the fighting, took all the casualties and paid all the bills."[76] After being relieved of command, General MacArthur maintained in a Senate hearing that ending the military contributions of the UNC allies "would have no material effect upon the tactical situation."[77] Many members of the Senate during these hearings concurred with this assessment. Despite these criticisms, the UNC allies made important contributions and suffered significant casualties relative to the size of their units.

While generally helpful in UNC operations, the international forces often complicated logistics and support. With the exception of the British and Canadian units, most UNC forces relied on the United States for supplies, transportation, weapons, and ammunition. Maintaining supply lines was sometimes difficult and Washington had to foot most of the bill. Arrangements were made prior to the war for each UNC member committing troops to reimburse the U.S. Treasury after the war. However, it often took years for the final settling of these debts. Thus, the benefits of coalition support often came at considerable financial cost to the United States. Language was another issue that sometimes made operations problematic. For those countries from the Commonwealth Division or NATO, this was less an issue, but for others, this complicated the conduct of combat operations and international units were sometimes on their own as a result.

Another dimension of the military effectiveness of the UNC was the speed at which the coalition needed to be put together. The North Korean invasion caught almost everyone by surprise. North Korea had launched the invasion in hopes the conquest would succeed before any help could arrive for the South, providing the U.S. and the UN with a fait accompli. Following on the heels of 5-6 years of fighting during World War II, few countries were prepared to send a significant amount of military support to Korea and there was no structure or institution in place to coordinate the international response. As a result, even among those countries that were willing to send ground combat units to Korea, it took six months or more to organize, train, equip, and transport the units to the theater. Given the early success of the North Korean invasion and the desperation around the Pusan perimeter, the international assistance almost came too late. The UNC response in Korea demonstrated the difficulty of piecing together an ad hoc coalition on short notice. Consequently, the Korean War helped to show the importance of having standing alliance relationships and procedures in place to respond to

international crises. In fact, when contemplating the importance of international participation in the defense of South Korea, General Maxwell Taylor believed that the assembling of a UN force of the size of a division from several countries would be a good testing ground for NATO both in the areas of organization and in conducting operations.[78]

Political importance. The contributions of the 15 non-ROK and non-US members of the UNC provided less than seven percent of the military forces for the war effort, but the political importance of their contribution was a significant element of their participation. According to William Stueck:

> Material support from other nations would relieve the United States of some of the burdens in Korea, would bind friendly nations to the U.S.-initiated venture, and would have a deterrent effect on Moscow. Furthermore, it would undermine Soviet claims that the U.S. effort in Korea had little support among the masses worldwide and would ensure ongoing support within the United States for a collective approach to U.S. foreign policy.[79]

Of the 16 UNC countries that did provide military assistance to South Korea, nine were from NATO or the British Commonwealth, putting a decidedly western face on the intervention. However, the handful of countries that were non-NATO and non-Commonwealth—Colombia, Ethiopia, Greece, the Philippines, South Africa, Thailand, and Turkey—did provide important political cover in portraying the effort as an international collective security operation. Greece and Turkey later became NATO members but at the outset of the war were not. In the case of Latin America, Colombia's contribution of an infantry battalion and frigate provided some military support along with the political implications of a state from the developing world joining the U.S./UN coalition. Colombia's participation provided a rebuttal to the arguments of communist states and other neutral nations that the intervention in Korea was largely an imperialist, Western affair. However, one assessment has argued that all Latin American states provided an important contribution to the war effort noting: "In evaluating the overall situation of Latin America with respect to the Korean conflict, it should be remembered that the embargo of strategic commodities imposed [on North Korea] by all nations probably had as much practical effect as the sending of troops by all nations could have had."[80]

Changes to NATO. Finally, the Korean War also had important implications for the NATO alliance. Prior to the Korean War, NATO had been at something of a crossroads. It was unclear how broad its

membership should be, the level of assistance the United States and others were willing to provide to the organization, and whether German rearmament needed to occur for a truly robust NATO defense capability. The Korean War helped to demonstrate the importance of all of these issues.[81] There was also far greater appreciation of the linkages of U.S. and Western interests in Europe and globally. Communist expansion in Asia mattered to Europe. The impact of China's fall to communism in 1949 and the dangers it posed to the interests of NATO members were clear. Thus, the Korean War demonstrated that the interests of NATO members were connected not only in Europe but also in Asia.[82]

Conclusion

When the call went out to UN member states to come to South Korea's defense in a U.S.-led UN coalition, 15 countries joined the United States to provide military assistance. Others provided medical and economic support. Countries joined the UNC more often to support their own interests that in many cases had little to do with South Korea. Many states felt obligated to support the young UN and the collective security stipulations present in the UN Charter. Getting to the war often took time, particularly when needing to train, equip, and transport ground units, and money which many of these states did not have. Moreover, World War II was only five years in the past; leaders and their people were tired of war and still recovering from the devastation of this conflict.

Their military contributions relative to South Korea and the United States were small. Yet, most units performed well as individual units and made important contributions in numerous engagements. In addition, their overall participation helped to demonstrate the international nature of the UNC effort. Crafting the coalition and making it work was a difficult task, particularly given the haste needed to assemble the group, the relative infancy of the organization that sponsored it, and the lack of established institutions to coordinate a response. Ad hoc coalitions are difficult to construct and point to the ongoing utility of formal alliance relationships and multilateral security organizations where combined training and procedures exist that facilitate effective military operations. Moreover, the greater the number of participants, the more beneficial it is to have these prior arrangements in place. Thus, the institutions, planning, and preparation that go into maintaining the ROK-U.S. alliance are important measures that help to provide for South Korea's security. In the end, the UNC coalition effort provided a valuable lesson in the importance of conducting military operations with well-known partners.

Notes:

[1] The views expressed in this report are the author's alone and do not represent the official position of the Department of the Navy, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. government.

[2] For example, Clay Blair, *The Forgotten War: America in Korea, 1950-1953* (New York: Times Books, 1987); Bruce Cumings (ed.) *Child of Conflict: The Korean-American Relationship, 1943-1953* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1983); Rosemary Foot, *The Wrong War: American Policy and the Dimensions of the Korean Conflict, 1950-1953* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985); Max Hastings, *The Korean War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987); Glenn Paige, *The Korea Decision* (New York: Free Press, 1968).

[3] Trygve Lie, *In the Cause of Peace: Seven Years with the United Nations* (New York: Macmillan, 1954), p. 329.

[4] United Nations Security Council, "82 (1950). Resolution of 25 June 1950 [S/1501]," available at available at http://www.un.org/documents/sc/res/1950/

scres50.htm (accessed May 10, 2010).

[5] Ibid.

[6] Harry S Truman, *Memoirs, Volume Two: Years of Trial and Hope* (Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday, 1956), pp. 332-333.

[7] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, p. 329.

[8] "Truman's Statement on the Korean War, June 27, 1950," in Henry Steele Commager, ed., *Documents in American History*, vol. II (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1962), pp. 560-561.

[9] Merle Miller, *Plain Speaking: An Oral Biography of Harry S. Truman* (New York: Berkley Publishing, 1973), p. 266.

[10] Jeffrey Grey, *The Commonwealth Armies and the Korean War: An Alliance Study* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), p. 27.

[11] United Nations, "83 (1950). Resolution of 27 June 1950 [S/1511]," available at http://www.un.org/documents/sc/res/1950/scres50.htm (accessed May 10, 2010).

[12] Lie, *In the Cause of Peace*, p. 332.

[13] Ibid., p. 335.

[14] Stanley Sandler, *The Korean War: No Victor, No Vanquished* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1999), pp. 151-152.

[15] William Stueck, *The Korean War: An International History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 57.

[16] James F. Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War: Policy and Direction: The First Year* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1988), p. 116.

[17] Ibid., pp. 115-117.

[18] Stueck, *The Korean War*, p. 72.

[19] "Help MacArthur?" *Newsweek*, September 11, 1950, p. 40.

[20] Elizabeth Edwards Spalding, *The First Cold Warrior: Harry Truman, Containment, the Remaking of Liberal Internationalism* (Lexington, Ky.: University of Kentucky Press, 2006), p. 64.

[21] Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War, 1950-1953 Vol I.: Strategy and Diplomacy* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial and the Australian Government Publishing Service, 1981), pp. 47-48.

[22] As quoted ibid., p. 65. See also Dennis Phillips, *Ambivalent Allies: Myth and Reality in the Australian-American Relationship* (New York: Penguin, 1988).

[23] Gavan McCormack, *Cold War, Hot War: An Australian Perspective on the Korean War* (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1983), pp. 102-104.

[24] Ian McGibbon, *New Zealand and the Korean War*, vol. II, Combat Operations (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 365.

[25] Trevor R. Reese, *Australia, New Zealand, and the United States: A Survey of International Relations, 1941-1968* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 157.

[26] Ibid., p. 118.

[27] Robert Osgood, *NATO: The Entangling Alliance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 68.

[28] Osgood, *NATO: The Entangling Alliance*, p. 69.

[29] Stueck, *The Korean War*, pp. 73-74.

[30] Milton, W. Meyer, *A Diplomatic History of the Philippine Republic* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1965), pp. 89-96.

[31] R. Sean Randolph, *The United States and Thailand: Alliance Dynamics, 1950-1985* (Berkeley, Calif.: Institute of East Asian Studies, 1986), p. 13.

[32] "ETHIOPIA: The Lion is Freed," *Time*, September 8, 1975, available at www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,917777,00.html (accessed May 12, 2010).

[33] Stueck, *The Korean War*, p. 74.

[34] Much of the information for this portion of the paper came from Sandler, *The Korean War*, pp. 149-169; Michael J. Varhola, *Fire and Ice: The Korean War,*

1950-1953 (Cambridge, Mass.: Da Capo Press, 200), pp. 127-150; and Stueck, *The Korean War*, p. 70-78.

[35] Sandler, *The Korean War*, p. 156.

[36] Grey, *The Commonwealth Armies and the Korean War*, p. 24.

[37] As quoted in Roy E. Appleman, *United States Army in the Korean War: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, June-November 1950* (Washington D.C., Center of Military History, 1986), p. 477. Appleman also quotes General Kean confirming this assessment: "The close air support rendered by the Fifth Air Force again saved this division as they have many times before." Ibid., pp. 476-477.

[38] David Rees, *Korea: The Limited War* (New York: St. Martins Press), p. 51.

[39] See George Odgers, *Across the Parallel: The Australian 77th Squadron in the United States Air Force in the Korean War* (London: William Heinemann, 1954).

[40] Sandler, *The Korean War*, p. 159.

[41] Russell W. Ramsey, "The Colombian Battalion in Korea and Suez," *Journal of Inter-American Studies*, vol. 9 (October, 1967), pp. 546-547. See also Bradley Lynn Coleman, "The Colombian Army in Korea, 1950-1954," *The Journal of Military History*, vol. 69, No. 4 (October, 2005), pp. 1137-1177.

[42] Ramsey, "The Colombian Battalion in Korea and Suez," p. 547.

[43] The Silver Star and Bronze Star are the 3rd and 4th highest honors respectively given by the U.S. military.

[44] Rick Scavetta, "Ethiopia – Kagnew veterans share memories of Korean War," *United States Army*, January 27, 2010 available at www.army.mil/-news/2010/01/27/33578-ethiopia---kagnew-veterans-share-memories-of-korean-war/ (accessed May 7, 2010).

[45] Sandler, *The Korean War*, p. 160.

[46] Ibid., p. 161.

[47] Ibid., p. 162.

[48] Varhola, *Fire and Ice*, pp. 140-141.

[49] McGibbon, *New Zealand and the Korean War*, vol. II, p. 363.

[50] Ibid., p. 364.

[51] Ibid., p. 365.

[52] Sandler, *The Korean War*, p. 161.

[53] Varhola, *Fire and Ice*, pp. 144-145.

[54] Sandler, *The Korean War*, p. 163 and Stueck, *The Korean War*, p. 72.

[55] The Turks' reputation generated several stories that may or may not have been true. According to one source, a Turkish commander was "incensed because a US officer had doubted the high number of Communist troops his men reported as having killed in a particular action. He then issued a bran sack to each of his men. The following day the officer reported back to the American, whereupon his men emptied their bran sacks – filled with Chinese ears – at the astonished US officer's feet. Laconically suggesting 'divide by two,' the Turk strode off." Sandler, *The Korean War*, p. 162.

[56] As quoted by George McGhee, *The US-Turkish-NATO Middle East Connection: How the Truman Doctrine Contained the Soviets in the Middle East* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), p. 77.

[57] Fehrenback, *This Kind of War*, p. 212.

[58] Sandler, *The Korean War*, p. 162.

[59] David Rees, *Korea: The Limited War* (New York: St. Martins Press), p. 250.

[60] Sandler, *The Korean War*, p. 158.

[61] Ibid., p. 155.

[62] Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War*, pp. 224-5.

[63] As quoted ibid., pp. 225-6.

[64] Major General Maxwell Taylor in commenting on the UN troop contributions believed that Turkey, Greece, the United Kingdom, the Philippines, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Australia, and New Zealand could be able to provide forces up to a division. Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War*, p. 356.

[65] Stueck, *The Korean War*, p. 195.

[66] Ibid., pp. 195-197.

[67] U.S. Senate, "Appendix IV: Declaration of the Sixteen Nations Relating to the Armistice," July 27, 1953, *Mutual Defense Treaty With Kor*ea, Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations, 83rd Congress, 2nd Session, January 13 and 14, 1954, p. 58.

[68] Grey, *The Commonwealth Armies and the Korean War*, p. 30.

[69] Reese, *Korea: The Limited War*, p. 32.

[70] Terence Roehrig, *From Deterrence to Engagement: The U.S. Defense Commitment to South Korea* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2006), pp. 124-129.

[71] McGibbon, *New Zealand and the Korean War*, vol. II, p. 362.

[72] As quoted in Grey, *The Commonwealth Armies and the Korean War*, p. 189.

[73] Ibid., p. 6.

[74] Fehrenbach, *This Kind of War*, p. 423.

[75] Grey, *The Commonwealth Armies and the Korean War*, p. 8.

[76] JCF comments, 10 November 1964 as quoted in Glen St. J. Barclay, *Friends in High Places: Australian-American diplomatic relations since 1945* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 145.

[77] As quoted in Stueck, *The Korean War*, p. 194.

[78] Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War*, p. 356.

[79] Stueck, *The Korean War: An International History*, p.56.

[80] Ramsey, "The Colombian Battalion in Korea and Suez," p. 557.

[81] Robert Jervis, "The Impact of the Korean War on the Cold War," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 24, no. 4 (December 1980), pp. 563-592.

[82] Walter LaFeber, "NATO and the Korean War: A Context," *Diplomatic History*, vol. 13, No. 4 (Fall, 1989), pp. 461-477 and Lawrence S. Kaplan, *The United States and NATO: The Formative Years* (Lexington, Ky.: University of Kentucky Press, 1984).

Some Lessons for Today from the Korean War

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ABSTRACT

The Korean War had an immense set of effects on the international system and a number of nations, primarily because of the interplay between the war and the historical context in which it occurred. Lessons include the importance of the historical context in a particular case since it undermines success in generalizing about the probable effects of seemingly similar events; the way even "small" wars can have a major impact; the need to be skeptical about suggestions that the U.S. significantly reduce its involvements in and efforts to manage regional security situations; the similarity between the Korean War and later forceful multilateral interventions for peace and security; and the need to be very cautious in offering predictions with high confidence about how a "limited" war with an Iran or North Korea will turn out.

Keywords: Forgotten War; Korean War and: bipolarity, Cold War militarization, US-China relations, deterrence; Korean War impact on: United States, Soviet Union, Japan, China, the two Koreas; Korean War and: regional security management, multilateral security management,

Introduction

It is particularly appropriate on the 60th anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War to look back at the war carefully. It has suffered from neglect, something that began not long after it ended. In various ways it has been largely forgotten, even by the latest generation of Koreans for whom it is no longer a self-defining memory, and is often referred to as "the Forgotten War."[1] In the U.S. there has been no recent surge in historical works revisiting the war, such as has been occurring with World War II. American movies about the war are rarely shown. It is at least better remembered in China, of course, where it is described as a Chinese victory, and in North and South Korea where the war was the seminal experience of their emergence as states. The neglect in the U.S. is unjustified, because the war was quite an important event, one of those very few events that can rightly be cited as a turning point in history. It had a huge impact on the international system and on the domestic affairs of several significant nations. Let me do my part to try to compensate a bit for that neglect.

I was asked to discuss the lessons for today that might be elicited from the war. Lessons are meant to be nuggets of wisdom that can assist us as we get on with our affairs, providing some guidance on how to proceed now. The trouble is that a major historical turning point is, by definition, a member of a uniquely important class of events, and it is normally not wise to draw lessons from such unusual circumstances. While the Korean War has important elements of what can be a broadly informative case study, doing an in-depth analysis in order to produce generalizations based on a single case is hardly wise. This article settles for attempting to highlight aspects of the war so as to indicate why they might periodically be useful to remember, and also stressing that the war and its impact might have turned out very differently, making for a rather different kind of world thereafter. Without the Korean War we might well have lived through something much less cold than the Cold War.

It is also worth emphasizing how the Korean War had a far greater impact than anyone at the time would have predicted, and that in part this was because it provided such a woeful parade of serious misperceptions and miscalculations.[2] As such it surely offers a lesson or two for today, but by telling us less about what we can learn about the Korean War that is pertinent now than instructing us in how dangerous it can be to be comfortably confident we know what we are doing.

The Importance of Context

The war had such a lengthy string of important results mainly due to the context within which it arose and was conducted. Hence the first

lesson we can draw from the war is that context can change almost everything. In other circumstances, especially much more ordinary ones, the outbreak of the war would likely have been considered a civil war in a peripheral place, a minor conflict of little importance, certainly not a conflict deserving of a massive international reaction. It was the shifting, still developing, Cold War context that made the Korean War so important for the U.S. and thus for several other governments. A number of facets of that context were particularly influential in turning the war into a seminal event. One was that the war erupted after a string of interrelated developments that were generating rising pressure on and within the American government for a strong reaction to an event like the North Korean attack. These developments included:

- The emergence of Soviet-style satellite governments in Eastern Europe after 1945;
- The first Soviet nuclear test in 1949;
- The establishment of NATO in 1949; and
- The triumph of communist forces in China (1949), followed shortly thereafter by a formal Sino-Soviet alliance (1950).

Pressure had been building in Washington to work harder to halt what seemed to be a rapid expansion of communist controlled territory and communist influence. And as a result of these developments the American government had begun drawing containment lines as a key part of its foreign policy thinking and actions, the central guide to which was the strategy of containment. There was, nevertheless, a growing sense in Washington in June 1950 that making this major adjustment in U.S. foreign policy was overdue and still incomplete. The Korean War therefore served as a huge catalyst to speed it up. And it was in this frame of mind that the attack was immediately perceived as exceedingly dangerous: here was the Soviet government seizing an opportunity to expand the Soviet bloc by using one of its satellites. Clearly, Moscow felt it was on a roll or riding on a high tide.

Another and related contextual element was that the U.S. was deep into trying to reformulate the military component of the containment strategy. That part of the strategy had not yet been nailed down, was still being considered and debated, and it was evident that making any major changes would be highly controversial. Even before the Korean War the conflict with the Soviet bloc had been generating rising concern that it would sooner or later lead to a major military confrontation, most likely in Europe. Because the Soviet government now had nuclear weapons, analysts concluded that it was bound to continue trying, even more than

it had in the past five years in Europe, to exploit its conventional military strength and that of the communist bloc to make major gains. With nuclear weapons in hand, it would now have less concern about and less respect for the American atomic bomb.

One result of this emerging perspective was a secret draft blueprint for an American/Western European military buildup: NSC-68. In suggesting what had to be done it gave the West's conventional military weaknesses particular attention. However, the proposed buildup was a very uncomfortable prospect and quite controversial; at the time NSC-68 was often described in the government as calling for politically impossible policies and expenditures. It was being mulled over rather dubiously when the war broke out, and the war promptly changed all that. The invasion and the fighting were widely taken as proof of both the NSC-68 view of the communists as poised, or soon ready, to attack almost anywhere and of the need to get better prepared militarily. Thus the general plan it provided, including a major military expansion, for how to try to deter communist bloc attacks and deal with them if they nevertheless occurred, was now endorsed and more or less implemented.

NATO was such an important part of the context because of the fact that President Truman and others around him felt strongly that the alliance, which had been created only through an elaborate and intense political effort in Europe and the U.S., would be undermined if the U.S. failed to defend a state elsewhere that it had nurtured into existence. Even if the U.S. had no official commitment to protect the ROK, the credibility of the American commitment to NATO in the eyes of the allies, even more than its enemies, was held to be at stake and that made the war in Korea of global significance to those policymakers.

Finally, a much broader contextual element was the way Truman and many others were naturally primed by some of the most seminal and notorious events of their lifetimes to refer to "lessons" they had learned which now seemed overwhelmingly relevant in 1950. The lessons had to do with the way the rise of major totalitarian states, the steady expansion of their territories and acquisition of satellites, and the failure of Western countries to stand up to all this in the 1930s had eventually been a terrible mistake. The Korean situation seemed all too much like that history being replayed. Suddenly, Korea was both "strategically" valuable and symbolically critical; as a result, assistance to it was deemed politically necessary.

Thus this initial lesson for today of the Korean War is that there is little that is intrinsically important about contemporary developments, such as in their dimensions, their location, even their prominence. Their importance is dependent on what they mean, and that meaning is very

much shaped by the observer's context. Thus the Korean War was surprisingly but readily seen at the time as extremely important, even though it is now often forgotten or only touched on in passing.

How Unexpected Consequences Can Flow From a "Little" War

The second lesson is how events that are taken to be very important can readily play a large role in then reshaping the context at that time so that the context then drives events thereafter in a very different direction. In this regard, it is astonishing how important the Korean War was and continues to be—its effects continue to reverberate today. The war demonstrated in detail how immense the impact on all concerned of even a relatively small or limited war can be and, when that turns out to be the case, how very unlikely it is that the impact will have been accurately anticipated. Here is a reasonable working list of the most notable effects of the Korean War.

First, with regard to the international environment, the Korean War cemented bipolarity in place. The dominance of two huge blocs led by two supposed superpowers was so striking and unusual that it was to eventually lead analysts to reshape the fundamental theory of international politics—political Realism—used by analysts and governments for some time, into Neorealism, which eventually dominated Cold War American academic and policy makers' thinking (aspects of it have outlasted the Cold War in some quarters). It shaped how we thought and taught on international politics. It was somewhat less influential when it came to U.S. foreign policy. The U.S. adopted the broad Realist/Neorealist perspective to fight the Cold War, matching a roughly realist Soviet perspective which had dominated Soviet foreign policy since the Bolshevik Revolution. Each superpower also added distinct additional elements from their ideologies. For the U.S. this eventually resulted in combining a realist approach with Wilsonianism, the conception of international politics applied ever since by Americans in relations with allies under which the alliances would be not just hard-nosed temporary deals born of national interests but growing communities of shared norms and values. That gave U.S. national security policy a somewhat schizophrenic character, turning its image of the Cold War into a contest between good and evil with the good side building a nonrealist community of states in a distinctly nonrealist fashion, while intensely realist behavior was reserved for competition with the communists or other realist-prone governments.

Since 9/11 the U.S. has, in important respects, replayed some of this history: the insistence that we are in a war, on a global scale, that calls for the presidential exercise of very unusual powers both at home and

abroad. Once again, we turned to the notion of a crusade against evil forces as the overarching conception of what we were up to in international affairs, combining a Wilsonian conception of our objectives with realist ways of carrying on the crusade.

Next, and certainly of lasting significance, the Korean War was directly responsible for or greatly speeded up the militarization of the Cold War, giving that conflict such a huge military dimension and emphasis. As indicated above, recent developments had brought key Americans and others to conclude that war was a growing possibility due to the intensity the Cold War had developed and that this required a major military buildup, but it is not clear (historians disagree) as to whether the buildup was inevitable.[3] The Cold War had been a sharp East-West political conflict, and while the possibility of a war had become a serious concern, outright fighting still seemed rather unlikely in view of everyone's need to continue recovering from World War II. The Korean War sharply altered this expectation. The North Korean attack was seen as indicating that the Soviet Union, directly or through its satellites, would readily use force to consolidate and expand its bloc and was prepared to pounce on any opportunity to do this that emerged. The Kremlin was even prepared to take the kinds of risks that could lead to a general war with the West. Washington had been expecting that under the cover of the NATO alliance, and with the aid of the Marshall Plan, the Western Europeans would gradually recover sufficiently to rearm and assume the responsibility of defending themselves. Now it seemed they would not necessarily have time to do that.

As a result, during the war itself the U.S. moved 5 divisions to Western Europe even as it entered into a major rearmament and was fighting in Korea. It strongly urged that its European allies similarly rearm, which they did. This massively enlarged the military dimension of the NATO alliance. In response, Soviet forces—which had never demobilized to the same extent—were considerably expanded in Eastern Europe and at home, as were the satellite nations' forces in Eastern Europe. From the Korean War onward Chinese forces would remain much larger and kept in a much higher state of readiness as well. And the two Koreas would eventually be maintaining some of the largest military forces in the world.

We distinctly remember how the Cold War featured the enormous (for peacetime) armed forces of two huge blocs facing each other at an unprecedented peacetime level of readiness and for an unheard of length of time. For nearly the entire Cold War thereafter each side operated as if it constantly faced the distinct possibility of a major attack, probably by surprise. More than any other development, it was the Korean War

that brought about this situation. Even George Kennan, who created the Western intellectual conception of the Cold War as an unavoidable political contest, and developed the core elements of American containment strategy for conducting it, did not envision the militarization that the Korean War; it was something he deeply regretted, and always resisted.[4]

Next, the Korean War stimulated the further multiplication of American alliances. The United States had deliberately avoided alliances since George Washington had laid that down as a core principle of American foreign policy, not compromising this until the 1947 Rio Treaty for the Americas that formalized the Monroe Doctrine and an alliance with the newly independent Philippines that same year when it became independent. Both seemed to involve places with little likelihood of a war in 1947. The creation of NATO in 1949 was therefore very controversial, a major departure. Now the policy of avoiding "entangling alliances" was thoroughly discarded. The Korean War was seen as demonstrating the folly of failing to practice deterrence via highly visible and official commitments. The war had occurred, it seemed, because the U.S. had not clearly indicated a vital national interest in South Korea thereby signaling it would fight to protect the ROK. (Of course, US officials had no idea this was the case until the war broke out; in seeing the ROK as worth fighting for, they surprised themselves as much as they did the North Koreans, Russians, and Chinese.) The political-diplomatic solution adopted by Washington was to use formal alliances to specify interests for which the U.S. would fight. During and not long after the Korean War the U.S. entered into alliances with Australia and New Zealand (1951), South Korea, Japan (1954), Taiwan, Thailand, and Pakistan. Soon the US would establish SEATO and CENTO as well (both eventually dissolved). Formal American alliances were supplemented with informal but alliance-like ties with Israel, Saudi Arabia, and South Vietnam. Eventually NATO would be enlarged and Sweden and Yugoslavia would be informally under NATO's extended deterrence as well.[5] NATO enlargement began by adding Greece and Turkey, which the U.S. proposed in 1951 in part as appreciation of their participation in the Korean War. In reaction, the Soviet Union eventually expanded its formal and informal alliance arrangements as well, in Europe and elsewhere.

A startling component of this expansion of alliances was the creation of several integrated alliance commands that were to be active in peacetime in developing preparations for warfare and were intended to take charge of any war that arose. Because of the Korean War and its demonstration that an attack could come at almost any time, NATO

developed an extensive political and military apparatus for planning and for almost instantaneous military action when necessary, involving an unprecedented peacetime level of cooperation/integration that included elaborate headquarters staffs, joint training exercises, substantial intelligence sharing, efforts to closely coordinate weapons procurements and defense budgets, and joint logistics arrangements. By the end of 1953 there were some 7 million NATO military personnel, under the Supreme Allied Commander at NATO headquarters in Paris.[6] Because of the Korean War a similar development eventually occurred in the U.S.-ROK alliance and for the same reason: fear of an attack almost out of the blue.

NATO's growth spurt after the Korean War also included the addition of West Germany. Thus the war had a good deal to do with German rearmament; in fact, while the war was in progress the U.S. was pressing hard for Western European rearmament while simultaneously insisting it would be impossible for the allies to offset the Soviet bloc's military strength without including West German forces.[7] No integrated and effective defense of Western Europe seemed possible without West Germany, the largest country in Europe (in population) NATO would be defending, and the U.S. got the other allies to accept it. While in June 1950 European NATO members had some 14 rather weak divisions and the US maintained two skeletal occupation divisions there, three years later there were 15 NATO divisions (6 American) in West Germany alone, and West Germany was about to rearm to add 12 more.[8]
The Soviet response was to object strenuously, then officially create the Warsaw Pact shortly after West Germany was admitted into NATO, and to rearm East Germany. In that way the Korean War made a major indirect contribution to hardening the division of Germany and Europe. In turn, that led to the series of crises over Berlin which, prior to the Cuban Missile Crisis, were the most nerve-wracking confrontations of the Cold War. The one Soviet alliance that came to have the same command arrangements as NATO or the Combined Forces Command in Korea was the Warsaw Pact.

The Korean War led, of course, to the freezing of Sino-American relations for over twenty years. There had been considerable debate in Washington about how to respond to Mao's triumph in China and his ensuing alliance with the Soviet Union. However, until China's entry into the War there was had been no American decision or intention to avoid relations with Beijing indefinitely.[9] But with the outbreak of the war, Truman ordered the 7th Fleet to protect Taiwan. This injected the U.S. into the Chinese civil war once again by providing protection for a rival claimant to the communist government as legitimate ruler of China.

Mao's government was naturally enraged, and his inclination was reinforced to pursue revolution in East Asia as opposed to giving overwhelming attention to domestic development. This tangle of events set off by the war was a major step in expanding the Cold War from being primarily a central European conflict into East Asia, soon into Southeast Asia, and ultimately to virtually everywhere else. For years the U.S.-China relationship remained one of the most dangerous in the world, with repeated crises that evoked U.S. threats to use nuclear weapons to protect Taiwan, and to other clashes over developments in Southeast Asia. As a result, the Korean War was a key step in the globalization of the Cold War. With the freezing of the situation in Europe after the building of the Berlin wall and the end of the related crisis, the Cold War was primarily a Third World affair thereafter.

The military impact of the Korean War went much further. On the eve of the Korean War the U.S. had a small nuclear arsenal, although the world's largest, and was pursuing deterrence in a broad, somewhat vague way. The war led the government into developing something much more elaborate. It helped generate a deep preoccupation with the credibility of U.S. deterrence threats, especially of the growing American alliance commitments because, as noted above, it was widely concluded that U.S. actions prior to the War had actually undermined American credibility and thus helped incite the North Korean invasion.

In addition, the Korean War had a major impact on American strategic plans because it was a fairly lengthy and costly conventional military conflict that featured human-wave attacks by the North Koreans and Chinese. This led to insistence, before the war had ended and during the Eisenhower Administration thereafter, that the U.S. deterrence posture should be explicitly designed to avoid another major ground war. It was said to play into the strength of communist governments that had endless manpower at their disposal and could accept heavy casualties without qualms about their citizens' objections.

The U.S. emphasis after the Korean War was therefore placed on deterrence by threats of a nuclear response, with plans to use nuclear weapons early in a future war either strategically—directly attacking the Soviet Union as the one responsible for any communist war either by starting it or getting a satellite to do so—or tactically, by readily using nuclear weapons on the battlefield. In particular, emphasis was placed on destroying a future opponent, particularly the Soviet Union or China, through a massive initial strategic nuclear attack (the strategy of "Massive Retaliation"). Therefore, the Korean War led directly to a new strategic approach that required and greatly stimulated a vast expansion in American nuclear weapons. The U.S. nuclear stockpile grew from a

few hundred at the outset of the war to roughly 19,000 by 1960. For strategic nuclear strikes the U.S. built and deployed some 2,000 strategic bombers and before the decade was over had begun also deploying intercontinental ballistic missiles as well as numerous shorter range missiles overseas that could reach the Soviet Union. What most characterized the Cold War was its array of immense nuclear forces facing each other for decades, many of the weapons maintained on high alert ready to go on very short notice, and the major states basing their deterrence ultimately on threats to inflict vast and quite indiscriminate death and destruction. This deterrence posture was eventually imitated on a roughly equivalent scale by the Soviet Union, and on a smaller scale by Britain, France, China, and other nuclear powers.[10]

As the previous point suggests, the Korean War was also a seminal event in promoting the development of deterrence theory. It was just after that war, and because of the deterrence concerns that came out of it, that the intellectual efforts began which culminated in the emergence of all the basic variants of deterrence thinking, and the preoccupation with keeping deterrence, especially nuclear deterrence, stable—i.e., keeping the Cold War from deteriorating into serious fighting not just like the Korean War but especially as world war. This meant using deterrence not only to prevent wars but, as another version of stability, to prevent wars from escalating to levels of massive destruction. Sustaining the stability of nuclear deterrence, and deterrence more broadly, became the major preoccupation of both deterrence theory and arms control.

In this connection, the Korean War had a major additional impact by demonstrating that sizable fighting could take place involving one or more nuclear-armed states from each bloc, with considerable participation by other bloc members via measures short of the use of nuclear weapons, such as economic assistance, military forces, suffering significant casualties, and bearing major expenses. This showed that escalation control was feasible, that a war within the Cold War framework could be "limited." In this way the Korean War also did much to establish what is now widely referred to as the "nuclear taboo," a striking feature of international politics every since.[11] That was a surprising development and directly contradicted the Eisenhower administration strategy of massive retaliation. The norm or taboo of nonuse was credited, in retrospect, with helping prevent escalation of the Korean War and with a major share of the responsibility for the nonuse of nuclear weapons ever since.

This was a controversial development. The Korean War initiated a continuing civil-military struggle in the U.S. over whether to prepare to fight limited wars for any length of time if necessary, even with the

prospect of results far short of victory, or to plan to use nuclear weapons as needed and to fight nuclear wars. Korea saw the first American war after World War II in which civilian leaders demonstrated they would settle for something short of seeking a decisive victory rather than turn to nuclear weapons. Some military leaders, such as General Douglas MacArthur, plus various civilian strategists and political figures have objected strongly over the years to this. The argument has repeatedly appeared in debates about other wars, broad strategic plans and postures, or even about what weapons to develop, and was a prominent feature of defense policy debates after the Vietnam War in particular.

The Korean War also supplied an early example of the complexities and difficulties of fighting wars with coalitions of allied and other forces, even if conducted under American leadership and with the U.S. providing the crucial forces.[12] The recurrence of the problem since then has been readily apparent and, just as in the Korean War, has led to extensive American efforts to find new ways to make fighting in multilateral coalitions smoother and more effective. It remains a central concern in American alliances today.

Finally, the Korean War had an immense impact because it was so indecisive. Some analysts (such as Edward Luttwak and Mohammed Ayoob) have argued that wars, however onerous, can at least have the virtue of settling important matters and should be given the chance to do so. That did not happen in Korea. The war did not establish who was to govern the Korean peninsula, nor determine the political and socioeconomic system for the peninsula. That has led to endless frictions, confrontations, and crises plus a few outright military clashes. It has mandated massive peacetime arming of both Koreas, resulting in additional huge costs for the sponsors of each Korean government and in development of nuclear weapons by North Korea. Any consistent collective security management of Northeast Asia has been prevented. In terms of a possible war, the peninsula has remained one of the world's most dangerous places, including the chance another war there could escalate into a much larger, more destructive conflict. Only the Middle East has rivaled the peninsula in offering such a consistent danger of interstate war and potential global instability so intensively for such a long time.

This danger has been the most crucial factor sustaining the close ties ever since between the U.S. and ROK, on the one hand, and Beijing and Pyongyang on the other. China has never been happy with the U.S.-ROK alliance and such a close presence of American military forces that was one result of the war. And the U.S. has been consistently unhappy with how China's close ties to the DPRK, rooted in the war, inhibit the

imposition of serious sanctions or compelling pressures on the North.

This list of the effects of the Korean War on the participants and international politics is incomplete but should suffice to show that it was very important. With that in mind, what else can we say about its lessons for today? Most of the "lessons" appear to have been absorbed later, although unevenly. Looking back at the Korean War reminds us we could have learned them sooner and more soundly.

Unexpected "Small Wars" Can Have a Very Serious Domestic Impact

The third lesson of the Korean War is that even a relatively limited war can have huge consequences via its domestic effects on the participants and other states and societies. For instance, it was the Korean War that established the modern practice of the President taking the U.S. into major combat without a declaration of war. As a result of that precedent there has not been an official U.S. declaration of war since 1941. The war also generated a presidential declaration of a state of national emergency instead under which the president assumed additional powers, a declaration which would not be cancelled until after the Vietnam War and which has been imitated several times. Temporary or permanent expansions in presidential powers have occurred in connection with every American war since and, despite efforts like the War Powers Act, the practice has never been seriously curtailed.

Along with those powers came, starting with the war, a tradition of U.S. limited wars tending to damage the careers of the presidents involved. This was something experienced by Presidents Truman, Johnson, Nixon, Clinton (in Somalia), and George W. Bush.[13] It is well on its way to happening again with Obama.

The Korean War was fought with draftees and was followed by installing a peacetime draft to provide for the ensuing very large standing forces, the first peacetime draft in U.S. history. The draft became a standard feature of young men's lives, with all of them having to register at age 18 and carry a draft card thereafter. It would last through the Vietnam War when it was replaced by the all-volunteer armed forces arrangement.

Rearmament, the war and the draft led to the U.S. entering into maintaining a vast peacetime military establishment, something which has continued down to today. This was also a radical departure from the past and had massive domestic repercussions. In the first years after the war the share of the GNP devoted to military and related matters was quite unprecedented in peacetime, and it absorbed close to 50 percent of the federal budget. One early uneasy reaction to this development was

Eisenhower's farewell address warning about the military-industrial-academic-scientific complex and its rising influence on public policy. This peacetime military establishment and related elements survived even the end of the Cold War.

The Soviet Union avoided direct participation in the Korean War, aside from some unannounced air battles with U.S. planes over Korea, but was seriously affected by it. The war helped push Moscow into a deep premature and excessive involvement in East Asian affairs, including having to devote sizable domestic resources to development of the eastern portion of the country. The emergence of the Sino-Soviet dispute shortly after the war would greatly stimulate this geographical extension of its political, economic, and military resources. This was a major contribution to the eventual exhaustion of the Soviet system which led to its collapse and the end of the Cold War.[14]

The impact of the Korean War was very dramatic in Japan, something sometimes forgotten. Japan's economy was given an enormous economic boost from the war, vastly enhancing a domestic recovery effort that had previously been unevenly successful so that it then dominated the making of modern Japan. The war led directly to a sharp escalation of what became the semi-permanent U.S. military presence in Northeast Asia as well as a boost to the US-Japan alliance. Both of those, in turn, provided Japan with the basis for adopting what has been termed the Yoshida Doctrine in which heavy concern about Japan's security concerns were largely set aside, under American protection, in favor of full exploitation of the economic stimulus and after that the open U.S. market. As a result, Japan raced away from its past into headlong development and almost frantic social change far more readily than would otherwise have been the case, to an extent matched by no other society and economy in the Cold War era.

Due to the war the U.S. military footprint in Japan also expanded greatly, and the situation in Korea has helped to keep it extensive. That military presence has made the U.S. commitment to protect Japan's security more real and reliable down to the present, and remains the cornerstone of Japan's national security policy. In effect, U.S. forces in Korea help to reassure Japan about its security while U.S. forces in Japan are mainly designed to fight another war if necessary in Korea. The U.S. forces are also a well known perennial irritant in Japanese politics and the Japan-U.S. alliance.

As for China, during the Korean War it was thrown into heavy dependence on the Soviet Union. What became the Sino-Soviet split was significantly provoked because the Soviet government was unable (and unwilling) to bear all the costs, particularly for extended nuclear

deterrence or aiding China to become a nuclear power, that their intimate association required. This Soviet deficiency, glaring during the Korean War, was never forgotten or forgiven in Beijing. It is also hard to imagine the PLA gaining and then retaining the level of influence it did in China for many years (reaching its culmination during the Cultural Revolution) if not for the huge boost it received from the Korean War and the ensuing poisoning of Sino-American relations and then Sino-Soviet relations.

Of course the war had an immense effect on South Korea domestically, particularly when it did not end the North Korean state and the North Korean threat. The ROK had considerable difficulty from the start in building a broad consensus as to who should govern its portion of the peninsula, making it an attractive target for Pyongyang in June 1950 in seeking to exploit its lack of political cohesion. Complaints about the Rhee regime continued to build after the war and resulted in a period of political unrest, military intervention and limited economic, social, and political progress. The war and the enduring threat had given the armed forces immense resources for intervening in or taking over the state and its political affairs. It would take a long time for the ROK state to become strong, viable, and able to generate rapid progress and national cohesion.

The North was less harmed by the war in this regard, rebounding rapidly and pulling well ahead of the South in industrial development. Survival cemented Kim Il Sung's regime in place and for a time gave it the resources to put down roots. But the ultimate impact of the war was to tie the legitimacy and stability of the regime to a Stalinist approach to national development and rule that eventually became outdated, linking North Korea to a failed community of states and ideas. One result was that in recent decades it has displayed some signs of a classic failed state itself.

However, it exemplifies a different kind of failed state. It has become so self-centered and out of step as to antagonize not only its standard enemies but even its major friends. The classic failed state cannot readily defend itself against outsiders and inside threats, cannot fully control its borders, and has a weak grip on its territory and population. This only marginally applies to the DPRK. What makes it an important variant of a failed state today is that it lacks legitimacy, precisely because the Korean War left the ROK in place. This is true in terms of its outmoded ideological roots, failure to compete economically and militarily with the ROK, and inability to adapt to what are now the dominant norms of state behavior. By forcing the North to compete with the ROK, the ultimate legacy of the Korean War to the North has been a

dearth of international legitimacy and support. It lacks any true supporters abroad, has few normal interactions with most of the world, and is unable to sustain itself without outside help.

The question now is how much longer this version of the failed-state problem will bedevil the international system. There are widespread objections to its nuclear weapons, and consistent fear that the North will collapse in into economic prostration and political disarray. But it is the real nature of North Korea's failed-state status—loss of legitimacy, normal international interactions, and foreign support—that drives its pursuit of nuclear weapons, exacerbating the nuclear proliferation problem, and leaves it in such a battered economic condition.

Beware of Failing to Sufficiently Attend to Regional Security Management

Here is a fourth lesson. A standard critique of American foreign policy, offered by both realists/neorealists and many liberal analysts and critics, is that the U.S. is overextended, too heavily involved in trying to manage regional security affairs in too many places. The Korean War should invite more caution about this. The U.S. did not initially consider the Korean situation important. It did not strive to stabilize that situation, having seemingly more important matters to attend to. When the U.S. plunged into the war, critics charged it was "the wrong war in the wrong place at the wrong time." Eventually, Americans eventually felt that Korea was not important enough insist on a decisive outcome as a vital contribution to regional security management. The war ended with a truce, which seemed sensible at the time since it had gone on too long. But lack of an enduring settlement meant continuing intense political conflict and the constant threat of renewed fighting. There never seemed to be a good time to end the conflict and repair the regional security situation.

One reason for taking the Korean situation too lightly was a persistent tendency in many governments, particularly Washington, to see the regional security situation as an offshoot of the global one. With that in mind, in the Cold War the Korean conflict seemed beyond resolution because the international system could not be mobilized to do anything about it, and because global Cold War security considerations took priority. The conflict in Korea was because of the Cold War: the Cold War made settling it impossible. Once the Cold War ended the Korean situation might have been wrapped up relatively quickly, or so it seemed to analysts in the U.S., the ROK, and elsewhere in East Asia at the time. Instead, the earlier deficiencies in regional security management led to an inability to end the stalemate on the peninsula,

especially as both China and the U.S. now saw the North Korean problem as continuing to be an offshoot of the global security situation—in the form of the global nuclear proliferation problem for the U.S. and the Chinese fear of any precedent of blatantly suppressing a state's sovereignty no matter how great the provocation. Thus we get contrasting analyses: cooperative and effective regional security management is undermined by the Korean situation, and the Korean situation will not yield a solution because of the lack of effective security management. The chicken scrambles the egg and the egg poisons the chicken.

As the Korean situation illustrates, failures to manage regional security have generally incited global-level intrusions sooner or later. Realist analysts always expected that system-wide struggles for power and influence would extend as far as the capacities of the main contestants would permit: the global system and regional systems become intertwined. Now it seems clear that in a liberalist-dominated international system the same sort of international-system intrusions are occurring, because the flaunting or catastrophic failure of liberal values in a particular region is politically intolerable to the dominant liberal states (particularly their publics). Thus when North Korea insists that the U.S. and other Western states cease their hostility, it is asking for the impossible. And when the U.S. and others insist that North Korea accept liberal international norms, they are suggesting what to Pyongyang is intolerable. The same thing seems to be true of Iran these days, or Venezuela, or Zambia or Myanmar. It is now harder than ever to imagine a regional system becoming a quiet backwater, where terrible things go on but none of the major states and their societies cares. As a result these regional systems need attention.

Give Due Respect to the Necessity and Perils or Predicaments of Multilateral Security Management of Regional Security Affairs

The fifth lesson of the Korean War lies in the way that it featured the first use of the UN Security Council to authorize a major military action to sustain peace and security. In doing so it nearly killed off chances of doing that again until the Cold War ended—only the intervention in the Congo late in the Eisenhower Administration was a serious exception, and it was on a much smaller scale. Since the end of the Cold War only one similar (in design) military effort has occurred, in the Gulf War. That conflict might well have had the same effect if it had dragged on and drawn major powers in on the Iraqi side. Instead the war involved hardly any casualties for UN-authorized forces (some 148 battle deaths). Nevertheless, it has proven extremely difficult to get a suitable Security

Council consensus behind any major use of force since then, such as to halt nuclear proliferation or genocide. Darfur was the most egregious recent example.

The Korean War displayed all of what are now cited as well known difficulties associated with standard wars fought multilaterally by alliances or coalitions under the auspices of international organizations. There were major disagreements over strategy, over burden sharing, over how to conduct specific military operations, over the length of the effort to be mounted, over who was to make the crucial decisions, and over the autonomy to be granted to the military commanders. There was even the alarm allies displayed when the U.S. was contemplating the use of nuclear weapons, or the disagreement/uneasiness over whether UN forces should enter North Korea to decisively end the Korean problem. These are the same choices that had to be made in the Gulf War.[15]

Do Analyses Like the One in this Paper with Caution

A sixth and final lesson takes us back to the early point that in-depth analysis on the basis of a single case is hardly to be recommended. All that can be done is to highlight aspects of the case, suggest a few that may come up again in somewhat similar circumstances, and note ways things might have turned out very differently to show how contingent they can be, with variations offering very different implications as to what might have happened. Suppose the Russians vetoed any UN action in 1950 and the U.S. undertook its military effort with no Security Council sanction. It might therefore have decided never to work through the Security Council again, or not to bother intervening in situations like the one in Korea. Suppose the invasion of North Korea had been successful: China did not intervene, the regime was extinguished. How might the Cold War have developed? (The postwar situation would have looked much like the one after the Iraq War.) What if the failure of the North Korean invasion and the huge Chinese casualties led to a much more circumspect China and undermined Kim Il Sung's regime? In each case the nature of the international system might have been considerably different from the one that emerged in the next several decades. Indeed, we might have had something much less cold than the Cold War.

What is most suitable is to emphasize that the Korean War had far more effects and implications than anyone would have predicted. Therefore, it mainly highlights how unpredictable such situations in terms of their ultimate consequences. Does that drive us into insisting on caution? Not exactly. It is a strong suggestion for using caution in calculating what will happen, as opposed to what might.

Today the U.S. is operating in a period similar to the post- World War II years, when its military preeminence is unmatched, but when it came to experience two small wars—insurgencies—that have put its armed forces under great strain and made for major political difficulties at home and abroad. However, we have not experienced what would be the equivalent of the Korean War—a "small" war (with much higher casualties than either the Iraq or Afghanistan conflicts) that drives such a comprehensive set of changes at home and in the international system, with consequences not fully anticipated or then readily comprehended for years. The Korean War offers valuable experience in this that must not be ignored when contemplating a possible war now with countries like Iran or North Korea.

Notes:

[1] Spencer C. Tucker, "Why Study the Korean War?" *Magazine of History*, vol. 14, No. 3 (Spring, 2000), pp. 3-5. This issue contains seven articles on the war.

[2] These miscalculations included the American misjudgment that Korea was not very important, the mistaken judgment by key communist leaders that the U.S. would not fight for the ROK, the Russian failure to be at the crucial Security Council meeting on condemning the attack by the North and entering the war, the unnecessary protection then extended to Taiwan, the North Korean failure to expect the landing at Inchon, the mistake in having UN forces strive for unification, MacArthur's confidence that China would not intervene, Chinese leaders' mistaken confidence that Stalin would fully back their intervention, and Mao's belief, after early Chinese success in the intervention, that the UN forces could be driven off the peninsula.

[3] Leftist critics charged that the Truman administration seized on the Korean War to generate American and Western rearmament and thus fully establish the Cold War. In their view, the Korean War was suspiciously convenient for building the necessary political support.

[4] The Communist side was better prepared for this militarization and a high threat of war because Stalin had insisted this was how the socialism-capitalism struggle would go and that future wars between them were inevitable. However, the Kremlin was also surprised at how suddenly and rapidly the intensified military situation emerged.

[5] The U.S. privately offered Sweden protection; whether NATO officially did this as well privately is unclear but it was widely assumed. The same was true for Yugoslavia.

[6] William Stueck, *The Korean War: An International History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 349-350

[7] Ibid., pp. 54-55.

[8] Ibid., pp. 349-50.

[9] Robert Jervis, "The Impact of the Korean War on the Cold War," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 24, No. 4 (December, 1980), pp. 574-78.

[10] The U.S. eventually shifted to a more discriminating strategy, but the ultimate threat it posed continued to be massive destruction. Most nuclear powers have retained plans for massive, indiscriminate strikes down to the present, as their ultimate deterrence threats.

[11] Some prefer the term "tradition of nonuse" to taboo.

[12] The U.S. entered World War II abruptly and well after it started, so problems of coordination with allies under its leadership were understandable—the coordination had to be cobbled together on the run.

[13] Exceptions were Eisenhower and George H. W. Bush.

[14] The effort to sustain the Siberian/East Asian portion of Russia remains a serious burden and drain on its resources today.

[15] It is interesting that in these cases both escalating the war's objectives and adherence to the original mission had disappointing results for regional security and creating a more amenable state. North Korea and Iraq remained serious problems for the international system after each war.

China's Strategic Lessons from the Korean War

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ABSTRACT

The lessons of the Korean War are fresh in Beijing's mind because the war remains the most significant, sizable, and sustained employment of force beyond China's borders in the modern era. The five enduring strategic lessons that China has drawn from the Korean War are: (1) not to fear the United States but take it seriously; (2) never again get sucked into a massive military intervention on the Korean peninsula, but if China does then the goal should be to fix the problem permanently; (3) give more attention to the desired outcome but to pay even greater attention to the process; (4) use all the levers of national power but do not rule out the use of force; (5) while times have changed, armed conflict is still possible in the 21st Century. Unlike in the Cold War era, China doesn't expect a major conflagration or world war. Nevertheless, while peace and development are the main trends of the early 21st Century, local wars are still possible. While peace and stability are the top priorities for China on the Korean Peninsula, Beijing will rule out the use of military force—or any other course of action—in defense of its vital interests.

Keywords: Korean War, China, United States, North Korea.

Introduction

In the sixty years since the outbreak of the Korean War much has changed in the world and Northeast Asia. The Cold War is over and the Soviet Union has disappeared. The war torn, poverty stricken countries of China, Japan and South Korea have boomed and are among the most prosperous societies and sizeable economies on the planet. In 2010, the state of exception is North Korea, which looms politically, economically, and militarily as an anachronism, with the Demilitarized Zone standing as a Cold War relic. Whereas six decades ago North Korea seemed to be riding an almost unstoppable wave of global communist revolution, today it is the perpetual problem child of Northeast Asia stuck in a time warp. I have dubbed it a "powder keg state"—a volatile country that has the potential to unravel or explode and destabilize an entire region.[1]

While so much has changed in Northeast Asia, some things have remained the same—North Korea remains the immediate preoccupation of the People's Republic of China (PRC) today as it did sixty years ago. The outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 produced an unwelcome distraction for Beijing which until that point had been focused on completing the final major campaign of the Chinese Civil War—the invasion of Taiwan. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) had directed its armed forces to concentrate their efforts on an amphibious invasion of Taiwan—the last outpost of the Koumintang or Nationalist Party. However, the Korean conflict proved to be so much more than a distraction from Taiwan as President Harry S Truman's response to North Korea's attack across the 38th parallel included interposing the U.S. Seventh Fleet into the Taiwan Strait. This signaled the commitment of the United States to the defense of the island effectively making Chinese seizure of Taiwan mission impossible.[2]

Thus, the Korean War is seared into China's memory. Certainly, the conflict is a source of pride for many Chinese—tangible proof that their country could stand up to great power threats and intimidation and that the so-called Century of Humiliation was well and truly over. And yet the conflict is bittersweet because of the hundreds of thousands of Chinese soldiers who were killed, wounded, or traumatized by the three-years of bloody struggle on the Korean Peninsula.[3] Moreover, the war's toll was not just measured in human lives and suffering but also in terms of the opportunity cost to China. As noted above, the outbreak of the Korean conflict cost the CCP the opportunity to realize total victory over the KMT in the Chinese Civil War—a disappointment that haunts Beijing to this day.

So what are the lessons of the Korean War that remain relevant for China in the 21st Century? Below I identify five enduring strategic

lessons.

Lesson #1: The United States is not to be Feared (but Must be Taken Seriously)

Perhaps the most important lesson of the Korean War for China is that the United States is not a country to be feared. In an article published in the CCP's most prominent journal ten years ago to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Korean War two senior Chinese generals wrote: "The war shattered the myth that the United States was invincible."[4] While the United States in 1950 was a superpower with overwhelming military might, including nuclear weapons that had been used against Japan to end the Second World War, China was not intimidated. Based on the clear asymmetry of military power—not to mention an overwhelming asymmetry of comprehensive national power—Beijing could very easily have determined that intervention in the Korean conflict was suicide. And yet, Chinese forces intervened. Considerable and prolonged deliberation over the merits of intervention went on in Beijing before Chinese leaders made the calculated gamble to intervene while doing what they could to limit the chances of escalation.[5] This included no formal declaration of war by the PRC and official designation of the intervention force as "volunteers" and hence technically not the armed forces of the PRC. This fig leaf permitted China to claim plausible denial and lessen the likelihood of China becoming embroiled in a larger war with United States that could easily have spiraled into a global conflagration—World War Three.

In short, China refused to be intimidated by the daunting military might of the United States. But this did not mean that Beijing did not take Washington seriously. China's leaders realized that they would have to play to their own strengths to compensate for the dominant power of the United States. Indeed, Chinese soldiers learned many valuable operational lessons from three years of war fighting in Korea.[6]

Lesson #2: "Never Again (Unless . . .)"

The second lesson of the Korean War can be captured by the phrase "never again (unless) . . ." There are two variations of this. The first variation is that China should at all costs avoid the temptation or pressure to intervene again in Korea militarily. There is certainly strong sentiment among some in China today and a significant minority appears to believe that China's intervention in 1950 was a tragic mistake. But this absolutist position is not widespread because most Chinese continue to believe that the country's actions in 1950 were correct and that the conflict, despite resulting in terrible loss of life and economic cost, was a

"war of necessity."[7] Moreover, this display of commitment demonstrated China's credibility as a power to be reckoned with. At the time Chinese officials publicly and repeatedly cautioned that China would not "stand idly by" as U.S. military forces marched further and further northward up the Korean Peninsula. Moreover, in subsequent decades top Chinese leaders have cited China's warnings to the United States not to go north of the 38th Parallel as proof positive of Chinese credibility. For example, in May 1962 PRC Foreign Minister Chen Yi warned the United States against trying to invade the mainland by way of Taiwan. Chen stated: "At the time of the Korean War, we first warned against crossing the thirty-eighth parallel but America ignored the warning. The second time we warned again but America occupied Pyongyang. The third time we warned again but America aggressed close to the Yalu River and threatened the security of China."[8] Then, in 1984 paramount leader Deng Xiaoping cited Beijing's warnings in 1950 as evidence that "China means what she says."[9] In the article commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Korean War noted earlier, two generals wrote:

> The War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea was the first cry let out by new China after its birth; it gave vivid expression to the historical declaration "the Chinese people have stood up." The war astonished the whole world and thoroughly changed China's international image.

Then, quoting Mao Zedong, the two generals commented that the war showed that "the Chinese people…are not to be trifled with."[10]

The second variation of this lesson is not that China should never intervene but rather that China should never again do so half-heartedly. "This time let's finish the job" is the mantra. This does not necessarily mean blaming Mao or Peng Dehuai for not expelling U.S. forces from the entire peninsula and unifying Korea. At the time the CPV was weak and overextended; hence the military could not complete the task Mao had given to commander Peng. As a result North Korea remains a security headache for China in 2010 and there is little indication that this will change in the near future. The lesson of this experience is that next time if Chinese military forces intervene they should take care of the Korean problem once and for all. The logic would be something akin to the psychology behind President George W. Bush's decision to invade Iraq in 2003 and go all the way to Baghdad. A powerful emotion influencing the president's decisionmaking calculus was that he should take care of unfinished family business left over from his father's administration. President George H. W. Bush had ended the 1991 Gulf

War after expelling Iraqi forces from Kuwait and demurred from a full blown invasion of Iraq and/or toppling dictator Saddam Hussein.

So what might "finishing the job" mean in the context of a Chinese intervention in early 21st-century Korea? It might mean toppling the Kim family regime and/or it might mean occupying all or a good portion of North Korea for an extended period. It might also mean pursuing a peace treaty or some type of diplomatic agreement that would formally end the Korean War and conclusively resolve the border between the two Koreas and provide a mutually agreeable framework to govern relations between Pyongyang and Seoul.

Lesson #3: Pay More Attention to the Desired Outcome (but Pay Greater Attention to the Process)

Another lesson of the Korean War is that Beijing should give much more attention to the outcome it desires on the peninsula. Despite celebratory rhetoric by Chinese soldiers about the country's great triumph in the Korean War, the reality was that the victory was not total. Indeed, the results—a divided and militarized Korea—were inconclusive and no peace treaty was ever signed. The armistice signed on July 27, 1953 was never intended to be more than a temporary agreement. And yet some six decades later it remains the framework for managing the security situation on the ground on the Korean peninsula. While Chinese soldiers withdrew from North Korea in 1958, U.S. forces remain in South Korea and Washington and Seoul continue to be staunch allies.

Thus, China's immediate preoccupation in Northeast Asia remains, just as it was sixty years ago. This is hardly a desirable outcome for Beijing and certainly not what Mao and his generation would have envisioned more than half a century later. Frustration and anger with Pyongyang have risen in Beijing during the past decade. North Korea remains an economic basket case with little sign this will change any time soon. Moreover, North Korea remains a powder keg—a major security concern for China as well as the other countries of the region. In short, in spite of a considerable amount of Chinese blood spilled and continued infusions of Chinese treasure, the outcome has been extremely disappointing.

Beijing's top priority in the early 21st century is peace and stability. The critical question is how this end state can best be achieved. China believes this can be achieved if North Korea "comes in from the Cold," and since the mid-1990s, Beijing has worked hard to persuade Pyongyang to wholeheartedly pursue economic reform and moderate its hardline security policy. China also believes it is essential for the United States to improve its relations with North Korea. Beijing has concluded

that for North Korea to reorient its policies, Pyongyang must be reassured by Washington that the United States is not seeking North Korea's collapse. Hence, China has been actively seeking to facilitate a U.S.-North Korean rapprochement, most notably through the Six Party Talks launched in 2003.

Many analysts argue that China does not want Korean unification—and this may be Beijing's strong preference. However, what is more important is that whatever the outcome, the process should be peaceful. Indeed, what Beijing fears is a violent and tumultuous transition from a divided peninsula to a Korea of one.[11] So what China wants is a soft landing in North Korea. Ideally this will lead to a more stable and moderate regime that in turn will result in a significant lessening of tensions on the peninsula. Quite possible, however, is that the reforms will undermine the Pyongyang regime and lead to the end of North Korea. The ultimate outcome in this scenario would be unification.

Lesson # 4: Use All the Elements of National Power (but Don't Rule Out the Use of Military Force)

A fourth lesson of the Korean War is that military force should only be used as a last resort. And in the 21st century, unlike the situation in the 1950s, China has many levers at its disposal. Sixty years ago Beijing had virtually no diplomatic influence and certainly no economic clout. The only potent instrument of national power it possessed was its military—albeit a rudimentary and unsophisticated one. China achieved a hard fought stalemate on the field of battle. There was a diplomatic dimension but it was essentially limited to a small but important stage at the Demilitarized Zone. For many months Chinese negotiators doggedly played a weak hand of cards in truce talks at Panmunjom. Beijing skillfully coordinated propaganda and hard bargaining at the negotiating table as it simultaneously fought for every inch of real estate on the battlefield.[12]

Today, China has potent economic power—in the form of foreign aid, trade and investment—and is using it to exert influence across the Yalu.[13] Moreover, China has considerable diplomatic influence—as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council and with ambassador-level bilateral relations with every major power. Of course China does not utilize just one of these levers; rather it seeks to coordinate multiple instruments of national power. On North Korea, China currently is employing economic power, diplomatic initiatives—bilaterally with North Korea and with other powers as well as multilaterally in the Six Party Talks. Moreover, in venues like the United Nations Security Council, China has worked to moderate

criticism and weaken sanctions against North Korea. In the future China could possibly use military force in conjunction with diplomatic efforts so as to justify intervention in North Korea on humanitarian grounds (or apply any other combination of the instruments of national power).

Lesson # 5: Peace and Development are the Main Trends (but Limited War is Always Possible)

Despite the menu of options at China's disposal including non-military ones, the use of force by Beijing in a North Korea scenario should not be ruled out. While Beijing would prefer not to intervene militarily, it will not shirk from the use of force if it believes its vital national security interests are at stake.[14] Beijing's tongue-in-cheek mantra might be "use force sparingly—rpeat as often as needed."[15] Chinese leaders, when reviewing their own record of military adventurism, have "never seen a war they didn't like." This does not mean China is bellicose or belligerent; rather, in hindsight, Beijing considers all instances of the use of force to have been both justified and successful.[16] Even in cases where success was less than resounding, the judgment is that if China had not used force, then the situation would have only gotten worse.[17] In addition Chinese military leaders have a high level of confidence in their ability at escalation control—in Chinese parlance "war control."[18] Moreover, various Korea scenarios are consistent with currently envisioned conflict scenarios under the rubric of Limited War in Conditions of Informatization. Furthermore, these various scenarios are not inconsistent with greater attention to non-traditional security threats and Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW) in recent years.[19]

Conclusion

The stakes in Korea were high for China in 1950 and the stakes are also high for China in 2010. Northeast Asia is China's doorstep and the Korean peninsula is the "threshold."[20] The lessons of the Korean War are fresh in Beijing's mind because it remains the most significant, sizable, and sustained employment of force beyond China's borders in the modern era.

There are five enduring strategic lessons that China seems to have gleaned from the Korean War. The first is not to fear the United States but take it seriously. The second lesson is to never again get sucked into a massive military intervention on the Korean peninsula, but if China does then the goal should be to fix the problem permanently. The third lesson is to give more attention to the desired outcome but to pay even greater attention to the process. The fourth lesson is to use all the levers

of national power but not to rule out the use of force. The fifth lesson is that while times have changed, armed conflict is still possible. Unlike in the Cold War era, China doesn't expect a major conflagration or world war. Nevertheless, while peace and development are the main trends of the early 21st century, local wars are still possible. While peace and stability are the top priorities for China in Northeast Asia, this does not mean that Beijing will rule out the use of military force—or any other course of action—in order to protect its vital interests in Korea.

Notes:

[1] Andrew Scobell and Larry Wortzel, *The Asia-Pacific in the U.S. National Security Calculus for a New Millennium* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, 2000), p. 24.

[2] Beijing attached virtually equal levels of alarm to the U.S. decisions to send reinforcements to the Korean Peninsula and interpose military forces between Taiwan and the Chinese mainland. See, for example, Andrew Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force: Beyond the Great Wall and the Long March* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 174.

[3] According to one official estimate, the Chinese People's Volunteers' "combat losses were more than 360,000 (including 130,000 wounded) and non-combat losses were more than 380,000." Zhang Aiping, Chief Compiler, *Zhongguo Renmin Jiefang Jun* [China's People's Liberation Army], vol. I, Contemporary China Series (Beijing: Dangdai Zhongguo Chubanshe, 1994), p. 137.

[4] Zhang Wannian and Chi Haotian, "Great Victory, Valuable Asset—Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Chinese People's Volunteers' Participation in the War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea," *Qiushi* (Seek Truth), No. 21 (November 1, 2000), internet version translated by Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) November 13, 2000.

[5] For an analysis of the Chinese decision to intervene in Korea in late 1950, see Andrew Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force*, chapter 4.

[6] See, for example, John J. Tkacik, Jr., "From Surprise to Stalemate: What the People's Liberation Army Learned from the Korean War," in Laurie Burkitt, Andrew Scobell and Larry M. Wortzel, eds., *The Lessons of History: The PLA at 75* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, 2003), pp. 293-326.

[7] See, for example, Bao Guojun," Is It Truth or Falsehood—Military Historian Meng Zhaohui Refutes Article 'Truth' for Negating War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea," *Liaowang* No. 23 (5 June 2000) pp. 27-31 translated by FBIS. The term "war of necessity" was used by Professor Steven Goldstein. See his article in this volume: "Chinese Perspectives on the Origins of the Korean War: As Assessment at Sixty."

[8] For the two quotations, see Allen S. Whiting, *The Chinese Calculus of Deterrence: India and Indochina* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1975), pp. 212, 206.

[9] This statement was made to reassure people that Beijing would abide by its commitment to maintain Hong Kong's autonomy for 50 years after it became a special autonomous region in 1997. See *Xinhua News Agency* June 28, 1984 in FBIS, *Daily Report: China*, June 29, 1984, p. E3.

[10] Zhang and Chi, "Great Victory, Valuable Asset."

[11] China is much more worried about the process than the outcome. See, for example, Andrew Scobell, "Beijing's Headache over Kim Jong Il," *Far Eastern Economic Review* vol. 170, no. 6 (July/August 2007), p. 38.

[12] For a Chinese account of the negotiations written by a participant, see Chai Chengwen and Zhao Yongtian, *Banmendian tanpan* [Panmunjom Negotiations] (Beijing: Jiefangjun Chubanshe, 1989).

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The Impact of the Korean War on the Political-Economic System of South Korea: Economic Growth and Democracy[1]

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to pursue several goals. The first is to anchor an analytical description of Korean political development at the beginning of national state formation. The Korean state, I argue, emerged from the wreckage of the Korea War. A second goal is to provide an analysis of the impact of the war on state formation trajectory. The unfinished armistice has shaped the path of the national state and its relations with the United States, which sponsored it. The final goal aims to account for the complex relations between political development and economic growth, weighing in on the ongoing debate over which has priority. The discussion that follows is divided into four main parts. The first examines the linkage of the Korea War to economic development. Land reform during the war is conducive to Korea's later development. The second deals with the role of the United States in fostering the military elites who made economic fortunes. The third highlights the relationship between economic growth and political development. Economic growth occurred prior to democracy. The Korean experience in political economy illustrates the complexity of the democratic path. The fourth part deals with complex connections among war, growth, and democracy.

Keywords: war, land reform, economic growth, state-making, democracy

Rapid Economic Expansion and the State

A large literature exists to examine various aspects of the Korean War—its origins, consequences, and implications for the international system, for example.[2] In the political economy literature, Korea is highlighted as a showcase for achieving both economic performance and political democracy. It is suggested as a model for the developing countries that attempt market economy in a democracy, without discussing the relevance of the Korean War to the issue. Nearly all explanations of South Korean development have placed stress narrowly on the period of rapid export-led growth in the 1960s through 1980s.[3] Previous periods are believed to be background ones for later periods. In doing so a fundamental piece of the Korean political economy development is missing. But it is the Korean War that fundamentally shaped the developmental path. Unlike those attempts, I select the Korea War as a pivotal moment during which the South Korean political economy of today evolved.[4]

However, little attention has been to what mechanism makes possible the state-led strategies. Why did a developmental state work very well in Korea and not as well elsewhere? South Korean development is worth more systematic analysis, considering that many other developing countries have failed to catch up to the developed countries even though they started much earlier than Korea did. Dual goals of economic growth and democracy were successfully accomplished during a brief period in Korea. It becomes a model to which other developing countries hope to aspire. A lot of studies focused on rapid economic development in the Newly Industrialized Countries concur that a developmental state is what those countries have in common. However, no one has shown how this dirigisme first came about?

South Korea has surprised the world by demonstrating economic success in a short duration, particularly since the solders left the barracks to exert direct control of the government in 1961. The developmental state of South Korea had been given intensive attention. South Korea's economic performance since 1961 was really outstanding (see Table 1). It is doubly distinctive compared with both its own records and other developing countries. Although the growth of Korean per capita income slowed after the financial crisis of 1997, it increased by 40 percent between 1965 and 1990, making it now the thirteenth largest economy in the world, bigger than Spain. As shown in Table 1, the Korean economy multiplied by 38-fold between 1950 and 1998. In contrast, the entire

Latin American economy grew by 6.3 times during that period. Early starters, mostly including Latin American countries, fared far less well than South Korea in terms of economic growth and depth of industrialization.

The per capita income of South Korea indicates similar growth. As Figure 1 shows, from 1960 to 1970, the growth of Korean per capita income exceeded that of all the other developing countries. In the space of two decades, Korean per capita income increased more than fivefold, a feat that had required more than a century for the nations that led the industrial revolution.[5] This is one thing that was not foreseen. Another thing that was not foreseen was the extraordinary and sustained growth in productivity, which led to a 24 percent increase in per capita consumption of calories.

Table 1: Levels of GDP (mil $US) and Growth (1950-1998)

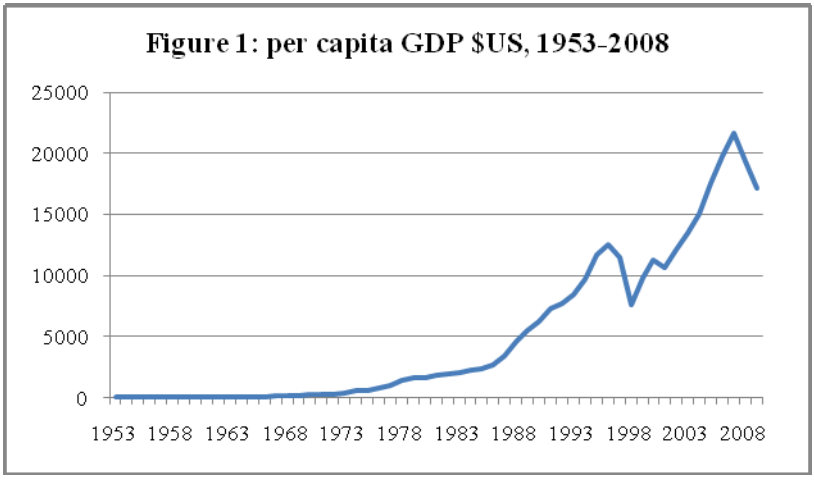
Year	Latin America	South Korea	Brazil	Argentina
1950	355334	16045	89342	85324
1960	591792	42114	167397	114614
1970	990990	62988	292480	174972
1980	1722570	156846	639093	232802
1998	2594017	624582	926918	334314
Growth 1950-1998	6.300222	37.92689	9.374941	2.918171

Data Sources: Maddison (2001)

Exceptionally rapid rates of growth have been achieved by several poor Asian countries for relatively long stretches of time since World War II. During the twenty years from 1950 to 1970, Japan grew at an average annual rate of 8.4 percent in per capita income, increasing its per capita income more than six fold, an achievement that is 50 percent higher than the goal set by the Chinese leadership. The corresponding figure for South Korea between 1965 and 1985 was 7.6 percent, and for Taiwan-China, an average of 7.2 percent over the same period.

It was trade that made this success. As Korea industrialized, its exports would have access to the vast American market. Like the Japanese miracle, Korea's was propelled by trade. South Korea became a trade-dependent state to the extent that the export share of the GDP grew more than 30 percent, which is very close to Sweden, a typical trade-dependent state.[6] Between 1964 and 1979, Korean exports rose

fourfold in dollar terms, and since then they have grown more than tenfold. The Korean export boom powered the dramatic rise in the Korean economy. In one industry after another, including cameras, sewing machines, and shipbuilding, Korean firms displayed their command of the latest technology. During the 1970s, Korea moved from producing under 500 cars to becoming the fifth largest supplier in the world, displacing France among others. The rise of auto production helped promote the expansion of steel and moved the country toward world preeminence in that basic product.



No one had predicted such extraordinary growth in Korea within three decades, from a poor colonial country to the thirteenth largest economy in the world, increasing per capita income by tenfold. South Korea moved to more than $20,000 in average per capita income in the early 2000s from zero income in 1953 when the Korean War ended. At the end of the Korean War the economies of Korea were entirely devastated. Observers of diverse persuasions and national origins wondered whether this abjectly broken society would be able to provide itself with even the rudiments of survival.

In addition Korea moved to a sustainable democracy in the late 1980s, away from a long period under authoritarian regimes, and without reverting to authoritarianism. The long-term consequences of the Korean War have shaped the developmental path. It should be noted that no state that gained power in the postcolonial world after 1945 has been nearly as successful as South Korea in achieving rapid economic growth and political development. However, the processes happened in

sequential order rather than simultaneously.[7]

This successful performance leads us to ask these questions. What makes successful economic development possible? What brings forth efficient bureaucracy to create capital and accomplish economic expansion in collaboration with the capital that is created? What is the relationship between economic development and political democracy? These questions are first directly and indirectly linked to the question of land reform. Land reform is one of the most important issues that characterizes the distinctive path of political economy.

The Korean War and Land Reform

The Korean War reshaped capitalism and liberal democracy by reordering both the domestic and international order around Korea. The domestic legacy of war is particularly effective in creating a strong state. The war years engendered an expansion of state capacities that permanently changed the balance between state and society. When the war ended in 1953, South Korea reflects what Mancur Olson argues with respect to the enormous impact of wars on economies. The war left no bases for "distribution coalitions" which, Olson says, impede economic growth. South Korea's economic loss in the first year of the war has been estimated at $1.8-2.0 billion.[8] This amount was equal to more than its GNP prior to the war. No influential group remained to exert its power to seek rents. Olson suggests that a society with "the longer history of stability, security, and freedom of association would have more institutions that limit entry and innovation" than a society with the same features otherwise.

Land reform is the first of the most significant legacies to demonstrate the changing boundaries between society, economy, and the state. The reason that the South Korean state was built up in a brief period is associated with the lack of powerful interests. Land reform put aside landlords as a class during the war. Military competition forced the state to adopt a policy that was hostile to the landowners, its core support base. With respect to the presence of special interests, a comparison of South Korea with Latin America is highly suggestive. Continual pursuit of import-substitution industrialization (ISI) policy fostered a close nexus of interests around it. The cluster of powerful interests impeded any move from the status quo to a new strategic policy that could hurt those interests. In a new nation like South Korea, land reform is the most urgent issue: how to distribute land and extract resources from it. Land reform in agricultural economy will affect who gains what, and finally can change income redistribution.[9] In fact, the Syngman Rhee

government had been slow to implement the reform, recognizing its redistributive outcome and the potential for a large backlash.

That's why land reform was und ertaken in 1950-1951 during the war, despite being passed earlier in parliament. The momentum for change came from outside. North Korea and the Soviet occupation implemented a sweeping land reform in March 1946 in a way that destroyed the basis of landed wealth that had existed in Korea for centuries.[10] The revolutionary redistribution of land that took place when North Korea occupied South Korea during the summer of 1950 had liquidated landlords as a barrier to military hegemony. Land reform was a reaction to revolutionary land redistribution carried out by the North during the war. The U.S. State Department recommended land reform in South Korea in 1947 to show a strong commitment to keep ROK safe from the Soviet influence. Land reform was one of the necessary safeguards that needed to be placed before leaving, in association with financial assistance and supervision through the World Bank.[11] The United States forced the Rhee government to implement land reform that the National Assembly had passed in 1949.

Land reform would not have been implemented if the Korean War had not occurred. But early attempts by United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMG) were continually postponed by the Korean advisers in USAMG, many of whom were large landowners. Only a partial land reform was undertaken in March 1948 in the last months of military rule—"partial" because it was confined to those rental lands formerly owned by the Japanese, less than twenty percent of total lands.[12] The Korean War thus became a great equalizer by redistributing land to peasants. Instantly, a landlord class, the ruling elite of Korea for centuries, was wiped out by the war.

> The yanban aristocracy exercised an extraordinary degree of influence over both their state and society. Not only did they own much of the land, the main form of wealth; through their control and manipulation of the state civil service examinations, strategic intermarriage (including the provision of royal consorts), and the formation of active yanban associations at the local level, they were also able to maintain a position of political power from one generation to the next that invariably rivaled, and not infrequently surpassed, the power of the Choson kings. Such wealth and power, moreover, were sustained within a society as a whole by occasional top-down marginal adjustments and reforms in the distribution system and by widely diffused

> neo-Confucian cultural and ideological norms articulated and propagated by the yanban themselves. This formidable array of economic, political, and normative resources made the yanban as a class virtually impervious to attack from either the state or other segments of society.[13]

There is a distinction between the landlords as a class on the one hand and the bourgeoisie created after industrialization on the other. Unlike the traditional landlords, the South Korean bourgeoisie has remained "estranged from the very society in which it continues to grow," though they have a plenty of wealth. The Korean landlords never recovered from land reform. The countryside, a place of landlords, would have dominated the country both politically and socially because a small aristocratic group of landowners remained powerful enough to rule over a large, passive peasant mass. The Rhee oligarchy collapsed because the armed forces in South Korea remained in the dispute due to massive electoral fraud. The neutral behavior of the military was regarded favorably by the public.

According to Huber, Rueshmeyer, and Stephens, capitalist development downgrades the power of the landlord class and upgrades the influence of the working class and middle class.[14] However the power of the landlord as a class was made impotent in Korea during the war. The landed gentry continued to be prevalent in Korea after colonial rule ended. Their influence came from land ownership. The post-colonial land reform was the key transformation that destroyed the power of landlords and provided institutional foundations for economic development. Land reform in Korea constitutes the core of what Lipset called the social requisite for economic development. Korean experience fits what Lipset says on the relationship between prosperity and democracy.[15] He argues that prosperity is a necessary condition for democracy. Democracy is more likely to be established once economic well-being is attained.

First of all, land reform removed landlords from power.[16] The disappearance of landlords from the center removed the barrier to radical change which was later initiated by the military elite in 1961. Second, land reform made available a large source of labor force whose use in an unlimited way contributed to export-centered industrialization.[17] The Korean state's strategic maneuvering room was widened because no rural elites now could challenge its development program. Third, the redistribution effect of land reform proved to have a broadly equalizing result on development in Korea.[18] In short, land reform removed what

Mancur Olson calls created social rigidities blocking efficient allocation of resources and effective decision-making. As Olson argues:[19]

> There is for practical purposes no constraint on the social cost such an organization will find it expedient to impose on the society in the course of obtaining a large share of the social output itself. . . . The organizations for collective action within societies that we are considering are therefore overwhelmingly oriented to struggles over the distribution of income and wealth rather than to the production of additional output—they are "distributional coalitions" (or organizations that engage in what, in one valuable line of literature, is called "rent seeking").

The importance of land reform lies, Olson suggests, in the elimination of the Korean landlords as a class.[20] Its historical legacy is to remove "one of the major social obstacles to full industrialization and simultaneously enhancing the role of the bourgeoisie in South Korea's economy and society."[21] Land reform in South Korea probably would have been much delayed if the North Korea had not executed the reform. Regime competition was found in land reform conducted by the Rhee government. The historical importance of land reform can be clearer if we imagine that there had been no Korean War. No Korean War, no land reform. As historian Carter J. Eckert has written:

> Land reform in the South, moreover, especially that executed by North Korean occupation forces during the Korean War, also eliminated the Korean landlords as a class, thereby removing one of the major social obstacles to full industrialization and simultaneously enhancing the role of the bourgeoisie in South Korea's economy and society.[22]

The importance of land reform success in subsequent development is seen with a comparison of Korea with Latin America where land reform had failed to remove the landlords. The elites in Latin America created institutions that preserved their hegemony, such as a narrow franchise for voting, restricted distribution of public lands and mineral rights, and low access to schooling. In countries like Mexico, Chile, and Peru up through the early 20th century, land was redistributed away from indigenous populations and into the hands of a small group of landowners.

The Korean War and the Role of the United States in State Formation

The Korean state became strong after the war in terms of extracting resources and monitoring societal capital. Robert H. Bates has put forward a "no state, no development" thesis, implying that state capacity means the transformation of the uses of its power to transform a means of "appropriating wealth into an instrument of its creation."[23] His concern is to look for the conditions which make possible the creation of wealth and the provision of security. Bates' hypothesis is highly suggestive in reminding us the role of the state in shaping social change. The presence of the U.S. troops stationed after the war constitutes what Bates considers one of the basic elements for development. The meager geopolitical function of the state in South Korea was then assisted by the United States.

The provision of security and the creation of welfare constitute the basic ground for the conception of development. Bates' conception is broader than Lipset's, whose perimeter is limited to political development. Conditions or requisites differ, depending on historical circumstances over time and space. The Korean War provides what Bates conceives of as the conception of development. War experiences made the South Korean state a specialist in the use of violence. The coercive capacity of the South Korea state grew suddenly, from a simple power with a mere 100,000 armed forces to a formidable power with a force of 600,000. America's massive assistance to South Korea during the cold war period contributed to the making of key components of the anti-communist nation such as the state and the armed forces. Centralization built up after the Korean War went far beyond the measure of autocracy that the United States endorsed as a necessary evil. War has been the single most important influence on the development of central state authority in Korea.

This enlarged organizational cohesiveness proved highly effective in intervening to control civilian elites in political turmoil. The Korean War provided the Korean middle-class officers with the professionalization which created a firm commitment to modernization and nationalism.[24] The military grew strong enough to maintain military regimes for more than two decades. The military and civilian bureaucrats are two groups that were first exposed to modernity. These groups were more likely to participate in modernization than any other group. History shows that the military overthrew the rural elite, and ended the traditional political system. No other group was able to take

the lead in mobilizing organized opposition to the ruling oligarchy that had long ruled over the country. American military aid allowed South Korean regimes to bypass consulting their subject populations or seeking their consent.

The involvement of the United States in South Korea would be quite different if the Korean War had not occurred. The United States after the war had no alternatives to forming a security alliance with South Korea, being clearly conscious that many developing countries caught up in the cold war could choose to fall under Soviet influence. An alliance with the United States has served Korea well, enabling it to enjoy peace and stability for more than half a century. Without it economic prosperity would not have been possible. The presence of U.S. troops in Korea has played a key role in moderating security competition and promoting stability over the past fifty years.

What about Korean-U.S. relations if there been no Korean War? In the beginning, the United States had no interest in Korea to the extent to which it had withdrawn their troops in 1949. More importantly, Secretary of State Dean Acheson had publicly excluded both South Korea and Taiwan from the American "defense perimeter" in the Western Pacific, though it should be recognized that his intention was to signal that the United States would not intervene in the Chinese civil war.[25] Whatever Acheson's real intention, American aid and commitment to Korea would have been much less without the Korean War.[26] The war helped the administration to activate NSC-68, whose fortunes had been unclear until the Korea War.[27] The United States came to assist South Korea in defeating North Korean forces and to defend South Korea. After the war, South Korea was under heavy pressure from the United States, which asked the Korean government to make domestic policy reforms. The U.S. aid program asked South Korea to achieve "self-sufficiency" so as to reduce its aid commitments. The shift to export-led strategy under the Park Chung Hee government should be understood in terms of the conjunction of external pressure with domestically driven institutional changes.

The Korean War enabled South Korea to consolidate itself as a junior ally for the United States. The great crescent policy of Acheson aimed to contain Soviet threats from the north. For it to be successful, a strong U.S. defense commitment and economic assistance were essential to keep the fragile Korean economy after the war from submitting to communist influence.[28] The ruling elites in Korea had taken advantage of the U.S. military assistance to consolidate its power. Power consolidation helped to enhance state capacity to control society and

manage the economy.

Table 2 indicates the annual amount of U.S. economic assistance to South Korea from 1950 to 1960. An average of more than $200 million a year was granted. That amount was equivalent to 70 percent of Korea's domestic revenue of $456 million, for instance, in 1958.[29] The role of the United States was crucial in the 1950s to the extent to which American aid was the only available source of the ROK government budget during those years. Moreover, U.S. military aid was considerably higher than aid for all of Europe, and was four times the U.S. aid to Latin America as a whole.[30] The United States as an external force helped the postwar Korean state to back economic development plan designed by President Park. Under military control and U.S. sponsorship, South Korea was able to pursue export-oriented industrialization on the basis of low wages. Also, the United States opened its market to Korean producers during the cold war.

Table 2: Grant Foreign Economic Aid Received by South Korea, US$1000

Year	Total Value	Year	Total Value
1951	106542	1956	326705
1952	161327	1957	382892
1953	194107	1958	321272
1954	153925	1959	222204
1955	236707	1960	245393

Data Source: Jung-En Woo (1991), p. 46.

The United States suffered some 30,000 dead among a total of about 137,000 casualties. It ensured South Korea's continual security through a formal defense commitment and a close bilateral alliance which involves a combined defense posture and the sustained stationing of tens of thousands of U.S. troops in South Korea. A large amount of American aid flowed into the ROK as a part of strengthening bilateral alliance to support the development and improvement of the armed forces, covering almost 80 percent of the ROK's military purchase and most of its technical training and advanced weapons. The U.S. also provided an enormous amount of economic assistance. The geostrategic significance of Korea enabled South Korea to put the United States in a position to make strong commitment to guarantee the security of Korea. Economic prosperity is more likely to be attained when military security is easily secured at a cheap price.

The Korea-U.S. security alliance forged after the war functioned as

an external guarantee that enabled the Korean state to concentrate its resources on economic development in a broad sense. If the Americans had removed their security blanket from Korea, Korea might well have returned to the destructive power politics that it had spent the last fifty years trying to banish. The United States provided a substantial flow of aid for Korea when it was most needed, fostering procedures for cooperation and liberal trading policies. Until the 1970s it also provided the world with a strong anchor for international monetary stability. The huge expansion of trade in international capitalist economies transmitted a dynamic influence throughout the world economy.

War made Korea heavily dependent on the United States for security, recognizing that the Korean state's geopolitical military function was found to be extremely inadequate. There was no alternative route to the postwar state, which was able to command the allegiance of its citizens when war memories were still vivid enough to make them involuntarily obedient. It was impossible to demand allegiance before the war broke out. The Rhee government after the war could last, relying on brutal force, in the name of emergency, without creating consensus. The powerful impulses of the mass in the postwar Korea were the desire for security and freedom from war. These impulses were amplified by American aid during the years following the war. Still, citizens in South Korea felt the war's impact.

Weakening war memories made the citizens awaken to their basic political rights and overthrow the Rhee regime, which failed to provide basic minimum needs. General Park took power in a military coup, and it was deficient in legitimacy even after the election. The Park government concentrated on achieving economic development in order to make up for the democratic deficit. In the early phases of his presidency, Park showed his government to be more responsive to the needs of a greater range and number of citizens. The Korean War immediately enabled the state to begin a massive conscription of its citizens for a military buildup. State expansion continued through the rapid industrialization of the early 1960s, when the Park government initiated export-led industrialization in alliance with business elites. The ambitious Park regime made a decisive shift toward direct intervention in economic development to guide the business sector in exporting merchandise and goods. The state showed no tolerance for independent labor unions, since its interest was in lowering labor costs so that business could be competitive in the world market.[31] Economic development was enhanced at a junction of coercion and capital that from very early on fortified state power, but at the price of large

concessions to the country's family-run conglomerates (*chaebol*).

The Park regime, based on this coercive state structure, made an alliance with business elites to extract economic resources. It made large concessions of government power to business, which in turn provided economic resources and taxes necessary to maintain a state bureaucracy. In short, the state bartered state-guaranteed privileges for statemaking using coercive power. The state encouraged big business to achieve economic success to gain the resources for keeping up its cold war with the North. It gave priority to commercial activities, which are the foundation for making possible security provision. Capital-intensive state formation began once coercion-intensive state formation had been accomplished.

The Korea state took shape in a capital-scarce environment devastated by the war. The environment was also "coercion-abundant" because the Korean War militarized society. The sheer number of the armed forces was swollen from a mere hundred thousand to several hundred thousand right after the war. The number has stayed the same until now. State builders in Korea depended on armies to stave off their northern brethrens' invasion. For this they needed an army as a reliable ally. But they lacked the money to satisfy the armed men, and allowed them rent-seeking by the army and sometimes bought their allegiance using corruption. In fifteenth century Russia, the ruling elites bought officeholders with expropriated land from conquering. But in modern Korea there was not enough land to distribute away.

State Formation in South Korea

A developmental state in South Korea succeeded in making and organizing capitalists. The key to economic success in South Korea lies in synergic relationship between the state and the business class. As a condition for an economic miracle in South Korea, David C. Kang emphasizes the small number of actors who are instrumental in saving the transaction costs, facilitating smooth communication, and monitoring easily.[32] What he calls "mutual hostility" between state managers and business elites makes possible mutual constraints and dependence, which block excessive rent-seeking and corruption. Crony networks could become the asset in lowering transaction costs. Transaction costs are shrunken in a regime in which distributional coalitions are forbidden to be made.

The existence of a strong state becomes a central issue in evaluating the relative merits of political-economic and ideological-cultural explanations of Korean political development. It also provides a good

opportunity to explore the implications of commonly held notions of statist principles for the practical organization and design of a central state. The Korean experience is particularly appropriate for this purpose because the Korean government began from scratch. The Korean War marks the beginning of state formation in South Korea. The post-colonial state was not yet a national state before the war broke out. The Japanese defeat and external intervention by the victors liberated Korea, which had been a Japanese colony for thirty-eight years. As I said in the above, economic growth in South Korea was surprisingly rapid and expansive. This feat, the so-called "miracle on the Han River," was achieved not by right-wing capitalists, but by soldiers in uniform.

A huge literature exists to highlight the importance of the role of the Korean state in promoting economic development since the 1960s when Park initiated economic planning via state guidance.[33] The key to swift economic expansion was its dirigisme regime in which the state intervened to correct for market failures. Despite its quantity, the literature is still insufficient to account for a mechanism linking centralize state authority to economic success. The mechanism is found in state formation process during and after the Korea War.

Charles Tilly persuades us to understand that the trajectories of state formation differ on varing historical junctures throughout world history. He highlights complex relations between the state and capital, depending on which one, either the state or capital, is more rich or scarce. Building up a millennium European experience, he extends the state formation path to later developers of states—the Third World countries. We can benefit from applying his approach to the case of Korea. His seminal work, *Coercion, Capital and European States*,[34] is insightful in thinking over the impact of the Korean War on the state formation pattern in Korea, in addition to understanding his original theme.

The state formation path in postwar Korea resembles what happened in Russia and Hungary. The circumstances that faced state builders in postwar South Korea are similar to those in Russia during the fifteenth century; both involved sharing scarce capital and abundant weapons. They had to rely on coercion for state making. There existed no powerful bourgeoisie in post-colonial Korea. The departing Japan left little capital behind them, but bequeathed to the post-colonial state military forces drawn from and modeled on the repressive forces for colonial administrative effectiveness. The military elites attempted to coopt scarce domestic capital and built extensive bureaucracies. The weakness of capital facilitated mastery of the soldiers over the state.

The armed forces and police remained the most effective

organizations operating in the territory. More importantly, the police and the army were filled with men who had previously occupied subordinate positions in colonial armies. An example was Park Chung Hee, who was a former officer in the Japanese occupation army. The military elites could have ruled until the success of economic expansion began to undermine the military's might.

Charles Tilly posits three different paths to state formation throughout world history.[35] Different paths are a combination product, depending on the relative distribution of coercion and capital. The capital-intensive state reigns when the market is well developed. Coercion-intensive state formation occurs if coercion is prevails over market and exchange. In between, an intermediate path of state formation is possible, where holders of coercion and capital bargain after struggles. The challenge of war with the North Korean military state strengthened the state structure and fortified the South Korean state. Thus there were two similarly coercive states across the border from one another. State making and war making are closely associated with each other, constituting synergistic relations. Korean military power kept on growing. Compared with other developing countries around the world, the Korean armed forces are now much larger. The number of soldiers per 10,000 people in South Korea, for example, is more than 145, which is nine times larger than Brazil's military (16 soldiers per 10,000 people). South Korea has kept a large standing army of about 600,000 since the Korean War.

Charles Tilly observes three broad patterns of state formation throughout European history:

> In the coercion-intensive mode, rulers squeezed the means of war from their own populations and others they conquered, building massive structures of extraction in the process. . . . In the capital-intensive mode, rulers relied on compacts with capitalists—whose interests they served with care—to rent or purchase military force, and thereby warred without building vast permanent state structures. . . . In the intermediate capitalized coercion mode, rulers did some of each, but spent more of their effort than did their capital-intensive neighbors on incorporating capitalists and sources of capital directly into the structures of their states.[36]

Coercive state formation had to give in capital-intensive state formation as capital grew enough to demand free autonomy from state guidance with respect to investment decision and financing methods.

Although the post-coup military pressured business to invest in unprofitable industries, the business community became equally powerful as time went by.

What would happen to South Korea divided without the Korean War? Without the war land reform would have not taken place; landlords would have remained powerful enough to keep industrialization in check. Without the war the Korean military would not have developed an organizational cohesiveness to intervene in civilian affairs and establish long-time rule. After the war, the military became the only effective, highly organized institution in a position to control the state. Most modernizing countries like South Korea after the war, as Huntington says,[37] suffered from "a shortage of political community and of effective, authoritative, legitimate government." The vacuum of authority and legitimacy was often filled by military rule.

The strong Korean state that emerged out of the war was remarkable in a number of respects. In early 1950 just before the war, the army in South Korea had only six battalions of artillery, armed with a lightweight version of the American 105mm howitzer.[38] From a modernizing perspective, old landlord elites were wiped out after the war. Rhee survived the war despite not having won the victory. More importantly he was now in a more favorable position which no one could have challenged, since strong rivals including landlords disappeared during the war. War mobilization created unprecedented state growth in various ways. Prior to 1950, the South Korea state had attempted a full mobilization of a society's material and human resources. The Korean War brought forth two such mobilizations and was thus the first modern war that it had ever had.[39] Over the course of the war not only did the South Korean military grow. The police, who bore the brunt of forceful control, rose to a peak of 75,000 during the Korean War and had played important,[40] largely military roles in the elimination of guerrillas until 1955. The Liberal Party needed them and yet could not prevent gradual diminution of their numbers as military needs ceased. In 1948 President Rhee initiated the National Security Law to establish public order, which enabled the government to crush internal dissent.

The rapid expansion of security forces was all the more remarkable considering the country's fiscal difficulty of supporting a 100,000-man force before the war. The military was now the most cohesive and well-organized group in postwar South Korea. National conscription for all male adults, which lasted for thirty-months, provided industry with a highly disciplined labor force compared with other countries without military discipline.[41] Wartime mobilization involves the relationship

between the economic base and the form of state organization. War mobilizations compel states to extract a much larger share of a society's resources than are usually collected through peacetime taxation. A state at war is often compelled to extract revenue from almost all areas of societal production, thus molding the state apparatus in a way that complements and exploits the strengths and organizing structures of economic activity. In short war mobilization leads to a strong state.

Tilly suggests that the role of coercion and war determines decisive variations in the paths of state formation in European history. He highlights two features that affect the entire process of state formation in history. First, organization of coercion and preparation for war are important pointers to varying state structure. Second, interstate relations change through war and preparation for war. Following the lead of Tilly, I argue that the Korean War had an enormous impact on state formation. For Tilly, the interplay of capital, coercion, and geopolitical location determines the state formation of a given polity. Tilly's conception of state formation types is suggestive in discussing the trajectory of the Korean state formation after the Korean War. South Korea is still at war with North Korea. As Bruce Cumings remarks,[42] the armistice means that "the war solved nothing: only the status quo was restored," indicating war might occur again. The possibility that war can occur again provides a propitious condition for the military to grow influential.

State formation is path-dependent. What happened to inchoate state after the war shaped the path the state had taken. The state-centered mobilization of economic resources and manpower that accompanies military conflict during the war is commonly conceded to have had this effect. However, the centralizing influence of the Korean War on the society has not been accorded the precedent-setting importance it deserves.

What makes the transformation of Korea all the more striking is that it occurred during a mere generation. The pace of change was swift—a mere three decades. After the war, Korea underwent a dual transformation to achieve both prosperity and democracy. First, South Korea has been successful in achieving an economic miracle. It has risen rapidly to a pretty rich country now from one of the poorest in the world since the Korean War. Another transformation is political—from an autocratic regime to a democratic polity. Political change also took place rapidly. Dual transformation came in a sequence of what Fareed Zakaria calls "illiberal democracy."[43] Economic development came first while the political regime remained conservative. Democratization eventually arrived in the late 1980s after economic development had persisted for

three decades.

In sum, war making (attacking external foes) is associated with state making (attacking internal rivals). The Korean War enabled the inchoate state from scratch to create both a military establishment and bureaucratic governance. The latter institutions played a key role in the developmental process thereafter. The Korean military was a child of the American cold war strategy in which American assistance and training programs built the South Korean military into a powerful institution that was destined to govern the country. The Korean War in particular facilitated the strong role of the Korean military that was weak in comparison with other institutions before the war broke out. Thus, the impact of war on the Korean state was felt to be huge. The Korean state at the beginning of the Korean War was a mass of unborn departments, incapable itself of generating energy to keep its own business in plausible vibration.

War, Economic Development, and Democracy in South Korea

The Korean War ended up without a clear victory. The two Koreas have remained divided until now, still caught up in a cold war. The war in general contributes to making the welfare state, which is a response of the ruling elites to participation from the masses during the war. However, the South Korean state had no need to broaden citizenship to strengthen welfare primarily because the war persisted. In other words, the unfinished war had impeded democratic development which in turn opened the gate for the development of the welfare state in correspondence to the level of economic development.

In Korea, the military regime kept down left-wing organizations in permanent cold war circumstances where the North military regime remained highly hostile. State-led export promotion controlled labor unions to provide domestic firms with cheap labor, which is the key to competitive advantages.[44] Democracy was said to be postponed until communist threats disappeared. In addition, the regime relied on communist threats to keep the political opposition from challenging establishments centering on a developmental state. The subsequent historical trajectory of the Korean War was conditioned by the rise of military authoritarianism, which ruled for more than four decades. Korean leaders since Park Chung Hee have based their legitimacy on economic growth. Authoritarian regime needed to demonstrate economic achievements to make up for the lack of political legitimacy. The military's embrace of export-led strategy was a function of its desire to enhance legitimacy through economic development.

The political data in Figure 3 come from the annual report on the state of freedom around the world by Freedom House. States are categorized as "not free" (authoritarian), "partly free" (semi-democratic), and "free" (democratic) on the basis of political rights and civil liberties, the ability of citizens to turn out incumbent governments through electoral means, and their ability to organize political parties and express critical views without government interference.[45] According to the Freedom House survey, Korea has been classified as free since 1993.

A new theory of modernization holds that democracy is more likely to emerge under certain conditions. The Korean case demonstrates simultaneous achievements of growth and democracy. It is unrealistic to expect democracy where certain conditions do not exist. The Park regime's economic expansion was a basic driver of democratic change. A growing sense of security in association with economic development encourages people to demand free choice in politics and self-expression, which leads to democracy. The Chun Doo Hwan regime, the authoritarian successor after Park's assassination in the early eighties, found it increasingly costly to check citizens' demand for democracy. An enlarged standing army during the war, fortified by necessity for external purposes, is likely to specialize in internal control, with little prospect of going to war.

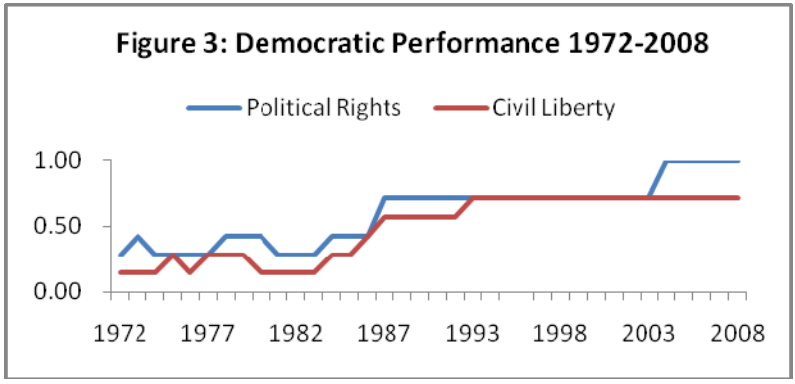
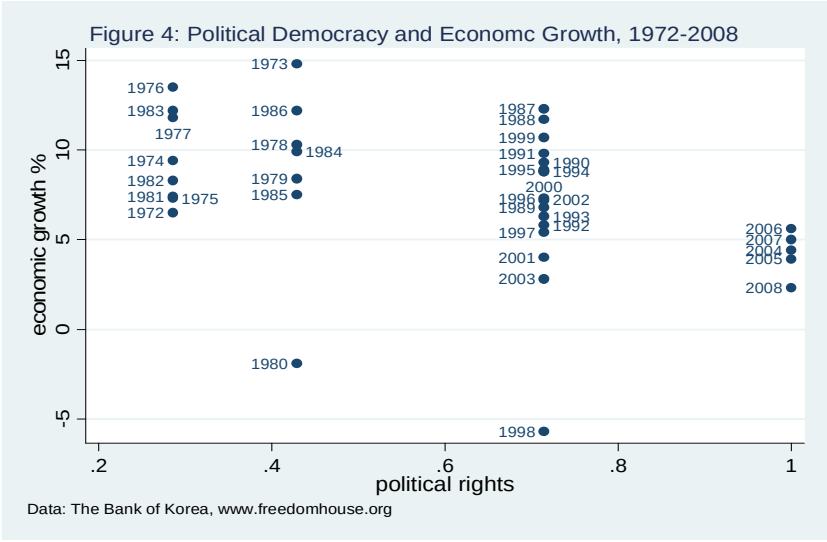


Figure 4 indicates that high growth is associated with fewer political rights. The Korean economy grew more during the period of 1960-1990 than in later periods. Financial crisis in 1997 badly affected economic performance despite the fact that the 1990s governments were free. The relationship in Korea between economic development and political democracy accords with what Lipset refers to concerning the economic

requisites for political development. The Lipset hypothesis is empirically supported by a cross-country study.[46] Democracies cannot last if they start without economic requisites. Continuous economic growth until 1990, shown in Figure 2, provides a fertile soil for nurturing democracy. Authoritarian rule is incompatible with the rise of a strong middle-class whose demands for autonomy from the state lead onto the democratic path.

The longtime dominance of the military gave birth to a united democratic opposition whose candidate, Kim Dae Jung, seriously threatened President Park in the 1971 presidential election to the extent that Park was almost defeated. In response to the threats, Park amended the constitution in 1972 in a way that allowed him to be safe from political challenges. Electoral democracy completely ended in 1972 when an extreme type of authoritarian regime, called Yushin, was imposed. Rule by decree replaced the rule of law.[47]

An uneasy alliance between the state and business following the military coup created the fruits of what Kang calls "mutually hostile" relations between them. The business elites proved themselves formidable men of the marketplace. Their ceaseless economic trade activity and economic expansion provided a financial base for state activity. On the basis of economic performance, South Korean proved to be superior to North Korea in terms of acquiring military procurement in the long run. Regime competition with the Kim Il Sung dictatorship was already over during the early 1980s.



Autocratic rule had ended by surprise in 1979 when Park was assassinated by his close aides. The ruling oligarchy was divided over how to respond to active student movements demanding full democratization. Park and his hawkish aides relied on brutal force to repress his critics. On the other hand, the "soft-liners" argued for using convincing methods instead of repression. A more harsh type of dictatorship led by Chun Doo Hwan, another military figure, replaced Park. Military rule continued until the first civilian government came in 1992 though democratization that started in 1987 and pressured the military elite to stay out of power. The rest is history as Figure 1 indicates consolidation of electoral democracy since 1992.

During the Cold War, the process of state building—which includes forming a central state structure, extracting resources, organizing a military, and establishing mass education—inevitably promoted nationalism in Korea, but it was restrained and muted by the overlay of the ideological conflicts between the superpowers. Korea created a state led by a "benevolent" autocrat; but it was totally dependent on cooperating with business elites whose interests dictated cutting down wages and salaries and controlling the labor market. As Michael Mann explains,[48] the state serves two functions. Not only does it perform the geopolitical function of prosecuting external war; it also has the domestic function of repressing discontent.

The Korean War helps us recognize how war making and its organizational consequences affected the different combined trajectories of security and capital. The South Korean state could wield its

predominant force to control economic expansion. Its particular coercive capacity came from security dominance due to the Korea War. Relations with the enemy in North Korea fortified the state structure. Being dependent only on coercion, North Korea erred on two fronts. It failed to create capital, which is conducive to strengthening a sustainable state capacity. Moreover, the North failed to organize an effective state, which helps transit to democracy. As a result of both failures, the North Korean state has come close to a breakdown. The South's experience exemplifies the opposite, resulting in a democracy.

Notes:

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[1]This version of the article has benefited from thoughtful and generous comments by Jonathan D. Pollack (U.S. Naval War College) and Young Soon Yim (Sungkyunkwan Univeristy).

[2] Following is a short list of works that deal with various aspects of the Korean War: Bruce Cumings, The Origins of the Korean War, vol. 1: The Roaring of the Cataract (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991); Cumings, The Origins of the Korean War, vol. 1: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regime, 1945-1947 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981); Sergei N. Goncharov, John W. Lewis, and Xue Litai, Uncertain Partners: Stain, Mao, and the Korean War (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993); David Halberstam, The Coldest Winter: America and the Korean War (New York: Hyperion, 2007); Allan Millett, The War for Korea, 1945-1950: A House Burning (Lawrence, Kans.: University Press of Kansas, 2005); William Stueck, Rethinking the Korean War: A New Diplomatic and Strategic History (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002); William Stueck, ed., The Korean War in World History (Louisville, Ky.: University Presso Kentucky, 2004); William J. Williams, A Revolutionary War: Korea and the Transformation of the Postwar World (Chicago: Imprint Publications, 1993).

[3] Alice Amsden, Asia's Next Giant: South Korea and Late Industrialization (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Gregg Brazinsky, Nation Building in South Korea: Koreans, Americans, and the Making of a Democracy (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Bruce Cumings, Korea's Place in the Sun (New York: Norton, 2005); Stephen Haggard, Pathways from the Periphery: The Politics of Growth in the Newly Industrializing Countries (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990); John Lie, Han Unbounded: The Political Economy of South Korea (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999); Robert Wade, Economic Theory and the Role of Government in East Asian Industrialization (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990); Jung-En Woo, Race to the Swift: State and Finance in Korean Industrialization (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).

[4] It was Barrington Moore who stressed that war cemented the demise of a landed aristocracy and the ascent of the bourgeoisie, facilitating the rise of democracy. See Moore's *Social Origins of Dictatorships and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966).

[5]Angus Maddison, The World Economy: A Millennial Perspective (OECD, 2001).

[6] On the importance of trade for political economy, see Peter Katzenstein, Small States in World Markets: Industrial Policy in Europe (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985).

[7] Sequential evolution of economic development and political democracy reflects what Przworski and Limougi call the thresholds of democracy beyond which democracy can endure. See Adam Przworski and F. Limongi, "Modernization: Theories and Facts," World Politics, vol. 48, pp. 253-273.

[8] Leary P. Jones and Il Sakong, Government, Business, and Entrepreneurship in Economic Development: The Korean Case (Cambridge: Council on East Asian Studies, 1980), p. 35.

[9] The U.S. military government in Korea closely examined the land reform issue and took important measures between 1945 and 1948. However, thorny problems remained unsolved when the war broke out in 1950. See Greg Branzinsky, Nation Building in South Korea, for details.

[10] Land reform in North Korea confiscated landholdings of about 5,000 Korean landlords as well as Japanese landholding. However, many of the northern landlords had already fled by the time the reform was undertaken. For land reform in North Korea, Bruce Cumings has noted that "the reform left the new regime with a vast reservoir of popular goodwill." Cumings, The Origins of the Korean War, p. 417.

[11] Ibid., p. 47.

[12] Carter J. Eckert et al., Korea: Old and New A History (Korea Institute: Harvard University 1990).

[13] Ibid., pp. 95-96.

[14] Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Evelyne Huber, and John D. Stephens, Capitalist Development and Democracy (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

[15] Seymour Martin Lipset, "Some Social Prerequisites for Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy," American Political Science Review, 53, 1959: 69-105.

[16] President Rhee vetoed the land reform bill that was passed in the legislature, and land reform was delayed until May 1950. He was under pressure from landlords. See Gregory Henderson, Korea: The Politics of Vortex (Cambridge:

Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 257-258.

[17] Eckert et al., Korea: Old and New, pp. 400-401.

[18] Haggard, Pathways from the Periphery, p. 36.

[19] Mancur Olson, The Rise and Decline of Nations: Economic Growth, Stagflation, and Social Rigidities (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1982), p. 44.

[20] Mancur Olson The Rise and Fall of Nations (New York: Oxford University Press,1984).

[21] Carter Eckert, "The South Korean Bourgeoisie: A Class in Search of Hegemony," in Hagen Koo, ed., State and Society in Contemporary Korea (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 95-130

[22] Ibid., pp. 95-130.

[23] Robert H. Bates, "The Role of the State in Development," in Barry R. Weingast and Donald A. Wittman, eds., The Oxford Handbook of Political Economy, pp. 708-722.

[24] Samuel P. Huntington Political Order in Changing Societies (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 205.

[25] John Lewis Gaddis, We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1997), p. 72.

[26] Donald Stone MacDonald, U.S.-Korean Relations from Liberaltion to Self-Reliance: The Twentieth-Year Record (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1992), p. 112.

[27] John Lewis Gaddis, Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American Security Policy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 109.

[28] Michael Schaller "Securing the Great Crescent: Occupied Japan and the Origins of Containment in Southeast Asia," Journal of American History, vol. 69, No. 2, pp. 392-414.

[29] Woo, Race to the Swift.

[30] Cumings, Korea's Place in the Sun, p. 307.

[31] Jang-jip Choi, "Political Cleavages in South Korea," in Koo, ed., State and Society in Contemporary Korea, pp. 13-50.

[32] David C. Kang, "Transaction Costs and Crony Capitalism in East Asia," Comparative Politics, July 2003, 439-458.

[33] As a recent update for this genre, see David C. Kang, Crony Captalism:

Corruption and Development in South Korea and the Philippines (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[34] Charles Tilly, Coercion, Capital, and European State, AD 990-1992 (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992).

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid., p. 30.

[37] Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies, p. 2.

[38] Millett, The War for Korea, p. 15.

[39] Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies, p. 200.

[40] Security was already under the Koreans though the United States military government was nominally in control. Both the Korean National Police and the Korean Constabulary doubled in size, providing a security force of about 80,000 by 1947. See Millett, The War for Korea, pp. 8-9.

[41] Cumings, Korea's Place in the Sun, p. 303

[42] Ibid., p. 298.

[43] Fareed Zakaria, "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy." Foreign Affairs, vol. 76 (September-October, 1997), pp. 22-41.

[44] Hagen Koo, "The State, Minjung, and the Working Class in South Korea," in Koo, ed., State and Society in Contemporary Korea, pp 131-162; Lie, Han Unbounded , p. 98.

[45] Raymond D. Gastil, Freedom in the World (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1985), p. 3.

[46] Robert J. Barro, Determinants of economic Growth. A Cross-Country Empirical Study (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press 1997).

[47] The Freedom House survey designated South Korea as "not free" from 1972 to 1976 when Korean politics decayed, moving from soft to strong authoritarian rule. See Figure 1 for rating on the regime characteristics in various years since 1972.

[48] Michael Mann, The Source of Social Power, vol. II, The Rise of Classes and Nation-state, 1760-1914 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

Beijing and the Paper Tiger: The Impact of the Korean War on Sino-American Relations

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ABSTRACT

Mutual hostility and confrontation characterized the first two decades of relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China. This article examines the impact of the Korean War on creating and perpetuating this mutual enmity. The first half describes how the U.S. reaction to the outbreak of the Korean War and especially Chinese military intervention in the conflict removed any chance for an early reconciliation, discussing Washington's specific policies from June 1950 until the armistice in July 1953 aimed at achieving diplomatic isolation and economic punishment of China's new regime. The second half defines China's five primary postwar foreign policy goals and explains how Beijing faced strident opposition from the United States in its attempts to achieve each objective. While Washington's efforts largely failed, U.S. actions ensured that Sino-American relations would remain poisoned for fifteen more years.

Keywords: Korean War; Neutralization of Taiwan; Chinese military intervention; United Nations; Mao Zedong; Harry S. Truman; Korean Armistice Negotiations; Korean Demilitarized Zone; voluntary repatriation; Dwight Eisenhower; U.S.-Republic of China Mutual Security Pact; Geneva Conference; Taiwan Strait Crisis; Bandung Conference; Geneva Ambassadorial Talks.

Introduction: The Origins of Mistrust

On January 5, 1950, President Harry S Truman declared publicly that the United States "will not pursue a course which will lead to involvement in the civil war in China." Moreover, it would not "provide military aid or advice to Chinese forces on Formosa."[1] His statement came just a few weeks after Communist forces had compelled the remnants of Guomindang armies to evacuate China's mainland and seek refuge for Jiang Jieshi's government on Taiwan. American officials of course were very distressed when Mao Zedong had proclaimed establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) on October 1, 1949, but Truman and his advisors had decided to accept this outcome because they saw no easy way to reverse it. China scholar Qing Simei recently has written that Truman's announcement signaled his adoption of a new grand strategy that "included two parts: First, the [United States would create] a limited economic relationship with Beijing, to drive a wedge between China and the Soviet Union, to break up the Sino-Soviet alliance. Second, [it] would not intervene in Beijing's [seizure of] Taiwan campaign, which U.S. intelligence reports indicated would happen in the summer of 1950."[2] Secretary of State Dean Acheson, speaking at the National Press Club seven days later, repeated the elements of this new policy when he not only placed Taiwan beyond the U.S. "defensive perimeter" in the Pacific, but also blamed Jiang's defeat on his failure to meet the economic needs of China's people.[3] Then, in March, Acheson informed UN General Secretary Trygve Lie that the United States would not use its veto to block a majority decision to seat the PRC in the international organization.[4]

Less than six months later, North Korea launched a massive offensive across the 38th parallel to reunite its country, igniting the Korean War. Among the most significant legacies of this conflict was its initiation of a sequence of events that would poison Sino-American relations for two decades. Many historians have blamed the Korean War for a missed opportunity for Washington to establish normal relations with Beijing. Chen Jian, however, has made a powerful case that anti-colonial and Communist ideology ensured that Mao and his associates would spurn U.S. offers of friendship and align with the Soviet Union.[5] Indeed, on February 14, 1950, Mao, after weeks of contentious discussions with Soviet leader Joseph Stalin in Moscow, signed the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance. In response, the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) began to reconsider its position regarding Taiwan, lobbying Truman and Acheson to adopt a policy of defending Taiwan and providing military and economic aid to Jiang's Republic of China (ROC). Dean Rusk, the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern

Affairs, and other State Department officials began advocating privately replacement of Jiang with a more competent leader. Finally, U.S. Occupation Commander General Douglas gave Defense Secretary Louis Johnson during his visit to Tokyo in June 1950 a memorandum urging transformation of Taiwan into a U.S. bastion to block further Communist expansion in East Asia.[6]

Unaware of the policy shift underway in Washington, Mao already had reason to distrust the United States because Truman's earlier efforts to end the civil war had not been even-handed. In late 1945, the president, as is well-known, had sent U.S. Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall to mediate a settlement, but neither he nor Truman were willing to act on threats to halt support for Jiang to force him to compromise—and the Guomindang leader knew this.[7] It therefore was highly unlikely that Washington and Beijing would have been able to develop the mutual trust necessary for an early cordial relationship. It was the Korean War, however, that would transform this suspicious and adversarial association between the United States and the PRC into a hostile and perilous confrontation. Neither nation wanted this outcome, especially the PRC. China had suffered enormous human and economic losses during its civil war, placing a priority on devoting its resources to economic recovery. Soviet documents reveal that Mao was even more reluctant than Stalin to approve Kim Il Sung's invasion plan but did so because he felt a deep debt to North Korea for providing troops that had helped defeat the Guomindang.[8] By contrast, Truman implemented provocative policies during and after the Korean War that challenged the PRC's vital interests. Rather than being intimidated, Beijing, as this article will show, emerged from Korea determined to expose the United States as a "paper tiger."

Truman set the tone for rancor and hostility in future Sino-American relations on June 27, 1950 when he ordered the U.S. Seventh Fleet to protect the island of Taiwan against an invasion from the PRC and supposedly prevent Guomindang attacks against the mainland. Determination of Taiwan's future status, he said, would have to await restoration of peace in the Pacific, a peace settlement with Japan, or a resolution in the United Nations. Coming two days after the Korean War started, this "neutralization" of Taiwan in essence permanently created two Chinas. His action enraged Beijing, which saw the Guomindang government on Taiwan as illegitimate and the last remaining obstacle to China's reunification. Chinese Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai branded it "an armed invasion of the Chinese territory and a complete infringement on the U.N. Charter."[9] Escalating the acrimony, MacArthur, after appointment as head of the United Nations Command (UNC) in Korea,

visited Taiwan in late July to survey its needs for U.S. military assistance. He followed this with an unauthorized dispatch of a message to the annual meeting of the American Veterans of Foreign Wars calling publicly for action to make Taiwan a powerful U.S. military base in the Pacific. These actions conflicted with Truman's desire to limit the U.S. commitment to Taiwan. Nevertheless, Beijing, knowing MacArthur's hatred of communism and the PRC, rightly judged U.S. behavior during the early weeks of the Korean War as very threatening.[10]

Truman's "neutralization" of Taiwan came easily because U.S. leaders favoring a tougher stand against the Soviets in East Asia had laid the groundwork for the decision. Significantly, in April 1950, submission of National Security Council (NSC) Paper 68, calling for a huge increase in defense spending, signaled an emerging consensus in the U.S. government on the necessity to rely on military means to contain Communist expansion. Exaggerating the significance of North Korea's attack, the Truman administration placed a premium on worldwide military and strategic considerations, thus adding force to the argument for action to demonstrate U.S. resolve.[11] Of course, doing otherwise would have left Truman and Acheson subject to virulent partisan attacks from Republicans and Jiang's adherents in Congress. Though entirely logical from an American perspective, U.S. "neutralization" of Taiwan probably surprised Beijing. By contrast, Chinese leaders anticipated Truman's decision to commit combat forces to prevent Communist conquest of South Korea. As North Korean forces advanced, Mao began to warn Kim Il Sung about the probability of a U.S. amphibious military landing behind his armies on Korea's northwest coast at Inchon.[12] Shen Zhihua explains in a recent article that Beijing in fact had offered to intervene shortly after the war began, but Stalin balked because he feared that this "would expand China's status and influence in Korea." The war definitely strained a relationship between the Soviet Union, China, and North Korea that already was complex, fractious, and mistrustful.[13]

Truman's decision to send U.S. forces across the 38th parallel weeks before the successful Inchon landing on September 15 was momentous. Profoundly misunderstanding the nature and power of nationalism as a force in world affairs, the president thought that the liberation of North Korea would initiate a process leading to the collapse of the Soviet empire. Instead, his reckless choice provoked Chinese intervention, extending the war from a conflict lasting three months to more than three years.[14] Almost as important, Truman's decision also dramatically altered the Sino-American relationship from one that might have remained rancorous coexistence to virulent and unrelenting confrontation. China scholars continue to debate the details surrounding

Mao's ultimate decision to commit Chinese troops in Korea. Shen emphasizes, however, that Stalin did not request PRC intervention until after South Korean forces entered the north, but then revoked a promise to provide Soviet air support. Mao did not make a final decision, Qing contends, until U.S. troops crossed the 38th parallel. At that moment, she concludes, China's leader chose "to enter the war" because Beijing had reached "the delicate balance between the defense of China's national independence and revolutionary internationalism."[15] Truman, of course, was oblivious to this disharmony, confident that Stalin controlled a monolithic Communist movement.

An Avoidable War

War between the United States and China in Korea was avoidable. Zhou Enlai famously conveyed warnings to the U.S. government against entering North Korea, but American leaders thought the threat was a bluff. Their dismissive and patronizing attitude toward the Chinese had a long history. That the Truman administration did nothing in response to MacArthur's violation of orders as head of the United Nations Command (UNC) when he initiated his brash "Home By Christmas Offensive" provided evidence that ethnocentric hubris afflicted not just the general.[16] China's counteroffensive that shattered the UNC's push to the Yalu late in November 1950 had a dramatic impact on U.S. security policy. After Truman declared a state of national emergency, Congress approved expanding the defense budget from $13.5 billion in 1950 to $60.4 billion for fiscal 1952. Thereafter, the U.S. government's mobilization strategy until the Cold War ended was perpetual military preparedness, enormous military expenditures, and budget deficits.[17] But in the short run, U.S. officials identified the PRC as a villain that the United States had to punish and weaken, if not defeat and subdue. Lieutenant General Matthew B. Ridgway provided the opportunity to achieve this goal first on the Korean battlefield. Restoring the fighting spirit of UNC forces following a costly and disorganized retreat, he staged offensives such as Operations Ripper and Killer that by March 1951 reestablished the front mostly above the 38th parallel.[18]

Meanwhile, the United States had moved vigorously to accomplish diplomatic isolation of Beijing. Washington had not recognized the PRC, a decision that the Korean War etched in stone for two decades. However, several other nations, most notably Britain, had established normal relations with the new Chinese government. The Soviet Union, for its part, had begun a boycott at the United Nations in January 1950 to protest the refusal to grant China's seat on the Security Council to the PRC in place of the ROC. Moscow's absence in June made it possible to

pass resolutions calling for defense of South Korea.[19] During early November 1950, the United Nations, in response to MacArthur's report of China's intervention, invited Beijing to participate in discussions about this allegation. Beijing sent Wu Xuiquan, who arrived at Lake Success on November 24, the same day MacArthur staged his offensive to the Yalu. His insistence that the United Nations seat the PRC as a member and act against U.S. aggression on Taiwan made clear the priority Beijing placed on acknowledging China's sovereignty as a condition for discussions. Unimpressed with Wu's analogy to China occupying Mexico or Hawaii, the United States was adamant in blocking consideration of either demand. Instead, it pressed for the passage of a UN resolution condemning the PRC for aggression in Korea. Disingenuously, Washington agreed to support a final compromise as a basis for discussions, knowing that the Chinese would reject it. Beijing obliged. On February 1, 1951, the United Nations approved a resolution branding China as an aggressor in the Korean War in a hypocritical act of intemperate spiteful revenge.[20]

For Washington, international condemnation of the PRC was just a first step in punishing the Beijing regime. The UN resolution also established the UN Additional Measures Committee (AMC) to "as a matter of urgency" consider further steps "to meet this aggression and to report thereon to the General Assembly." The AMC members were Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Britain, Canada, Egypt, France, Mexico, the Philippines, Turkey, the United States, and Venezuela. The United States already had frozen China's financial assets, imposed a total trade embargo, forbade U.S. ships from calling at PRC ports, and barred visas for Americans to travel to China. Now it urged international economic and political sanctions, recommending five measures against the PRC, among them non-recognition, its exclusion from all UN bodies, and an embargo on export to it of strategic goods. Even though Beijing rebuffed UN overtures for a negotiated settlement, Britain refused to approve political sanctions, but it did agree to serve on a subcommittee that drafted a proposal for economic sanctions. Then in April and May 1951, the Chinese launched two massive offensives to force the UNC out of Korea, but without success. In response, the AMC recommended on May 14 the adoption of a U.S. proposal for a selective embargo against China that the UN General Assembly approved. Less comprehensive than what the Truman administration preferred, it called upon UN members not to export to the PRC or North Korea "arms, ammunition and implements of war, atomic energy, materials, petroleum, transportation materials of strategic importance, and items useful in the production of arms, ammunition and implements of war."[21] This only

made China even more dependent on the Soviet Union.

The Long Road to a Truce

China's failed spring offensives of 1951 severely weakened its ground forces, as well as exposing its inadequacies in firepower, mobility, and logistics. At the same time, the UNC had displayed a significant military superiority in using airborne infantry, air support, and tanks that, Colin Jackson argues, "surprised the Chinese and led to panic in some units."[22] Beijing now decided, as the Truman administration already had in March, that it could not achieve complete victory and should pursue a negotiated settlement. When the UNC suggested the possibility of truce talks on June 30, China had reason to be suspicious, having recently become the target of moral condemnation and economic reprisals. Truman's firing of MacArthur in April, however, did provide some reassurance of a sincere U.S. desire for peace. As a result, Korean War truce talks began at Kaesong on July 10, 1951, but lasted for two years. Historians have devoted much attention to describing the acrimonious atmosphere that the Communists established at the first negotiating sessions after occupying the area around Kaesong, highlighting their obsession with scoring propaganda points as evidence of their bad faith. These actions included greeting with photographers the UNC delegation's arrival in vehicles displaying white flags, giving the UNC chief delegate a smaller chair than his counterpart, competing to see who displayed the biggest flag, and refusing to allow UNC newsmen at Kaesong.[23] Communist critics also allege that they haggled needlessly over the agenda. But in fact, the two sides formally adopted a bilateral draft of a five-item agenda after meeting on just ten days for a total of 22 hours of discussion.[24]

Setting aside the issue of prisoner of war (POW) repatriation, the negotiators might have achieved an armistice agreement in four months had the United States not chosen to advance a preposterous proposal to resolve agenda item two calling for establishing "a military demarcation line" and "demilitarized zone [DMZ] as a basic condition for a cessation of hostilities." On July 26, after adoption of the agenda, General Nam Il, the Communist chief delegate, asked the UNC to present its position, but Vice Admiral C. Turner Joy, his counterpart, refused to do so until the next day. Eager to reach quick agreement, the Communist side called for a line at the 38th parallel. But the following day, Joy proposed a demarcation line well north of the current fighting, requiring the enemy to agree to a hefty territorial retreat. Defining military activities as separated into zones of ground, air, and sea operations, he claimed that the Communists would forfeit only the first in an armistice, while the

UNC would sacrifice all three, requiring territorial compensation. Joy then haughtily avowed that this justified a demarcation line at the narrow neck of Korea, but proposed instead a 40-mile wide demilitarized zone (DMZ) with its northern border about 20 miles south of Wonsan in the east and roughly 75 miles south of the capital at Pyongyang in the west. Nam Il reacted with understandable anger at this affront, denouncing Joy's suggestion of "a line running through Pyongyang and Wonsan" as an act of intimidation, declaring that the UNC's specific "lines drawn at random were not worthy of attention [because] . . . the arguments you raised in support of these lines . . . were naïve and illogical."[25]

Joy's opening proposal had made it impossible for the Communists even to consider its honest proposal of the battlefront as a demarcation line because this would imply acceptance of military inferiority. Moreover, numerous U.S. officials had named the 38th parallel publicly as a suitable armistice line as recently as June during the U.S. Senate hearings into MacArthur's firing, rightly causing the Communists to see themselves as victims of a classic bait and switch. Accusing the UNC of arrogance, the Communist delegation adopted an inflexible stand insisting on the 38th parallel as the armistice line. On August 10, the UNC said it was willing to discuss a DMZ based on the existing line of ground contact, but Nam Il refused. There followed a "period of silence, lasting two hours and eleven minutes."[26] Beijing, however, still wanted an early truce agreement. Indeed, on August 20, Nam Il presented a qualification of his position on location of the DMZ, retreating from his demand for a demarcation line at the 38th parallel. Two days later, he pressed for an agreement in principle that "adjustments could be made to the line of contact by withdrawals and advances by both sides in such a way as to fix a military demarcation line."[27] Unfortunately, China had immediate misgivings over its decision to compromise, fearing that it had shown weakness. Beijing decided to halt the talks unilaterally at the meeting on 23 August, charging that an alleged UNC air attack near Kaesong based on fabricated evidence meant the conference site was not safe. The swift progress in the talks suddenly troubled the Chinese, who decided to reassess their strategy. Armistice negotiations would remain suspended for more than six weeks because Ridgway, now UNC commander, insisted on moving the conference site.[28]

Meanwhile, the UNC had intensified its ground and air attacks against the enemy, which almost certainly helped to persuade the Communists to return to the bargaining table.[29] On October 7, they suggested resuming the talks, as well as yielding to the UNC demand to move the meeting place to Panmunjom, a village about six miles east of Kaesong. After approving a more comprehensive security agreement,

the Communists on October 25 formally abandoned the 38th parallel, but proposed a demarcation line that required the UNC to surrender most of its holdings above that line. Naturally, the UNC delegation flatly rejected this proposal.[30] But the Truman administration wanted to avoid charges that it was slowing progress toward peace because it feared that this would imperil continued support among its allies at the United Nations and also for ratification of the recently negotiated Japanese Peace Treaty. On November 13, the UNC received instructions to settle the issue based on the line of contact, suggesting that it be effective for one month. On November 17, the UNC tabled this proposal, but the Communist delegation insisted that the line's location, once decided, not be subject to revision, even after the specified period ended. The UNC again sought compromise, proposing that in the absence of an armistice within thirty days that the line should be subject to revision based on subsequent combat.[31]

Reflecting a new spirit of compromise, the Communists accepted and the two sides promptly agreed on the location of a specific line. On November 27, resolution of agenda item two provided that this provisional demarcation line would be the final one if the belligerents signed the armistice in thirty days. Neither side reopened the issue after the grace period ended, resulting in the provisional line becoming the de facto demarcation line and the basis for the DMZ at the last stage of the fighting.[32] Meanwhile, the negotiators turned attention to resolving agenda item three, calling for "arrangements for the realization of a ceasefire and an armistice in Korea including composition, authority, and functions of a supervising organization." During December, productive bargaining led to agreement on the details for supervision of the cease-fire, but then deadlock occurred over the questions of airfield rehabilitation and the Communist desire for the Soviet Union to serve on the neutral supervisory commission. Early in 1952, discussions on agenda item five began and experienced immediate progress. On February 6, the Communists proposed a political conference after the armistice to discuss withdrawal of foreign forces from Korea, recommendations for peaceful settlement of the Korean question, and other problems relating to peace in Korea. The UNC delegation agreed to these provisions, with a few minor changes, after less than two weeks of discussion.[33]

Seven months after the Korean truce talks began negotiators might have signed a truce agreement had they not reached a stalemate regarding agenda item four, "arrangements relating to prisoners of war." This deadlock was the result of Truman's decision, for political reasons, to guarantee asylum for any Communist prisoner of war who did not

wish to return to the PRC or North Korea. When the UNC negotiators first introduced the concept of voluntary repatriation at the truce talks on January 2, 1952, the Communist delegation rejected it out of hand. But when the UNC speculated later that as many as 116,000 out of 132,000 Communist POWs and 38,500 civilian internees probably would elect to return home, allowing the impression that voluntary repatriation would not discredit Communist ideology, the Chinese agreed on April 2 to screening of POWs to separate potential repatriates from non-repatriates. After completing this process, the UNC delegation informed the Communist side that of 170,000 prisoners, only 70,000 wished to return home. This news infuriated the Communists, who must have thought that the UNC had swindled them with a bait and switch over the DMZ. Charging the UNC with deception, the Communist delegation assumed an inflexible position, demanding repatriation of all POWs as the Geneva Convention required. In a wild stab at settling all remaining disputes, the UNC delegation on April 28 submitted a package proposal. Dropping its demand for a ban on airfield rehabilitation, it called on the Communists to concede on Soviet participation on the supervisory team and voluntary repatriation—a trade of one for two. On May 2 the Communists accepted a swap on the first two provisions, but would not budge in demanding return of all POWs.[34]

Thereafter, only the impasse over the POW question prevented an armistice. Again, the UNC resorted to military escalation to place pressure on their opponents to compromise. With intensification of the war and no progress at Panmunjom, prisoner repatriation became an issue at the United Nations, with several states putting forth proposals. India's plan gained the most support, providing for a neutral commission to resolve the POW question. The United States preferred passing a resolution endorsing the proposal that the UNC delegation had presented to the Communists on October 8 as its final offer. Communist rejection had prompted the chief UNC delegate to adjourn the negotiations permanently. This deflating turn of events motivated the UN General Assembly to pass a resolution on December 3 advocating implementation of the Indian formula to end the impasse over POW repatriation. Washington wanted to force the PRC to back down, but approved this measure to avoid alienating its allies.[35] This was because the Truman administration, Charles Young perceptively writes, had embraced voluntary repatriation as a substitute for victory in compelling the Communists to submit to a U.S. grant of asylum for its soldiers. Knowing the American people would not accept this reason, U.S. officials blamed the lack of an armistice instead on the "wicked ways the Communists prevented peace" through "a bewildering snarl of petty

bickering, inscrutable 'Oriental' stubbornness, and senseless desire to keep killing."[36] Only Truman's decision to pursue forcible reunification was more important than insistence on voluntary repatriation in guaranteeing two decades of Sino-American enmity.

Explaining the War's End and Sino-American Enmity

How the Korean War ended remains contested terrain. Historians acknowledge that Dwight D. Eisenhower assumed the presidency in January 1953 thinking seriously about using expanded conventional bombing and the threat of nuclear attack to force concessions from the Communist side. The truce agreement came on July 27, after an accelerated bombing campaign in North Korea and bellicose rhetoric about expanding the war. Most scholars, however, reject Eisenhower's claim that Beijing was reacting to his threat of an expanded war employing atomic weapons because no documentary evidence has surfaced to support his assertion. Instead, it was Stalin's death on March 5 that was decisive because it brought to power leaders who wanted to end the war. Soviet documents reveal that Stalin had opposed an early armistice, using pledges of economic aid for recovery to compel the Chinese to continue fighting. Ironically, his death created a sense of political vulnerability that helped persuade Beijing to have Zhou Enlai signal a willingness to retreat on repatriation late in March before Secretary of State John Foster Dulles conveyed his vague atomic threat to India's prime minister for delivery to Beijing. Furthermore, the indirect nuclear saber rattling of May 1953 was not much different from the implied threats that the Truman administration made in the fall of 1951, when B-29 bombers carried out atomic bombing test runs over North Korea.[37] Finally, Mao's famous statement that the atomic bomb was a "paper tiger" makes U.S. success in intimidating the Chinese all the more unlikely.[38]

By January 1953, both sides in fact wanted an armistice. Washington and Beijing had grown tired of the economic burdens, military losses, political and military constraints, worries about an expanded war, and pressure from allies and the world community to end the stalemated war. Food shortages in North Korea coupled with an understanding that forcible reunification was no longer possible had motivated Pyongyang to favor an armistice even earlier. Moscow's new leaders had been concerned even before Stalin died about economic problems in Eastern Europe. A more conciliatory approach in the Cold War, they believed, not only would reduce the risk of general war, but also might create tensions in the Western alliance if the United States acted provocatively in Korea. Weeks before Eisenhower's threats of

using atomic weapons and the bombing of North Korea's dams and irrigation system in May, Chinese negotiators signaled a change in policy when they accepted the UNC's proposal for an exchange of sick and wounded POWs and then recommended turning non-repatriates over to a neutral state. Also, in late May and early June 1953, Chinese forces launched powerful attacks against positions that South Korean units were defending along the front line and pushed U.S. forces off Pork Chop Hill in July.[39] Far from being intimidated, Beijing thus showed its continuing resolve, persuading the United States to compromise on the final terms of the armistice. But there was no peace treaty in Korea, a warning sign that the wider battle between Washington and Beijing had just begun.

Chinese and Americans stopped trying to kill each other in Korea in the summer of 1953, but the war had built unremitting hostility into the Sino-American confrontation, which would fuel its continuation until the early 1970s. This clash might have subsided more quickly had the United States not assumed a posture of irrevocable refusal to accept the legitimacy of Beijing's postwar foreign policy objectives and its right to pursue them in the global arena. Instead, as Michael Yahuda writes, the United States became "the major obstacle to the attainment of [PRC] long-term foreign policy goals."[40] Beijing's actions during the five years after the Korean truce reflected pursuit of five primary aims. First, the PRC acted to defend its national security, as do all nation states. Second, China's leaders were determined to reestablish China's position as the preeminent nation in East Asia. Third, Beijing sought reunification of China through acquisition of Taiwan. Fourth, Mao and his associates wanted to elevate the international status of China as a recognized and respected world power. Finally, China's new leaders were determined to force the United States to treat it as a sovereign and equal nation. A major legacy of the Korean War was that it motivated the United States in the 1950s to oppose every effort of the PRC to achieve these objectives.[41] Accordingly, Beijing would spurn U.S. hints in the 1960s about normalizing relations. As late as 1971, China expert A. Doak Barnett even speculated that if "Washington were simply to announce that it had decided to recognize the [PRC] in a de jure sense, . . . the Chinese Communists would almost certainly either ignore or reject the American actions."[42]

In 1953, Beijing accepted voluntary repatriation to end the Korean War as part of a new effort aimed at building "a peaceful united front." Seeking to avoid conflict, this policy relied on diplomacy to promote regional peace conducive to successful implementation of the PRC's first Five-Year Plan for internal economic development.[43] The Truman administration, however, saw only malevolent intent, as it continued to

create an alliance system to contain the perceived threat of Chinese expansion in East Asia. Significantly, the Korean War ended division in Washington regarding Japan's future, as the Pentagon agreed to early restoration of sovereignty and the State Department reciprocated with agreement to future Japanese rearmament. In September 1951, the Japanese Peace Treaty provided for independence the following May, but only after Tokyo had promised neither to recognize nor trade with the PRC. Simultaneously, Japan signed separately a bilateral security pact with the United States allowing U.S. troops to remain in Japan indefinitely. To assuage fears of a revived Japan, Washington achieved its parallel objective of containing the PRC when it negotiated security agreements with several nations in East Asia. In August 1951, it signed a mutual defense pact with the Philippines pledging mutual protection from aggression. The next month, the United States signed a similar agreement with Australia and New Zealand known as the ANZUS Treaty. In August 1953, Dulles negotiated the U.S.-South Korea Mutual Security Treaty. Beijing could anticipate that a defense pact with Jiang's regime was next after Eisenhower, in his State of the Union address the previous February, removed the Seventh Fleet from the Taiwan Strait, stating that the United States no longer would shield the mainland.[44]

Washington understood that the Korean War had established the power and prestige of the PRC in world affairs, weakening its strategic position in Asia and widening divisions with its allies. Along with negotiating new defense pacts, U.S. leaders intensified the economic warfare begun during the war. In September 1952, ten months before the armistice, the United States joined with Britain, France, Canada, and Japan in forming the China Committee (CHINCOM), a working group to maintain strict export controls against the PRC and other Communist states in Asia. The CHINCOM's creation was the result of differences between Washington on one side and London, Paris, and Ottawa on the other concerning an appropriate export control committee for Asia. The United States sought to establish a separate Far Eastern Group in Asia to impose stiffer export controls on the PRC and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) than what the Coordinating Committee on East-West Trade Policy (COCOM) then was maintaining towards the European Soviet bloc. But Britain, France, and Canada opposed the U.S. proposal because none saw any benefit in losing Asian trade. The compromise was creation of a separate Far Eastern Committee within the COCOM structure, which allowed U.S. officials to enforce more restrictive trade lists on exports to Asian Communist countries than the European Soviet bloc. Additionally, the United States pressured Japan into signing a bilateral agreement that required it to embargo 400 more

goods against the PRC than other CHINCOM members.[45]

For Beijing, persistence of the U.S. policy of military and economic containment of the PRC after the Korean armistice not only threatened its national security, but also its aspirations to reestablish China's place as the foremost nation in East Asia. World War II had shattered old forms of political and economic organization throughout the region. Mao and his associates had a powerful sense of mission to assert leadership in guiding the course of change in neighboring states.[46] John K. Fairbank emphasized long ago that, whether consciously or not, China's leaders were heirs of an imperial past. Mao, in particular, was sensitive to the historic place China held as the "middle kingdom" in East Asia providing a political and cultural model for its neighbors.[47] Benjamin Schwartz has cautioned against exaggerating the impact of China's imperial legacy in the making of early PRC foreign policy. Certainly another major motive force was Communist ideology.[48] The PRC was committed to promoting Marxism-Leninism as a blueprint for national development and encouraging emulation of the Chinese revolution. But this reinforced Beijing's greater desire to recreate a political and economic sphere of influence in areas adjacent to China. Of course, the PRC's determination to purge the U.S. presence in the region had deep historical roots. As Fairbank writes, understanding Beijing's actions requires first remembering that "the West had invaded China, not China the West." Beijing would not tolerate a resumption of the "gunboat diplomacy" that had inflicted humiliation and suffering on the Chinese people.[49]

Sino-U.S. Competition in East Asia

China had sustained enormous damage in World War II and its civil war, but its strength still was very substantial relative to the power of neighboring Asian countries. Taking advantage of its central geographic location, large economy, and military prowess, Beijing acted quickly to reestablish regional hegemony. Pyongyang's failed invasion, Shen Zhihua points out, gave the PRC the chance to become "the main force" in Korea after intervention. Moreover, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) occupied Tibet during the Korean War.[50] Earlier in 1950, Beijing had recognized Ho Chi Minh's Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV), declaring its intention to help its new Communist ally end French colonialism. China had even more incentive to provide assistance after U.S. intervention in the Korean War. During July, a Chinese Military Advisory Group (CMAG) began providing aid to Viet Minh headquarters and opened an officer candidate school in southern China. The PRC's support for the Viet Minh grew steadily, not least because the

Truman administration was supplying France with economic and military aid to maintain its control over Indochina. By 1954, Washington was financing eighty percent of the French war effort. China strived to match this support, sending large amounts of U.S.-made heavy mortars, machine guns, recoilless rifles, and howitzers captured from defeated Guomindang forces. PLA troops provided logistical support and ran a special artillery school for Viet Minh soldiers. In addition to other training camps, the PRC maintained three hospitals in China to treat wounded Viet Minh fighters. "Chinese advisors," John Garver reports, "played a key role in formulating Viet Minh strategy and in directing Viet Minh forces in the execution of that strategy."[51]

Chinese assistance allowed Ho's forces to assume the offensive and, as is well known, lay siege to the French garrison at Dien Bien Phu early in 1954. In February, the Allied foreign ministers, during their meeting in Berlin, decided to hold a conference in Geneva to seek both a resolution of the Indochina crisis and a settlement in Korea. The Korean armistice had called for a political conference to convene three months after the agreement became effective to achieve withdrawal of all foreign troops and Korea's reunification. There was a meeting at Panmunjom in October 1953, but it adjourned after much bickering and total disagreement in December.[52] A final attempt to resolve the Korean dispute came at the Geneva Conference, which convened on April 26, 1954. All members of the United Nations that sent troops to fight in the Korean War, except South Africa, participated in discussions on Korea, plus the ROK, the DPRK, the PRC, and the Soviet Union. Washington endorsed a South Korean proposal assigning authority to the United Nations to supervise elections to establish a united, independent, and democratic Korea, with the UN forces remaining in Korea until it had accomplished this mission. The Communists understandably dismissed as absurd the notion of UN neutrality. The Soviet Union presented a counterproposal requiring as a prerequisite for any settlement first the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Korean peninsula. Discussions ended in deadlock. On June 15, the sixteen nations contributing forces to the UNC issued a declaration clearly targeted at the PRC, warning that collective action would punish directly any nation that resumed aggression in Korea.[53]

Geneva opened a new phase in the Sino-American confrontation, shifting the contest to the diplomatic stage. Beijing was acutely aware that this was its first opportunity to establish itself as a major actor in regional, as well as world politics. But the Eisenhower administration was determined to prevent this outcome. Throughout the conference, the United States made every effort to maintain its hostile posture against the

PRC, denigrating Beijing's position or refusing to recognize its status. Most famously, Chinese Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai, upon a chance encounter, extended his hand to U.S. Secretary of State Dulles, who, instead of shaking it, turned and walked away in an astonishing display of disrespect.[54] But these American actions proved futile because it was clear to all the conference participants that the PRC was an essential major player in addressing the issues.[55] This was especially true when, on May 7, talks began on Indochina, the day that French forces surrendered at Dien Bien Phu. This defeat came after the United States chose not to intervene after failing to gain support from its allies and its people for air strikes to save the garrison. Progress toward a settlement followed because France wanted to withdraw. In July, Moscow and Beijing persuaded Ho Chi Minh to accept the Geneva Accords that Britain played a central role in negotiating, which provided for separate governments in Laos and Cambodia and temporary division of Vietnam until elections for reunification in 1956. Not only did the United States not participate in the discussions or sign the agreement, it acted quickly to divide Vietnam permanently. As another barrier to contain Chinese expansion, it organized the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization at Manila in September 1954.[56]

Beijing had joined with Moscow in persuading a reluctant Ho Chi Minh to accept the compromise of temporary division at Geneva to deter U.S. military intervention. But it also had played a major role in exposing the United States as a "paper tiger" in allowing the Viet Minh to defeat the French. Chinese leaders already were trumpeting their military success in the Korean War, rightfully taking credit for defending North Korea against American imperialism. Mao and his associates, to be sure, used such anti-colonial nationalist appeals to unify the populace behind China's new Communist government. Indeed, after the Korean War began, they had initiated the "Resist America Aid Korea" campaign to energize popular support behind mass mobilization for possible war. Chinese leaders encouraged anti-Americanism as well because uniting the people against a common enemy was a useful tool to build internal political control.[57] Intense fear and hatred of the United States, however, did not become a powerful weapon for Beijing in domestic politics until the Korean War and neutralization of Taiwan. The PRC condemned the U.S. policy reversal, denouncing defense of Jiang's illegal regime as blatant interference in China's internal affairs.[58] U.S. protection of the rival Guomindang government on Taiwan, a mere one hundred miles from the southeast mainland, constituted not only a political challenge, but also a military threat because of Jiang's determination to regain power. Guomindang retention of the offshore islands of Jinmen and

Mazu, just a few miles off the coast, was even more disturbing, since they were indisputably Chinese territory and provided a base for military operations.[59]

China's entry into the Korean War, Robert Accinelli writes, motivated the United States to adopt a "fixed defensive commitment" to Jiang's regime on Taiwan. Thereafter, increasing U.S. military support for the ROC provided Beijing with abundant evidence to justify its charges that Washington was determined to overthrow China's new government. By January 1951, the Truman administration had delivered to Taiwan $29 million in military assistance when the Defense Department advocated approval of a U.S. military survey group's recommendation to allocate $71.2 million more for fiscal 1951. Thereafter, the State Department negotiated with Jiang's government a Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement that gave legal foundation for the use of U.S. military aid for Taiwan's internal security and self-defense. Joint support from State and Defense in March 1951 resulted in the creation of a Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) on Taiwan, with responsibilities that included receipt and distribution military aid and advising the Guomindang on military training and organization. By 1952, MAAG personnel had risen to 770 Americans, who worked with the ROC to reorganize its armed forces to twenty-one army divisions from thirty-one divisions, as well as modernizing its small air force and navy.[60] Truman's policy, however, concentrated on creating just enough military strength on Taiwan to deter a Chinese Communist attack, thereby preventing a conflict that he did not want to expand beyond Korea. By contrast, Eisenhower agreed with Dulles that the PRC was an aberration, but he was vague about whether the United States should encourage Jiang's return to the mainland.[61]

Eisenhower's "unleashing" of Jiang Jieshi early in February 1953 signaled a change in the U.S. policy of provocation toward the PRC regarding Taiwan not just in words but in deeds as well. On February 5, the MAAG's Chief General William Chase suggested to the ROC that it draft a plan to blockade the mainland and increase the frequency of raids against the PRC. But the Eisenhower administration asked the ROC not to utilize aircraft in these forays and to consult with Washington beforehand about military operations exceeding five hundred men. After the PRC sent troops to Korea in October 1950, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) started to train Jiang's forces on how to conduct guerrilla-style commando raids against the PRC from the ROC-held offshore islands and northern Burma. By the end of 1950, the Guomindang claimed it had staged 1.5 million anti-Communist guerrilla attacks on the mainland. After two more years, Nationalist hit-and-run

raids had immobilized at least 200,000 PLA forces in Southeast China, and killed or wounded 41,727 Communist troops. Jiang anticipated an expansion of U.S. support for Guomindang military harassment of the PRC when Eisenhower became president in January 1953, pressing Washington to provide F-84 jet fighters. Like his predecessor, the new president, however, did not want the ROC to provoke a war and approved the request only after Jiang, on April 23, pledged not to "alter patterns and tempo of operations" against the mainland.[62]

Beijing, unaware of Eisenhower's private caution, paid attention to his public bravado and prepared for the worst on the eve of the Korean armistice. ROC military attacks against the mainland during the war elevated seizing the occupied offshore islands to a high priority, setting the stage for the first Taiwan Strait crisis. "On July 16," Cheng-yi Lin reports, "the Guomindang launched a large-scale amphibious attack against Tungsban Island in Fukien Province, and later made an air strike to cover withdrawal from the island." Washington protested to the ROC that it had staged the air raid without securing prior U.S. clearance as required, receiving in response a promise against repetition. Shortly thereafter, however, the Eisenhower administration extended its military aid and training program to the offshore islands, including Jinmen and Mazu, as well as transferring two more destroyers to the ROC. For Beijing, the United States was determined that the Guomindang would hold the offshore islands as a springboard for an attack on the PRC. Indeed, Jiang insisted on holding Jinmen and Mazu as at least symbols of his hope to return and regain power on the mainland. Eisenhower and Dulles, however, thought the islands were more trouble than they were worth and preferred evacuation, but never conveyed this belief explicitly to Beijing. The president also was reluctant to sign a mutual defense pact, refusing to submit to Guomindang pressure in 1953 that intensified after the Geneva Conference and culminated in the submission in December of a draft treaty. Washington thus continued a policy dating from the start of the Korean War to limit its commitment of support of the ROC government.[63]

In September 1954, Beijing massed roughly 2.5 million soldiers in Fujian Province and then commenced shelling offshore islands and air strikes against the Dachen islands.[64] Beijing started to bombard Jinmen in September 1954. Predictably, Eisenhower and his advisors saw this as the opening gun of a military campaign aimed at seizing Taiwan. Instead, Beijing's intent was to warn the United States not to sign a defense treaty with the ROC and persuade it to cease its hostile policies toward the PRC. Exaggerating the threat, the president adopted a strategy of ambiguity, making neither a public commitment to support or

oppose the ROC's defense of the offshore islands. Eisenhower sought to avoid direct U.S. involvement not least because the JCS advised that holding them against a full-scale PRC assault would require using nuclear weapons. To show U.S. resolve, he approved the U.S.-China Mutual Defense Treaty of 1954 and Dulles persuaded Britain and New Zealand to submit the issue to the United Nations. When Beijing captured a small island two hundred miles north of Taiwan early in 1955, Dulles prevailed on Jiang to evacuate the nearby Dachen islands in return for a pledge of U.S. protection for Jinmen and Mazu. Eisenhower also rejected Jiang's request for U.S. consent to stage attacks on PRC air bases. Public provocation, however, continued, as administration statements hinted at the use of tactical nuclear weapons if war broke out. Then, in April, JCS Chair Admiral Arthur W. Radford traveled to Taiwan to inform Jiang that Eisenhower had revoked his promise to defend Jinmen and Mazu. In response to an offer of U.S. support for a blockade of sea lanes along the China coast, Jiang angrily declared that he would defend the islands with or without U.S. support.[65]

Meanwhile, on January 31, 1955, the UN Security Council had placed the Taiwan issue on its agenda and invited the PRC to participate in discussions. That Beijing rejected the offer was hardly surprising given that two days earlier, the U.S. Congress had approved the Formosa Resolution, authorizing U.S. military action to protect Taiwan and such related territories as the president deemed necessary. Eisenhower refused to issue a public commitment of U.S. support for defense of Jinmen and Mazu and gave Jiang only a secret pledge of U.S. assistance in case of an attack "at this time."[66] But from Beijing's viewpoint, the United States was committed firmly to Jiang's retention of the offshore islands as physical evidence of the ROC's claim to be the legitimate government of China. Reinforcing this judgment was the Eisenhower administration's adamant opposition to admission of the PRC to the United Nations. In June 1951, Acheson had presented one reason for exclusion, declaring that "a claimant for seating cannot shoot his way into the UN and cannot get in by defying the UN and fighting its forces."[67] Assistant Secretary Rusk, however, captured the visceral hostility that perpetuated this policy earlier in May when he stated that the Beijing "regime may be a colonial Russian government—a Slavic Manchukuo on a larger scale. It is not the Government of China," he maintained. "It is not entitled to speak for China in the community of nations."[68] Thereafter, annual Congressional resolutions threatened to end U.S. participation in the United Nations if it voted to oust the Guomindang government.

China's Revolutionary Diplomacy

In November 1951, the UN General Assembly approved Thailand's resolution not to consider any changes in Chinese representation. The United States annually gained passage of a similar moratorium measure until 1960.[69] Despite U.S. efforts at diplomatic isolation, however, the Korean War had made it plain to the majority of Asian and African leaders in particular that Mao's government now was firmly in power and Jiang's regime never would change that reality. Beijing saw this de facto recognition as the first step toward the PRC achieving its fourth major objective of establishing a position of leadership in the international community outside of the United Nations. Two wars, however, had weakened China's economy, limiting its ability to act as a benefactor. Instead, Beijing worked to enhance its image as a champion of anti-imperialism, identifying itself as a strong proponent of former victims of colonial rule in efforts to assert their independence.[70] Grounding its claim to world leadership in becoming the foremost supporter in helping liberate people worldwide from the American imperialists had great appeal to Mao and his associates for both ideological and security reasons. By assisting nations to free themselves from imperialist domination, Beijing could win new allies who would support its aims in world politics, as well as divert U.S. military, economic, and diplomatic resources away from policies directed at weakening the PRC. Another factor was pressure from Moscow to replicate its new "peaceful coexistence" strategy. After Beijing ended shelling of the offshore islands in February 1955, the Soviets offered to provide it with assistance to develop peaceful nuclear power and a large commercial credit in return for a promise to postpone active attempts to seize Taiwan.[71]

Beijing's strategy to elevate China's reputation as a leader in the anti-imperialist struggle had its roots in Maoist ideology. Shortly after World War II ended, Mao explained to American journalist Anna Louise Strong that before the United States could attack the Soviet Union and ignite another world war, it first would have to subjugate the nations of Europe, Asia, and Africa, an area he called the "vast intermediate zone" between the imperialist and the socialist countries. To prevent a U.S. imperialist attack on the socialist Soviet Union, he reasoned, was to intensify the struggle especially among former victims of colonialism against the United States in this intermediate zone. After triumphing in China's civil war, Mao also concluded that ensuring the success of revolutionary movements in the developing countries would enhance the security of the revolutionary state he had founded in China.[72] The PRC had the first opportunity to become the leader of the intermediate zone in

April 1955 when it attended the Bandung Conference in Indonesia. One year earlier, at the conclusion of the gathering of the heads of the governments of Burma, Ceylon, Indonesia, India, and Pakistan at Colombo, Ceylon, participants had issued a joint statement that proposed a wider international meeting of post-colonial states to deal with common problems. African and Asian leaders agreed that the issues would include colonialism, racism, international economic and social cooperation, human rights, and world peace.[73]

Under the sponsorship of the Colombo powers, representatives from twenty-nine Asian and African countries attended the Bandung Conference from April 18 to 24. Although there were notable exclusions from the conference, including the ROC and the two Koreas, the nations present did represent a quarter of the world's land area and two-thirds of its population. Elected as president of the body was Prime Minister Ali Sastroamidjojo of Indonesia, who was the prime mover behind organization of the meeting. The nations in attendance included neutrals, as well as bloc members, representing all political ideologies. The delegates engaged in remarkably free and frank exchanges, as three committees brokered compromises that led to reaching agreement on several key issues. First, there would be steps for national development, including promotion of intra-regional trade, export diversification, and the undertaking of collective action to stabilize demand for primary basic commodities. Second, participants would sponsor cultural exchanges of information and artists to acquire knowledge of each other's countries. Third, worldwide self-determination received overwhelming support. Pledging to eradicate racism, the delegates also declared that colonialism in all its manifestations was "an evil which should speedily be brought to an end." Finally, the conferees urged liberation of French North Africa, states in Arabia under British protection, and West Irian, a territory Indonesia claimed, but still under Dutch rule.[74]

Bandung initiated a new spirit of cooperation among non-Western nations and provided encouragement for the non-aligned movement in a bipolar world. The conferees also passed the Bandung Declaration of Peace, calling for the destruction of all nuclear arsenals and universal disarmament. They recommended greater Afro-Asian representation in the United Nations and on its Security Council. Attempting to mitigate, rather than inflame Cold War tensions, the final communiqué did not endorse a UN seat for the PRC. But Beijing fully exploited its participation to project cooperation and cordiality, discrediting U.S. characterizations of Communist China as evil and predatory. Zhou Enlai represented the PRC and was a model of collaboration, winning respect, admiration, and gratitude from all the other delegates. His efforts were

instrumental in formulation, advocacy, and approval of the "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence," calling for respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, non-aggression, non-interference of nations in the internal affairs of others, equality of economic treatment, and peaceful coexistence.[75] Zhou's virtuoso performance was instrumental in the rapid rise of Beijing's prestige and influence in the developing world, as the PRC's display of moderation and conciliation contrasted sharply with a U.S.-promoted image of Communist China as militant and subversive. Beijing became an active proponent of the "Spirit of Bandung" that encouraged an extension of the non-aligned areas of peace around the world to balance the major powers.[76] The PRC's diplomatic strategy sought to isolate the "paper tiger" and to create a bloc of neutral nations under its leadership.

Beijing remained on the diplomatic offensive against the United States after Bandung. On April 23, 1955, even before the conference ended, Zhou publicly proposed "to sit down and enter into negotiations with the U.S. government to discuss . . . the question of relaxing tension in the Taiwan area."[77] Beijing's purpose was to compel the United States to deal directly with the PRC as equal, thereby indirectly recognizing its national dignity and world power status. On October 1, 1949, Mao had declared on the establishment of the PRC that "we have stood up" and promised that China would "never again be an insulted nation."[78] Beijing's fifth foreign policy objective after the Korean War was to force the "paper tiger" to negotiate with the PRC, while at the same time pursuing the contradictory and unproductive policy of formal diplomatic isolation.

On July 25, 1955, Washington and Beijing announced that ambassadorial-level talks would occur to help resolve the repatriation of civilians and "to facilitate further discussions and settlement of certain other practical matters now at issue between both sides." On August 1, the first of 138 meetings convened in Geneva—moved to Warsaw in 1958—that for fifteen years was the only regular channel of direct communication between the United States and the PRC. The first issue for discussion was mutual repatriation of detained citizens, an issue that representatives from the two sides had discussed at the Geneva Conference. Contrary to past diplomatic dealings, these Sino-American negotiations in each instance proceeded on a basis of equality and reciprocity. While ritualized exchange of rhetoric was the norm, they would provide an efficient means for communication of national interests and limitation of the areas of mutual conflict.[79]

Fears of a Sino-American war after the Taiwan Strait crisis caused several governments to offer mediation, but Dulles chose direct

negotiations, apparently because he did not trust third parties to protect U.S. interests. On September 10, talks at Geneva resulted in U.S. Ambassador to Czechoslovakia U. Alexis Johnson and PRC Ambassador to Poland Wang Bingnan issuing an "agreed announcement" declaring that civilians of both countries who wished to return to their respective nations could do so and repatriation would occur "expeditiously." This would be the only agreement that the negotiations would produce, although it did not resolve the issue swiftly. Washington had lifted the last restrictions on the departure of Chinese nationals before the talks began, but Beijing argued that Americans in Chinese prisons were there lawfully for espionage or other crimes. Nevertheless, the PRC began to release the incarcerated slowly until only two CIA agents remained. During October 1955, discussions shifted to a U.S. proposal for a mutual renunciation of force in the Taiwan area, but the two sides remained far apart. Wang demanded "mutual respect for territorial integrity"—indicative of the PRC's claim to Taiwan—and Johnson insisted on the right of "individual and collective self-defense"—an assertion of the legal validity of the ROC and the U.S. defense treaty with it. While Washington was inflexible in perpetuating China's division, Beijing was just as adamant that Taiwan was an inalienable part of China. For the PRC, U.S. defense of Taiwan prevented real peace in the area. "Any plot to slice off Chinese territory and create 'two Chinas' will not be tolerated," Yu Chao-li stated defiantly in 1959.[80]

Other issues were similarly stalemated. American insincerity ensured this result, given that Dulles agreed to the ambassadorial talks only to pacify U.S. allies and discourage the PRC from resuming attacks on Jinmen and Mazu. Wang proposed the exchanges of newsmen, the opening of trade, and the exchange of diplomatic missions, but Johnson predictably rejected the offer because Washington judged acceptance as tantamount to de jure recognition. Beijing's invitation in 1956 for the visit of fifteen newsmen to China met rejection from the United States through the denial of passports. In August 1957, Washington bowed to pressure and validated a limited number of visas for travel to China, but agreed only to "individual" entry of the Chinese newsmen after great scrutiny. Beijing condemned the proposal as the equivalent of an "unequal treaty" and vetoed the proposed exchange of correspondents.[81] When Johnson left his post in Prague at the end of 1957, Dulles proposed downgrading the Geneva talks, but Beijing objected. Washington's refusal to name a replacement resulted in a lapse of meetings for several months, causing Chinese leaders to feel deeply insulted. Beijing angrily explained that "what the United States was aiming at . . . was by no means a peaceful settlement of the international dispute between China

and the United States on the basis of equality and mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty. . . . This cannot but rouse the indignation of the Chinese people."[82] Collapse of the Geneva talks culminated a series of events that persuaded the PRC by early 1958 that the United States never would accept its legitimacy or bargain with it as an equal.

Dealing with a Not-so-Paper Tiger

Beijing abandoned its reliance on what Xia labels "tension" diplomacy to diminish the threat from the "paper tiger" almost five years after the end of the Korean War, shifting instead to an emphasis on developing the economic and military strength necessary to meet and defeat any American challenge. As is well known, Mao now began to assert his preference for a more militant, revolutionary approach in domestic and foreign policy. To be sure, U.S. behavior was not the primary factor in motivating this shift, but it was not irrelevant. Washington's decision to support South Vietnam in not holding elections in July 1956 justified the PRC's support for Ho Chi Minh in implementing a more aggressive strategy in Indochina. Nikita Khrushchev's speech denouncing Stalin had created doubts for Mao about whether the Soviet Union remained devoted to Marxism-Leninism. In September 1957, the Soviet launching of Sputnik convinced Mao that the socialist camp now held the advantage and should exploit its superior power to challenge and defeat U.S. imperialism.[83] But Khrushchev opposed direct confrontation and preferred peaceful competition with the United States. He wanted to reduce Cold War tensions because he feared that an aggressive approach might ignite a nuclear war. Beijing and Moscow would split on this and other important issues. Chinese leaders did not want war because they respected U.S. power. Certain that the United States was internally weak and destined to collapse, Beijing nevertheless understood that "tactically, they are real tigers which can devour human beings."[84]

Warren I. Cohen has written that the postwar confrontation between Washington and Beijing constituted the "great aberration" in U.S. China policy. Traditionally, the United States had supported the "existence of a strong, independent China," but in early 1950 it "forgot the sound geopolitical, economic, and ethical basis of their historic desire for China's well being" and embarked on "an unprecedented campaign of opposition to the development of a strong, modern China."[85] In fact, this did not occur until the Korean War, replacing a united China with one permanently divided and substituting economic sanctions for an open door. Thereafter, the United States exerted immense effort to ensure that

the PRC would not become the "policeman" of Asia, but in doing so after the Korean armistice Washington actually moved Beijing closer to achieving most of its five major foreign policy objectives.[86] By 1956, China reached a plateau of early success, boasting a strong government that was fostering economic growth. Beijing's main tool for exerting influence in world politics was application of political and diplomatic pressure, notwithstanding Mao's oft-quoted statement that "power flows out of the barrel of a gun."[87] But Chinese leaders soon concluded that diplomacy no longer would be effective in ending persistent U.S. efforts to weaken and destroy the PRC. American leaders were not prepared to deal with a revolutionary China, but it was the Korean War that instilled in them exaggerated fears leading to adoption of unrealistic and threatening policies. Eventually, Beijing responded in kind.

Notes:

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