

BEHIND THE STORM:  
THE EVOLUTION OF U.S. DEFENSE POLICY TOWARD KOREA, 1953-1957

by

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(Under the Direction of William Stueck)

ABSTRACT

Between 1953 and 1957, the United States cultivated a major military partnership with the Republic of Korea (ROK) as part of Cold War strategy in Asia and the Pacific. Before the Korean War (1950-53), the United States did not have a defense burden in the ROK. Intervention of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in Korea in late 1950, however, led to the evolution of U.S. strategy in the Far East and the reshaping of U.S.-ROK relations. The Eisenhower administration (1953-61) responded to Communist China's military threats to noncommunist Asia by implementing the "New Look," with its emphasis on massive retaliation. By combining U.S. nuclear weapons and indigenous Asian forces, and expanding regional security arrangements, the Eisenhower administration sought to prevent further Communist expansion in East Asia without exhausting the U.S. economy. Not only did the U.S.-ROK alliance buttress ROK security under the Korean armistice, it also emerged as a main component of the U.S. defense system against the Communists in East Asia. Meanwhile, U.S. allies in Europe remained largely noncommittal toward ongoing Sino-American hostilities after the Korean War. For both economic and security concerns, Japan's contributions to the defense of noncommunist Asia also fell short of U.S. expectations. Faced with growing Soviet military threats to the free world after

the mid-1950s, the Eisenhower administration was determined to prevent military tension in Korea from escalating into general war between the United States and the Soviet Union. Therefore, the United States attempted to separate Japan from ongoing military conflicts in mainland Asia, and this led to increased reliance on the American partnership with the ROK to cope with North Korea and the PRC. By the end of 1957, the United States had dissolved the Far East Command (FEC), moved the United Nations Command (UNC) from Tokyo to Seoul, and decided to send tactical nuclear weapons to Korea. With the deployment of U.S. nuclear weapons in Korea, the U.S.-ROK alliance, prompted in 1953 by the ROK's urgent security problem, had evolved into a strategic partnership of mutual interests in a joint, long-term struggle against the Communist bloc in Asia and the Pacific.

INDEX WORDS:      The United States, The Cold War, The Korean War, Nuclear Weapons, Republic of Korea, Asia, The Pacific, The Far East

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AEC.....	Atomic Energy Commission
ANZUS.....	Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty
ATFA.....	Atomic Test Field Army
CAFIC.....	Communist Air Force in China
CCF.....	Chinese Communist Forces
CFEP.....	Council on Foreign Economic Policy
CG.....	Consultative Group
CGSC.....	Command and General Staff College
CHINCOM.....	China Committee
CINCFE.....	Commander-in-chief, Far East
CINCPAC.....	Commander in Chief Pacific
CINCUNC.....	Commander in Chief, United Nations Command
COCOM.....	Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls
COMSAC.....	Commander, Strategic Air Command
DDEL.....	Dwight D. Eisenhower Library
DMZ/DZ.....	Demilitarized Zone
DSB.....	Department of State Bulletin
FEAF.....	Far East Air Force
FEC/FECOM.....	Far East Command
FRUS.....	Foreign Relations of the United States
GHQ.....	General Headquarters
IAEA.....	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICA.....	International Cooperation Administration
ICBM.....	Intercontinental Ballistic Missile
IRBM.....	Intermediate-Range Ballistic Missile
ISA.....	International Security Affairs
JCS.....	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JIC.....	Joint Intelligence Committee
JLPC.....	Joint Logistics Plans Committee
JSDF.....	Japanese Self-Defense Forces
JSP.....	Japanese Socialist Party
JSPC.....	Joint Strategic Plans Committee
LDP.....	Liberal Democratic Party
MAC.....	Military Armistice Commission
MDL.....	Military Demarcation Line
MSA.....	Mutual Security Act
MSF.....	Maritime Safety Force
NA.....	National Archive

NNIT.....	Neutral Nations Inspection Team
NNSC.....	Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission
NPR.....	National Police Reserve
NSC.....	National Security Council
OCB.....	Operational Coordinating Board
OSANSA.....	Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs
RCT.....	Regimental Combat Team
RG .....	Record Group
SAC.....	Strategic Air Command
SACEUR .....	Supreme Allied Commander Europe
SAM.....	Surface-to-Air Missile
SEATO.....	Southeast Asia Treaty Organization
SSM .....	Surface-to-Surface Missile
TAC.....	Tactical Air Command
TCP.....	Technological Capabilities Panel
UNC.....	United Nations Command
WEU.....	Western European Union

## **Introduction**

More than six decades have passed since hostilities in Korea ended with the signing of the Korean armistice on July 27, 1953. Although Koreans have not engaged in large-scale war since then, they have remained technically at endless war during peacetime. Even to postwar generations who do not share the slightest bit of wartime memory with older Koreans, this is an unforgettable fact so long as the mutual animosity between the two regimes in the northern and southern parts of the peninsula lingers. From 1953 onwards the Military Demarcation Line (MDL) has been the most heavily militarized area in the world, along which millions of soldiers have confronted each other. Recently, North Korea's nuclear and long-range missile program has escalated the inter-Korean rivalry to a foremost security concern of the global community.

On the other side of the coin, however, a tense armed peace on the Korean peninsula has contributed to the establishment and maintenance of a stable balance of power in Asia and the Pacific. The Korean War legitimized the division of Korea in the international arena, thus ending an era of post-liberation turmoil from joint occupation to armistice. The war redefined Korea's strategic position in the region. Between 1953 and 1957 the United States transformed the Republic of Korea (ROK) into a bulwark against further Communist expansion in East Asia for the rest of the Cold War. The bilateral U.S.-ROK tie started with the signing of a mutual defense treaty in August 1953. By the end of 1957, the United States had decided to transform its two ground divisions in the ROK into an atomic army. For the rest of the Cold War, the U.S.-ROK alliance, which Washington had agreed to only with great reluctance four years before, proved to

be a great success in maintaining peace and advancing prosperity in East Asia after half a century of war, destruction, and misery.

This study details and explains how and why the United States took decisive steps to integrate the ROK into the extended Cold War theaters in East Asia and the Western Pacific between 1953 and 1957. The post-armistice course of Washington contrasts sharply with Korea's lowly position in U.S. defense policy prior to June 25, 1950. As early as September 1947, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) opined that the United States had little strategic interest in maintaining its troops and bases on the peninsula. Under the United Nations Resolution of December 1948 on the establishment of the ROK and the withdrawal of occupation forces, U.S. combat units completed their departure on June 30, 1949. All that remained was a small number of officers in the U.S. Military Advisory Group to the ROK. However, three years of war on the peninsula brought striking changes in U.S.-ROK relations. After investing huge manpower and resources in the armed conflict, Washington believed that the long-term survival of the ROK was essential to maintaining America's credibility with friends and enemies alike.

Concern for U.S. credibility was not the only rationale that shaped the evolving U.S.-ROK alliance. A looming question between 1953 and 1957 was how effectively the armistice would support peace in Korea, as neither of the two Korean regimes accepted the long-term division of the country. After four years of experience with the armistice regime in Korea, Washington concluded that it was sustainable but only with adjustments that required a substantial and indefinite U.S. military presence in Korea. By 1957 both Seoul and Washington agreed that the U.S.-ROK alliance would remain indefinitely as an essential component of the ROK's security under the armistice.

At the same time, Washington found that ROK security was part and parcel of a larger problem in the Western Pacific and East Asia, where the rise of the People's Republic of China (PRC) posed an immediate and long-term threat. Following the Geneva conference of 1954, U.S. containment strategy was officially stretched to cover the Asiatic mainland surrounding the PRC. A strong, anti-communist ROK would serve U.S. interests and strategy in the region. A full-fledged alliance with the ROK, Washington came to believe, made that state one of its major strategic partners in the Cold War. By 1957 the U.S.-ROK alliance, which was inspired by the ROK's urgent security concerns as the Korean War came to an end, evolved into a strategic partnership of mutual interests.

U.S. nuclear strategy is a critical part of this story. On several occasions during the early and mid-1950s, the U.S. government warned publicly of the possibility of using atomic bombs. In fact, the "New Look," a central doctrine of American foreign policy during the Dwight D. Eisenhower administration (1953-1961), based much of U.S. strength in the Cold War on its asymmetrical nuclear power – i.e. its retaliatory capacity against Communist aggression. A central purpose of the "New Look" was to keep the American economy strong and sound in a long-term struggle between East and West. The skyrocketing military expenditures after the outbreak of the Korean War, the administration calculated, could be controlled only by relying upon strategic deterrence by air retaliatory power in defense of the Free World. *Massive retaliation* became an official doctrine in Washington in October 1953.

In practice, atomic weapons' high-yield productivity per dollar not only impressed fiscal conservatives at home but also military planners in the field. The promise of tactical nuclear weapons had numerous effects upon the U.S. military position after the late 1940s. While both the Free World and the Soviet bloc began to possess and expand their nuclear arsenal after 1949,

the concept of a nuclear battlefield was no longer a remote possibility. After the early 1950s the United States was highly successful in producing various types of nuclear weapons and means of delivery. Faced with the Soviet bloc's military challenges based upon their superiority in conventional forces, U.S. leaders did not rule out the possibility of using tactical nuclear weapons in Korea, Indochina, and Chinese offshore islands in the Taiwan Strait. By 1957 evolving nuclear technology convinced Washington policymakers to reorganize U.S. forces into "Pentomic" divisions with nuclear capabilities. Despite limited budgetary resources assigned to the non-strategic field, U.S. leaders believed, nuclear firepower would enable U.S. armed forces to deter and neutralize further Communist aggression.

U.S. nuclear policy helped to redefine the place of the ROK in the U.S. defense network for noncommunist Asia. While the Eisenhower administration was developing contingencies during and after the Korean War, its stress on the heavy use of nuclear weapons against North Korea and the PRC paved a way to extending U.S. defense commitment to the ROK without overstretching its military resources in a limited war in East Asia. While the "New Look" set the highest priority upon the expansion of the Strategic Air Command (SAC) and the development of a "new weapon," Washington's drastic cuts in conventional force structure were inevitable due to budgetary limits. Therefore, U.S. dependence on indigenous forces in local conflicts featured prominently in its defense strategy. Behind the backdrop of ongoing U.S.-PRC hostilities in the Far East, ROK armed forces turned out to be the most reliable and strongest military resources in the defense of noncommunist Asia. Further, with its geographic proximity to North China and Manchuria, ROK bases posed potentially the main threats to the Communist regimes in the region.

By 1957 the “New Look” and heavy reliance upon nuclear weapons in U.S. defense strategy changed the ROK’s position on American security arrangements in the region. At the end of the Korean War, U.S. strategy in the Western Pacific still centered on the defense of an “off-shore chain,” with Japan and Okinawa at the core of the defense system. As U.S.-PRC hostilities continued indefinitely in East Asia, however, many Japanese began to realize that their country might become entrapped in an unwanted war between the United States and the Sino-Soviet bloc. Not only did Tokyo openly question the wisdom of a U.S.-Japan security treaty leaving U.S. armed forces within Japan; it also attempted to restore its relations with Beijing and Moscow. In the face of growing Soviet nuclear capabilities after the mid-1950s, Washington was also concerned that the U.S.-Japan military partnership might invite World War III, starting with a U.S.-Soviet clash over a U.S. attack on China from bases in Japan and Okinawa.

While Japan continued to display reservations about the Eisenhower administration’s defense policy in East Asia, the ROK’s struggle against North Korea and the PRC became an essential part of the “New Look” strategy. By 1956 U.S. military leaders had concluded that the United States should shift its strategic focus in East Asia somewhat from Tokyo to Seoul. In the middle of 1957, Washington’s new defense policy materialized with the U.S. plan to sharply reduce its forces in Japan, dismantle the Far East Command (FEC), and transfer the United Nations Command (UNC) from Tokyo to Seoul. The vital significance of the ROK’s territorial integrity to UN operations in the Far East convinced Washington policymakers of the need for forward-deployed nuclear forces along the MDL. With the arrival of tactical nuclear weapons in the ROK in early 1958, the United States began to transform the southern half of the peninsula into a solid military foothold in mainland Asia from which the U.S.-ROK alliance could fight a limited war against North Korea and the PRC.

The major questions addressed in this study are as follows: between 1951 and 1953, what terms did the United States seek in armistice negotiations in search of a durable cease-fire in a Korea that might remain divided indefinitely? As the Korean War came to an end in the summer of 1953, how did Washington define its position regarding Korea? What constituted the major security concerns with regard to the ROK under the armistice? How did the “New Look” reshape U.S. defense policy toward Korea in the final stage of armistice negotiations and after the armistice was concluded? How was U.S. engagement on the “Asiatic mainland” grafted to the U.S. off-shore strategy in the Western Pacific? Why and how was the ROK significant to the new defense strategy in Asia and the Pacific? Why did a Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission (NNSC) fail to sustain a military balance under the armistice agreement? Why did the continuing U.S.-PRC confrontation after the Korean War alienate Japan and European allies from U.S. defense strategy in East Asia? How did disagreements of these allies with U.S. strategy in East Asia affect the ROK? How did Soviet nuclear strength begin to affect U.S. defense policy after the mid-1950s? Why and how did Washington’s desire to limit any war outside Europe reshape the U.S. military posture in East Asia? What was the rationale behind Washington’s decision to send nuclear weapons to Korea? Finally, why was the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons in Korea militarily necessary to defend the ROK according to U.S. planning for limited war?

Historians have advanced a variety of answers to these questions, but none have dealt with every one of them in a focused study drawing on currently available sources. In 1991, Australian scholar Peter Hayes published *Pacific Powderkeg*, the first major study that covered the issue of American nuclear weapons in Korea, ranging back to Hiroshima and Nagasaki and extending forward to the end of the Cold War. Before his study, Hayes noted, the military kept

under wraps “virtually all trustworthy information on U.S. nuclear forces in Korea.” He specifically attributed the information available in *Pacific Powderkeg* to the U.S. Freedom of Information Act.<sup>1</sup> In tracing U.S. nuclear policies, Hayes referred to a collection of papers available from various agencies including the Department of State, the Department of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), the Far East Command (FEC), the U.S. Air Force Academy, the U.S. Eighth Army Korea, the U.S. Navy, and the Rand Corporation.<sup>2</sup> Further, his account also relied on publications by prominent authors such as John Foster Dulles, Paul Nitze, and Dean Acheson.<sup>3</sup> Finally, Hayes integrated the secondary literature about Korea, China, Japan, and overall U.S. nuclear policies, largely written in the 1980s.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Hayes, *Pacific Powderkeg, American Nuclear Dilemmas in Korea* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1990), xv.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of State, Division of Research for Far East, Office of Intelligence Research, “The Relationship of Japan to Nuclear Weapons and Warfare” (top secret), Washington, D.C., 1957.; J. Cary, “U.S. Military Bases Overseas: An Exploratory Investigation,” report from Institute for Defense Analysis, International and Social Studies Division to Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense, International Security Affairs, U.S. Defense Department, Research Paper P-397, Arlington, Va., June 1967.; U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Plans and Policy Division, “Report by the J-5 to the Joint Chiefs of Staff on Security Treaty – Japan” (secret), JCS 2180/118, Sept. 5, 1958.; Commander in Chief Pacific (CINCPAC) message to U.S. Joint Chief of Staff, no. 4335, DTG 192243Z (top secret), Aug. 1958, attached to “Note by the Secretaries to the Joint Chiefs on Security Treaty-Japan,” JCS 2180/119, Aug. 21, 1958.; L. Rumbaugh et al., “Tactical Employment of Atomic Weapons,” Operations Research Office, Far Eastern Command, Johns Hopkins University report to Operations Research Office, Far East Command, report ORO-R-2 (FEC), Tokyo, March 1, 1951.; Far East Command, Standard Operating Procedure for Atomic Operations, Tokyo, November 1, 1956, appendix 1 to annex D, revised January 1957.; Operations Research Office, Johns Hopkins University, Semi-Annual Report 9:2 (July 1-Dec. 31, 1956).; Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, *The Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission in Korea*, ACDA/WEC/FO 69-65, Washington DC, August 1970.; J. Schlight, “The Impact of the Orient on Airpower,” in U.S. Air Force Academy, *The American Military and the Far East* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Publishing Office, 1980).; U.S. Forces Korea/Eighth U.S. Army, 1974 Annual Historical Report, Seoul, 3-4.; J. Finley, “The U.S. Military Experience in Korea, 1871-1982,” Command Historian’s Office, U.S. Forces Korea, Seoul, 1983.; R. Dennison, U.S. Deputy Chief of Naval Operations, “Definition of ‘Operational’ Use of U.S. Bases,” Memo to U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA) (secret), serial no.00851P61, Washington D.C., Oct. 23, 1958.; Commander U.S. Seventh Fleet to Chief of Naval Operations, “Seventh Fleet Command History, September 17, 1959,” attachment: “Chronology of Major Events in the Offshore Island Crisis,” Navy Historical Center, Washington, D.C.; H. Goldhamer, *Communist Reaction in Korea to American Possession of the A-Bomb and its Significance for U.S. Political and Psychological Warfare* (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, RM-903, August 1, 1952).

<sup>3</sup> J. Dulles, “Security in the Pacific,” *Foreign Affairs* 30:2 (Jan. 1952).; P. Nitze, “Atoms, Strategy and Policy,” *Foreign Affairs* 54:2 (Jan. 1956).; D. Acheson, *Present at the Creation* (New York: Norton, 1987).

<sup>4</sup> In addition to his own previous study, *American Lake, Nuclear Peril in the Pacific* (1987), Hayes’s bibliography includes M. Hastings’ *The Korean War* (1987), J. Cushman’s *Command and Control of Theater Forces: The Korea Command and Other Cases* (1986), C. Macdonald’s *Korea: The War Before Vietnam* (1986), T. Stolper’s *China, Taiwan, and the Offshore Islands* (1985), B. Cumings, ed., *Child of Conflict: The Korean-American Relationship 1943-1953* (1983), and L. Freeman’s *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy* (1981), as well as G. Snyder and P. Diesing’s *Conflict Among Nations: Bargaining, Decision Making and System Structure in International Crises* (1977), C. Alexander’s *Holding the Line: The Eisenhower Era, 1952-61* (1976), J. Endicott’s *Japan’s Nuclear Option* (1975), J. Schnabel’s *United States Army in the Korean War, Policy Direction and the First Year* (1972), and G. Packard’s *Protest in Tokyo: The Security Crisis of 1960* (1966).

Since the release of *Pacific Powderkeg*, a wealth of primary sources has been declassified, and they made possible numerous new studies. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)*, a multivolume collection of documents from the U.S. Department of State and other agencies of the national security apparatus, has extended its coverage of the ROK well beyond the Korean War and the Geneva Conference of 1954.<sup>5</sup> Donald Macdonald's *U.S.-Korean Relations from Liberation to Self-Reliance: The Twenty Year Record* (1992) is another great source for early U.S.-ROK relations based on U.S. Department of State archives. *Trilateralism and Beyond: Great Power Politics and the Korean Security Dilemma during and after the Cold War* (2012) illuminates how recent scholarly works have been replenished with newly available sources. In particular, William Stueck has integrated recent scholarly works concerning Korea, Japan, and China in "Ambivalent Occupation: U.S. Armed Forces in Korea, 1953 to the Present." Together with *The Road to Confrontation: U.S. Policy toward China and Korea, 1947-1950* (1981), *The Korean War: An International History* (1995), and *Rethinking the Korean War: A New Diplomatic and Strategic History* (2002), "Ambivalent Occupation" presents an overview of U.S.-ROK relations after World War II. After producing the widely celebrated *The Origins of the Korean War* (1981), Bruce Cumings has continued his contributions to the study of Korea and the Korean War for decades. The *Ashgate Research Companion to the Korean War* (2014) earmarks current research in the field.<sup>6</sup> All the aforementioned studies have largely

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<sup>5</sup> *FRUS, 1950, Korea*, Volume VII (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1976).; *FRUS, 1951, Korea and China*, Volume VII (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1983).; *FRUS, 1952-1954, Korea*, Volume XV (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1984).; *FRUS, 1952-1954, The Geneva Conference*, Volume XVI (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1981).; *FRUS, 1955-1957, Korea*, Volume XXIII, Part 2 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1993).; *FRUS, 1958-1960, Japan; Korea*, Volume XVIII (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1994).; *FRUS, 1961-1963, Northeast Asia*, Volume XXII (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1996).; *FRUS, 1964-1968, Korea*, Volume XXIX, Part 1 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 2000).; *FRUS, 1969-1976, Korea, 1969-1972*, Volume XIX, Part 1 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 2010).; *FRUS, 1969-1976, Documents on East and Southeast Asia, 1973-1976*, Volume E-12 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 2011).

<sup>6</sup> Donald Stone Macdonald, *U.S.-Korean Relations from Liberation to Self-Reliance: The Twenty Year Record* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1992).; Robert A. Wampler, ed., *Trilateralism and Beyond: Great Power Politics and the Korean*

shaped my understanding of early U.S. policies toward Korea, but none have provided an analysis of the integration of Korea into the U.S. defense system between 1953 and 1957.

My interpretation of U.S. nuclear strategy in the last months of the Korean War developed from a comparative review of Conrad Crane's *American Airpower Strategy in Korea, 1950-1953* (2000) and "To Avert Impending Disaster: American Military Plans to use Atomic Weapons during the Korean War" (2000), Roger Dingman's "Atomic Diplomacy during the Korean War" (winter 1988-89), Marc Trachtenberg's "A 'Wasting Asset': American Strategy and the Shifting Nuclear Balance, 1949-1954" (winter 1988-89), and Rosemary Foot's *The Wrong War: American Policy and the Dimensions of the Korean Conflict, 1950-1953* (1985), as well as two doctoral dissertations: Jerome Martin's "Reforging the Sword: United States Air Force Tactical Air Forces, Air Power Doctrines, and National Security Policy, 1945-1958" (1988) and Caroline Ziemke's "In the Shadow of the Giant: USAF Tactical Air Command in the Era of Strategic Bombing 1945-1955" (1989).<sup>7</sup>

Further, I owe many of my thoughts on evolving U.S. nuclear strategy during the Eisenhower administration to previous studies of U.S. national security policy, especially to *The*

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*Security Dilemma during and after the Cold War* (Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 2012).; Chae-jin Lee, *A Troubled Peace: U.S. Policy and the Two Koreas* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2006).; William Stueck, *The road to confrontation: American policy toward China and Korea, 1947-1950* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981).; *The Korean War: an international history* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995).; *Rethinking the Korean war: a new diplomatic and strategic history* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002).; Maxwell Taylor, *Swords and Ploughshares* (New York: W.W.Norton, 1972).; Bruce Cumings, *The origins of the Korean War* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981).; *Korea's place in the sun: a modern history* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005).; *The Korean War: a history* (New York: Modern Library, 2010).; *Dominion from sea to sea: Pacific ascendancy and American power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).; James Matray & Donald Boose, ed., *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Korean War* (Farnham & Burlington, VT.: Ashgate Publishing Limited & Ashgate Publishing Company, 2014).

<sup>7</sup> Conrad Crane, *American Airpower Strategy in Korea, 1950 – 1953* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2000).; "To Avert Impending Disaster: American Military Plans to Use Atomic Weapons During the Korean War" (Journal of Strategic Studies, vol. 23, no.2, June 2000).; Roger Dingman, "Atomic Diplomacy during the Korean War" (International Security, Volume 13, No. 3, Winter 1988/89).; Marc Trachtenberg, "A 'wasting asset': American strategy and the shifting nuclear balance, 1949-1954" (International Security, Volume 13, No. 3, winter 1988-89).; Rosemary Foot, *The Wrong War: American Policy and the Dimensions of the Korean Conflict, 1950-1953* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1985).; Jerome Martin, "Reforging the sword: United States Air Force tactical air forces, air power doctrine, and national security policy, 1945-1956" (Ph.D. Dissertation, the Ohio State University, 1988).; Carolina Ziemke, "In the shadow of the giant: USAF Tactical Air Command in the era of strategic bombing, 1945-1955" (Ph.D. Dissertation, the Ohio State University: 1989).

*Development of American Strategic Thought: Basic Documents from the Eisenhower and Kennedy Periods, Including the Basic National Security Policy Papers from 1953 to 1959* (1988), George Lemmer's *The Air Force and Strategic Deterrence 1951-1960* (1967), and the series *History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy*. I also need to mention John Lewis Gaddis' *Strategies of Containment: a Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy during the Cold War* (2005), Andrew Bacevich's *The Pentomic Era: The U.S. Army between Korea and Vietnam* (1986), and John Midgley's *Deadly Illusions: Army Policy for the Nuclear Battlefield* (1986).<sup>8</sup>

As my study requires a comprehensive view of the early Cold War in Asia and the Pacific, my research materials cover geographic areas beyond the Korean peninsula. The series *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)*, the *Department of State Bulletin (DSB)*, and the *Yearbook of the United Nations* constitute a significant part of the primary sources in my study.<sup>9</sup> I also refer to several secondary works, including Chen Jian's *Mao's China and the Cold War* (2001), Robert Accinelli's *Crisis and Commitment: United States Policy toward Taiwan, 1950-*

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<sup>8</sup> Trachtenberg, ed., *Basic documents from the Eisenhower and Kennedy periods, including the basic national security policy papers from 1953 to 1959* (New York : Garland, 1988).; George Lemmer, *The Air Force and Strategic Deterrence 1951-1960* (U.S. Historical Division Liaison Office, December 1967).; Kenneth Condit, *History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, 1947-1949* (Washington, District of Columbia: Office of Joint History, Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1996).; James Schnabel & Robert Watson, *History of the JCS: The JCS and National Policy, 1950-1951* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Joint History, Office of the Chairman of the JCS, 1998).; Watson, *History of the JCS: The JCS and the National Policy, 1953-1954* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Joint History, Office of the Chairman of the JCS, 1998).; Condit, *History of the JCS: The JCS and the National Policy, 1955-1956* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Joint History, Office of the Chairman of the JCS, 1992).; Byron Fairchild & Walter Poole, *History of the JCS: The JCS and the National Policy, 1957-1960* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Joint History, Office of the Chairman of the JCS, 2000).; John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy during the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University press, 2005).; Andrew Bacevich, *The Pentomic Era: The U.S. Army between Korea and Vietnam* (Washington, DC : National Defense University Press : Sold by US G.P.O., 1986).; John Midgley, *Deadly Illusions : Army Policy for the Nuclear Battlefield* (Boulder, CO.: Westview Press, 1986).

<sup>9</sup> *FRUS, 1951, Asia and the Pacific*, Volume VI, Part 1 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1977).; *FRUS, 1951, Korea and China*, Volume VII (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1983).; *FRUS, 1952-1954, China and Japan*, Volume XIV (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1985).; *FRUS, 1955-1957, Foreign Economic Aid and Economic Defense Policy*, Volume IX (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1989).; *FRUS, 1955-1957, China*, Volume II-III (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1986).; *FRUS, 1955-1957, Japan*, Volume XXIII, Part 1 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1991).; *FRUS, 1958-1960, Japan; Korea*, Volume XVIII (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1994).; *FRUS, 1961-1963, National Security Policy*, Volume VIII (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1996).; *Department of State Bulletin*, Volumes 22-43 (Washington: Office of Public Communication, Bureau of Public Affairs, 1950-1960).; *Yearbook of the United Nations 1946-1960* (United Nations, 1946-1961).

1955 (1996), Shu Guang Zhang's *Deterrence and Strategic Culture: Chinese-American Confrontations, 1949-1958* (1992) and *Economic Cold War: America's Embargo against China and the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1949-1963* (2001), Martin Weinstein's *Japan's Postwar Defense Policy, 1947-1968* (1971), Michael Schaller's *Altered States: The United States and Japan since the Occupation* (1997), Walter Lafeber's *The Clash: U.S.-Japanese Relations throughout History* (1997), Sayuri Shimizu's *Creating People of Plenty: the United States and Japan's Economic Alternatives, 1950-1960* (2001), Richard Betts' *Nuclear Blackmail and Nuclear Balance* (1987), Marc Trachtenberg's *A Constructed Peace: The Making of the European Settlement, 1945-1963* (1999), and *The First Vietnam War: Colonial Conflict and Cold War Crisis* (2007).<sup>10</sup>

My archival research relies on sources available at National Archives II in College Park (MD) and the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum in Abilene (KS), some of which have already appeared in *FRUS*. The sources available at the National Security Archive, located at the George Washington University in Washington D.C., also have been consulted.<sup>11</sup> Between 1970 and 2003, Johns Hopkins University Press released the 21-volume *Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, a massive collection of declassified documents including letters, memoranda, cables, and directives written or dictated by Eisenhower from the years prior to World War II through the full term of his presidency. My study of the Eisenhower era (1953-

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<sup>10</sup> Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2001).; Robert Accinelli, *Crisis and commitment: United States policy toward Taiwan, 1950-1955* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).; Shu Guang Zhang, *Deterrence and strategic culture : Chinese-American confrontations, 1949-1958* (Ithaca, N.Y. : Cornell University Press, 1992).; *Economic Cold War: America's embargo against China and the Sino-Soviet alliance, 1949-1963* (Washington, D.C. : Woodrow Wilson Center Press ; Stanford, Calif. : Stanford University Press, 2001).; Martin Weinstein, *Japan's postwar defense policy, 1947-1968* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1971).; Michael Schaller, *Altered states : the United States and Japan since the occupation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).; Walter LaFeber, *The clash: a history of U.S.-Japan relations* (New York : W.W. Norton, 1997).; Sayuri Shimizu, *Creating people of plenty: the United States and Japan's economic alternatives, 1950-1960* (Kent, Ohio : Kent State University Press, 2001).; Richard Betts, *Nuclear blackmail and nuclear balance* (Washington, D.C. : Brookings Institution, 1987).; Trachtenberg, *A constructed peace: the making of the European settlement, 1945-1963* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999).; Mark Lawrence & Frederik Logevall, ed., *The first Vietnam War: colonial conflict and Cold War crisis* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007).

<sup>11</sup> <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/>.

1957) utilizes the *Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower* as well as *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower*.<sup>12</sup> Oral history transcripts originating from the *Eisenhower Administration Project: Oral History, 1962-1972* at the Columbia University Center for Oral History as well as published memoirs also have proved useful.<sup>13</sup> Finally, my study refers to the *South Korean Foreign Ministry Archives* located in the Yenching Library at Harvard University. Covering the years 1948 to 1972, this collection represents the most extensive and important primary source for modern Korean diplomatic history and the only comprehensive collection of South Korean official documents available to scholars.<sup>14</sup>

I develop the major issues of my study in four chapters. Chapter 1 demonstrates how security concerns that Communist China posed to the United States and its allies after the winter of 1950 transformed overall U.S. strategy during the Korean War. Soon after the Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) collided with the UNC in North Korea, Washington decided to restore the *status quo ante* in Korea prior to June 1950. Although U.S. policymakers were divided as to the plausibility of an expanded war in China and the use of nuclear weapons, the risk of global war with the Soviet Union persuaded the Truman administration by July 1951 to seek a negotiated armistice with the Communists. By the spring of 1952, the UNC and the Communists reached agreements on major issues of the armistice agreements: the establishment of the Military Demarcation Line (MDL), restrictions on military buildup in Korea after the armistice, and the creation of the Military Armistice Commission (MAC) and the Neutral Nations

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<sup>12</sup> Alfred Chandler, Stephen Ambrose, associate editor and others, ed., *The papers of Dwight David Eisenhower* (Baltimore, MD.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970).; *Public papers of the Presidents of the United States* (Washington : Federal Register Division, National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration : For sale by the Supt. of Docs., U.S. G.P.O.).

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.eisenhower.archives.gov/research/oral\\_histories.html](http://www.eisenhower.archives.gov/research/oral_histories.html).; [http://oralhistoryportal.cul.columbia.edu/document.php?id=ldpd\\_4074583](http://oralhistoryportal.cul.columbia.edu/document.php?id=ldpd_4074583).

<sup>14</sup> Jiyul Kim, "The South Korean Foreign Ministry Archives," in Choong-Nam Yoon, ed., *Studies on the Korean materials in the Harvard-Yenching Library* 하바드옌칭한국관자료연구 윤충남(Söul T'ükyölsi: 서울특별시: Kyöngin Munhwasa 경인문화사, 2004), 327.

Supervisory Commission (NNSC). However, armistice talks then entered a long stalemate that spanned the rest of the Truman administration.

While the war dragged on in Korea, the overall U.S. strategic position vis-à-vis the Soviet bloc began to change. The Korean War expedited the Truman administration's rearmament program to cope with the global Communist thrust into the Free World. In particular, U.S. determination to create a position of military strength vis-à-vis the Soviet Union prompted a rapid increase of the U.S. nuclear stockpile. Further, the United States began to consolidate U.S. security networks in Asia and the Pacific through expanded bilateral and trilateral security arrangements. Finally, the Korean War witnessed the advance of U.S. nuclear technology in the field of small nuclear weapons. Combined with the rapid expansion of the U.S. nuclear arsenal, the advent of small nuclear weapons inspired U.S. military leaders to develop tactical nuclear doctrines during the later period of the Korean War.

Therefore, by the time Dwight Eisenhower entered the White House in January 1953, the United States stood in a much improved position in dealing with the Communists than the Truman administration had faced two years previously. The Eisenhower administration spent the spring of 1953 developing a military contingency to the final breakdown of the armistice talks. Because the Communists were also increasing their military strength both in conventional and nuclear terms, new military contingencies assumed the massive use of nuclear weapons in case of full-scale hostilities. In view of the tremendous nuclear strength of the United States, many policymakers believed, the Soviet Union would be forced to limit its military reaction. In the face of U.S. allies' opposition to the use of nuclear weapons, the Eisenhower administration's nuclear strategy in Korea was affirmed as basic national security policy in June 1953. Although the signing of the Korean armistice in July 1953 ended hostilities, the Eisenhower

administration's nuclear strategy in the last months of the Korean War contained vital clues to the origins of the U.S.-ROK alliance and U.S. policies toward East Asia as the 1950s progressed.

Chapter 2 demonstrates how the United States and the ROK set in place a bilateral security alliance by the end of 1954. As long as large Communist armed forces remained in their positions north of the MDL, the Korean armistice did not guarantee the security of the ROK. UN forces remained in Korea after the signing of the armistice, waiting for the political resolution of the Korean problem. Unfortunately, the Geneva conference of 1954 failed to produce a meaningful settlement, and it was obvious that Korea would be divided for an indefinite period. A redeployment of large U.S. armed forces from Korea was inevitable in peacetime, but the imminent question was how the U.S.-ROK alliance could defend the ROK from North Korea and the PRC with declining UN commitments to the peninsula.

The Eisenhower administration had its answer in the "New Look" and its heavy reliance upon U.S. air retaliatory power. According to the massive retaliation doctrine, further Communist aggressions in East Asia, including the Korean theater, could be neutralized by direct nuclear attacks on mainland China. Therefore, the United States could withdraw ground forces very quickly from Korea, and eventually from the entire region. However, the ROK vigorously resisted the U.S. redeployment plan for Korea. Desperate to achieve Korea's unification by force, ROK President Syngman Rhee even proposed a drastic augmentation of ROK armed forces. The differing opinions of Seoul and Washington reached a peak in the spring and summer of 1954 during General James Van Fleet's Far Eastern tour and Rhee's visit to Washington. In the fall the United States and the ROK worked out a package deal for U.S. military and economic programs to the ROK. In November 1954 President Rhee finally signed the "Agreed

Minute” with U.S. agreement contingent on the principle of Korea’s unification by peaceful means.

Meanwhile, U.S. Cold War strategy in East Asia and the Western Pacific gradually reshaped U.S. policies in Korea. The outcome of the Geneva Conference revealed the gloomy prospects for a permanent peace settlement along China’s periphery. Thus the United States endeavored to maintain a strategy of containing the PRC in Korea, Indochina, and Taiwan through a collective effort with allies. Further, the Eisenhower administration began to reinforce its defenses in the western Pacific with forward-deployed nuclear weapons. While U.S. policymakers were not convinced of Japan’s major contributions to U.S. efforts to defend the region, the ROK’s cooperation with U.S. defense strategy vis-à-vis Asian Communism enhanced the fledgling U.S.-ROK alliance.

Chapter 3 shows that the failure of cross inspections to maintain the military balance after the Korean War provided for in the armistice agreements persuaded Washington that U.S. forces in Korea should be equipped with up-to-date weapons. Once an armistice was recognized as a *de facto* political settlement of the Korean problem, the primary concern was whether it could indefinitely prevent a renewal of hostilities. The armistice agreement provided restraints on the military buildup of both sides, but the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission (NNSC) had little success in discouraging the Communists from expanding air forces in the North and its inspection activities were branded as espionage in the South. Therefore, between 1954 and 1956 the validity of provisions of the armistice agreements related to the NNSC activities fell into question.

Because the Korean armistice as an international agreement regulated the UNC, the Communists, and the NNSC, the United States needed to coordinate with UN allies and neutrals

to resolve the NNSC dispute. After the Korean War, however, the United States encountered growing difficulty in sustaining the wartime coalition with some of its allies. Despite Washington's desire for Free World unity against the PRC, major U.S. allies were gradually alienated from ongoing crises in East Asia. European allies did not view Asian Communists' threats to U.S. allies in East Asia as primary concerns. Not only did European allies begin to pull UN forces out of Korea immediately after the Geneva Conference; they resisted U.S. pressure on continuing anti-PRC sanctions. Further, the U.S.-PRC confrontations in East Asia posed not only economic but also security problems to Japan. Therefore, post-Yoshida Japan was becoming reluctant to cooperate with the United States in a war with the Communist bloc. As UN allies and neutrals in Europe were reluctant to poison their relations with the PRC over Korea, the NNSC disputes dragged on until mid-1956 without any promise of early settlement. Eventually, the United States and the ROK resorted to unilateral UNC action on the removal of the NNSC from the ROK.

Chapter 4 explains why and how Washington finally reached the decision to introduce nuclear weapons to Korea during 1956 and 1957. After the mid-1950s the reliability of the massive retaliation doctrine intensified the debates in Washington over limited war. With massive retaliation alone, many military leaders believed, the United States could not in the future cope with situations short of general war. Although the risk of limited war was well understood in Washington, under strict budgetary restraints the administration had few resources to be distracted from strategic deterrence. Eventually, the United States furthered its reliance upon nuclear weapons both in general and limited war situations to maximize the use of defense dollars. At the same time, the advent of new guided missiles and new tactical doctrines on the nuclear battlefield transformed the Army into an atomic force. By the time the UNC suspended

the NNSC provisions of the armistice agreement, the United States was ready to apply a new defense strategy to the modernization program for U.S. forces in Korea.

Further, U.S. strategy for limited war in East Asia furthered the significance of the U.S.-ROK alliance in the region after the mid-1950s. Neither Europe nor Japan turned out to be trustworthy military partners in anti-Communist campaigns in Asia and the Pacific. Further, in the shadow of growing Soviet nuclear capabilities, UN operations from U.S. bases in Japan increased the risk of a direct U.S.-Soviet clash beginning there. Hence a series of U.S. decisions between 1956 and 1957, such as to drastically reduce the U.S. military presence in Japan, to dissolve the Far East Command (FEC) in Tokyo, and to permanently transfer the UNC from Tokyo to Seoul, should be understood as integral parts in making the ROK a permanent U.S. strategic partner in regional security arrangements.

Therefore, the United States decided in late 1957 to deploy tactical nuclear weapons in Korea on both financial and military grounds. Clearly, the need to secure recalcitrant President Rhee's agreement to a reduction of ROK armed forces to downsize U.S. overseas expenditures facilitated the introduction of nuclear weapons to Korea as part of the modernization program of U.S. forces there. Nonetheless, U.S. military leaders believed that forward deployment of U.S. nuclear weapons was necessary to secure U.S. armed forces along the MDL, as well as the ROK capital Seoul. Considering uncertainties surrounding the fate of U.S. bases in Japan and Okinawa from which the United States would launch massive retaliation in case of Communist resumption of hostilities in Korea, the United States needed atomic defenses to protect the integrity of the ROK as a bastion of UN operations at the outset of a possible Communist first-wave offensive. For the rest of the Cold War, the presence of U.S. tactical nuclear weapons in Korea reflected

U.S. determination to make the ROK an invincible bulwark in mainland Asia against North Korea and the PRC.

When I began my investigation of U.S. nuclear weapons in Korea, I approached Washington's decision to introduce nuclear weapons to Korea in the sequence of the nuclear history in Korea from 1957 onwards. As my study proceeded, however, I realized that Washington's decision would be better understood in the context of the ROK security question in the expanding Cold War, which was far from resolved when the armistice was signed in July 1953. My study elucidates the unfinished story of the Korean War between 1953 and 1957. This period is crucial to understanding how the U.S.-ROK alliance was strategically integrated into the Cold War theaters in East Asia and the Western Pacific. On the assumption that nuclear weapons were crucial to U.S. policy in Asia and the Pacific during the early Cold War, my study shows that the ROK security question after the Korean War was successfully renegotiated by 1957 when the forward-deployed nuclear weapons authorized the post-armistice ROK as a U.S. strategic partner in the struggle against their common enemy of the time: Communist China. I hope that my efforts will shed new light on the interpretation of the Korean War, its nuclear history, and the Cold War in Asia and the Pacific.

## Chapter 1

### Ending the Korean War

On November 28, 1950, in a telegram to the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) in Washington, General Douglass MacArthur, the Commander in Chief, United Nations Command in Korea (CINCUNC) and Commander-in-chief, Far East (CINCFE), reported that the “home-by-Christmas Offensive,” which he had launched four days earlier to destroy the last remnants of North Korean troops, was disrupted by a new situation:

All hope of localization of the Korean conflict to enemy forces composed of North Korean troops with alien token elements can now be completely abandoned. The Chinese military forces are committed in North Korea in great and ever increasing strength. .... We face an entirely new war.<sup>15</sup>

General MacArthur’s “new war” marked the beginning of a military debacle. By mid-December United Nations forces had retreated south of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, the old dividing line between North and South Korea. In the east they were evacuating by sea from Hungnam and Wonsan to Pusan. The rapid retreat of UN forces emboldened the Communists to seek a total victory in Korea, and on New Year’s Eve the Communists extended their offensive south of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. As Washington contemplated the possibility of total evacuation of UN forces from Korea, the fortunes of the ROK were back on the brink of bankruptcy. Only after the Communist offensive was “temporarily exhausted” in mid-January, William Stueck writes, did Washington

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<sup>15</sup> *FRUS, 1950, Korea*, Volume VII, 1237.

conclude that there was “no immediate danger of friendly forces being driven from the peninsula.”<sup>16</sup>

Behind the growing crisis on the front, the “new war” posed a fundamental question about Korea’s place in U.S. strategy worldwide. Many influential figures in Washington began to question the prudence and even the viability of continued military ventures by U.S.-dominated UN forces in Korea as part of the ongoing global struggle between East and West. Others, particularly General MacArthur and his command in Tokyo, thought that the only reasonable course in Korea was to expand the war to China. Prevailing sentiment in the administration rejected the latter option unless necessary to save UN forces in Korea. The halt of the Communist advance in early 1951 reinforced the view that the United States should stay in Korea while abandoning the effort of the previous fall to use force in an effort to unite the country under the ROK. In the summer of 1951, the UNC began armistice negotiations with the Communists based on the idea that the fighting should end under roughly the conditions prevailing prior to the outbreak of war on June 25, 1950. It took until July 27, 1953 to conclude an armistice. Although it ended combat on the peninsula, Korea remained divided between two hostile governments with over 300,000 U.S. military personnel remaining in the South and over a million Chinese troops in the North.

This chapter revisits the Korean War between November 1950 and July 1953. How and why did U.S. policymakers adjust their aims in Korea in the face of Chinese intervention rather than risk expanding the war? Once the United States had resigned itself to seek an end of the

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<sup>16</sup> Stueck, *Rethinking the Korean War*, 119, 127. On January 17, 1951, General Lawton Collins and General Hoyt Vandenberg in the Far East reported to Washington that the U.S. Eighth Army in Korea was “in good shape and improving daily under (General) Matthew Ridgway’s leadership.” They especially mentioned that Ridgway could obtain “two to three months delay before evacuation.” The report was very significant in Washington because Washington politicians were demanding time to “concert measures in the United Nations” and to “seek ways of persuading the enemy to end the conflict on the basis of a restoration of the *status quo ante*.” General Ridgway had provided a “breathing spell of at least two or three months”; James Schnabel and Robert Watson, *History of the JCS: the JCS and National Policy 1950-1951*, Volume III, Part 1 (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chairman of the JCS, 1998), 195-197.

fighting while the peninsula remained divided, how did Washington attempt to provide for the ongoing security of the ROK? How did nuclear weapons enter American calculations both in seeking an armistice and in planning for postwar security? How did Dwight D. Eisenhower, who succeeded Harry S. Truman as U.S. president on January 20, 1953, differ with his predecessor in his approach to ending the war while addressing American concerns for post-armistice security? How did ROK President Syngman Rhee's opposition to an armistice impact U.S. pursuit of a halt to the war and postwar planning? Answering these questions is essential in establishing a framework for understanding how U.S. security policy evolved in the four years following the armistice.

### **Weighing Alternatives in Korea**

The massive Chinese intervention in Korea destroyed General MacArthur's effort to eliminate enemy forces there as the first step in unifying the peninsula under the ROK. In addition, that intervention posed the question of whether any of Korea could be saved from Communist domination without attacking China. On December 3 General MacArthur reported to the JCS that "our relatively small force" now faces the "full offensive power of the Chinese Communist nation augmented by extended supply of Soviet materiel." Since the strategic concept "suitable for operations against the North Korean Army" was not susceptible to "continued application against such power," General MacArthur called for "political decisions and strategic plans" adequate to "meet the realities involved."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> *FRUS, 1950, Korea*, Volume VII, 1321-1322.

In fact, “political decisions and strategic plans” had not awaited MacArthur’s report on the dismal military situation.<sup>18</sup> Soon after the JCS received his November 28 telegram, President Truman began working with his National Security Council (NSC) to establish a new policy. At one meeting Secretary of State Dean Acheson, the president’s top foreign policy adviser, articulated a key point: decisions on Korea must be made in light of the “worldwide problem of confronting the USSR as an antagonist.”<sup>19</sup> As before and after the outbreak of war in Korea on June 25, 1950, Washington’s top priority in foreign affairs was to contain Moscow’s expansion into war-torn but strategically vital Western Europe, which if dominated by the Kremlin would disrupt the balance of power in world politics. To protect the region from the Red Army, Washington needed to develop collective security as well as a U.S. retaliatory power against the Soviet homeland. Therefore, Secretary Acheson, a firm advocate of a Europe-first strategy, stressed in the meeting that the need for Western unity and a sufficient atomic stockpile could not be compromised by the deepening Korean crisis. With this framework in mind, the State and Defense Departments set out to agree on a political arrangement acceptable from a military standpoint.

Before this process was concluded, however, British Prime Minister Clement Attlee, the leader of America’s closest ally and partner in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), arrived in Washington for consultations.<sup>20</sup> Chinese Communist intervention revived the fear

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<sup>18</sup> According to General MacArthur’s report, between November 30 and December 1, casualties exceeded 11,000 men, “according to preliminary estimates.” The Second Infantry Division had lost 6,380 men, nearly half its strength. The Turkish Brigade estimably lost 1,000 out of 5,000 men. U.S. Eighth Army and X Corps together could have slightly more than 110,000 men in the field, against an estimated 256,000 Chinese and 10,000 North Koreans.; Schnabel and Watson, *History of the JCS*, Volume III, Part 1, 158-159.

<sup>19</sup> *FRUS, 1950, Korea*, Volume VII, 1246. Acheson said that the U.S. was “much closer to the danger of general war.” He pointed out that “behind a Chinese Communist involvement in Korea” there was always the Soviet Union. He said, “We must consider Korea not in isolation but in worldwide problem of confronting the Soviet Union as an antagonist.”

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 1280, 1324. Before the arrival of British Prime Minister, Secretary Acheson agreed with “Assistant Secretary Rusk and others in the State Department” that if a cease-fire could not be achieved, the United States must “hold on as long as

among Europeans of an escalation of the war. Joint planning on Korea symbolized common interests across the Atlantic to confirm Western unity, an essential element to a final victory in the event of U.S.-Soviet confrontation in Europe. While Washington was engrossed in political and military problems surrounding Korea, Attlee's visit contributed to establishing a common understanding of UN policies between Washington and its key allies participating in UN operations in Korea.

Generally speaking, the Anglo-American summit communicated to Washington the fear of U.S. allies of further escalation of the war, especially through the use of atomic weapons. The immediate source of Attlee's visit from December 4 to 8 was Truman's statement in a press conference on November 30 that all available weapons, including atomic bombs, were being considered for use in the Korean crisis and that the field commander had control over them. The comment caused an uproar in allied capitals in Europe, even after Washington issued a clarification that only the president held the authority to employ atomic weapons. To American allies the use of such weapons in Northeast Asia was likely to be the first step in expanding the war beyond Korea and increasing the possibility of a military confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union. Such a U.S.-Soviet clash could overcommit American resources to a secondary theater and then spread to Europe, making that continent the scene of another bloodbath only five years after the end of World War II.<sup>21</sup>

In fact, from the beginning of the war, President Truman's atomic policy in Korea was inseparable from a U.S. nuclear deterrent of Soviet aggression in Europe. On the first evening of the war, Roger Dingman notes, Truman ordered General Hoyt Vandenberg, the Air Force chief

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possible" and force the Chinese Communists to "pay the highest possible price for expelling UN troops."; Schnabel and Watson, *History of the JCS*, Volume III, Part 1, 162.

<sup>21</sup> Conrad Crane, *American Airpower Strategy in Korea, 1950 – 1953* (Lawrence, KS.: University Press of Kansas, 2000), 58.

of staff, to prepare plans for “launching an atomic attack in the event the Soviet Union entered the fighting.”<sup>22</sup> In the following weeks, however, the Soviet Union showed no sign of deploying its own forces in Korea or of military moves anywhere else along its periphery. Military planners in Washington, uncertain that atomic weapons would be decisive in ending the fighting in Korea and desiring to preserve their limited nuclear stockpile and delivery capability, decided that, for the moment, U.S. nuclear power was of use primarily as a deterrent to direct Soviet action in both Korea and elsewhere. As July progressed, therefore, General Curtis Lemay, commander of the Strategic Air Command (SAC), was ordered to send his nuclear-capable B-29 bombers to Great Britain to signal Moscow of U.S. nuclear power and reaffirm Anglo-American solidarity. Later in the month the JCS ordered reinforcement of U.S. air forces in the Western Pacific with two SAC B-29 groups, supplemented with ten nuclear-capable Superfortresses. This represented the first deployment of U.S. nuclear power to the Pacific since the end of World War II.<sup>23</sup>

Communist China’s entry into North Korea in the fall led Washington to reassess its previous judgment of the need for atomic weapons. As before, Conrad Crane explains, State Department planners argued that “political fallout” would “overshadow military benefits of their use.” In particular, if Washington decided to use the bombs again in Asia, American diplomacy would face serious setbacks among non-white populations in the Third World. In contrast, the Army Staff G-3 reported that the situation was “more favorable for employment of atomic bombs than in July.” When the scale of Chinese intervention was fully recognized in Washington, the possibility of surprise Communist air attacks rose to prominence. According to General Vandenberg, the “only effective defense against the new threat” would be to “either hit

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<sup>22</sup> Roger Dingman, “Atomic Diplomacy during the Korean War” (International Security, Volume 13, No. 3, Winter 1988/89), 55-56.

<sup>23</sup> Crane, “To Avert Impending Disaster: American Military Plans to Use Atomic Weapons During the Korean War” (Journal of Strategic Studies, vol. 23, no.2, June 2000), 74; Dingman, “Atomic Diplomacy,” 57-65.

the enemy airfields” in Manchuria or “withdraw many aircrafts to Japan.” However, Soviet retaliation to the UN attacks in Manchuria could not be ruled out, in the event of which General Collins urged a response that included atomic bombs.<sup>24</sup>

Yet even to military officials in Washington such a development was highly undesirable. According to the prevailing intelligence estimate, the United States would not be prepared for general war with the Soviet Union at least until July 1, 1952. The Chinese intervention in Korea, which American officials correctly believed had been encouraged by the Soviet Union, indicated that Moscow was perfectly willing to risk global war. If the United States now bombed air bases in Manchuria, the reasoning went in Washington, its limited stockpile of nuclear weapons as well as its bomber fleet would be depleted. Such a development, in turn, would reduce the U.S. capacity to launch a strategic nuclear attack on the Soviet homeland. Since the Soviets enjoyed a decisive advantage in conventional forces over the United States and its NATO allies, they might be tempted to invade Western Europe. Such an invasion would produce general war, which would be long and costly and with an uncertain outcome. Thus when General Collins asserted that the United States should use “all honorable means to avoid any action” that was likely to “bring Russia into open conflict with the United States prior to that date” (July 1, 1952), he expressed the prevailing view within the Pentagon.<sup>25</sup>

U.S. allies in Europe, as well as a general consensus in the United Nations, reinforced this opinion. In his talks in Washington, Attlee sought assurances that atomic bombs would not be used without British consultation and approval. The prime minister failed on this point, but he conveyed a strong message to American leaders that the U.S. alliance with Western Europe would be in serious jeopardy should they decide to expand the war or use atomic weapons.

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<sup>24</sup> Crane, “To Avert Impending Disaster,” 74-75.

<sup>25</sup> Trachtenberg, “A ‘Wasting Asset,’” 24-26.

Meanwhile, activities at the United Nations strengthened Attlee's message. United Nations involvement in the Korea problem dated back to 1947, when the United States asked the General Assembly to help resolve the Soviet-American stalemate over the peninsula's independence and unification. When the Soviet Union refused to cooperate with a General Assembly resolution calling for national elections, the United States secured UN support for elections below the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel and eventually for creation of the ROK there. When North Korea attacked the South in June 1950, the United States turned to the UN Security Council. With the Soviet delegate absent as a result of a boycott over Chinese representation, the United States gained broad support for action to "restore peace and security to the area."<sup>26</sup>

Chinese Communist intervention was a major turning point in the UN role in U.S. policies in Korea. The United States led the UN Command in Korea and already had recruited significant materiel support from other UN members in containing the North Korean advance. When in September and October UN forces reversed the military balance in their favor, the United States solicited and received General Assembly support for action in North Korea aimed at reunifying the peninsula. With Chinese intervention in Korea, however, support for the United States in the United Nations was in serious jeopardy. Indeed, allied and neutral nations now maneuvered in the UN General Assembly to prevent the war's expansion – and the bulk of this effort was directed at restraining the United States. To ignore this activity would risk the

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<sup>26</sup> UN Department of Public Information, *Yearbook of the United Nations, 1950* (Hague, Boston: Nijhoff), 223-24. The resolution adopted by the Council (S/1511) read as follows: The Security Council, having determined that the armed attack upon the Republic of Korea by forces from North Korea constitutes a breach of the peace, having called for an immediate cessation of hostilities, and having called upon the authorities of North Korea to withdraw forthwith their armed forces to the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, and having noted from the report of the United Nations Commission for Korea that the authorities in North Korea have neither ceased hostilities nor withdrawn their armed forces to the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel and that urgent military measures are required to restore international peace and security, and having noted the appeal from the Republic of Korea to the United Nations for immediate and effective steps to secure peace and security, recommends that the Members of the United Nations 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.

international legitimacy of U.S. efforts in Korea and reduce prospects for continued materiel support from member nations.<sup>27</sup>

The final communiqué of the Truman-Attlee meetings declared that they would “seek an end to the hostilities [in Korea] by means of negotiation.” Although the United States stood firm against any British hint at “appeasement,” such as Communist China’s seating in the United Nations in exchange for a cease-fire, both were cautious not to disturb a united effort in support of the common objective.<sup>28</sup> Most significantly, the final communiqué confirmed that both were willing to end the war on a basis of the old border – the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, the goal at the beginning of the war – shelving the objective of unifying Korea by force, which had been adopted in the optimistic atmosphere following the Inchon landing in September. Top policymakers in Washington had already agreed that the Chinese intervention in Korea would be brought before the General Assembly. Now there were two possible ways of seeking a cease-fire: direct contact with either Moscow or Beijing or passage of a resolution in the General Assembly.<sup>29</sup>

A group of Asian and Arab states in the United Nations attempted both approaches. In the first week of December, thirteen Arab-Asian members proposed that the Chinese and North Koreans halt their advance at the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. When the Communists did not reply, they turned to a cease-fire resolution in the General Assembly. With the United States in support of the resolution, the General Assembly approved it on December 14. The Chinese Communists rejected the thirteen-power resolution on December 21, however, and two days later Foreign Minister Zhou En-lai announced on radio that the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel had been “obliterated forever” by

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<sup>27</sup> Stueck, *The Korean War*, 138-42.

<sup>28</sup> *FRUS, 1950, Korea*, Volume VII, 1477.

<sup>29</sup> Schnabel and Watson, *History of the JCS*, Volume III, Part 1, 158, 169-171.

the UNC's invasion of North Korea. Further, Communist China would not consider a cease-fire apart from a "favorable disposition of Far Eastern political issues."<sup>30</sup>

### **MacArthur's opposition to a limited war**

A military debate over expanding the war to China became a central issue in the last week of December, as Beijing rejected a cease-fire offer and launched its "third-phase" offensive south of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. UN troops abandoned Seoul on January 4. For the time being, the foremost concern was whether UN forces could stay on the peninsula or would be forced to retreat to Japan. In a telegram to General MacArthur on January 12, the JCS concluded that it was not feasible to "hold a position in Korea for a protracted period" and suggested that MacArthur "estimate the timing and conditions" to "issue instructions to evacuate Korea."<sup>31</sup>

MacArthur believed that the war should be expanded to China as the only way to forestall a humiliating defeat. His recommendations included a naval blockade, air strikes on industrial facilities, introduction of Chinese Nationalist troops to Korea, and "diversionary operations" in other areas by Nationalist forces. MacArthur also proposed the use of atomic bombs in the early stages of an expanded war, with thirty-four bombs aimed primarily at "retardation targets." Even in March 1951, with the military situation turned in favor of UN forces, he insisted that the bombs should be employed in an expanded war to destroy enemy airfields.<sup>32</sup>

The JCS opposed all of MacArthur's proposals. In the political realm they were not inconsistent with Washington's limited war policy necessary to preserve the unity of U.S. allies

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 172-175. Zhou specified "withdrawal of foreign troops from Korea, settlement of Korean affairs by the Korean people themselves, withdrawal of 'American aggression forces' from Taiwan, and the seating of the Chinese People's Republic in the United Nations."

<sup>31</sup> *FRUS, 1951, Korea and China*, Volume VII, Part 1, 68 - 69.

<sup>32</sup> Crane, "To Avert Impending Disaster," 79.

against possible Soviet aggression.<sup>33</sup> From a military standpoint the JCS found MacArthur's view of overall Soviet military capacities in the Far East seriously flawed. According to John Wiltz MacArthur seemed to think that even the "unlikely event" of a belligerent Soviet response would be confined to "more or less conventional operations in the general area of Korea." He believed that those operations would be unsuccessful because the Soviets were "poorly prepared for hostilities in that part of the world." In contrast, the JCS thought that Moscow might respond with nuclear weapons, which if directed at the U.S. homeland could bring disaster to cities in the densely populated northeast, with 10 million casualties.<sup>34</sup> Even without assuming a nuclear escalation, the JCS thought, Soviet forces had the power to drive UN forces out of Korea with their "aerial superiority," 35 army divisions, and 85 submarines in the Far East.<sup>35</sup>

By February, with the likelihood diminished that UNC forces would have to evacuate Korea, a consensus emerged at top levels of the executive branch in Washington that the conflict in Korea should be confined to the peninsula. Although the United States would retaliate against Chinese air bases if enemy air power attacked "U.S. forces in Korea, outside of Korea, or in transit to or from Korea," Secretary Acheson set aside all other proposals. Washington reassured its allies that the United States would "localize the war in Korea."<sup>36</sup>

This consensus ran counter to General MacArthur's conviction that the United States, "with or without sanction of the United Nations," should expand the war to China.<sup>37</sup> By mid-March General Ridgway had seized the initiative from the enemy. As UN forces restored

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<sup>33</sup> Schnabel, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: Policy and Direction: the First Year* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1992), 315-321.

<sup>34</sup> John Wiltz, "The MacArthur Hearings of 1951: the Secret Test" (Military Affairs, Vol. 39, No. 4 [Dec., 1975]), 168. Upon the possible retaliatory nuclear attack on the United States, MacArthur argued in the hearings that "such matters had been outside his responsibility as a theater commander" and simply refused to consider.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Foot, *The Wrong War*, 128-129

<sup>37</sup> Wiltz, "The MacArthur Hearings of 1951," 168.

territories lost in the previous winter, including Seoul, the State Department began to discuss with allies some restrictions on UNC military operations north of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel and a cease-fire offer on UN terms. When the JCS informed MacArthur of new policy currents, including an impending overture to the enemy to negotiate an end to the fighting, he immediately replied that “no further military restrictions should be imposed on his command.”<sup>38</sup> Further, on March 23 the CINCUNC released a public ultimatum to the Communists:

The enemy... must ... be painfully aware that a decision of the United Nations to depart from its tolerant effort to contain the war to the area of Korea through expansion of our military operations to his coastal areas and interior bases would doom Red China to the risk of imminent military collapse.... Within my area of authority as military commander, however, ... I stand ready at any time to confer in the field with the commander in chief of the enemy forces in an earnest effort to find any military means whereby the realization of the political objectives of the United Nations in Korea, to which no nation may justly take exception, might be accomplished without further bloodshed.

Concerned UN allies queried Washington as to whether General MacArthur’s missive implied a change of U.S. policy.<sup>39</sup>

General MacArthur’s open defiance of Washington came at a moment when the administration urgently needed a trusted theater commander in Asia and the Western Pacific. Apart from the improving military situation in Korea, the Truman administration was also receiving alarming signs that the Communists had not abandoned their original goal of pursuing total victory in Korea and, if necessary, even planned to use Soviet forces in the Far East. Since late 1950 U.S. intelligence had noted a heavy buildup of Soviet air forces in Manchuria and now

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<sup>38</sup> Schnabel, *U.S. Army in the Korean War*, 351, 358.

<sup>39</sup> Schnabel and Watson, *History of the JCS*, Volume III, Part 1, 242-243.

had evidence that Soviet pilots were engaged in limited missions along and south of the Yalu.<sup>40</sup>

If such activity expanded to large-scale air attacks on the battle front, the security of UN forces in Korea might be in jeopardy. By March 1951 intelligence sources reported that even at the risk of general war Stalin was seemingly determined to be more aggressive in Asia. The augmented Soviet armed forces in Manchuria and more than seventy submarines near Vladivostok and Sakhalin Island led President Truman to transfer atomic bombs from the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) to the Air Force.<sup>41</sup> When intelligence of impending Chinese spring offensives arrived, the president decided to transport nuclear weapons and more SAC bombers to Okinawa.<sup>42</sup>

In preparation for possible enemy escalation of the Korean War, the JCS approved a draft order authorizing General MacArthur's "hot pursuit" to attack air bases in China in the event of a major attack on UN forces at the front. The JCS order was then approved by the secretaries of Defense and State and President Truman. Instead of sending the order to General MacArthur for use in contingency planning, however, the JCS decided not to inform him of its existence. They feared that MacArthur might execute the order unnecessarily, especially against Soviet air forces in Manchuria.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Stueck, *Rethinking the Korean War*, 116.

<sup>41</sup> Dingman, "Atomic Diplomacy," 78-79. Roger Anders explains that a principle established by the Atomic Energy Act of 1946 called for civilian control of the atomic bomb as fundamental national policy. However, the crisis of April 1951 resulted in the "first erosion of the principle" because of the seriousness with which the Truman administration viewed the possible Soviet intervention in Korea. Gordon Dean, chairman of the AEC did not want to transfer authority of using the bomb to a field commander, who "had little knowledge concerning effects." However, Truman signed an order transferring nine atomic bombs to the Air Force. Anders surmises that the "crisis with its specter of nuclear war" may have influenced on Truman's decision to relieve the general; Roger Anders, "The Atomic Bomb and the Korean War: Gordon Dean and the Issue of Civilian Control" (Military Affairs, January 1988), 1-5.

<sup>42</sup> Dingman, "Atomic Diplomacy," 75-79. Dingman explains three implications in Washington's positioning of atomic weapons during the spring of 1951. First, Truman's nuclear deployment carried a message to enemies that it was something "far more serious than a training exercise or deterrent feint." Second, Washington intended to warn that the Communists should not consider MacArthur's relief and rejection of expanded fighting as "signs of weakness or timidity." Third, in domestic politics Truman's determination was helpful to bring public focus to MacArthur's misbehavior rather than to a different military strategy. Overall, Dingman concludes that threat may have been "nothing more than a deterrent gesture."

<sup>43</sup> Schnabel and Watson, *History of the JCS*, Volume III, Part 1, 246.

By that time Truman's advisers recognized that he was considering the relief of General MacArthur. On April 5 U.S. Congressman Joseph Martin made public MacArthur's letter in the House of Representatives, in which the general contended that the "utilization of the Chinese forces on Formosa" was not in conflict with either logic or tradition. Further, MacArthur argued:

It seems strangely difficult for some to realize that here in Asia is where the Communist conspirators have elected to make their play for global conquest, and that we have joined the issue thus raised on the battlefield; that here we fight Europe's war with arms while the diplomats there still fight it with words; that if we lose this war to Communism in Asia the fall of Europe is inevitable, win it and Europe most probably would avoid war and yet preserve freedom... There is no substitute for victory.

Because MacArthur was "not only in disagreement with the policy of the government but was challenging this policy in open insubordination to his Commander in Chief," the president concluded, the "time had come to draw the line."<sup>44</sup> After consulting his top advisers, the president finally decided on General MacArthur's relief on April 10 and his replacement in Tokyo by General Ridgway. General James Van Fleet would replace Ridgway in Korea. By the time MacArthur left Tokyo, the prospect of expanding the war to China had diminished in light of Washington's clear willingness to end the Korean War without total victory.<sup>45</sup>

### **Toward armistice talks**

Washington's view of Korea's security position continued to be shaped by perceptions growing out of East-West struggles. Approved on May 17, 1951, NSC 48/5 clearly outlined the Truman administration's policy looking forward: the United States should "seek a settlement of the Korean conflict through appropriate UN machinery," which would terminate hostilities

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<sup>44</sup> Harry Truman, *Memoirs* (N.Y., Garden City: Double Day, 1955-56), 445-47.

<sup>45</sup> Schnabel and Watson, *History of the JCS*, Volume III, Part 1, 246.

“under appropriate armistice arrangements.” Further, the United States should seek to “avoid the extension of hostilities in Korea into a general war with the Soviet Union” and seek to “avoid the extension beyond Korea of hostilities with Communist China, particularly without the support of our major allies.” Another paragraph defined an “acceptable political settlement” in Korea as one that “does not jeopardize the U.S. position with respect to the USSR, to Formosa, or to seating Communist China” in the United Nations. Under such an objective the two major field commanders, Generals Ridgway and Van Fleet, sought to preserve UNC forces while inflicting maximum casualties on the enemy. Ridgway’s directive to Van Fleet pointed out that “continued piecemeal destruction of the offensive potential” of enemy forces would “contribute materially to this objective, while concurrently destroying Communist China’s military prestige.”<sup>46</sup>

On the front in Korea, UN forces proved capable of halting the Communist offensives from April 22 to late May. Not only was Seoul secured by UN forces, but they advanced to positions significantly north of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel except in the far west.<sup>47</sup> Without escalating the air war, a move Stalin rejected as posing too great a risk of expanding the conflict, the Communists clearly could not achieve their goal of driving UN forces off the peninsula. Thus on June 23, 1951, Yakov Malik, the Soviet ambassador to the United Nations, broadcast on radio a proposal for a cease-fire based on the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. The U.S. government responded positively shortly thereafter. Since UN forces had accomplished the main U.S. goal in Korea – protection of the ROK from aggression – it was time to seek an end to the fighting.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 218-219.

<sup>47</sup> Stueck, *Rethinking the Korean War*, 139. After meeting Kim Il Sung and Gao Gang in June, Joseph Stalin cabled Mao that an “armistice would be advantageous.”

<sup>48</sup> Sheila Miyoshi Jager, *Brothers at War: the Unending Conflict in Korea* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company), 192. Jager argues that “based on recent evidence” the Soviet proposal seems to have been “disingenuous.” In a cable to Mao in early June, Stalin stated that the best strategy would be “a long and drawn out war in Korea.” A cease-fire would be “advantageous to the communists,” as it would allow the Chinese and the North Koreans to “rest and regroup,” *ibid.*, 193-194.

U.S. policy in Korea adopted in the fall of 1950, which supported Korea's unification by force, had been abandoned under new circumstances. Chinese military intervention in late 1950 had destroyed Washington's optimism that the defeat of North Korea would end the Communist threat to the ROK's security. As long as China and the Soviet Union, the two major Communist powers ideologically hostile to the ROK regime, bordered the northernmost parts of Korea, the ROK's security problem would not be resolved even if Korea was unified by force. Although Washington continued its political support for the unification of the peninsula under the ROK government, an ongoing attempt at unification by force meant an excessive commitment of resources to a peripheral area and an unacceptable risk of starting a general war. Faced with allied opposition to further offensive military ventures by UN forces above the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel and the continued relative weakness of NATO forces in Europe, Washington was disinclined to invest military resources in pursuit of a unified Korea.<sup>49</sup>

Not only did Washington's revised Korea policy infuriate many Asia-first strategists represented by General MacArthur; it also had potential to alienate the ROK. In February 1951 John Muccio, U.S. ambassador to the ROK, warned that a cease-fire at the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel would "bring a violent explosion from all Koreans" and would "create serious problems in controlling ROK forces." Since the ROK government found unification through diplomacy unrealistic, Washington's promise of political support for a unified Korea under the ROK hardly reassured Seoul. In late May and early June, the ROK government sponsored public demonstrations in Pusan to oppose the start of armistice negotiations. At the end of June the ROK cabinet announced that an acceptable cease-fire should include a "Chinese withdrawal from Korea, the disarming of the North Korean Communists, a UN guarantee that no third power would assist

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<sup>49</sup> Schnabel and Watson, *History of the JCS*, Volume III, Part 1, 202-203.

them either militarily or financially, and recognition of the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the ROK.” To alleviate the ROK’s overt opposition to an armistice, the United States included a ROK representative on the UN negotiating team, admitted the ROK ambassador to the regular meetings in Washington of the sixteen governments contributing military forces to the UN effort in Korea, and reassured support after a cease-fire. While the armistice talks dragged on, however, Washington had to struggle with the tension between the ROK and UNC over a possible cease-fire without unification.<sup>50</sup>

Broadly speaking, the American experience in the first year of the Korean War accounts for Washington’s altered view of U.S. interests in Korea. After the outbreak of war, the Truman administration reached a consensus that those interests could not be defined simply from a military viewpoint. In September 1947 the JCS had concluded that Korea was of no crucial military interest to the United States.<sup>51</sup> Nudged by fiscal austerity in Congress, such a judgment in the military reflected the influence of Europe-first strategists in Washington and the prevailing idea that the U.S. monopoly on nuclear weapons and unchallenged industrial capacity to mobilize for war could deter Soviet aggression.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Stueck, *The Korean War*, 214-215.

<sup>51</sup> The election of Congress in November 1946 set the stage for “rethinking the U.S. occupation policies abroad.” Determined to “hold a right rein on expenditures,” the Congress was deeply concerned with the “high ratios in the army of officers to enlisted men and of civilians to military personnel,” both of which were “closely related to occupation duties.” A sizable budget cut would “render the continuance of occupations impossible”; Stueck, *Road to Confrontation*, 76-77. Faced with budget cuts, the army had to make choices regarding its four occupations – Germany, Austria, Japan, and Korea, where Korea was regarded of the lowest priority. Although earlier in the year Army Chief of Staff Dwight D. Eisenhower reported that “in the long run the costs of our retreat from Korea would be far, far greater than any present or contemplated appropriation to maintain ourselves there.” However, in September he agreed on the JCS judgment that the United States had “little strategic interest in maintaining troops on the peninsula.” If the Soviets “extended their control over the entire country,” they would increase their capacity to “interfere with U.S. communications and operations in East China, Manchuria, the Yellow Sea, Sea of Japan and adjacent islands.” Even so, the United States could “neutralize such a threat by air action,” which would be “more feasible and less costly than large-scale ground operations”; Stueck, *Rethinking the Korean War*, 52-53.

<sup>52</sup> A new Korean aid program in 1947 also presents Washington’s “marginalization of Korea’s strategic value vis-à-vis Europe.” In May 1947, the State Department planned to propose at least a one-year program to Congress. Authorizing the Greek-Turkey aid program, however, the administration was wholly committed to European recovery. In June, Secretary of State George Marshall announced that “billions of dollars would soon be required for Europe.” In July, the Wedemeyer mission was instructed to visit and report on Korea with “special attention to the projected economic aid program,” and the State Department tacitly withdrew its earlier plan. In August, the program was shelved until 1948; Stueck, *Road to confrontation*, 79-82. After the

In June 1950, however, Washington's quick intervention in the Korean War revealed that for political and psychological reasons rooted in the American role on the peninsula since 1945 and UN involvement in the creation of the ROK in 1948, the United States would not permit the overthrow of South Korea by blatant military action. The expenditure of a substantial amount of manpower and resources for the survival of the ROK and the continuing engagement of the United Nations during the first year of the war reinforced this initial judgment. By the summer of 1951, any decision to abandon the ROK would have meant a severe loss of U.S. credibility in the eyes of U.S. allies and an encouragement of its enemies. Protecting the ROK was now considered of crucial U.S. interest and the dominant U.S. security concern when the armistice talks began. Yet even from a political and strategic standpoint, that interest did not include extending ROK authority over the entire peninsula. The key question now facing the Truman administration was whether armistice negotiations could secure the ROK's integrity in the face of North Korean and Chinese Communist armed forces once the fighting stopped.

### **Major security issues in the armistice negotiations**

The key objective of Washington in negotiating an armistice was to end the fighting in a way that would protect the security of the ROK at a price sustainable to the United States. Therefore, the UNC decided to seek an end to the fighting along the current battle line, which was mostly north of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel and defensible, as an adequate starting point to maintain the security of the ROK after the signing of an armistice. In addition to a defensible armistice line,

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trip to Korea, the Wedemeyer team recommended a "relief program for Korea," which would cost the U.S. about "\$150 million annually, nearly \$60 million more than Congress provided in 1947." At that time, the recommendation was declined, under the uncertain status of Korea before the UN Assembly. Eventually, the "economic aid funds under the occupation budget" would rise to \$147 million for the newborn ROK forces in 1949, which "virtually matched Wedemeyer's estimate of the ROK needs"; Stueck, *The Wedemeyer Mission: American Politics and Foreign Policy during the Cold War* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1984), 82, 101-102.

the UNC called for an inspection system to restrict any post-armistice military buildup and an acceptable repatriation of war prisoners. Beyond the various provisions of the armistice agreement, the United States sought agreement of the sixteen UN members contributing military forces in Korea on a joint declaration of a “greater sanctions statement” upon the signing of the armistice, a warning message to the Communist powers.

Since March 1951 UN forces had proven their ability to repulse enemy offensives along current battle positions, then named the *Kansas Line*. When the United States decided to negotiate for an armistice in Korea, it regarded the current lines as suitable for defensive operations under the current directive: inflicting heavy losses on the enemy while managing its own casualties at a low level. At the beginning of the negotiations, the Communists angrily rejected the initial UNC proposal to draw a defensible line well north of the UN position on the front. Talks were suspended in August.<sup>53</sup> Soon after they resumed at Panmunjom in October, the Communists agreed on a revised UNC proposal for a preliminary armistice line based on the present “line of [military] contact in the middle of a four kilometer demilitarized zone.”<sup>54</sup> Although the preliminary line technically lost its validity after a month passed without the conclusion of the armistice, the Military Demarcation Line (MDL) signed in July 1953 was little different from the line agreed to in November 1951.<sup>55</sup>

The second major issue addressed was restrictions on a military buildup after the armistice.<sup>56</sup> U.S. negotiating instructions called for creation of a commission that would “keep the opposing sides from reinforcing air, ground, or naval units or personnel during the armistice

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<sup>53</sup> Stueck, *The Korean War*, 225.

<sup>54</sup> Stueck, *Rethinking the Korean War*, 145, 156-157.

<sup>55</sup> Walter Hermes, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: Truce Tent and Fighting Front* (Washington, D.C.: United States Army, Center of Military History), 120 - 121.

<sup>56</sup> Stueck, *Rethinking the Korean War*, 159-160.

and from increasing the level of war equipment and materiel existing in Korea at the time the armistice becomes effective.”<sup>57</sup> The UNC (American) negotiators contemplated two monitoring institutions: a Military Armistice Commission (MAC) and a Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission (NNSC). In January 1952 the UNC consented to the Communist insistence that a NNSC would “bear the responsibility for inspection on the ground, aerial surveillance, and port inspection.”<sup>58</sup>

Following the establishment of monitoring institutions, the UNC and the Communists dealt with specific inspection issues. First, both agreed on the number of 35,000 for monthly rotations of troops, which was significant to the UNC because of the physical distance between Korea and other UN members. Second, both the UNC and the Communists agreed to specify five ports of entry for inspection on each side. Third, the rehabilitation of North Korean air fields, which had been largely destroyed by UNC air power, turned out to be the most controversial issue. To reach an early armistice agreement, the UNC finally accepted the Communist demand that “no restriction be placed on the rehabilitation and construction of airfields.”<sup>59</sup>

Admiral C. Turner Joy, the first head of the UN negotiating team, later criticized this concession because “there was no longer any chance to prevent the military capabilities of Communist forces in Korea from increasing in a major degree during the truce.”<sup>60</sup> In other words, the agreement potentially undermined the UNC’s advantage in air power on the peninsula without altering the other side’s superiority in the size of ground forces. As the fighting was in stalemate while the armistice talks proceeded, the enemy’s reduced casualties, combined with

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<sup>57</sup> *FRUS, 1951, Korea and China*, Volume VII, Part 1, 598-600.

<sup>58</sup> Chuck Downs, *Over the Line: North Korea’s Negotiating Strategy* (Washington, D.C.: The AEI Press, 1999), 66-67, 70.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 71-76.

<sup>60</sup> Turner Joy, *How Communists Negotiate* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955), 73.

new reinforcements, resulted in a growing imbalance of troops on the ground between the UN forces and the Communists.<sup>61</sup>

Although most of the security issues were resolved by April 1952, the negotiations for an armistice did not reach a successful conclusion until July 1953. The failure to resolve the issue of disposal of prisoners-of-war (POWs) explains this delay. With the exchange of the prisoner lists in December 1951, the UNC discovered that prisoners in the custody of the Communists were far fewer than the Communist prisoners in their hands. While the Communists showed only 11,559 prisoners out of some 100,000 missing in action on UN records, the UNC list had 132,000 prisoners and another 37,000 civilian internees out of 188,000 Communist soldiers missing on their records.<sup>62</sup> Obviously tens of thousands of captured ROK citizens and soldiers, who were missing from the Communist list, had been coerced into the North Korean army.

The UNC subsequently adopted two major positions regarding the POWs: first, prisoners held by the UNC who resided in South Korea prior to the war and had been forced into the North Korean army must be reclassified as “civilian internees” not subject to repatriation and, second, no prisoners held by either side could be forced to return against their will. While the former issue contributed to prolonged negotiations, the latter eventually led negotiations into a lengthy deadlock. Among other things, the UNC feared that if the prisoners on the exchange list were released on an all-for-all basis, the Communist armed forces would be immediately expanded, increasing the cost of sustaining the armistice line. UNC reclassification efforts regarding North

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<sup>61</sup> Hermes, *U.S. Army in the Korean War*, 198-200. Hermes explains that from a low of 377,000 men on November 1, 1951, the Chinese Communists grew to an estimated 570,000 on December 1 and a total of 642,000 by the first of the year. On the other hand, during the six months between November 1 and April 30, U.S. ground force strength, including the marines, dropped from 264,670 to 260,479. The U.S. policy of rotation helped to sustain morale but it also served to depress the relative strength of the UN ground forces vis-à-vis the Communists. Despite an increase of around 65,000 men from the other UN countries and the ROK, enemy superiority in manpower continuously mounted during the six months.

<sup>62</sup> Stueck, *The Korean War*, 250. On December 22, 1951, when the lists were discussed for the first time, Rear Admiral Ruthven Libby explained to the Communists that 16,000 more prisoners had turned out to be ROK citizens and also would not be repatriated.

Korean prisoners succeeded in slashing the number of Communist prisoners by more than one third, but the issue of no-forced-repatriation for the remaining prisoners was unresolved when Eisenhower succeeded Truman in the White House in January 1953.<sup>63</sup>

Beyond all the security measures integrated into armistice agreements, Washington planned to extend UN wartime collective security into the defense of the ROK after the armistice. By the time armistice talks were fully underway in Panmunjom, the overall commitment of UN members to the security of the ROK had far exceeded token levels. In response to UN resolution 83 on July 27, 1950, Jiyul Kim explains, 48 out of 59 UN member nations provided assistance, including personnel, cash, food, and medicine. Seven non-member-states and two non-states, Japan and West Germany, also sent aid, bringing the total to 57 nations. Of these, 22 nations formed the core of the coalition under the UN Command. Non-U.S. ground forces began to arrive in strength in August 1950, and by mid-1951 fourteen nations had sent ground forces. In the summer of 1951, the Eighth Army had 28,000 soldiers from 16 nations other than the United States and the ROK. By the end of the year, the troops of Commonwealth nations had significantly expanded, and medical units from five other nations had arrived in Korea.<sup>64</sup> Not only did the UN members contribute to saving the ROK from the Communists; their presence in Korea was an instrument to impose international pressure on the Communists, especially in Moscow. During the Korean War Moscow's desire to maintain its prestigious standing in the United Nations helped deter its overt participation in the war. Likewise, Washington believed, the continuing UN commitment to Korea would deter another Communist aggression in Korea under the armistice.

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 250-252.

<sup>64</sup> Jiyul Kim, "United Nations Command and Korean Augmentation" in James Matray and Donald Boose, Jr, ed., *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Korean War* (Surrey & Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited & Ashgate Publishing Company, 2014), 285-89.

Therefore, Washington pressed military contributors to the UNC to agree to participate in a “greater sanctions statement” upon the signing of the armistice. The statement would warn the Communists that the sixteen nations contributing military forces to the UNC would be united to resist a renewal of the Communist armed attack after the armistice and in such an event hostilities were not likely to be confined within the frontiers of Korea.<sup>65</sup> In part the idea had roots in Washington’s doubts regarding effective inspections. Originally the UNC considered that aerial surveillance could prevent or at least detect a potential post-armistice Communist buildup, but it did not insist on this method in the armistice agreements.<sup>66</sup> As a consequence, Washington turned to the UN principle of collective security as the last resort to the defense of the ROK. The sixteen nations reached agreement on a statement in February 1952.<sup>67</sup>

Despite this statement and the security measures sought through the armistice negotiations, Truman’s planners were under no illusion that, even if achieved, they would ensure a permanent end to the fighting in Korea. Effective deterrence, they believed, also would depend on real military power.

### **Seeking a position of strength**

We saw earlier that U.S. strategists during the first year of the war worried about the American ability to wage a successful larger conflict against the Soviet Union. Indeed, this concern was a primary argument against expanding the fighting in Korea. Thus as the struggle proceeded in Korea, the Truman administration undertook several measures to create a position

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<sup>65</sup> Hermes, *U.S. Army in the Korean War*, 491-493.

<sup>66</sup> Downs, *Over the Line*, 74. Downs notes that thanks to “advances in surveillance technology” Washington may have thought that aerial surveillance could “operate without agreement from the Communists.”

<sup>67</sup> *FRUS, 1952-54, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 1, 14. The draft of the “Greater Sanctions Statement” was approved without changes by all 16 UN members participating in the Korean War on Feb. 20, 1952.

of strength vis-à-vis the Communists, not just on the peninsula but worldwide. First, the JCS and the State Department agreed that the top priority was to build up American military power, and a rearmament plan was well under way by June 1951.<sup>68</sup> Enhancing the overall capacities of U.S. armed forces, Washington strategists hoped, would discourage the Kremlin from launching a general war.<sup>69</sup> Second, Washington endeavored to establish a principle of collective security both in Asia and Europe. While a network of bilateral and trilateral alliances was being created along the Asia-Pacific rim, Western unity was also reinforced by integrating Greece and Turkey into NATO and deploying new U.S. army divisions to Germany. Finally, the United States was turning American strength, based on air power and the atomic bomb, into a tactical advantage at a theater level. Without doubt the outbreak of the Korean War contributed to all these efforts. As the war dragged on without any promise of a cease-fire, however, a change in the military situation surrounding Korea potentially influenced the armistice negotiations.

The American military buildup between 1950 and 1953 shifted the East-West balance in some respects in favor of the United States and its allies. By mid-1952, George Lemmer observes, the JCS had set the rearmament goals to include “twenty Army divisions, three Marine divisions and three Marine Air wings, 409 major combat ships for the Navy, and 143 wings for the Air Force.”<sup>70</sup> As the administration believed that by 1954 the Soviet Union could launch a devastating first nuclear strike on the United States, a strong emphasis was placed upon U.S. strategic deterrence of growing Soviet nuclear power. In 1950 the United States possessed a total of 299 nuclear weapons. By 1953 the number had jumped to 1,169, including around 300 new tactical atomic weapons for use in the field on military targets. Meanwhile, the Soviet

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<sup>68</sup> Trachtenberg, “A ‘wasting asset,’” 24, 26.

<sup>69</sup> George Lemmer, *The Air Force and Strategic Deterrence 1951-1960* (U.S. Historical Division Liaison Office, December 1967), 8.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

Union increased its stockpile from 5 to 120.<sup>71</sup> The stockpile of bombs became so plentiful by 1953 that Washington was much less concerned than two years before that the use of nuclear weapons in Korea might seriously drain its reserve.<sup>72</sup>

A plan to establish an expanded defense network in Asia and the Western Pacific also unfolded after 1950. Before the war a basic principle of U.S. defense in the region was to focus on a chain of islands off the coast of East Asia without committing its forces to the mainland. In fact, Washington's defense of the so-called "off-shore chain" in the Pacific was not considered the most desirable military position even then. In May 1949, faced with the U.S. troop withdrawal from Korea and impending defeat of Nationalist China, ROK President Rhee suggested a Pacific Security Pact, a NATO-like multilateral military organization in the Far East. In August, when Chiang Kai-shek visited the ROK, they proposed a conference of Asian leaders in the Philippines.<sup>73</sup> Shortly after Communist China's victory on the mainland in late 1949, NSC 48/1 concluded that the United States should encourage noncommunist forces to "take the initiative in Asia by forming a regional security association" and should "assist it, if invited, under conditions that would serve U.S. interests."<sup>74</sup>

But Asian states failed to agree on the primary significance of such a military organization and Rhee's negative sentiments toward Japan did not permit its inclusion as potentially the most significant military power in East Asia.<sup>75</sup> The stillbirth of the Pacific security pact reinforced the JSC's pessimistic view regarding the prospect of collective security

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<sup>71</sup> Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace: the Making of the European Settlement 1945 – 1963* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 181.

<sup>72</sup> Trachtenberg, "A 'wasting asset'," 30.

<sup>73</sup> Donald Macdonald, *U.S.-Korean Relations from Liberation to Self-reliance* (Boulder, London: Westview Press, 1992), 139.

<sup>74</sup> Kenneth Condit, *History of the JCS: the JCS and National Policy 1947-1949*, Volume II (Washington D.C.: Office of the Chairman of the JCS, 1996), 276.

<sup>75</sup> Macdonald, *U.S.-Korean Relations*, 139.

arrangements among noncommunist nations of Asia. Therefore, an overall U.S. policy in East Asia under the Truman administration, which was finalized in NSC 48/2, was to concentrate on American bases in the Western Pacific while avoiding the involvement of its ground forces on the mainland.<sup>76</sup> On January 12, 1950 Acheson publicly described the U.S. Pacific defense perimeter as spanning from the Aleutians to Japan, then through the Ryukyus, omitting Taiwan, and ending in the Philippines.<sup>77</sup> In “other areas in the Pacific,” Acheson continued, the initial reliance must be “on the people attacked to resist it” and then upon the “commitments of the entire civilized world under the Charter of the United Nations.”<sup>78</sup>

Soon after the outbreak of war in Korea, however, strategists in Washington and Tokyo grasped the disadvantage of isolating military strength in Korea from manageable resources in East Asia and the Pacific. At the heart of problem lay the fact that U.S. forces had only limited military resources in areas of secondary importance while the military balance of conventional forces in Europe was still favorable to the Soviet Union by three to one. The Korean War convinced Washington that U.S. naval and air strength alone was not sufficient to deter “Communist imperialism” in Asia. Improved U.S. relations with Japan and Nationalist China during the war raised a new prospect of “collective security” on a regional basis, to consolidate common security interests and create a bulwark of Asian anti-Communism. The strained relationship between Seoul and Tokyo, however, remained an insurmountable impediment to any Washington-sponsored regional coalition.

On several occasions during the Korean War, the United States considered the introduction of Chinese Nationalist troops to the peninsula. Soon after the war’s outbreak,

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<sup>76</sup> Condit, *History of the JCS*, Volume II, 277.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 278. Acheson did not include Taiwan in the perimeter, since the United States was at that time carefully looking for a “correct position in the Chinese civil war.”

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

President Truman ordered the Seventh Fleet to cruise the Taiwan Strait and “neutralize” it, reversing his previous non-engagement policy regarding survival of Chiang Kai-shek’s anti-Communist regime. In response, Chiang offered to send Nationalist troops to the ROK. However, Washington rejected the idea at that time.<sup>79</sup> In November 1950 General MacArthur’s call for additional reinforcements reminded Washington of the Generalissimo’s earlier offer. According to MacArthur Nationalist troops were the “only source of potential trained reinforcement available for early commitment.” When the JCS rejected MacArthur’s plan for an expanded war in January 1951, it again rejected the employment of Nationalist troops on the ground that they were unlikely to be decisive and were probably of “greater usefulness elsewhere.” In May 1952 General Mark Clark, the new CINUNC following General Ridgway, urged that the Nationalists should offer two divisions in Korea. The idea was not approved, mainly because the State Department firmly opposed it on political grounds. Although Washington planners continued to contemplate a contribution of Nationalist forces to the defense of the ROK, none ever occurred.<sup>80</sup>

The Korean War also expedited Washington’s plan for Japanese rearmament. The basic idea was that once Japanese forces grew enough to provide for self-defense, the United States would reduce its burden in Japan and have more troops disposable to deploy elsewhere. Further, Japan served as a big supply base for UN munitions, and its military potential was rated high for the future defense of Asia and the Western Pacific. As occupation forces under General Headquarters (GHQ) moved to Korea in the summer of 1950, General MacArthur decided to create a National Police Reserve (NPR) of 75,000 men and expand the Maritime Safety Force

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<sup>79</sup> Schnabel and Watson, *History of the JCS*, Volume III, Part 1, 201-202. The administration reasoned that the Nationalists’ military effectiveness was dubious and it would seem “a little inconsistent” to send U.S. troops to protect Taiwan while the island’s “natural defenders” were being moved to Korea.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 204-209.

(MSF) from 8,000 to 10,000. In 1952 the United States planned to expand the NPR to a “300,000-man force of ten ground divisions with air and naval capability.” However, Shigeru Yoshida, the Japanese prime minister, was reluctant to rearm and deploy Japanese troops elsewhere. Yoshida agreed only to augment NPR force levels to 110,000.<sup>81</sup>

When Washington dispatched Special Envoy John Foster Dulles to Tokyo in January 1951 to negotiate a peace treaty with Japan, its rearmament became a central subject. Yoshida’s notion was that “any precipitate rearmament” was inadvisable due to the threat of “underground militarism, economic weakness, and public opposition.”<sup>82</sup> He contended that the United States exaggerated the Communist threat in East Asia. In Yoshida’s opinion the “regional security arrangements ... appropriate to West Europe” was not suitable in Asia. He urged that “American interests in the Far East” did not call for a substantial buildup of Japanese forces. Dulles and Yoshida could only agree on the stationing of U.S. forces in Japan after the peace treaty was concluded.<sup>83</sup>

A restored U.S.-Japan relationship was one significant episode in Washington’s efforts for the establishment of an Asia-Pacific security network during the Korean War. In 1951 Washington and Tokyo finally agreed on a peace settlement of World War II between the Allies and Japan. Separately, the two nations prepared for a bilateral U.S.-Japan security pact. Instantly after Japan signed the peace treaty with 48 nations in San Francisco on September 8, 1951, the United States and Japan initialed such a pact, which included a subsidiary agreement regarding U.S. use of bases in Japan for Korean operations.<sup>84</sup> In fact, under the security treaty

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<sup>81</sup> Michael Schaller, *Altered states: the United States and Japan since the occupation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 45-46.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>83</sup> Weinstein, *Japan’s Postwar Defense Policy*, 62, 66-67.

<sup>84</sup> Schaller, *Altered states*, 40

the United States could maintain armed forces in Japan until it could acquire sufficient strength for self-defense.<sup>85</sup> By the time Tokyo agreed to these security arrangements, the United States had completed bilateral and trilateral defense pacts with the Philippines and Australia and New Zealand. These treaties established a legal basis for a U.S. military presence in Asia and the Pacific, which later would be supplemented by the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and pacts with the ROK and Taiwan.<sup>86</sup>

With its solid influence in Japan and Taiwan, Washington also sought to keep Japan at arm's length from the Beijing regime despite its historic interest in the China trade. In April 1951 Republicans began to pressure the Truman administration for a peace treaty with Japan only on the condition that Communist China neither participate in the settlement nor take control of Taiwan. In June Dulles proposed that neither of the two Chinese regimes should be invited to the peace conference. In his opinion Japan had to be allowed a "separate peace agreement" with "either Taipei or Beijing" after the conclusion of the peace treaty. In April 1952, shortly before the peace treaty was ratified by the U.S. Senate, Japan complied with Washington's call for a relationship exclusively with Chiang's government.<sup>87</sup>

Finally, wartime technological progress, coupled with the arrival of nuclear-plenty by the end of the Korean War, led to a revolution of tactical nuclear doctrine. A key factor in the new doctrine was the development of small atomic bombs. After 1951, George Lemmer explains, the development of nuclear technology diverged in two different directions. While the development of fusion bombs advanced on schedule, a number of weapons in "various sizes, shapes, weights, and yields" also appeared. Between 1951 and 1953, the AEC developed "hydride or so-called

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<sup>85</sup> Hermes, *U.S. Army in the Korean War*, 220-224. The conditions governing the disposition of U.S. troops and the use of Japanese facilities were worked out by an administrative agreement, which was signed in February 1952.

<sup>86</sup> Schaller, *Altered states*, 40.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 38, 44.

boosted bombs,” which required a smaller amount of fissionable material for high yield. As a result smaller nuclear bombs could be produced for tactical use and nuclear warheads in missiles. In early 1952 fighter aircraft such as the “F-84 and some Navy carrier planes” could deliver an atomic bomb weighing approximately 1,700 pounds. By the end of the year the weight of a fission bomb could be reduced to only 1,000 pounds. Therefore, the idea that fighter-bombers could strike “purely tactical targets” with atomic bombs was finally accepted.<sup>88</sup>

In step with technological progress on small nuclear weapons, the Tactical Air Command (TAC)’s turn to nuclear armament during the Korean War came to challenge a lion’s share of the SAC doctrine of strategic deterrence, paving the way to the establishment of tactical nuclear doctrine within the Air Force. When the war broke out in Korea, Jerome Martine explains, the Air Force, based on its experience in World War II, began to provide air support for ground operations. Reinforced rapidly from the United States, the Air Force performed well in its air and ground missions. Overall, the TAC owed its escape from marginal status within the Air Force to the impact of the Korean War on U.S. security policies. According to Martin the active Air Force units in 1950, composed of only ten fighter or fighter-bomber groups (wings) and one equipped with light bombers, increased to fifteen fighter-bomber plus four tactical bomber wings. Meanwhile, various types of new planes were under development as part of modernization programs.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Lemmer, *The Air Force*, 10-15.

<sup>89</sup> Jerome Martin, “Reforging the sword: United States Air Force tactical air forces, air power doctrine, and national security policy, 1945-1956” (Ph.D. Dissertation, the Ohio State University, 1988), 76-77, 107. To many Air Force commanders, however, their tactical missions in Korea were obviously an aberration from what the Air Force had long labored for since World War II: building strategic air power in the event of a general war. In 1950, an Air Force report to Congress declared that its top priority mission was “cooperating with the Army and Navy in the air defense of the Western Hemisphere.” By 1952 its primacy was revised to “defending the United States by both offensive and defensive air operations” with “particular emphasis against atomic attack.” This top priority was followed by “attacking the enemy war-making capacity, assisting the direct defense of NATO and then the defense of critical areas in the Far East, and aiding the allies in executing their responsibilities.” As Martin points out, the “traditional tactical missions in support of theater operations” were placed into the “last two, lower priority roles”; *ibid.*, 109, 115.

An important change to the traditional role of the TAC began with military stalemate in Korea. As Caroline Ziemke explains, in early 1951 the production of smaller nuclear weapons, which were suitable for mid-bomber missions, inspired TAC to establish a “special air branch” and claim a “piece of USAF’s nuclear mission.” Under the new leadership of Lieutenant General John Cannon, TAC aimed at developing strike and “special weapons capabilities,” including nuclear weapons. New capabilities, Cannon urged, would enable SAC to concentrate on the development of a strategic force necessary to “deter or conduct all-out war with the Soviet Union.” By acquiring a “TAC fleet of medium bombers,” Cannon planned to create a “theater-level SAC” having “short and medium-range capabilities,” including nuclear weapons.”<sup>90</sup>

Cannon’s idea fit into Air Force planning for the rest of the Korean War. In August 1951 Air Force Secretary Thomas Finletter announced that the Air Force would develop “new tactical atomic weapons” designed to “bring atomic power to bear directly on the enemy’s ground forces.” In an address to the Air Force Association, Secretary Finletter specifically commented that “pressure from the other services, a reassessment of the capabilities of strategic aviation, and the operational lessons of the Korean War reinforced by the development of tactical nuclear weapons,” had contributed to rethinking the “relative role of strategic and tactical airpower.” Korea convinced Finletter that U.S. military planning could not abandon its “traditional primary purpose” of “defeating the enemy’s armed forces in the field.”<sup>91</sup> Therefore, between 1951 and 1953 the Air Force undertook the task of creating a tactical atomic force. By July 1952, Lemmer recounts, a composite atomic air squadron, the 49<sup>th</sup> Air Division, had arrived in Europe. TAC’s 20<sup>th</sup> Fighter Bomber Wing, equipped with “specially modified F-84G’s,” specialized in atomic

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<sup>90</sup> Carolina Ziemke, “In the shadow of the giant: USAF Tactical Air Command in the era of strategic bombing, 1945-1955” (Ph.D. Dissertation, the Ohio State University: 1989), 182-183.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 184, 232-233.

tactical support missions. Another new TAC unit, the First Tactical Support Squadron, could deliver the tactical atomic bombs to “U.S. air bases worldwide” and transfer them to the fighter bomber units.<sup>92</sup>

A rapidly expanding tactical air component of the Air Force received public support for several reasons. Ziemke explains that Cannon’s efforts to transform TAC into another atomic air force fit well the popular notion that nuclear weapons were cost-effective as a substitute for conventional systems. At the same time, in the public debate over TAC’s atomic weapons, the military and Congress shared the view that the United States was facing a “complex threat environment” that SAC alone was not well disposed to cope with. TAC’s atomic capability was more flexible, responsive, and economical given various threats to U.S. interests than a strategic force existing solely for the purpose of an all-out nuclear war with the Soviet Union.<sup>93</sup>

The new military current in Washington in support of tactical use of nuclear weapons produced eagerness among U.S. commanders in the Western Pacific regarding its practical utility in Korea. After General MacArthur’s dismissal in April 1951, any vocal advocacy of using atomic weapons in Korea at the official level in Washington was muted, at least for the rest of Truman’s term. However, MacArthur’s successors in Tokyo investigated the feasibility as well as the real advantage of the use of tactical atomic weapons in Korea. Yet the deployment of a new nuclear-capable tactical air squadron in the Far East was not completed until Eisenhower took over in the White House in January 1953, and a theater commander’s call for possible tactical nuclear warfare in Korea remained muted because Air Force planners were dubious regarding its effectiveness.

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<sup>92</sup> Lemmer, *The Air Force*, 10-15.

<sup>93</sup> Ziemke, “In the shadow of the giant,” 235-237. The Army began to develop its own atomic artillery, charging that the Air Force was “dragging its feet in developing atomic tactical air support,” partly because of “SAC’s public insistence” that “tactical support was an unproductive use of atomic resources.”

In May 1951, soon after he succeeded General MacArthur's command in Tokyo, Ridgway, concerned about possible Soviet reactions to a peace treaty with Japan, explored the need for atomic bombs to support ground operations in Korea. According to Army Staff studies, however, "planning, intelligence, command relationships, and training in SAC and Far East Command (FEC)" were inadequate to "support Ridgway's ground operations with nuclear weapons." When the JCS discussed one of the two Army Staff studies in August, they directed FEC to "test atomic delivery procedures by conducting simulated strikes in Korea" with the "coordination of SAC and Commander-in-Chief Pacific (CINCPAC)."<sup>94</sup>

Eventually, *Exercise HUDSON HARBOR* came out of the JCS directive in August 1951, but the conclusion of the maneuver disappointed military planners' expectation for good targets in Korea. Crane explains that *the operation* consisted of four practice missions, which SAC X-RAY conducted on "tactical targets" FEC had selected. The operations were conducted for security reasons in a guise of "conventional strikes in support of front line troops" and rehearsed actual nuclear procedures, including three and a half hours of interval before a simulated presidential order released the weapons for a first strike. Hudson Harbor led to the conclusion that potential targets in Korea were not adequate for atomic attacks.<sup>95</sup>

In May 1952 General Clark, the new CINCUNC and CINCFE, also expressed interest in tactical nuclear planning in Korea, and the previous year's review was rekindled. When General Clark suggested a "punishing campaign of increased air pressure" to reach a favorable settlement of the Panmunjom talks, a Headquarters USAF staff study replied in conventional rhetoric that the "political drawbacks" of using atomic weapons in Korea, "except to avert a disaster,"

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<sup>94</sup> Crane, "To Avert Impending Disaster," 79. Crane explains that the JCS directive reflected the Navy's "carrier-based nuclear capability."

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 79-80.

outweighed any military advantages. Nonetheless, in June the general requested nuclear capable F-84s for the Far East Air Force (FEAF) to “hit counter air targets, if required, especially air bases in Manchuria.” Clark was concerned that SAC units, including the B-50s on Guam, would not be available except for strategic use should the war expand. Meanwhile, the medium bombers were vulnerable to enemy jet fighters and radar defenses, which were protecting their key air installations.<sup>96</sup> After the armistice talks were suspended indefinitely in October 1952, General Clark became more impatient to get Washington’s approval of expanded military operations.

The last two years of the Korean War are often described as a series of small-scale, skirmish-like, intermittent battles along the established frontline. In the eyes of the general public, many battles seemed just as trivial and unproductive as the armistice talks in Panmunjom. Beyond the battlefield in Korea, however, overall U.S. military strength transformed so much that strategic planners began to contemplate new approaches to the Korean problem. American rearmament, an expansion of regional security arrangements in Asia and the Western Pacific, and the evolution of tactical nuclear doctrine all influenced Washington’s strategic approach to Korea after Dwight D. Eisenhower entered the White House in January 1953.

### **From Truman to Eisenhower**

By the time Eisenhower entered the White House on January 20, 1953, U.S. military strength far exceeded that of late 1950 and early 1951. A top military hero of World War II, the new president enjoyed enormous prestige at home but at the same time considerable pressure to bring the Korean War to an early end. Indeed, he had won election in November 1952 to a large

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

extent because of the suspended armistice talks and his promise late in the campaign to “go to Korea” himself if necessary to bring the fighting to an end. An opportune moment existed to reconsider escalating military operations in and/or beyond Korea.

Washington’s general view of the Korean War in the global context changed little with Eisenhower’s inauguration. On November 26, 1952, future Secretary of State John Foster Dulles recapitulated the Korean problem in a memorandum to the president-elect, pointing out that the “dominant will with which we have to deal” is that of the Soviet Union. Although the Kremlin could not “impose its will on Communist China” in the “same arbitrary way as in Eastern Europe,” the Chinese Communists accepted the “dominance of the Soviet Communist Party as leader of [the] world proletariat.” Therefore, Dulles concluded that considerations determining “whether or not the Communists will continue the war” were global, not limited to the “battle line in Korea or the desires of the North Koreans or Chinese Communists.”<sup>97</sup>

In dealing with this “dominant will” in Moscow, however, Eisenhower felt less concerned than Truman that employment of new military and political pressure regarding Korea would risk a global conflagration. As Trachtenberg points out, the empirical evidence demonstrated that the Soviet Union was not managing the Korean crisis as part of an immediate global war plan. East Germany had not invaded its western counterpart. The Berlin crisis had not recurred. Tito’s neutral stance had not been punished. Soviet troops did not move back to Iran. As fears of an early global war between East and West receded, Washington could seek more initiatives in the Far East than during the winter of 1950-51. The new president was ready

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<sup>97</sup> *FRUS, 1952-1954, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 1, 692.

to take more risk of an escalation of the war if no armistice agreement could be reached. In developing a new strategic position, U.S. nuclear strength held the key.<sup>98</sup>

Washington's new initiatives in Korea, buttressed by enhanced U.S. nuclear strength, reflected the new administration's strategic position in the Cold War. As John Lewis Gaddis points out, in coping with worldwide Communist threats that NSC 68 had warned of in early 1950, the Truman administration seemed to believe that any spending level could be justified for the sake of U.S. security. In contrast, Eisenhower assumed that the United States had limited means to achieve strategic objectives in the long-term, worldwide struggle with Communism. Eisenhower's observation of skyrocketing military spending, prompted and justified by the war in Korea, led to his fear that the United States might degenerate into a "garrison state," where the American tradition of a free economy and democracy would no longer stand.<sup>99</sup> To forestall the bad effects of military expenditure upon the vitality of the U.S. economy in a long-term trajectory, Eisenhower believed that global strategy must accommodate calls for budgetary restraint.

Such a belief set a basis for the new administration's strategic concept, which would become known as the "New Look." A central objective, Gaddis explains, was "regaining the initiative" while "lowering costs." In obtaining strategic initiatives within a budgetary boundary, the concept of "strategic asymmetry," which Dulles had first suggested in 1952, gained formal endorsement. By asymmetrical response the new administration meant to apply "one's own strength" against "the other side's weakness." U.S. nuclear weapons were a primary instrument in this strategy. Though the Truman administration did not adopt a universal doctrine to achieve

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<sup>98</sup> Trachtenberg, "A 'wasting asset,'" 28-30.

<sup>99</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy during the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University press, 2005), 130-32.

political benefits from its nuclear strength, a substantial buildup of U.S. nuclear weapons encouraged the Eisenhower administration to take advantage of its nuclear strength in dealing with its enemies.<sup>100</sup>

Policy toward China was another area that eventually distinguished Eisenhower's initiatives from those of his predecessor. During his election campaign of 1952, Gaddis notes, Eisenhower expressed support for Truman's major diplomatic and strategic approaches "with the single exception of its China policy, about which he had had private reservations."<sup>101</sup> While Truman based his limited war policy upon U.S. containment of the Soviet Union to protect the Pacific from the Communists, Eisenhower interpreted the Korean War more directly as a signal of overall crisis in East Asia arising from Communist China's emergence as a great power on the mainland. In the spring of 1951, advocates of the former view in Washington effectively countered General MacArthur's position as commander-in-chief in the Far East (CINCFE). By early 1953, in contrast, the new Republican administration was flexible enough to consider strategies based on the latter view, including an expansion of the Korean War, in order to neutralize Communist China's military adventurism in Asia. If the Soviet Union was "the dominant will" with which the United States must contend on a global basis, for the moment the PRC was a powerful instrument of that will in Korea and the rest of East Asia. In this light an escalation of the war in and/or beyond Korea might serve as a counter to the PRC's aid to the Viet Minh in Indochina, a Communist-dominated movement that threatened to spread revolution throughout Southeast Asia.

Eisenhower's new initiatives against Communist China are also comprehensible in light of Washington's view of Sino-Soviet relations during the Korean War. Prior to its outbreak

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 144-6.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 125.

Moscow and Beijing had signed a Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance in which the parties guaranteed mutual support should one of them face attack by Japan or an allied state.<sup>102</sup> In September 1951, when Washington and Tokyo signed a security pact, the end of the Korean “hot war” seemed to be a matter of time. Considering diminishing hostilities in Korea, a new U.S.-Japan alliance was unlikely to activate the Sino-Soviet treaty as long as Moscow and Beijing evasively denied China’s official entry into the Korean War in the guise of “volunteers.” By the time Eisenhower entered office, however, prospects in Korea were uncertain and Moscow’s possible reaction to U.S. military escalation there remained so.

Despite Moscow’s legal obligation to Beijing, by late 1952 the dominant view within the Truman administration was that even U.S. direct military action against Chinese territory would not bring the Soviet Union into the expanded war. Although some warned of the possibility of World War III, most U.S. officials believed that Moscow would not come openly and extensively to the support of China unless it appeared that the Beijing government was about to fall as a consequence of U.S. bombing activity, or unless bombing operations strayed close to sensitive Soviet border areas. Throughout 1952 this prevailing view was frequently confirmed by intelligence estimates. The State Department had informed its key allies of this view, with which few within the Pentagon dissented. All but one of the commanding officers in the Far East, including CINCUNC General Clark, believed that the Soviet Union would not enter an expanded conflict because of its strategic focus on a proxy rather than a wider war.<sup>103</sup> Under such circumstances President-elect Eisenhower had an interim period to think over new initiatives in and beyond Korea before he took the office.

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<sup>102</sup> Foot, *The Wrong War*, 26.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 195-99.

Eisenhower's post-election activities in December 1952 foretold an impending shift of U.S. policies in Korea. Between December 2 and 5, Eisenhower flew to Korea and met with Generals Clark and Van Fleet. By the time Eisenhower visited Korea, General Clark had completed his new contingency plan in the event of a total breakdown of the armistice talks and the JCS were reviewing it in Washington.<sup>104</sup> As of October 15, 1952, OPLAN 8-52 pointed out that the UNC confronted "numerically superior enemy forces" in "excellent, well-organized defensive positions" with "adequate logistic support." To obtain a military victory and thereby an armistice on UNC terms, General Clark proposed a general offensive to "effect maximum destruction of enemy forces and materiel" and drive the enemy north of the Pyongyang-Wonsan line. "Air facilities and communications" in China and Manchuria would be subject to air-naval attacks prior to the general offensive, which would then require "three phases of approximately twenty days each."<sup>105</sup>

Under the Truman administration, Crane notes, OPLAN 8-52 did not assume any employment of atomic bombs. Nevertheless, Clark believed that the "special weapons" would make "much more effective" attacks on airfields in Manchuria and North China, as well as "on targets of opportunity" in Korea. Therefore, when General Clark prepared for a briefing on OPLAN 8-52 for Eisenhower, he added a discussion of contingency planning for the use of atomic weapons. In preparing for another briefing for the JCS, General Clark indicated to his staff General Bradley's advance approval of the atomic scheme in the event of a resumption of the offensive.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Schnabel and Watson, *History of the JCS: the JCS and National Policy 1951-1953*, Volume III, Part 2 (Washington D.C.: Office of the Chairman of the JCS, 1998), 190-192.

<sup>105</sup> United Nations Command, Operations Plan CINCUNC No. 8-52, October 15, 1952 in Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Geographic File 1951-53, RG 218, 383.21 Korea (3-19-45) Sec. 139 B.P. Pt. 4-5, Box No. 47 (College Park, MD.: National Archive).

<sup>106</sup> Crane, "To Avert Impending Disaster," 81.

Another sign of new military initiatives came from an Eisenhower-MacArthur meeting. On the last day of Eisenhower's trip to Korea, MacArthur announced that he had a solution on "how to end the war in Korea." On December 17 Eisenhower met with MacArthur in New York to hear his suggestions. What MacArthur envisioned was a grand political settlement with Moscow: unification of Germany and Korea followed by neutralization of Germany, Austria, Japan, and Korea. To compel Moscow's agreement on such a big deal, MacArthur urged, Washington should express its determination to "clear North Korea of enemy forces" and "neutralize Red China's capability to wage modern war." In particular MacArthur mentioned the need for "atomic bombing of enemy military concentrations and installations in North Korea" and the "sowing of fields of suitable radioactive materials" in order to "close major lines of enemy supply and communication leading south from the Yalu, with simultaneous amphibious landings on both coasts of North Korea."<sup>107</sup> Eisenhower later recalled that MacArthur's suggestions had influence on his view of the need for nuclear weapons.<sup>108</sup>

Although Eisenhower listened carefully to the proposals of military experts, he also understood that execution of either of these plans would risk a variety of diplomatic setbacks involving U.S. allies and neutrals in the United Nations. Even before Eisenhower won the election, NATO allies signaled their opposition to more pressure on Communist China. During the fall of 1952, the UN General Assembly showed lukewarm support for the U.S. position at Panmunjom and blocked any U.S. proposal to impose additional sanctions on Communist China.<sup>109</sup> Just like the Truman administration in late 1950 and early 1951, the new administration faced a crucial choice regarding an expanded war. Under growing restiveness at

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<sup>107</sup> Douglass MacArthur, Memorandum on ending the Korean War, New York, December 14, 1952 in Ann Whitman File, Administration Series, Box No. 25 (Abilene, KS.: Dwight D. Eisenhower Library).

<sup>108</sup> Foot, *The Wrong War*, 205-06.

<sup>109</sup> Stueck, *Rethinking the Korean War*, 170-171.

home military planners called for more drastic measures, but the international community remained highly skeptical.

### **President Eisenhower Explores Options for Ending the Korean War**

The new administration quickly signaled its willingness to explore new initiatives in Asia, including a possible escalation of the Korean War. The first significant departure from Truman's policy came in President Eisenhower's State of the Union address to Congress on February 2, 1953. The new president announced that the U.S. Seventh Fleet would no longer protect Chinese Communists from Nationalist attacks on the mainland. Then in early March Eisenhower invited his advisers and congressional leaders to the reception of General Van Fleet in the White House, where the general, recently released from his duties as commander of the Eighth Army in Korea, asserted that "the way to end the war" was "through military escalation."<sup>110</sup>

These public signals reflected a broad evaluation within the new administration of several possible initiatives to end the fighting in Korea while reducing the Communist threat to the ROK and the rest of East Asia. First, the administration attempted to cobble together a regional security alliance linking Seoul, Tokyo, and Taipei. Second, Washington undertook plans to end the Korean War from a dominant position, that is, to push the armistice line north to the waist of Korea. Unlike General Clark's original OPLAN 8-52, a new UN military offensive did not rule out the use of nuclear weapons. Finally, after the administration approved the use of nuclear weapons if the Communists refused to sign an armistice, Washington carried out nuclear threats in an attempt to compel the Communists to accept UNC terms. The Eisenhower administration

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 172-173.

believed that such measures contributed to ending hostilities in Korea on July 27, 1953; they also set a cornerstone to Washington's strategic mind regarding post-armistice Korea in East Asia.

The Korean War convinced the Eisenhower administration that, so long as Communist China was ready to exert its military power beyond its traditional borders, a consolidation of security arrangements in East Asia was necessary to counter its military strength. Such a consolidation would not only reduce the U.S. burden in the region; it would compensate somewhat for the feared weakening or disintegration of the anti-PRC coalition in the United Nations following a Korean armistice. In February 1951 the UN General Assembly's condemnation of the PRC for acts of aggression in Korea provided the basic rationale for UN support of U.S. economic sanctions against Communist China. However, as NSC 154 warned in June 1953, after an armistice UN allies might be "unwilling to support the United States in maintaining political and economic pressures against Communist China." As a result, "existing differences between the US and its major allies over policy toward China" might be intensified, and this could lead to a "serious breach between the US and its major allies over the Far East."<sup>111</sup>

Washington's doubts about a continued UN commitment to the anti-PRC campaign was not groundless, as shown by UN allies' reluctance to announce the "greater sanctions statement" in the last months of the Korean War. The 16 nations had reached an agreement on the joint statement of "greater sanctions" in early 1952, but when the signing of the armistice finally came

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<sup>111</sup> NSC 154: United States tactics immediately following an armistice in Korea, Washington, June 15, 1953 in White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, 1952-61, NSC Series, Policy Papers Subseries, Box No.5 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL). While hostilities continued in Korea, Washington successfully associated its UN allies into sanction against Beijing. Soon after Communist China intervened in Korea, Washington quickly imposed a total economic embargo against Beijing. However, Washington did not pressure its allies at that time to join to U.S. embargo against China. It insisted on "multilateral sanctions under the auspices of the United Nations." In the summer of 1951, ships "with western flags transporting strategic materials to China through Hong Kong" decreased. Washington held on to the China embargo, in part to bring Beijing to U.S. terms during the Kaesong-Panmunjom negotiation. To block the development of China strength until "fundamental change of China's aggressive and expansionist designs indicated," Washington established a China Committee (CHINCOM) of the Consultative Group in Paris in July 1952. Washington maintained this policy current through to the end of the Korean War; Shu Guang Zhang, *Economic Cold War: America's Embargo against China and the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1949-1963* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 34-35, 43-48.

into sight UN allies feared that the ROK's blunt opposition might embroil them in resumed hostilities in Korea. Therefore, some allied nations began to question the wisdom of the joint declaration. To avoid broad publicity of their future commitments to Korea, they urged Washington to release the statement as part of a special report to the UN General Assembly. Eventually, the "greater sanctions" statement was issued as part of General Clark's summary of the armistice agreements to the United Nations on August 7, 1953.<sup>112</sup>

Although the U.S. security network in East Asia and the Western Pacific had expanded substantially during the Korean War, the integration of its parts in the struggle against Communist China was sorely lacking. In March 1953 the JCS pointed out that, to date, the military potential of the ROK, Nationalist China, and U.S. army divisions in Japan had been "unrelated and handled piecemeal." In view of their military strength if coordinated, the JCS advised that all of these forces could contribute to preventing further Communist aggression in Korea and the rest of the region.<sup>113</sup>

The biggest obstacle to such a plan was, as the failure of the Pacific Pact had revealed four years earlier, the acrimonious relationship between Seoul and Tokyo. In hopes of overcoming this hurdle, in January 1953 General Clark invited ROK President Rhee to Tokyo, an invitation he accepted only grudgingly. During his visit Rhee met Yoshida and set the stage for substantive negotiations. Pressured by Washington, Tokyo initiated a proposal for Japan-ROK normalization talks, which began on April 15, 1953. As Donald Macdonald notes,

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<sup>112</sup> Hermes, *U.S. Army in the Korean War*, 491-93.

<sup>113</sup> Memorandum for the National Security Council: Future Courses of Action in Connection with the Situation in Korea, Washington, March 30, 1953 in White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, 1952-61, NSC Series, Policy Papers Subseries, Box No.2 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

“Korean flexibility” on negotiations was based on the calculation that they could get a “better deal” from Yoshida than from his eventual successor.<sup>114</sup>

Meanwhile, Washington sought to expand Japan’s role in the defense of East Asia. To begin with, Secretary Dulles endeavored to integrate Japan into the Mutual Security Act (MSA). The U.S. Congress had passed the MSA in 1951 as a way of coordinating the “numerous military aid programs during the Korean War.” On July 10, 1953 Dulles announced that Japan’s security forces should be expanded to over 300,000 under the MSA. In less than a month, when Dulles went to Korea to conclude a bilateral security pact with President Rhee, he told the press that he was exploring the “prospects not only of a defense pact with Seoul, but also a mutual security pact covering Japan, Korea, and Nationalist China.” Dulles’ comments only infuriated Rhee and embarrassed Yoshida. Eventually Dulles concluded that Japan had a “passive attitude” toward the defense of Asia.<sup>115</sup> Despite all the practical merits intrinsic to the establishment of a regional defense network, the prospect of such a military alliance seemed as remote as it had been four years earlier.

While it explored new security arrangements, the administration also prepared for military initiatives in Korea. A big question Washington strategists faced was whether the current battle line was the most desirable position for UN forces to defend after the armistice. The JCS had long contemplated the issue. Initially the JCS believed that if the armistice talks failed UN forces should remove all restrictions concerning an advance into North Korea, or at least to the neck of North Korea.<sup>116</sup> Such a view was revised in September 1951, when Washington compared and weighed three possible courses of action for contingencies: advance

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<sup>114</sup> Macdonald, *U.S.-Korean Relations*, 128.

<sup>115</sup> Schaller, *Altered States*, 64-67.

<sup>116</sup> Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, “U.S. course of action in Korea,” JCS 1776/240, July 13, 1951, cited from William Stueck’s archive.

to the Manchurian border, advance to the “northern waist,” and no major movement. In light of Communist China’s capabilities to launch a new offensive, the best course of action seemed to be a defense on the “present strong position in the *Kansas line*” and to “inflict maximum casualties on the Chinese” if a new Communist offensive began.<sup>117</sup>

In 1952 the question of the UN military position became an integral part of contingency planning because of the inconclusive, now suspended armistice negotiations. As early as February 1952, the JCS had begun to develop new war plans in the event that negotiations dragged on indefinitely or broke down. Eventually the JCS turned to CINUNC General Clark for advice.<sup>118</sup> Before the new Eisenhower administration finalized possible military options available in Korea, however, the long-term deadlock at Panmunjom suddenly showed signs of movement. Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin died on March 5, 1953, and in less than a month the Communists signaled their readiness to resume negotiations.<sup>119</sup>

Although the administration was not inherently at odds with the Communist initiative for an armistice, its search for an optimal military option was not abandoned by the sudden, new peace mood. At bottom the new administration was not convinced that a cease-fire at the current battle line would be the most desirable end of the Korean War. As distinct from Acheson’s days, the State Department leaned toward a new military campaign. Secretary Dulles expressed his concern that after the Korean War the Communists might intensify their hostilities elsewhere, especially in Indochina. Dulles seriously considered the advantages of a military offensive to the narrow neck, which would shorten the battle line by one third and bring more than 80 percent of

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<sup>117</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom, “Military action in Korea in the event of a breakdown in the armistice talks,” September 17, 1951, Australian archives accession mp 1217 item, box 1690, cited from William Stueck’s archive.

<sup>118</sup> Schnabel and Watson, *History of the JCS*, Volume III, Part 2, 190-191.

<sup>119</sup> Stueck, *The Korean War*, 308-10.

the Korean population under ROK control.<sup>120</sup> Such an advance would weaken North Korea's future prospects as an independent regime. Dulles had never given up on the ultimate objective of a united Korea under the ROK, the achievement of which was the only way to satisfy Rhee. If the UNC established itself at the narrow neck, the reasoning went in the State Department, the Soviet Union and Communist China might be willing to accept an end to North Korea in return for the withdrawal of American forces from the peninsula.

Although the potential strategic advantage of a successful UN offensive was indisputable, military planners understood that after nearly two years of stalemate any success of a full-scale UN offensive in Korea would be very costly. On March 21 President Eisenhower directed Secretary of Defense Charles Wilson to study the "cost of a UN advance" to the waist of Korea. The JCS proceeded to examine six possible courses of action. When the JCS delivered its report before the end of March, it warned that a successful military offensive against the "well dug in enemy forces in Korea" would be challenging even with the use of nuclear weapons and would cost heavy casualties.<sup>121</sup> As the JCS report specified, a fortification of the Communist line, reinforced by the arrival of new Chinese armed forces, represented major impediments to the advance of UN forces.

A buildup of enemy forces was sufficiently large to shift the military balance in Korea. While the Communists had only 35 divisions on the front in July 1951, by April 1952 they had 51 divisions. Their artillery delivery capability rose during the same period from 8,000 rounds to 43,000 rounds daily. They had virtually no armor in July 1951, but in April 1952 they had a total of 520 tanks and self-propelled guns. They increased air strength from 500 to 1,250 aircraft,

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 310.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 309-310.

leaving UN forces in Korea vulnerable to air strikes. Communist ground forces could launch a major attack with little warning and sustain it for five to ten days.<sup>122</sup>

By early 1953 the Chinese military buildup in Korea was even more impressive. The 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, and 46<sup>th</sup> Armies entered Korea in the fall of 1952, and the 1<sup>st</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, and 54<sup>th</sup> Armies arrived in January 1953. To support 1.35 million Chinese troops in Korea, the Communists stockpiled more than 120,000 tons of ammunition and more than 248,000 tons of grain. They also established a “consolidated defense system” on both the east and west coasts in North Korea to prevent enemy amphibious operations behind the battle line. In November and December 1952, Chen Jian explains, UN landing operations became the “single most important issue on the [Chinese People’s Volunteers] CPV agenda.” Chairman Mao Zedong expressed confidence that the failure in the landing operation would mean a certain defeat of the United States.<sup>123</sup>

Washington was keenly aware that the Panmunjom talks would not ensure the end of fighting in Korea. As early as the first week of negotiations in July 1951, the JCS undertook to examine possible military measures in the event that negotiations failed. In such an event the JCS recommended an immediate increase of the scale of military operations, a rapid buildup of Japanese and Korean troops, and additional reinforcements from the 16 UN participants.<sup>124</sup> With American commitments elsewhere and the unwillingness of other UN members to contribute more conventional units, however, the only viable way to counter the Communist buildup conventionally was through the augmentation of ROK forces.

In fact, such a buildup had been proceeding since mid-1951. Soon after the relief of General MacArthur, the ROK government began to insist on the increase of the ROK forces

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<sup>122</sup> Schnabel and Watson, *History of the JCS*, Volume III, Part 2, 144-145.

<sup>123</sup> Chen Jian, *Mao’s China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill & London: the University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 110-111.

<sup>124</sup> *FRUS, 1951, Korea and China*, Volume VII, Part 1, 667-668.

from 10 to 20 divisions. In May 1951 NSC 48/5 directed that the United States should “develop dependable South Korean military units as rapidly as possible and in sufficient strength eventually to assume the major part of the burden of the UN forces there.” Buoyed by progress in Panmunjom, NSC 118/2 stated in December that if an armistice was achieved, the United States would “intensify to the maximum practicable extent the organization, training, and equipping of the armed forces of the ROK, so that they may assume increasing responsibility for the defense and security of the ROK.” If no armistice was achieved, the United States would “develop and equip dependable ROK military units, as rapidly as possible and in sufficient strength, with a view to their assuming eventually responsibility for the defense of Korea.”<sup>125</sup>

Under President Truman’s new policies, ROK forces began to swell after General Clark assumed his command in mid-1952. As of February 1952 ROK forces had 250,000 men in 10 divisions, numerically equivalent to North Korea’s 225,000 men in 23 divisions. In October Washington approved the increase of the ROK Army to 12 divisions and six separate regiments, with an overall ceiling of 463,000 men. Soon after President Eisenhower took office, he approved Clark’s call for a 14-division army. In April 1953 the president approved creation of two more divisions, with tentative agreement on a 20-division plan with a ceiling of 655,000 men. Finally, in May President Eisenhower directed the NSC to allow the CINCUNC to activate the remaining four divisions. Such a rapid buildup in 1953 was authorized in anticipation of the restrictions on the size of armed forces that would go into effect under the armistice.<sup>126</sup> Nonetheless, the massive Communist buildup, to say nothing of China’s potential manpower, far exceeded the ROK’s mobilization capacities during the whole period.

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<sup>125</sup> Schnabel and Watson, *History of the JCS*, Volume III, Part 2, 120-124.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 152, 196-200.

Even so, by the fall of 1952 the indefinite stalemate at Panmunjom brought the possibility of military escalation back into focus. Washington began to question how long the UNC policy based on a limited war would be adequate in the face of the growing military imbalance on the front. In mid-October, a week after negotiations had been formally suspended, Secretary of the Army Frank Pace argued in favor of the 20-division plan of the ROK government and General Clark. In his memorandum to the Defense Secretary, Pace raised the problem of limited UNC military resources in contrast to the vast improvement of enemy forces. Although UN ground forces were bolstered by the “expanding ranks of well trained, combat tested ROK troops,” Pace pointed out, the ROK army could not provide the “margin of additional power necessary to effect a military solution.” Pace’s assessment was that UN ground troops could not be used extensively to force a decision in Korea prior to 1954.<sup>127</sup>

Not only was the military balance in Korea evolving to the disadvantage of the UNC; nearly a year of stalemate also gave the enemy enough time to construct and fortify the current battle line. After UN forces made limited gains between July and October 1951, the enemy battle line was reinforced in depth. By late 1952 UNC field commanders faced increasing tactical problems in operations against enhanced enemy defense abilities.<sup>128</sup>

From a broader strategic perspective, MacArthur’s memorandum on “ending the Korean War” in December 1952 summarized well how the stalemate in Korea had changed the military situation in Korea to the advantage of the Communists:

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<sup>127</sup> Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, “Reduction of U.S. manpower in Korea,” Washington 25 D.C.: Department of the Army, October 16, 1952, cited from William Stueck’s archive.

<sup>128</sup> For instance, a report of November 1952 stated, “The static situation which has now existed in Korea for over a year has enabled the Chinese to gain greater accuracy, flexibility and speed in concentrating fire on any given target. As a result, it is now normal practice in UN attacks for troops to be supported with fortification materials as part of the attack in the same manner as the resupply of ammunition is accomplished. These materials usually consist of precut logs to furnish overhead shelter, barbed wire and sandbags carried forward by the KSC moving almost without internal in rear of the attacking elements. In many cases individual riflemen each carry several empty sandbags to augment the supply from other sources”; special operation report 3(QGC-35). 040001I-102400I Nov 52 in 11 parts, Van Fleet Collection, Box 87, Lexington, VA.: George C. Marshall Research Library, cited from William Stueck’s archive.

In April 1951, when I left the scene of action, the enemy, although well supplied with excellently trained infantry with adequate small arms and light equipment, had practically no supporting air power and was markedly deficient in artillery, anti-aircraft guns, transport and communications equipment. This permitted our own air to operate strategically and tactically with little or no opposition and made possible an early and inexpensive military victory through destruction of the enemy's bases of attack and supply north of the Yalu.... Now after 20 months the situation as it then existed is markedly changed. The enemy reportedly has appreciable air forces with an arc of air bases from Port Arthur to Vladivostok to challenge our own air operations within the general area of the Yalu. He probably now has artillery superiority and through greatly increased motor equipment has largely solved the logistical problems.... His communications now permit far more efficient tactical control of his front line units....<sup>129</sup>

The military challenge in Korea that the new administration inherited in early 1953 was how UN forces could win over the Communists, now much stronger than in July 1951, should full-scale hostilities resume. In President Eisenhower's opinion, even a substantial buildup of UN forces for the purpose of the military campaign to the waist of Korea might not resolve the impasse. In a special NSC meeting of March 31, 1953, Eisenhower opined that any sizable conventional buildup for a "sound tactical victory in Korea" would be quickly detected by the Soviets, who would respond by increasing Communist strength there. As a result, Eisenhower continued, UN forces would be "forced ultimately into a situation very close to general mobilization."<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Douglass MacArthur, "Memorandum on ending the Korean War," New York, December 14, 1952 in Ann Whitman File, Administration Series, Box 25 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL). According to CINCUNC General Clark, the UN forces still enjoyed a superiority of firepower on the battlefield through better ammunition. The ratio of UN fire to the enemy's had declined from 40:1 in January 1952 to a low of approximately 4:1 in September 1952, but it rebounded to about 10:1 in December. Clark defended high ratio of artillery and mortar fires to the enemy's in terms of the reduced casualties and UN success in repelling the recent attacks with heavy Communist casualties; General Mark Clark, Statement on ammunition situation in Far Eastern Command, January 19, 1953 in Ann Whitman File, Administration Series, Box 10 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>130</sup> Memorandum: Discussion at Special Meeting of the NSC, Tuesday, March 31, 1953 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No.4 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

Although a substantial buildup of UN forces was mandatory to defeat the Communist armed forces in Korea, a general war situation there also would carry an unprecedented military risk because of growing Soviet nuclear capabilities. In March 1953 the JCS study of possible military actions in Korea expressed concern about “Soviet retaliation in kind,” especially against UN forces and installations, which provided “better targets for atomic weapons than those of the enemy.”<sup>131</sup> To American strategists the Korean War was not an exemplary case of how future war should be conducted. In an atomic era “old-school” features of the Korean War, such as heavy concentration of ground troops within a small battle area, position warfare with its reliance on firepower such as artillery, howitzer, mortar, and tactical bombers, and a prolonged war of attrition, were getting anachronistic, leaving the ground units on the battlefield vulnerable to possible enemy nuclear air strikes. With increasing nuclear and airpower on the Communist side, concentrations of ground forces on the scale of the Communist buildup would risk catastrophic losses should the Soviet Union decide to arm the Communist Air Force in China (CAFIC) with the bombs and means of delivery means or participate in the war with its own forces.

President Eisenhower’s estimate of Communists’ willingness to use nuclear bombs on the battlefield is unclear. As Evan Thomas states, there are “no revealing diary entries from this

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<sup>131</sup> Memorandum for the NSC: Future courses of action in connection with the situation in Korea, March 30, 1953 in White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, 1952-61, NSC Series, Policy Papers Subseries, Box 2 (Abilene, KS., DDEL). The JCS listed five major advantages of using atomic weapons; first, it would “considerably augment capabilities of U.S.-UN forces” and somewhat offset the “implications of developing a conventional capability to produce equivalent military effects outside Korea.” Second, it would curtail Communist Chinese capability of “continuing present hostilities, of threatening U.S.-UN security in Korea and Japan, or of initiating aggression elsewhere.” Third, it might increase the “deterrent effect of our atomic capabilities on the USSR, as pertains to both global and limited war.” Fourth, threats to our military position in Korea could be eliminated “more effectively, quickly and cheaply than by use of conventional weapons.” Finally, Sino-Soviet solidarity might be seriously strained if Soviet Union would not sufficiently increase aid to “offset the adverse effect of atomic weapons.” At the same time, the JCS picked up six disadvantages; first, unless nuclear strike results in a decisive military victory, the deterrent effect might be eroded. Second, public opinion in the United States, as well as in allies and neutral nations, might be adverse. Third, any profitable strategic use requires “extension of hostilities outside of Korea.” Fourth, “increased threat of Soviet intervention or retaliation in kind” might result. Fifth, a precedent would be established, and “UN forces and installations” are generally “better targets for atomic weapons than those of the enemy,” for example, the “ports of Inchon and Pusan, UN airfields and concentrations for amphibious operations.” Finally, use of substantial number of bombs will reduce the U.S. stockpile and “global atomic capabilities.”

period, no advisers' recollections of the president confiding or even guessing at his true intentions." Eisenhower had written in his diary on June 30, 1950, however, that he told Pentagon friends that "an appeal to force cannot, by its nature, be a partial one" and "we must study every angle to be prepared for whatever may happen, even if it finally came to the use of an A-Bomb (which God forbid)."<sup>132</sup> The president was convinced, Gaddis notes, that the "advent of nuclear weapons" had made it impossible to "move American troops abroad on a World War II scale." He pointed out that had the Germans possessed atomic bombs, Allied forces could never "even have crossed the [English] Channel."<sup>133</sup> It is unlikely, therefore, that in early 1953 the president merely ignored the worst case that new UN amphibious and ground operations in North Korea, which Mao had feared the most and General Clark had already suggested in OPLAN 8-52, would end in military fiasco as a result of the tactical use of nuclear weapons by the Communists.

Under such circumstances, maximizing U.S. superiority in the air remained essential to a successful UN offensive. This was how the Americans had defeated its enemies during World War II while keeping casualties at a manageable level. In the last year of the Korean War, key military decision-makers in Washington and Tokyo were veteran generals of World War II, who had common experiences in converting the allied aerial superiority to tactical advantage on the ground. Indeed, in February 1944, during the battle of *Monte Cassino*, General Clark, then commander of the Fifth U.S. Army, made his controversial order to destroy the historical Benedictine monastery before he launched a major assault to the *Gustav Line*.<sup>134</sup> Five months

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<sup>132</sup> Evan Thomas, *Ike's Bluff: President Eisenhower's Secret Battle to Save the World* (New York, Boston, London: Little, Brown and Company, 2012), 73, 77-78.

<sup>133</sup> Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 164.

<sup>134</sup> Martin Blumenson, *U.S. Army in World War II: The Mediterranean Theater of Operations: Salerno to Cassino* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1993), 399-418.

later Generals Eisenhower and Bradley succeeded in breaking through German defenses in northern France soon after a concentrated aerial bombardment stormed over *Panzer Lehr* during *Operation COBRA*.<sup>135</sup> Bradley later recalled that this was the “most decisive battle of our war in western Europe.”<sup>136</sup> Nine years later the three highest U.S. commanders in the Mediterranean and Western Europe joined in Washington’s final decision-making process in Korea as U.S. president, chairman of the JCS, and the CINCUNC.

Yet to many military planners the Korean War taught that, despite the huge contribution the Air Force had made to the defense of the ROK in the first year of the war, a limit existed to what it alone could achieve. At the beginning of the fighting, Crane explains, many believed that “airpower alone” could “turn the tide of the war.” By 1951, however, they largely understood the limited capabilities of the FEAF.<sup>137</sup> Since even a full-scale employment of airpower could not guarantee a UN victory, what could be done with the limited military resources available in Korea?<sup>138</sup>

Technological breakthroughs gave the Americans the potential to further capitalize on air power. In the spring of 1953, the military impasse prompted the new administration to consider the use of tactical atomic weapons in an effort to end the Korean War. Secretary Dulles did not rule out use of atomic weapons if necessary for a UNC advance to the waist of Korea.

Regarding Soviet success in its propaganda in “setting atomic weapons apart from all other

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<sup>135</sup> Blumenson, *U.S. Army in World War II: The European Theater of Operations: Breakout and Pursuit* (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, 1993), 224-246.

<sup>136</sup> *The Washington Post*, April 10, 1981.

<sup>137</sup> Crane, *American Airpower Strategy in Korea, 1950-1953* (Lawrence, KS.: University Press of Kansas, 2000), 183-184.

<sup>138</sup> Despite field commanders’ need for additional troops, the entire Korean peninsula was already under coverage of the Communist air attacks, which did not rule out possible nuclear strikes. The result was, as Stalin told Zhou once in August 1952, the United States seemed to “have no ability to wage a large-scale war at all” as long as “all of their strength lies in air power and the atomic bomb”; Jager, *Brothers at War*, 274.

weapons,” the secretary argued that the United States should “break down this false distinction.”<sup>139</sup> Military advisers did not disagree. In light of the “extensive implications of developing an effective conventional capability in the Far East,” the JCS recommended to the president in late March that the “timely use of atomic weapons” should be considered against “military targets affecting operations in Korea,” including “direct action against Communist China and Manchuria.”<sup>140</sup>

Eisenhower was a main contributor to the development of nuclear options in the Korean War. For years before he entered the White House, he had given considerable thought to the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. military planning. His thoughts had grown out of his involvement in U.S. strategic planning going back at least to the immediate post-World War II period. After succeeding General George Marshall as Army chief of staff in November 1945, he began to play a role in planning a large peacetime military establishment, especially in airpower. Under Eisenhower’s influence competition between the air service and the navy was intense, and an emphasis on strategic air power for deterrence and retaliation was widely recognized in Washington.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Memorandum: Discussion at the 131st meeting of the NSC on Wednesday, February 11, 1953, February 12, 1953 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No.4 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>140</sup> Memorandum for the NSC: Future courses of action in connection with the situation in Korea, March 30, 1953 in White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, 1952-61, NSC Series, Policy Papers Subseries, Box 2 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>141</sup> Michael Sherry, *Preparing for the next war: American plans for postwar defense, 1941-45* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977), 228-29. Sherry explains that the advent of an atomic age intensified inter-departmental competition in the postwar planning. The public reaction to Hiroshima and Nagasaki revealed skepticism of the role of conventional forces in future war, except for “all-important” strategic airpower. The Army and Navy debated the importance of supporting personnel and carrier task forces. By the time General Eisenhower joined to the Joint Chiefs, the Joint Strategic Survey Committee was concluding that the advent of atomic weapons did not at this time justify elimination of the conventional armaments or major modification of the services that employed them. At the same time, the doctrines of massive deterrence and retaliation, as the new policies would later be called, had begun to be noted. The bomb heightened the necessity of “striking first, if necessary, against the source of threatened attack.” The Joint Intelligence Committee recommended both retaliatory and preventive atomic strikes against the Soviet Union not only in case of an imminent Soviet attack but in the contingency that enemy industrial and scientific progress suggested a capability for an “eventual attack against the United States or defense against our attack.” The committee advised that “use of strategic air power should be given highest priority.” With nuclear warfare too terrible to contemplate and a first strike too politically risky to venture, however, prevention of war was the first priority. Therefore, the atomic weapon appealed to policymakers as the ultimate weapon of deterrence; *ibid.*, 205-13.

General Eisenhower's concern as Army chief was not confined to the strategic importance of the new weapons in preparing for future war with the Soviet Union. He also played a central role in initiating the Army's efforts to develop a doctrine for tactical use of atomic weapons. In January 1946 Eisenhower urged "study, experiment, and training" to point the way toward the "best kind of an Army to build around the all-powerful atomic weapons." "All possible methods of delivery of atomic weapons" should be studied and developed, he declared. The JCS approved his idea and integrated it into the final assessment of the "effect of atomic weapons on military organization." John Midgley explains that the major contribution of the resulting Study Group was an "extended analysis of a future war in Europe" fought under "hypothetical conditions of American strategic atomic superiority."<sup>142</sup>

The Soviet explosion of a nuclear device in August 1949, the outbreak of war in Korea, and the U.S. intervention there with major ground and air forces led to a rethinking of the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. defense strategy. On several occasions during the war, Eisenhower remarked that SAC-based deterrence was not a panacea to every problem the United States faced in the world.<sup>143</sup> In 1952 presidential candidate Eisenhower warned in the Republican convention that "obsession with economic growth and overreliance on strategic airpower" had led to a "sort of neo-isolationism" that threatened, in the long run, to "turn the U.S. into a have-not nation." He questioned how responsive a "national strategy based on retaliatory air power" could be to U.S. interests "below the level of superpower confrontation." However determined U.S. leadership

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<sup>142</sup> Midgley, *Deadly Illusions*, 4-8.

<sup>143</sup> Crane, "To Avert Impending Disaster," 72-73. Eisenhower was out of the government at the beginning of the war, but wanted to present his view to General Bradley, chairman of the JCS, that "use of one or two bombs in the Korean area" might be worthwhile "if suitable targets could be found." Unfortunately General Bradley was sick and out of his office, and Eisenhower instead "dictated a memorandum for the staff to transmit to Bradley." Crane surmises that the discussion about the use of atomic weapons in a July 9, 1950 JCS meeting may have been prodded by General Eisenhower.

was to avoid such entanglements, Eisenhower argued, Korea had proved that a “Gibraltar theory of isolationism” defended by “retaliatory air power” was “obsolete.”<sup>144</sup>

From the NSC meeting on February 11, 1953, when he raised the possibility of using tactical nuclear weapons “in the [then neutral] area around Kaesong,” which the Communists were using as a major supply base, President Eisenhower was actively engaged in discussions with his top advisers about their proper use as part of a new war plan in Korea. Although the JCS report of late March failed to meet the president’s expectation that the use of tactical nuclear weapons in Korea would be decisive enough to justify the resulting decrease of the U.S. stockpile, President Eisenhower continued to explore the merits of such an offensive. He admitted that there were “not many good tactical targets” in Korea, but he still argued that nuclear bombing could be “worth the cost” in winning over the Communist forces and reaching the waist of Korea. The president and secretary were “in complete agreement” that the taboo surrounding the use of atomic weapons should be discredited.<sup>145</sup> In Richard Betts’ analysis the president and his military advisers were divided on the “range of nuclear options;” while the president looked for various uses of the weapons, including on the battlefield, his advisers thought that they should be reserved for possible use in a war expanded to China.<sup>146</sup>

Finally, in May 1953 military advisers went along with President Eisenhower’s call for the active use of the tactical atomic weapons in the event that UN forces attempted to go north to

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<sup>144</sup> Martin, “Reforging the sword,” 217.

<sup>145</sup> Memorandum: Discussion at Special Meeting of the NSC, Tuesday, March 31, 1953 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No.4 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>146</sup> Betts, *Nuclear Blackmail*, 40-41. When the issue of bombing new air fields in North Korea was discussed on May 6, 1953, the president reiterated his earlier view by stating that “we had got to consider the atomic bomb as simply another weapon in our arsenal”; Memorandum: discussion at the 143rd meeting of the NSC on Wednesday, May 6, 1953, May 7, 1953 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No.4 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL). In the following week, when the JCS briefed the Council that they were “most anxious to make use of atomic weapons” in any course of action involving “operations outside Korea,” the president seemed not to understand why atomic weapons could not be used to dislodge the Chinese armed forces from their positions in Korea; Memorandum: discussion at the 144th meeting of the NSC, Wednesday, May 13, 1953, May 14, 1953 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No.4 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

the waist of Korea. Although the Air Force continued to oppose General Clark's plan because of "too much force augmentation" and an "unrealistic number of atomic bombs, between 342 and 482," the final JCS recommendation to the secretary of defense on May 19, 1953 overrode that opposition.<sup>147</sup> The JCS proposed "air and naval operations against China and Manchuria, an offensive to seize a position at the narrow neck, and the tactical and strategic use of atomic bombs." Air attacks beyond the Yalu River were to be limited to North China and Manchuria. Longer term objectives were "destroying the Communists' military power in Korea" while "reducing their capability for further aggression, increasing the possibility of an armistice on UN terms, and creating conditions favorable for ROK forces to assume more responsibility."<sup>148</sup>

On May 20 agreement between the president and his military advisers resulted in NSC Action No. 794, which approved the JCS course of action "as a general guide" if conditions arose "requiring more positive action in Korea."<sup>149</sup> The president had two reasons for remaining determined to use atomic weapons if necessary to end the Korean War. First, he thought that an evolving tactical nuclear doctrine had made obsolete the political taboo of atomic weapons that the international community had recognized in past years. Second, he believed that, faced with U.S. strategic deterrence, which meant SAC capacities to utterly destroy the Soviet Union in the

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<sup>147</sup> Crane, "To Avert Impending Disaster," 83. Instead, the Air Force suggested a buildup of the ROK Army and "increasing pressure on the Communist Chinese in stages, without a fixed geographical objective" to take more in Washington's control and less risk to allied support.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid. Regarding the problem of "dug-in [enemy] fortifications," President Eisenhower inquired about whether "earth-penetrating atomic munitions had been tested"; Bett, *Nuclear Blackmail*, 41. General Collins also proposed the use of mustard gas to "drive the enemy from the caves into the open, where they would be targets for tactical nuclear weapons;" Thomas, *Ike's Bluff*, 78. Such a discourse reveals that by the spring of 1953 the enemy's underground fortifications posed a major tactical problem to the UN troops in Korea, and a special weapon was under development to overcome the limited effect of traditional bombing over enemies hidden under Korea's mountainous terrain. To minimize the loss of FEAF and UN troops from enemy retaliatory attacks or intercepts, targets would be extended to neutralize enemy airpower. For instance, Ilyushin Il-28 twin-engined jet bombers, the "highest priority aircraft in the Soviet Air Force," Crane notes, could reach Japan from Manchuria, and even hit Okinawa from mainland China; Crane, "To Avert Impending Disaster," 81.

<sup>149</sup> Memorandum: discussion at the 145th meeting of the NSC on Wednesday, May 20, 1953, May 23, 1953 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No.4 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

event of a general war, Moscow would not launch such a conflict so long as the Soviet Far East was secured from direct UNC attack.

### **Signaling and Negotiating to Avoid Escalation**

If President Eisenhower's prior professional career eventually inspired him to seek a military solution based on tactical nuclear doctrine, his responsibility as head of American diplomacy, not to mention his belief in the Europe-first strategy, inclined him to prioritize the Western alliance and UN backing as the foundations of collective security and the post-World War II order. Therefore, when NSC Action No. 794 was approved on May 20, the president mentioned his concerns about the possible reaction of UN allies. In the NSC meeting the president stressed that the United States should immediately begin to "infiltrate these ideas into the minds of our allies." With the "seeds planted in a quiet and informal way," the president argued, the allies would be much more likely to accept them rather than if confronted with a "full-fledged plan to end the war" by military decision.<sup>150</sup>

As for the Soviet response, while turmoil in the Communist world following Stalin's death suggested that the Kremlin strongly desired to avoid a direct military confrontation with the United States, considerable uncertainty remained, especially if the United States initiated nuclear warfare.<sup>151</sup> Soviet options included a nuclear offensive against Inchon, Pusan, and key

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<sup>150</sup> Memorandum: discussion at the 145th meeting of the NSC on Wednesday, May 20, 1953, May 23, 1953 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No.4 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>151</sup> The Director of Intelligence, USAF, added in a footnote that this paragraph should read as follows: "... We also believe that Communist China currently desires to limit hostilities with the UN/US forces to the Korean issue and that the USSR desires to avoid any expansion of hostilities which would put at risk fundamental strengths of the Soviet Union." It also states that "if atomic weapons were employed by UN/US forces in any of the alternative courses of action," the Communists would recognize such an employment as indicative of "Western determination to carry the Korean war to a successful conclusion," but (it was) unable to estimate "whether this recognition would by itself lead the Communists to make the concessions necessary to reach an armistice;" *FRUS, 1952-54, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 1, 887-888, 892.

areas of Japan, which Eisenhower himself acknowledged were “almost defenseless.”<sup>152</sup> To have as accurate an estimate as possible on this subject, the council put the State Department to work preparing a “political annex setting forth the foreign policy implications of the course of action selected by the JCS.” At the same time the Council deferred further consideration of the subject pending completion of related studies then under way.<sup>153</sup>

In fact, the potential disadvantages of new military actions were not confined to diplomatic complications and the Soviet response. A protracted war might be extremely costly. By mid-May the spirit of the “New Look,” with its emphasis on correlation between military strength and a sound economy, had made skyrocketing U.S. military expenditures a key issue within the administration and Congress. During the war military expenditures had escalated from roughly \$14 billion to over \$62 billion two years later. Truman himself regarded such a level as unwarranted after the initial wartime buildup and the de-escalation in the level of fighting in Korea from mid-1951 onward. Yet his final projection for defense spending for fiscal year 1954 was \$45.5 billion, a figure that Republicans were determined to cut. Even the reduced figure of \$43.2 billion presented by Eisenhower to congressional leaders at the end of April 1953 left many fiscal conservatives dissatisfied.<sup>154</sup> One thing was certain: the surest way to further cuts was not through an escalation of war in Korea but through an early armistice there. Thus, as the JCS admitted in late 1953, the course of action General Bradley had recommended to the council in May 19, 1953 was “designed in part,” to “increase the possibility of enemy acceptance

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<sup>152</sup> As Crane notes, in the NSC meeting of May 20, 1953, the president was very concerned about the possibility of Soviet air raids on the “almost defenseless population centers of Japan”; Crane, “To Avert Impending Disaster,” 83.

<sup>153</sup> Memorandum: discussion at the 145th meeting of the NSC on Wednesday, May 20, 1953, May 23, 1953 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No.4 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>154</sup> Stueck, “Reassessing U.S. Strategy in the Aftermath of the Korean War” in *Journal of Strategic Studies* (Foreign Policy Research Institute, Fall 2009), 572-79.

of an armistice on U.S.-UN terms.”<sup>155</sup> And nuclear threats aimed at the Communists were a key part of the plan.

At the time the administration finalized its military approach to the breakdown of armistice talks, the resumed Panmunjom negotiations remained stalemated on the POW issue. Beijing insisted it could be resolved by turning over all non-repatriate prisoners to a neutral state, a position that made no provision for their final release and thus remained unsatisfactory to the United States. When the Communists scornfully rejected a UNC counterproposal, Washington grew concerned that they lacked the incentive to conclude an armistice.<sup>156</sup>

Although U.S. allies expressed their hope for a return to the Indian resolution at the UN General Assembly of the previous fall, Washington responded by increasing military pressure. The UNC commenced attacks on North Korean dikes to disturb the food supply of their troops, cracking two dams, flooding thousands of acres, and temporarily disrupting railroad transportation to Pyongyang. Meanwhile, the UNC developed a final position on POWs, including four minor concessions to the Communists. On May 25 the UNC presented the new proposals at Panmunjom, declaring that if the Communist rejected them without alternatives a week hence, the talks would be terminated and the agreements affecting the Kaesong neutral area voided.<sup>157</sup>

On the diplomatic front, when President Eisenhower reached an agreement on May 20 with his military advisers on the possible future use of nuclear weapons, Secretary Dulles was arriving at New Delhi to meet with Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. When they discussed Korea on May 21, Nehru urged the importance of concluding an armistice, stating that

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<sup>155</sup> *FRUS, 1952-54, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 2, 1626-27.

<sup>156</sup> Stueck, *The Korean War*, 313-20.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 322-24.

what he feared otherwise was the extension of military operations. Dulles confided that the United States wanted an armistice, stating that “only crazy people” believed that the United States wanted a prolonged struggle over Korea. The secretary of state also warned, however, that “if the armistice negotiations collapsed, the United States would probably make a stronger rather than a lesser military course, and that this might well extend the area of conflict” to Manchuria.<sup>158</sup> In the “absence of satisfactory progress,” Eisenhower later wrote, he wanted to “let the Communist authorities understand that [the United States] intended to move decisively without inhibition in [the] use of weapons, and would no longer be responsible for confining hostilities to the Korean peninsula.”<sup>159</sup>

Nehru claimed that he did not pass on this message to Beijing, but Sheila Miyoshi Jager argues persuasively that the Chinese were aware that Eisenhower was contemplating an escalation of the war. In addition to other signals, she emphasizes the message conveyed by Charles Bohlen, the new U.S. ambassador in Moscow. On May 26 he was directed to inform the Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov of the “extreme importance and seriousness of the latest UNC proposals” at Panmunjom. With negotiations there recessed for a week, Bohlen met with Molotov on May 28 and informed him that rejection of those proposals and the refusal to release the POWs who refused repatriation from captivity would “extinguish hopes for an armistice” and create a “situation which the U.S. government was most sincerely and earnestly attempting to avoid.” On June 3 Bohlen received Molotov’s reply: “The Soviet Government has taken care of the information you gave to me on May 28, concerning the armistice talks at Panmunjom; as you know the outcome of these talks does not depend on us, but it has been

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<sup>158</sup> *FRUS, 1952-54, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 1, 1068.

<sup>159</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change, 1953-56: The White House Years* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1963), 181.

noted with satisfaction that the path to the successful conclusion of these armistice talks has been mapped out.”<sup>160</sup> In all likelihood the Soviets conveyed the gist of Bohlen’s message to Beijing, namely that the United States wanted an armistice if the Communists conceded on the POW issue, but otherwise would escalate the war.<sup>161</sup>

During the first week of June, the State Department reinforced the desirability of achieving an early armistice when it completed its evaluation of the foreign policy implications of NSC Action No. 794. The study concluded that, although the Soviets would not consciously embark on general war, their reaction to a U.S. escalation of the war in Korea would be “sufficiently vigorous” to risk “a spiral of action and reaction” resulting in world-wide conflict. In the Far East the Soviet Union “might well react by direct Soviet military intervention.” The report also warned that “U.S. increased involvement in the Far East,” plus the “weakened situation of the Western European alliance” resulting from the “stresses and strains incident to this development,” might prompt serious new pressures against the “Western position in Germany, particularly in Berlin.”<sup>162</sup>

The State Department was particularly concerned about the response of UN allies. At best, NATO would suffer “losses on its northern flank.” Further, an increase of neutral

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<sup>160</sup> *FRUS, 1952-54, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 1, 1109-11, 1133.

<sup>161</sup> On the Communist side, Beijing’s receptiveness to Washington’s nuclear strategy in 1953 has not been clear to historians. According to Chen Jian, there is no evidence that Beijing considered seriously U.S. nuclear strength before early 1953. A heavy military buildup in Korea indicates Beijing’s belief that the outcome of the war would be determined by ground operations. In August 1952, when large-scale reinforcements flowed into Korea, Mao viewed the military situation purely in a conventional term: the United States had three fundamental weaknesses in fighting a protracted war in Korea: much smaller U.S. population than that of the Chinese, a severe financial burden of a drawn-out war, and Eurocentric U.S. global strategy; Jian, *Mao’s China and the Cold War*, 111. However, as Hayes notes, since November 1950 the Chinese had been trying to keep their troops and civilians out of public fears of U.S. nuclear attacks. By the time Eisenhower channeled nuclear threats, Hayes and Foot point out, Beijing was aware of American public opinion and Republican congressmen’s view in support of atomic bombing in the mainland. Although many scholars are reluctant to conclude sharply how effective Eisenhower’s nuclear diplomacy in late May, Hayes and Foot also commonly mention that the Chinese nuclear program, launched immediately after the end of the Korean War, implies that Beijing did not think light of the role of U.S. nuclear threats in the last months of the war; Hayes, *Pacific Powderkeg*, 15-16; Foot, *The Wrong War*, 230.

<sup>162</sup> *FRUS, 1952-54, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 1, 1143.

sentiment would undermine public support for each government's pro-Washington stance. In Britain the Labor Party could gain heavily. Regarding the "ultimate effect on the Free World," the State Department believed that, if U.S. escalation in Korea did not provoke a large-scale Soviet reaction and if the United States won a quick victory, the "sharp cleavages among the Allies [probably] could be patched up." Even so, allies might be "much less willing to rely on the United States" to "take account of the interest of the coalition." If the action in Korea was protracted, on the other hand, or the Soviet Union reacted violently, "especially in a different area," the impact on the coalition would be "even more marked."<sup>163</sup>

On June 4, 1953, one day after Bohlen received Molotov's positive reply in Moscow, the Communists at Panmunjom finally accepted the UNC proposals of May 25. The final release of POWs choosing not to be repatriated would occur 120 days after the armistice was signed under the supervision of a neutral nations' commission headed by India. Details on the terms of reference were completed at Panmunjom on June 8. Adjustments of the military demarcation line to meet the minor changes on the battlefield since late 1951 were completed nine days later.<sup>164</sup>

Despite improved prospects for an end to the fighting, U.S. planning for new military initiatives continued. Under the NSC directive, General Clark began to revise his OPLAN 8-52 with General LeMay and CINCPAC Admiral Radford to include use of atomic weapons in the event that hostilities continued in Korea or were resumed following an armistice. On July 23, 1953, seven weeks after the Communists had accepted the UNC proposal on POWs, the NSC agreed that "our atomic capabilities must be used against the Chinese Communists if the armistice is violated." General LeMay ordered SAC headquarters to "put his command on

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 1141-42.

<sup>164</sup> Stueck, *The Korean War*, 326.

standby” to “execute an emergency plan for atomic air operations in the Far East.”<sup>165</sup> Even with the basic issues in the negotiations resolved and the armistice only four days away, the specter of a nuclear war remained in Korea and surrounding areas.

Historians continue to debate the role of nuclear threats emanating from Washington in persuading the Communists to make the necessary concessions on the POW issue. In tracing the evolution of U.S. strategy for defending the ROK in the years following an armistice, however, it suffices to say that Eisenhower and Dulles genuinely believed that those threats had a decisive impact. Yet the future impact of the final, turbulent road to an armistice on U.S. security policy toward Korea was not restricted to the belief that nuclear diplomacy had succeeded. President Rhee’s actions as an armistice approached would prove of significance as well.

### **U.S. strategy and Syngman Rhee’s opposition to an Armistice**

While the UNC and the Communists were settling the POW issue at Panmunjom in the spring of 1953, ROK opposition to an armistice reached new levels, eventually becoming the last obstacle to an end of the fighting. With the Communist concession on POWs on June 4, an armistice could have been achieved before the end of the month had ROK President Rhee not sought to sabotage an end to the fighting without Korea’s unification. On June 18 he went beyond arguing with the Americans and released more than 25,000 anti-Communist war prisoners. The act led to crises in both the armistice negotiations and U.S.-ROK relations. In the end the signing of an armistice was delayed, but U.S.-ROK relations avoided a major breach. In the process of trying to avoid a crisis in U.S.-ROK relations and then in resolving one, however,

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<sup>165</sup> Crane, “To Avert Impending Disaster,” 84.

the Eisenhower administration made concessions to Rhee that significantly redefined the bilateral security relationship after the armistice.

Soon after the UNC and the Communists resumed negotiations at Panmunjom in April 1953, Washington received alarming reports of “anti-armistice parades and condemnatory public statements” in the ROK. General Clark worried that the ROK might “withdraw elements of the ROK army from UN control” and “remove ROK officials from UN influence.”<sup>166</sup> President Rhee’s unrelenting opposition to any cease-fire without unification moved toward the forefront.<sup>167</sup> If Korea was not to be unified indefinitely after a cease-fire, the biggest threat to the security of the ROK was the presence of Chinese Communist forces in North Korea. So long as they remained, Rhee thought, an armistice would not bring permanent peace to the ROK. According to *New York Times* reports on May 31 and June 9, Rhee declared that “we reassure our determination to risk our lives to fight on to a decisive end in case the United Nations accepts a truce and stops fighting. This is imperative because the presence of Chinese Communist troops in Korea is tantamount to denying us our free existence”<sup>168</sup>

The Eisenhower administration suspected that Rhee’s anti-armistice rhetoric was designed, in part, to convey a political claim to Washington. Deputy Assistant Secretary U. Alexis Johnson pointed out in his report to Secretary Dulles in April 1953 that, considering the “impossibility of opposing any U.S. Government decision to enter into an armistice,” President

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<sup>166</sup> From U. Alexis Johnson to the Secretary: Call by Korean Ambassador, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, April 8, 1953 (College Park, MD.: NA).

<sup>167</sup> Stueck, *The Korean War*, 316. The friction between the United States and the ROK president lasted for many years before the armistice came in sight. When Eisenhower took office, the major disagreements between the two governments included the “settlement of accounts regarding advances of Korean currency to U.S. soldiers,” through which Rhee hoped to secure sufficient dollars in a time of economic crisis, and the return of the ROK government to Seoul, which the UNC objected for security reasons.

<sup>168</sup> Jager, *Brothers at war*, 278.

Rhee's genuine intention was to "obtain a bilateral defense pact from the United States."<sup>169</sup>

Washington sensed that Rhee believed the surest way to secure the ROK from Communist China's continuing threats was to integrate the ROK into a burgeoning U.S. regional security network in the Western Pacific. To many Americans such a "deal" was not new because, since March 1952, Rhee had called through diplomatic channels for a bilateral pact in exchange for ROK acceptance of an armistice.<sup>170</sup>

To Rhee's disappointment, President Eisenhower did not immediately accede to Rhee's repeated requests. In Washington's view the UN principle of collective security already provided a legitimate U.S. commitment to the defense of the ROK. Washington's official comments on a continuing UN and U.S. military commitment to the ROK had been clear during the war. Soon after armistice talks began in July 1951, for example, Secretary Acheson, believing that the ROK's anti-armistice sentiment was rooted partly in the fear of abandonment, issued a public statement:

...If there is an effective armistice, a United Nations force must remain in Korea until a genuine peace has been firmly established and the Korean people have assurance that they can work out their future free from the fear of aggression...Once before, foreign forces were withdrawn from Korea as a part of a United Nations plan to reach a settlement of the Korean problem. The Communists defied this effort and committed aggression against the Republic of Korea. The Korean people can be assured that a repetition of this act will not be tolerated.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> From U. Alexis Johnson to the Secretary: Call by Korean Ambassador, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, April 8, 1953 (College Park, MD.: NA).

<sup>170</sup> In a letter to President Truman on March 21, 1952, President Rhee gave assurances of his personal cooperation in any armistice which may be concluded, but he suggested that in order to encourage the support of the Korean people, the United States and the ROK should negotiate a mutual security pact "at an early date" and endeavor to "speed up the expansion program for the Korean armed forces." Acheson recommended that Truman should not reply to President Rhee's letter, but he also believed that the points which Rhee raised "should receive our most careful consideration"; *FRUS, 1952-54, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 1, 185-86.

<sup>171</sup> *New York Times*, July 20, 1951.

In this view a bilateral defense treaty was not only unnecessary; it might undermine the sense of responsibility among other UN members to continue to contribute to the broader collective enterprise of maintaining peace on the peninsula.

Such a treaty might also complicate State Department hopes once an armistice was signed to explore reunification of the peninsula under the ROK. On the assumption that the armistice would be concluded as agreed between the two parties, in July 1953 the administration approved several key papers identifying policies to be implemented in Korea: NSC 154/1, 156/1, 157/1, and a Memo for the NSC, “Additional UN Forces for Korea.”<sup>172</sup> NSC 157/1, “U.S. objectives with respect to Korea following an armistice,” stated that the United States should seek to secure a unified and neutralized Korea under a substantially unchanged ROK, oriented toward the United States, and with guaranteed political and territorial integrity. Achievement of this objective would require “Communist agreement to a unified Korea with U.S. political orientation, in exchange for U.S. agreement to remove U.S. forces and bases from Korea, and *not to conclude a mutual security pact with Korea.*”<sup>173</sup>

Finally, Washington sensed that the American public would not welcome further U.S. military obligations to the ROK after the armistice. In such a domestic atmosphere, the ROK’s blatant anti-armistice campaign was making harder the task of getting such a treaty ratified in the U.S. Senate. Therefore, Washington did not believe that prospects for a U.S.-ROK mutual defense pact were promising. For these reasons, on May 20 President Eisenhower instructed U.S.

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<sup>172</sup> NSC 154/1, “U.S. tactics immediately following an armistice in Korea,” approved July 3, 1953, envisioned interim courses of action during the Korean political conference and until basic U.S. policies toward China and Korea were reviewed. NSC 156/1, “Strengthening the Korean economy,” approved July 23, 1953, was to provide an expanded economic assistance to the ROK when Seoul met economic, military, and political requirements. “Additional UN forces for Korea,” approved July 23, 1953 aimed to obtain maximum contributions of manpower from U.S. allies in Korea and approved a new formula to reimburse other UN forces in Korea with regard to U.S. logistic support; *FRUS, 1952-54, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 2, 1546-47.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 1303-08.

Ambassador Briggs and General Clark to meet with Rhee and explain that a bilateral pact would undermine the principle of collective security represented by UN action in Korea, would compromise post-armistice efforts to achieve a unified Korea, and would be “particularly difficult” to explain to the American people and Congress. Five days later Ambassador Briggs and General Clark outlined these points to Rhee as well as the president’s belief that the United States would be in a “better position to consider appropriate formal defense arrangements with [the] ROK” at a later date.<sup>174</sup>

With the Communists’ acceptance of the UNC position on POWs in early June, American officials began to offer new assurances to Rhee in hopes of forestalling any negative reaction to the signing of an armistice. Most prominently, despite his reservations regarding the “advice and consent of the Senate,” on June 6 President Eisenhower sent an official letter to President Rhee stating that the United States would negotiate a mutual security pact with the ROK promptly after an armistice was concluded and the ROK had accepted it. His letter also included a promise that the United States would not tolerate a repetition of unprovoked aggression.<sup>175</sup> In a meeting with ROK delegates in Washington, Secretary Dulles opposed Rhee’s suggestion for an early simultaneous withdrawal of foreign troops, arguing that the presence of U.S. and UN forces in Korea might eventually persuade the Communists to agree to a unified Korea in exchange for removing this threat.<sup>176</sup>

Before the signing of the armistice, however, President Rhee violated the UNC-Communist agreement regarding the repatriation of POWs by releasing anti-Communist North

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<sup>174</sup> Joint State-Defense message, DEPTTEL 713 to Pusan, 2694 to Tokyo, Pusan’s unnumbered May 17 and Tokyo’s 3620, May 20, 1953 (College Park, MD.: NA).

<sup>175</sup> Louis Galambos and Daun Van Ee, ed., *The papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, Volume XIV (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press), 278-82.

<sup>176</sup> *FRUS, 1952-54, Korea*, Volume XV, 1195-96.

Korean prisoners in the UNC camps patrolled by ROK troops and police. Rhee's unilateral release of POWs angered President Eisenhower, who even considered the removal of Rhee from power. The enormous domestic prestige Rhee had gained from his decision, however, dictated against such an extreme measure. The only viable option was to dissuade Rhee from breaking away from an armistice.<sup>177</sup>

Washington decided to send Assistant Secretary Walter Robertson to persuade Rhee not to resist the armistice agreements.<sup>178</sup> Before Robertson finished his trip, and perhaps in part because limited Communist offensives against ROK forces defending the battle line achieved some success, Rhee agreed not to obstruct conclusion of an armistice; he indicated, however, that he might use force if a post-armistice political conference failed to achieve Korea's unification.<sup>179</sup> In return, Rhee received promises that immediately following an armistice the Eisenhower administration would conclude a mutual security treaty with the ROK *and that the U.S. Senate would ratify it*.<sup>180</sup>

Rhee's stubbornness reinforced Washington's belief that close ties to the ROK were necessary to keep it in line with U.S. policy. The command of ROK forces, which Rhee had formally transferred to the UNC in July 1950, caused new friction between the two countries on the eve of the armistice.<sup>181</sup> Rhee hinted at withdrawing his concession after the armistice, but Washington regarded it as "indispensable for preventing the ROK from violating the ceasefire."

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<sup>177</sup> Jager, *Brothers at war*, 279-283.

<sup>178</sup> On June 11, 1953 Dulles suggested that Rhee visit Washington. Rhee declined Dulles' invitation, asking the secretary of state to come to Korea. Since Dulles thought that such a trip would be "unwise before Rhee had agreed to accept an armistice," he appointed Assistant Secretary Robertson in place of himself; Stueck, *The Korean War*, 331.

<sup>179</sup> Stueck, *Rethinking the Korean War*, 178-179. Rhee wrote in the letter that "we should like to have specific assurances of moral and material support for an effort with our own armed forces to repel aggressors from Korea;" Stueck, *The Korean War*, 337.

<sup>180</sup> Jager, *Brothers at war*, 284.

<sup>181</sup> Korea Institute of Military History, *The Korean War: Volume One*, 341-348

According to Chae-Jin Lee, the military pact represented a “system of dual containment – against the possibilities of North Korea’s invasion and against provocation by South Korea.”<sup>182</sup> Victor Cha agrees, pointing out that the United States established a formal alliance 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 that might embroil the U.S. in a larger war on the Asian mainland.”<sup>183</sup>

The most dramatic illustration of Washington’s concern for Rhee’s unilateralism was the revised *EVERREADY Plan*. *This scheme to remove Rhee as president* originated in mid-1952 during a constitutional crisis provoked by Rhee’s determination to continue in his position for another term. Rhee resolved the crisis through strong-armed measures and the threatened disruption of UNC military operations never materialized. *EVERREADY* was considered again in the summer of 1953 in the face of Rhee’s attempt to prevent an armistice and survived in contingency planning even after its signing. According to the plan’s October 28, 1953 version, in the event that “operational control of the ROK forces [was] weakened or lost prior to, during, or following the political settlement,” the Eighth Army Commander might “relieve disloyal ROK commanders,” “bomb designated ROK ammunition-supply points,” and “secure custody of dissident military and civilian leaders.” Further, CINUNC General Hull might be recommended to “withdraw recognition of the Rhee government and expel ROK forces from the UNC” and “proclaim martial law.”<sup>184</sup> Yet overthrow of the legitimate political leadership of the ROK was desirable only under extreme conditions, and it was hoped that a mutual security pact would help prevent them from ever arising.

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<sup>182</sup> Lee, *Troubled Peace*, 39.

<sup>183</sup> Victor Cha, “‘Rhee-strait’: the origins of the U.S.-ROK alliance” (*International Journal of Korean Studies*: Vol. XV, No.1), 1-3.

<sup>184</sup> *FRUS, 1952-1954, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 2, 1569-1570.

That said, the readiness of Eisenhower to conclude such a pact, combined with his willingness to expand the war both territorially and in weaponry, represented changes of considerable magnitude from the previous administration. Truman had been wedded to acting in Korea through the United Nations. Although Eisenhower strongly preferred to maintain UN support for the U.S. course there, he was more willing than his predecessor to pursue independent actions. This willingness fit into a shift in U.S. strategy articulated in NSC 153/1, which the president approved on June 10. Robert Watson notes that some of the actions proposed in that document were “wholly new.” One of these was that the United States “should be willing to undertake unilateral action, if necessary, against local communist aggression in key areas.”<sup>185</sup> The central idea was that, by capitalizing on its unparalleled nuclear strength against local aggression, the United States could defend “key areas” of its own choice without mobilizing large-scale conventional forces. Under the new defense strategy, the Eisenhower administration could extend its defense commitment to areas located beyond the “off-shore chain,” such as Indochina, the Taiwan Strait, and the ROK, without overstretching U.S. troops and other resources. This revised strategy paved the way to inviting the ROK into the U.S. security club in Asia and the Western Pacific.

Although atomic weapons made new treaty undertakings more manageable, Washington still had reason to wait for the outcome of a Korean political conference and the establishment of a continuing UN role on the peninsula following an armistice before complicating the Korean problem with a new bilateral pact. The maintenance of UN elements under an armistice was crucial to keeping the Korean problem within international agreements. Those UN elements also would keep the expanded ROK forces under CINCUNC control, thus preventing a renewal of

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<sup>185</sup> Watson, *History of the JCS: The JCS and the National Policy 1953-1954*, Volume V (Washington, D.C.: Office of Joint History, Office of the Chairman of the JCS, 1998), 9.

hostilities through ROK initiatives. Eisenhower's new strategy made Washington more flexible in considering a bilateral pact, but the case for such an alliance would have been far less compelling had Rhee not threatened the UNC-Communist agreement. We will see in the next three chapters that existence of the pact played an important role in shaping U.S. efforts over the next four years to devise a long-term strategy for defending the ROK.

## **Conclusion**

During the Korean War the United States restricted its military actions in Korea within the legitimate authority of the United Nation Command. In November 1950, when a prospect of expansion of the war arose immediately after Communist China's entry, President Truman's comments on the possible use of atomic bombs and growing public demands in the United States for expanding the conflict beyond the peninsula alarmed American allies in Europe. An Anglo-American summit in December reassured those allies that the United States would seek a settlement of the war through negotiations rather than an escalation of the fighting. American strategists feared that, in addition to splitting apart the NATO alliance, an expansion of the conflict would waste scarce military resources in Korea and result in a general war with the Soviet Union for which the United States was poorly prepared. A consensus emerged within the Truman administration that the United States should attempt to save the ROK within the territorial boundaries existing prior to June 25, 1950 while giving top priority to a military buildup at home and in Western Europe.

By mid-1951 the arrival of a military stalemate not far from the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, the pre-war boundary, persuaded Communist bloc leaders to engage in truce talks in Korea. In negotiating an armistice with the Communists, Washington's basic objective was to secure the ROK and other

areas in Asia and the Western Pacific from further Communist aggression at a manageable cost on a long-term basis. Major objectives for the armistice agreements – a defensible boundary line, a ceiling of military strength on the two sides, a system of inspection, and a “fair exchange” of POWs – reflected Washington’s desire to end the fighting without an excessive long-term commitment of American resources to the ROK.

As the Panmunjom talks were prolonged unexpectedly, the U.S. military position in Korea and elsewhere began to change. First, the fruits of U.S. wartime rearmament, especially of strategic deterrence, shifted the East-West military balance largely in favor of the United States. Second, while Washington’s fear of a general war with the Soviet Union dwindled after the spring of 1951, a collective security network expanded both in Europe and the Western Pacific. Third, the development of nuclear technology gave the United States the potential to capitalize on its nuclear strength on the battlefield. By the time Eisenhower entered the White House, U.S. military strength, enhanced by the substantial buildup of a nuclear stockpile, convinced the new administration to turn its nuclear power to strategic advantage in Korea.

During the early months of the Eisenhower administration, the president brought the Korean War into focus in his new policy toward East Asia. At the beginning of 1953, little prospect existed that the Communists soon would agree with an armistice on UN terms, as UN forces in Korea, including the rapidly growing ROK army, did not match a Communist buildup during the previous year. With plenty of tactical nuclear weapons newly in the U.S. arsenal, in May 1953 the new president came to the conclusion that their use was necessary and justified in an expanded war against China if the Communists refused to sign an acceptable armistice.

However, in spite of the president’s belief that such an offensive was unlikely to lead to a general war in Europe or an end to Western unity, the political risks in using nuclear weapons

and expanding the war were undeniable. Moreover, in a belief that U.S. military spending must be reduced in order to maintain the long-term vitality of the U.S. economy, President Eisenhower understood that an early end of the Korean War would be highly desirable in achieving his budgetary goals. Therefore, while a new military plan for an escalation of the war was under development in Tokyo, Washington maneuvered diplomatically to persuade the Communists to accept UNC terms for an armistice. In early June, swayed at least in part by turmoil in the Soviet bloc following Stalin's death, the Communists agreed. In the minds of the president and his secretary of state, nuclear diplomacy had come to fruition.

However, on June 18, before the final details for an armistice were completed, President Rhee tried to sabotage the UNC-Communist agreement by releasing tens of thousands of anti-Communist POWs. During the armistice talks the Americans had made considerable effort to keep the ROK in line with the UNC position. Now faced with Rhee's possible intransigence, Washington recognized that only the firm assurance of a mutual defense pact with the United States could bring the ROK leader into line. Ultimately the assurance worked, but Rhee's agreement not to disrupt an armistice was less than definitive, a fact that left the United States prepared, in an emergency, to execute a plan to remove the ROK president and his supporters from office.

By the time the Korean armistice was finally achieved, Washington saw several possibilities ahead on Korea. The president and the secretary of state secretly looked for a chance to create a unified but neutral Korea under the ROK, which would end the U.S. military presence on the peninsula. They recognized, however, that the likelihood of this solution was not great. More realistically, the Pentagon considered a long-term stalemate on the current armistice line as the best position to maintain the security of the ROK. If the armistice continued without a

political settlement, UN and Chinese Communist forces might remain in Korea indefinitely. The level of such forces, including the size and nature of the U.S. contribution to the former, remained uncertain. Even the continuing role of the United Nations remained far from guaranteed. The United States was now determined to defend the ROK, but precisely how to do this over an extended period of time at a cost consistent with the nation's economic health was a matter with which policymakers would grapple for years to come.

## Chapter 2

### Peace without Unification

When Secretary of State Dulles started his four-day talks with ROK officials in Seoul on August 5, 1953, his opening comment touched on two facts: for the first time the United States had consulted with the ROK “prior to other nations involved in important matters” and “his mission had overflowed Japan.” In reply President Rhee commented that the Korean people would love him for these gestures. Four days later, after the initialing and exchanging of the draft of the U.S.-ROK mutual defense treaty, Secretary Dulles stressed to President Rhee that the initialing of the documents would “establish the basis for the development of really effective future relations between the United States of America and the Republic of Korea.” To President Rhee it was a “most historic moment for the Korean people.”<sup>186</sup>

The U.S.-ROK alliance, officially launched soon after the signing of the armistice, was to substantially rearrange the position of post-armistice Korea at the crossroads of the Cold War in Asia and the Pacific. Militarily, the ROK was officially integrated into the burgeoning U.S. defense network there. As the Eisenhower administration developed a new defense plan in the region to forestall another Korea-type war, Korea policy invariably became linked to Washington’s overall strategy against the Communist threat. Politically, the new bilateral tie indicated the centrality of the opinion of the ROK in Washington’s approach to the Korean problem in the international community, where Seoul remained at odds with other UN

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<sup>186</sup> *FRUS, 1952-1954, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 2, 1467, 1490.

members regarding a political settlement and the wisdom of an armistice. During the war Washington often acted as a representative of the 16 governments providing military units to communicate UN decisions to the ROK. After August 1953, in contrast, Washington found itself in the position of mediator between the ROK government and other UN allies to prevent a breach of the wartime coalition. The principle of collective security remained fundamental to U.S. foreign policy, as NSC 162/2 stressed in October 1953. A political settlement for Korea and the credibility of the armistice continued to test Western unity after the fighting ended.

This chapter shows that during the first year and a half after the signing of the armistice many elements of long-term U.S. policy in Korea and, more generally, in East Asia were established. Although President Rhee refused to give up his dream of unification by force, the United States succeeded in keeping the ROK in line with the armistice. The Geneva conference of 1954 demonstrated that for the foreseeable future Korea would remain a major front of the Cold War, with its southern half as part of the larger U.S. sphere of influence in the vicinity of Communist China and the Soviet Union. During this period the Eisenhower administration's reassessment of defense strategy had broad influence upon U.S. actions in East Asia. Faced with French defeat in Indochina and the first Taiwan Strait crisis, the Eisenhower administration was convinced that regional security arrangements, backed by U.S. nuclear strength, should be major components of defense in the region. Considering mutual animosities between Washington and Beijing, the prospect of a permanent peace settlement was bleak and Cold War strategy continued to dominate U.S. policy toward Korea.

To explain these developments, several key questions are addressed: what was the U.S. objective in Korea immediately after the armistice? How did Washington restrain Seoul from

taking unilateral action? How did the administration's global strategy interact with U.S. military planning in the event that the Communists resumed hostilities in Korea? What was the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. defense strategy? How did the "New Look" impact Washington's defense strategy both at home and in Asia and the Pacific? How did Seoul and Washington negotiate the ROK security position after the Geneva Conference? How did the place of the ROK in overall U.S. policy in East Asia evolve, and why? This chapter demonstrates how Washington's experience after August 1953 through the end of 1954 provided a basis for U.S. defense strategy in Korea, and more broadly, in East Asia for years to come.

### **The "Korean question" under the armistice**

In the last months of the Korean War, the U.S. position on the "Korean question," a phrase often used to describe the agenda for unification of the peninsula in the international community, began to take shape in preparation for a post-armistice political conference. To "insure the peaceful settlement of the Korean question," Article 60 of the armistice agreement recommended that, within three months after its signing, a political conference be held to "settle through negotiation" the questions of the "withdrawal of all foreign forces from Korea, the peaceful settlement of the Korean question, etc."<sup>187</sup>

On the assumption that conclusion of an armistice precluded a military campaign by the UNC to unify the peninsula under an ROK allied with the United States, NSC 157, drafted and circulated in June 1953, suggested two alternative objectives:

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<sup>187</sup> DSB, August 3, 1953, 139.

- (a) A Korea divided for an indefinite period on the present demarcation line with the Republic of Korea tied into U.S. security system and developed as a military ally.
- (b) A unified, neutralized Korea under a substantially unchanged ROK.

Objective (b) required Communist agreement to a Korea unified and politically orientated toward Washington in exchange for removal of U.S. forces and bases and denial of a bilateral security pact to the ROK. Despite the loss by the United States of military bases in Korea, the authors of NSC 157 thought that objective (b) would serve American interests better than objective (a):

...The relinquishment of its military position in Korea which would result from neutralization would not be critical for the United States. In the event of general war, the desirability of attempting to defend Korea would be problematical. With respect to the danger of local aggression against Korea it would in any case be only the prospect of retaliation by the U.S. forces that would deter such aggression. The danger of internal subversion or indirect aggression in Korea could and should be countered by adequate Korean security forces and economic assistance. On the positive side, the security of Japan would be favored by the Yalu and Tumen Rivers. The savings made possible for the United States by its being relieved of the necessity of supporting U.S. bases in Korea and large, heavily-armed Korean forces would make possible a strengthening of the military position of the free world in other areas. The unification of Korea would probably be generally regarded as a significant accomplishment by the United Nations, to the enhancement of its prestige. The unification of Korea under the ROK, even on a neutralized basis, would probably also be widely regarded as a more constructive result of the war and more to the credit of the United States than the restitution of the *status quo ante*.<sup>188</sup>

The JCS countered NSC 157's assumption that a unified but neutralized Korea could stand alone without an ongoing U.S. military commitment. The military chiefs argued that

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<sup>188</sup> NSC 157: "U.S. objective with respect to Korea following an armistice," June 25, 1953 in White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, 1952-61, NSC series, Policy paper subseries, Box 6 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

neither an armistice agreement nor a political settlement based on a unified, neutralized Korea would indicate that the Communist powers had abandoned their objective of bringing the Korean peninsula under their domination. Although U.S. bases in Korea were not critical to maintain a military posture against the PRC, acquisition by the Communists of such bases would threaten the security of Japan. Such a development could be countered only with the great augmentation of U.S. air and naval bases in the region. The JCS concluded that the United States should “maintain a strong military posture in the Far East,” including the “retention of adequate ROK forces.”<sup>189</sup>

NSC 157 assumed the feasibility of a Communist agreement to dismantle the North Korean regime. Even though a unified but neutral Korea would deprive the Communists of the “satellite North Korean regime” and “considerable prestige,” the authors of NSC 157 believed that the Communists might accept it to avoid permanent U.S. bases “within a few hundred miles of Manchurian and North Chinese industrial, transportation, and port facilities.” The Communists also might find attractive elimination of the “economic liability” of North Korea. Finally, NSC 157 expressed a hope that, “from the global point of view,” the propaganda value of a Korean settlement might provide the Communists an opportunity to impress the world “by deeds” with the peaceful nature of their regimes.<sup>190</sup>

In a NSC meeting on July 2, 1953, President Eisenhower expressed interest in the neutralization of a unified Korea. His central inquiry was whether a neutralized country could have armed forces “sufficient to provide it with a reasonable defense.” The president surmised

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<sup>189</sup> W.M. Fechteler, Memorandum for the secretary of defense: NSC 157, U.S. objective with respect to Korea following an armistice, June 30, 1953 in White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, 1952-61, NSC Series, Policy Paper subseries, Box No. 6 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>190</sup> NSC 157: “U.S. objective with respect to Korea following an armistice,” June 25, 1953 in White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, 1952-61, NSC series, Policy paper subseries, Box 6 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

that the Communists might accept a “certain level of armament” if the United States abandoned air bases on the peninsula, which were the only source of the Communist fear. The president finally approved the conclusion of NSC 157/1 stating that

It is in the interest of the United States and should be the U.S. objective to secure a unified and neutralized Korea under a substantially unchanged ROK. Such an objective would entail Communist agreement to a unified Korea with U.S. political orientation, in exchange for U.S. agreement to remove U.S. forces and bases from Korea, and not to conclude a mutual security pact with Korea. This objective should also involve guarantees for the territorial and political integrity of a unified Korea under the ROK, the admission of the ROK to the United Nations, and ROK military forces sufficient for internal security and capable of defending Korean territory short of an attack by a major power.<sup>191</sup>

Before the idea of NSC 157/1 fully unfolded as Washington’s position in the forthcoming Korean political conference, however, its basic assumption was severely tested by the U.S.-ROK mutual defense pact. Washington and its allies feared that a new bilateral treaty would engage U.S./UN forces indefinitely on the peninsula, thus destroying the prospect of a political settlement on Korean unification. On August 1, 1953, in a meeting with representatives of the 16 governments contributing military units to the UNC, Secretary Dulles gave assurances that a treaty with the ROK would “give the United States a right, an option to maintain troops and bases” but would create no obligation that might prevent future agreement for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Korea. With reference to the unification of Korea, Dulles promised, the treaty would not “embarrass the freedom of the political conference” to “explore all possibilities.”<sup>192</sup> Article IV of the text of the mutual defense treaty released in Seoul on

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<sup>191</sup> Memorandum: discussion at the 152nd meeting of the NSC, Thursday, July 2, 1953, July 3, 1953 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No.4 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>192</sup> *FRUS, 1952-1954, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 2, 1463. Despite the absence of a “legally binding provision for immediate and automatic military action by the United States,” Chae-jin Lee explains, Dulles had assured Rhee in a letter that “if

August 7 stated that the ROK “grants, and the United States accepts, the right to dispose U.S. land, air and sea forces in and about the territory of the ROK as determined by mutual agreement.” Further, Article VI functioned as an “escape clause” in stating that either party could terminate the treaty one year after notice had been given to the party.<sup>193</sup>

Yet the treaty significantly impacted Washington’s vision of unification, as the United States officially recognized the legitimacy of the ROK claim to a major role in a political settlement. To achieve the unification of Korea in the political conference, Dulles stressed while visiting the ROK on August 5 that Washington and Seoul would have to use “tactics that would be concerted between us.” He also wanted to concert U.S. ideas with Rhee’s in order to have the foundation of “our joint ideas” for “discussion with other interested governments,” thus reminding President Rhee of other UN members’ share in the political settlement. In reply, Rhee promised that his delegation in the conference would “keep in close touch with Washington” to achieve unification. Washington soon realized that the idea of a neutral Korea in the U.S. plan for unification had little sympathy in Seoul. After three years of fighting, a wholly devoted anti-Communist regime in Seoul had no inclination to make a political compromise with the Communist aggressors. Neither did it trust in Communist rhetoric regarding a peaceful unification of Korea, as demonstrated by Pyongyang’s peace offensive in June 1950, only a week before the invasion of the ROK. In a meeting with Secretary Dulles, President Rhee opined

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in violation of the armistice the ROK is subjected to unprovoked attack you may of course count upon our immediate and automatic military action. Such an attack would not only be an attack upon the ROK but an attack upon the UNC and U.S. forces within that Command”; Lee, *A Troubled Peace*, 38-39.

<sup>193</sup> DSB, August 17, 1953, 204.

that the proposal for neutralization of Korea would be “absolutely unacceptable” until the “situation in the Far East was settled.”<sup>194</sup>

Regarding the possibility of Korean unification with U.S. forces stationed on the peninsula, Dulles explained to ROK officials that the “principal obstacle” would be its northern area, mainly because of its proximity to Port Arthur and Vladivostok and economic connection to Manchuria. For this reason, Dulles was dubious about prospects for a unification that would “expose this area to attack by the ROK, possibly in alliance with the United States,” and thus “carry a grave threat to vital portions of Russia and China.” Therefore, Dulles proposed that some demilitarization would be essential to unification. Rhee agreed, but he urged that “any buffer zone” should include “some portion of China.”<sup>195</sup>

When ROK Foreign Minister Pyun Young-Tae visited the United States in early October, Dulles tried once more to persuade the Rhee regime of the plan for a neutralized Korea under principles agreed between Rhee and Dulles in August. First, Dulles repeated his promise that the administration would consult “fully ahead of time” with the ROK government in “any proposals regarding Korea.” Second, he and other officials stressed the need for a demilitarized zone in a unified Korea. Washington pointed out again that Korea’s security situation was “entirely different from that of the past” because U.S. forces were in Korea under the mutual defense treaty. If the ROK’s historic border area were militarized, U.S. forces could be stationed “right next to Communist territory,” which would be extremely provocative for the Communists. In consequence, a negotiation with the Communists on a unified Korea would be out of the question. Finally, recognizing the ROK’s resistance to the neutralization idea, Dulles asked

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<sup>194</sup> *FRUS, 1952-1954, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 2, 1467-68, 1474.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, 1474, 1481.

whether the ROK government could accept a Soviet guarantee of Korea. Pyun indicated that he might not oppose a guarantee signed by the United States, the United Nations, Communist China, and the Soviet Union, but he resisted the idea of establishing a demilitarized zone south of the Yalu. The conversation ended without agreement on a specific demilitarized zone.<sup>196</sup>

By November the schedule for a Korean political conference had faltered over a variety of issues and Washington reassessed the adequacy of its previous position regarding unification. In a NSC meeting of November 19, the JCS reiterated its skepticism of the neutralization plan on the ground that a neutral Korea simply could not last. The president agreed with Secretary Dulles, though, that any neutralization would not disarm Korea, which also would be protected by U.S. forces in Okinawa “if Korea were again the victim of aggression.” While the United States and other allied powers would “remain free to help Korea preserve its independence,” according to Dulles, a neutral Korea could not be a U.S. military ally, nor would it permit U.S. bases within its boundaries.<sup>197</sup> When NSC 170/1 was amended and approved by the president, Washington’s basic position changed little, but it called for U.S. and Communist assurances of the territorial and political integrity of Korea under the ROK in exchange for the U.S. concession of all rights granted to the United States under a U.S.-ROK mutual assistance pact.<sup>198</sup>

The opening of the Korean political conference was not agreed upon between the Western powers and the Soviet Union until the Berlin conference in February 1954. Between

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<sup>196</sup> Ibid., 1515-19.

<sup>197</sup> Memorandum: discussion at the 171st meeting of the NSC, Thursday, November 19, 1953, November 20, 1953 in Ann Whitman File, NSC series, Box No. 5 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL). However, the foregoing would not preclude the provision by the United States of economic and military assistance to Korea.

<sup>198</sup> NSC 170/1: U.S. objective and courses of action in Korea, November 20, 1953 in White House Office: Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (OSANSA): Records, NSC series, policy papers subseries, Box no. 7 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL). However, the U.S. concession to its rights on the mutual defense pact would not preclude the provision by the United States of economic and military assistance to Korea.

January 25 and February 18, 1954, the foreign ministers of the four powers – the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and the Soviet Union – met in Berlin to discuss the division of Germany and Austria. On January 27, however, Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov called for a five-power conference, including Communist China, to discuss “solely Far East matters.” Suspicious that the so-called Far Eastern conference was designed to advance Communist China’s influence and leadership in Asia rather than solve the Korean problem, Washington rejected the proposal.<sup>199</sup> During the following weeks, it was revised to meet U.S. concerns. On the last day of the Berlin conference, a communiqué announced that representatives of the “four powers, Communist China and the two Koreas, and the other participants in the hostilities in Korea,” plus any others who wanted to participate, would meet in Geneva on April 26 to reach a “peaceful settlement of the Korean question.”<sup>200</sup>

Yet well before the designated date arrived, Washington’s plan for Korean unification as directed by NSC 170/1 had lost much of its rationale. As a progress report on NSC 170/1 commented on March 31, the “relative small possibility” that a political conference might produce an agreement on a unified Korea had declined even further given the shower of economic and military aid to North Korea provided by Communist China and the Soviet Union.<sup>201</sup> In September 1953 the Soviet government agreed to cancel or postpone all of North Korea’s debts and promised one billion rubles of aid. In November the PRC also canceled

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<sup>199</sup> *FRUS, 1952-1954, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 2, 1666-73, 1691-92, 1735-37, 1739-42.

<sup>200</sup> DSB, March 1, 1954, 316-318.

<sup>201</sup> Progressive report on NSC 170/1: U.S. objectives and courses of action in Korea, March 31, 1954 in White House Office: Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (OSANSA): Records, NSC series, policy papers subseries, Box No.7 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

North Korea's debts and offered 300 million yuan of aid in the next year, plus an additional 500 million yuan until 1957.<sup>202</sup>

In short, despite Eisenhower and Dulles' wish to resolve the Korean problem through negotiations, the political reality surrounding the Korean peninsula was much closer to the opinion of President Rhee and the JCS that Korea's division was a fait accompli except through the use of military force. The Department of Defense was hardly in perfect agreement with Rhee, however; while the U.S. military's primary objective was to maintain the status quo in Korea under the armistice, President Rhee was anxious to initiate a renewed military campaign to the Yalu, in his mind the only road to the unification he coveted. Therefore, while seeking the possibility of a political settlement in Korea under the armistice, Washington's main concern was how to protect the armistice from the ROK's unilateral military action.

### **Securing the armistice from ROK unilateralism**

During the first year following the armistice, the United States feared that unilateral action by the ROK was more likely to disrupt the peace than a Communist military offensive. At the heart of Washington's fear was President Rhee, who refused to sign the armistice and threatened to withdraw ROK forces from the UNC unless the United States resumed the fight until Korea was unified. According to the Dulles-Rhee joint statement of August 8, 1953, once the political conference had been in session for 90 days, and if both governments understood that all attempts had been fruitless, they should be ready to withdraw from negotiations and consult further regarding the "attainment of a unified, free, and independent

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<sup>202</sup> Armstrong, *Tyranny of the Weak*, 56.

Korea.”<sup>203</sup> Thus the timing and outcome of the Korean political conference became a potential breaking point with regard to the ROK’s continuing commitment not to disrupt the armistice. Eventually Washington’s ceaseless efforts to restrain President Rhee, including individual contacts with him and genuine interest in progress in the political conference, failed to dispel the ROK president’s desire to pursue unification by force; but Washington succeeded in discouraging Seoul’s most belligerent inclinations.

In August 1953 Secretary Dulles’ talks with Rhee in Seoul started with the details of the political conference.<sup>204</sup> Dulles and Rhee initially considered October 1 as its possible opening date, but they reached a mutual understanding that other governments might delay the actual beginning until October 15. They also agreed that the conference would last at least 90 days. Later Rhee expressed his hope that if Korea’s unification was not achieved after 90 days the United States would either resume hostilities or provide the ROK with “moral and material support” until the peninsula was unified. Yet Secretary Dulles stood firm that he could not commit the United States to another war “at the end of six months.”<sup>205</sup> In the end, a Rhee-Dulles joint statement announced that a political conference would be convened prior to October 27, 1953. The statement also declared that there would be no unilateral action to unite Korea by force for the “agreed duration of the political conference.”<sup>206</sup> In his report of August

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<sup>203</sup> DSB, August 17, 1953, 203.

<sup>204</sup> The United States opined its main five points of the political conference to the ROK. In addition to the date and duration of conference issues detailed above, the two nations discussed the place, agenda, and participants. The place was not decided yet, but San Francisco was considered first, and if denied, any place in South America would be suggested. Next, the agenda should be confined exclusively to Korean questions. Finally, Dulles also hoped to limit the participants to the U.S., the ROK and some of the sixteen U.N. members, although the Soviet Union and India might join. On the ROK side, Rhee opposed India’s participation as neutral because of India’s “pro-Communist” attitude, but the U.S. disagreed with Rhee’s judgment; *FRUS, 1952-1954, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 2, 1468-1471.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, 1468-1471, 1483.

<sup>206</sup> DSB, August 17, 1953, 203.

27, Secretary Dulles explained to American officials that the terms constituted Rhee's assurance that ROK forces would remain under UNC control "until at least February 1954."<sup>207</sup>

Although the subject of the Korean political conference was placed on the agenda of the UN General Assembly in August 1953, several issues regarding its composition delayed the opening. For example, the inclusion of India was supported by the United Kingdom but vetoed by both the U.S. and ROK governments. India eventually decided to withdraw itself.<sup>208</sup> Armistice Article 60 dictated a cross-table negotiation between two parties--the UNC and the Communists--but the Soviet Union called for a "roundtable" arrangement including neutrals.<sup>209</sup> After the UN General Assembly passed a resolution regarding the Korean political conference on August 28, the United States, as the representative of the 16 nations contributing armed forces to the UNC, proposed a time and place for the meeting, which the PRC received on September 5. Ten days later Beijing replied, urging a review of previous debates over composition of the conference.<sup>210</sup> It was not clear that the conference would be held as proposed by the armistice agreement.

As the UN General Assembly balked at the schedule and composition of the political conference, the ROK government began to question the legitimacy of the August Rhee-Dulles agreements. On October 2 ROK Foreign Minister Pyun informed the Americans that Rhee was "terribly concerned" over whether there would be a political conference and what could be done to unify Korea without one. A day later, Washington took alarm over a statement by Cho Chung Whan, the acting foreign minister of the ROK, suggesting that his countrymen

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<sup>207</sup> *FRUS, 1952-1954, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 2, 1502.

<sup>208</sup> DSB, Sept 14, 1953, 340-341.

<sup>209</sup> DSB, Oct 5, 1953, 466-467.

<sup>210</sup> DSB, Sept 28, 1953, 404-405.

“take up our arms” against the Indian Repatriation Forces supervising the release of POWs in the demilitarized zone. On October 5, in a meeting with the ROK prime minister, President Eisenhower and Secretary Dulles expressed their concerns about the “apparent tendency of Korean officials” to “talk in terms of war.”<sup>211</sup>

Washington needed to know exactly how the ROK would respond if the political conference was delayed beyond October. According to one intelligence estimate, the ROK army could initiate full-scale hostilities “despite UNC surveillance and countermeasures.” The estimate stated that when the 90-day commitment no longer bound Rhee his decision regarding a resumption of hostilities would depend on his view of possible U.S involvement in the fighting in Korea. The estimate concluded that, “even with a slight chance of involving the United States,” Rhee might renew the war “in the hope that the United States would eventually give a full support of the ROK.” However, if Rhee were convinced of U.S. non-engagement, his interests would center on abandoning the political conference to “forestall any agreement unacceptable to the ROK” and to “insure the retention of U.S. protecting forces in the ROK.”<sup>212</sup>

Washington also undertook a study of U.S. courses of action in Korea in the event that an “acceptable political settlement” could not be achieved. If the ROK “took or clearly intended to take the initiative in unilaterally renewing hostilities,” the NSC planning board contemplated four alternative courses of action, ranging from non-engagement of UN forces in new hostilities, withdrawal of all UN forces from Korea, and acceptance of hostilities for combined action to unify Korea by force. Because all of the four alternatives “carried such political and military costs and hazards,” the planning board considered none of them

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<sup>211</sup> *FRUS, 1952-1954, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 2, 1519-22.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, 1519, 1521-22, 1534-36.

acceptable “unless it were imperative that one of them be adopted.” Accordingly, the planning board concluded that the United States should “urgently undertake all possible measures” to keep in check the ROK’s desire for unilateral military action.<sup>213</sup>

Top U.S. officials concurred. After meeting with President Rhee, General John Hull, the new CINUNC in Tokyo, stressed to Washington on October 21 that, if Rhee really understood that Washington would not support him “in any military venture,” he would not “resort to such action.” General Hull recommended Vice President Richard Nixon as a special envoy to Rhee during his scheduled visit to East Asia in November. President Eisenhower agreed and on November 4 Secretary Dulles forwarded to the vice president Eisenhower’s official letter to Rhee. The American president wrote that the United States would not “directly or indirectly violate or evade the commitment” to the armistice by “assistance in any form to any renewal of such hostilities by ROK forces.”<sup>214</sup>

Approved by the president on November 6, NSC 167/2 directed that the United States should “promptly notify Rhee formally” that, “if the ROK unilaterally initiates military operations against Chinese or North Korean forces in or north of the demilitarized zone,”

- a. UNC air, ground, and sea forces will not support such operations directly or indirectly;
- b. The U.S. will not furnish any military or logistic support for such operations;
- c. All U.S. economic aid to Korea will cease immediately;
- d. The UNC Commander will take any action necessary to prevent his forces becoming involved in the renewal of hostilities and to provide for their security.

Rhee also would be informed that, if he ceased further cooperation with the UNC, it would decide its course of action “purely in terms of its own interest and without consulting him.”

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<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 1546-57.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., 1543-45, 1590-93.

Finally, NSC 167/2 recommended that the United States should seek from Rhee a “formal assurance in writing” that “he would not initiate unilateral military action at any time against the Communists in or north of the demilitarized zone.”<sup>215</sup> Receipt of such an assurance became the most important mission in Nixon’s meetings with Rhee.

Those meetings helped reduce Washington’s fear of unilateral actions by the ROK, but they failed to dispel U.S. suspicion of the ROK’s genuine intentions. Nixon arrived in Seoul on November 12 and delivered Eisenhower’s letter to Rhee in their first meeting. According to Nixon, at one point Rhee vowed that “before he took any unilateral action he should inform President Eisenhower.” Nixon received Rhee’s letter to Eisenhower while in Tokyo a week later. The vice-president confirmed to Secretary Dulles that the letter contained “in express terms” the “personal assurances Rhee made in the first conversation.” In a NSC meeting on December 15, Nixon’s oral report of his recent trip affirmed again that Rhee finally pledged to do nothing unless and until he had informed the president. However, Nixon was also impressed that, “unlike his prior understanding,” Rhee enjoyed the “very complete support” of the Korean people in the “strong popular desire” to unify Korea. Nixon concluded that the United States should be very cautious in “judging the temper of the Korean people.”<sup>216</sup>

Meanwhile the preliminary talks in Panmunjom for the Korean political conference were not going well. On September 15 the State Department appointed Arthur Dean as U.S. emissary representing the 16 nations of the UNC and the ROK in the political conference. On October 24 Ambassador Dean arrived in Seoul and two days later he launched the preliminary talks in Panmunjom with the delegates from Communist China and North Korea. The discussions dragged on through November and early December. The Communists nominated

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<sup>215</sup> Ibid., 1543-45, 1598-99.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid., 1609-16, 1658-62.

the Soviet Union, Burma, India, Indonesia, and Pakistan to participate as neutrals at the conference while the UNC refused to classify the Soviet Union as a “true neutral.” Fearing problems with the ROK, the UNC also challenged India’s neutral status. As to voting, each side would vote as a unit, but they disagreed on whether any nation could announce before the voting that it would not be bound to a specific issue by its vote.<sup>217</sup>

On December 8, 1953 Ambassador Dean put forward a final proposal, which included the Soviet Union on the Communist side, but the Communists demurred because the Soviet Union was not approved as a neutral and neutral participation was severely limited. Four days later, faced with the Chinese delegate’s repeated accusation of U.S. “perfidy” or deliberate treachery in the ROK’s release of anti-Communist prisoners in June 1953, Ambassador Dean walked out of the talks in protest. Although liaison meetings resumed at Panmunjom on January 14, 1954, they made no meaningful progress regarding composition of the political conference.<sup>218</sup>

As prospects for the political conference withered away during the winter, President Rhee’s unrelenting wish for a unified Korea floated again in official diplomatic channels. On January 2, in a confidential letter to Rhee, President Eisenhower extolled the former’s pledge in his letter of November 1953 not to “undertake unilateral action without informing me beforehand.” Relying on Rhee’s assurance, the U.S. president promised he would ask the Senate to “go ahead with the ratification of our Mutual Defense Treaty” and both houses of Congress to enact “the legislation necessary for the economic assistance program.” On January 27, the day after the Senate approved ratification, Rhee expressed his “heartly congratulations on your

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<sup>217</sup> DSB, January 4, 1954, 16.

<sup>218</sup> *FRUS, 1952-1954, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 2, 1588, 1655-57.

success.” Three days later Eisenhower replied that the treaty would be a “symbol of enduring cooperation” between the ROK and the United States.<sup>219</sup>

Once it became clear that the pact would be ratified by the United States, however, Rhee lost no time in again floating his view of unification. When Rhee’s next letter to Eisenhower arrived in Washington on February 9, American officials were embarrassed by the ROK president’s unrefined and provocative tone, which they feared might produce an earthquake in U.S.-ROK relations. In the last paragraph Rhee stated:

... we see no hope in the U.S. Government. So long as we continue to cooperate with the United States we will either be another China or once again the Korea of the last forty years. If we have to be sold to either of our enemies, we would rather fight until we are united with our own people. If we succeed, we will become free men, or slaves if we fail fighting alone, but we will be united. This may simplify the matter for you to solve as you wish. I deeply regret that we have been a cause of great trouble for the United States and other UN nations. The time is here when we must decide either one way or another. Please tell me frankly what your present policy is regarding the unification of Korea.

Assistant Secretary Robertson worried that his president would be “shocked to receive such a communication” and decided not to forward it to him. A week later, in a talk with ROK Ambassador Yang, Robertson explained that the letter could “do serious harm to the U.S.-ROK relations.” Yang appreciated Robertson’s warning and promised to report the conversation to President Rhee, who later withdrew the letter.<sup>220</sup> Yet Washington realized that Rhee’s basic objective of unifying Korea by force had not changed, leaving in question Rhee’s continuing cooperation with the United States.

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<sup>219</sup> W. K. Scott, Director Executive Secretary, Memorandum for General Paul T. Carroll, February 12, 1954 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>220</sup> *FRUS, 1952-1954, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 2, 1685-86, 1745-47, 1749-50.

A week after the scheduling of the Korean political conference was finally agreed to in Berlin on February 18, Washington sent an official invitation to Seoul to attend. The ROK accepted only a week before its opening in late April. During the interval the ROK president attempted to sell his unification plan as the price of accepting Washington's invitation to Geneva. In March Ambassador Yang transmitted another bombshell letter from Seoul to Washington. Recalling his promise of no unilateral action without first notifying Eisenhower, Rhee declared that the time had come to "give you such notification." In Rhee's plan Koreans would "take sole responsibility for the fighting;" UN forces would not need to join his campaign to the north, but Rhee requested "moral and material support," including "adequate arms, ammunition, and other logistics, and air and naval coverage." Rhee also added that in Taipei Chiang had already agreed with his plan by promising to "move his army to the mainland at the same time." Alternately, Rhee desired a substantial buildup of ROK forces for the defense of Korea and the U.S. perimeter after total withdrawal of UN forces.<sup>221</sup> Rhee conditioned ROK participation in the Geneva Conference upon Washington's approval of either of his plans.

Top officials in Washington listened carefully to Rhee's plea for additional measures for the ROK's security. By Dulles' direction, to be sure, the exchange of ratifications of the mutual defense pact, originally scheduled on March 18, was postponed without explanation.<sup>222</sup> When Dulles forwarded Rhee's letter to Admiral Radford, however, the JCS chairman

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<sup>221</sup> Copy of Syngman Rhee Letter, transmitted through Ambassador You Chan Yang, Seoul: Kyung Mu Dai, March 11, 1954 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL). Rhee's alternative specified three points; (1) air and naval strength fully adequate to support the 20 divisions of the ROK and prevent a surprise enemy breakthrough (2) immediate training and equipment of 15 to 20 additional Korean divisions in preparation for withdrawal of all UN forces within six months (3) assignment of General Van Fleet to train and supervise the additional divisions. Citing Van Fleet's estimate that 25 Asian divisions could be established and maintained for the cost of one American division, Rhee argued that the result would be a "tremendous buildup of Free Asian defense without the commitment of U.S. manpower and at minimum expense."

<sup>222</sup> Progress report on U.S. objectives and courses of action in Korea, March 31, 1954 in White House Office: Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (OSANSA): Records, NSC Series, Policy Papers Subseries, Box No. 7 (Abilene, KS.:DDEL).

commented that Rhee's offer should not be "arbitrarily rejected" because the ROK president was "honestly striving to find military and political solutions for his problems."<sup>223</sup> On March 20 President Eisenhower officially refused to support military action to unify Korea. Regarding Rhee's alternative request, Eisenhower stressed that the real sanction against unprovoked Communist aggression in Korea would be the "Greater Sanctions Statement" and mutual defense pact, but he promised further study of the security matters raised by his ROK counterpart. Eisenhower ended his letter with encouragement of Rhee's early decision to join the negotiations at Geneva so as to concert a basic U.S.-ROK position before engaging other participants.<sup>224</sup>

When the ROK government finally announced its participation in the Geneva conference on April 19, it stressed that the event must be the "final time-consuming attempt" to "attain unification by peaceful means." In case the Geneva conference failed, the ROK government urged the United States and "other friends in free world" to "join with us in employing other means to drive the enemy from our land." In consultation with Washington, after a reasonable time passed without conference results, the ROK government would decide to abandon discussion "as [a] way to peace with Communism and Communists."<sup>225</sup> The announcement assured Washington that at least Rhee would follow the agreed schedule until the outcome of the political conference became clear.

### **A contingency to the Communist renewal of hostilities in Korea**

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<sup>223</sup> *FRUS, 1952-54, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 2, 1765-66.

<sup>224</sup> The White House, Eisenhower's letter to Rhee, March 20, 1954 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>225</sup> *FRUS, 1952-54, The Geneva Conference*, Volume XVI, 113-115.

Soon after the armistice was signed, Secretary Dulles told the 16 ambassadors with armed forces in the UNC that the future character of the Korean problem would be more political than military.<sup>226</sup> Although the military dimension of the Korean problem no longer received so much public attention, the first year after the armistice saw another significant milestone in the shaping of the ROK's security position in Washington's mind. The U.S. military contingency plan of May 1953, with its call for atomic bombardment of North Korea and Communist China, survived Washington's reassessment of the overall security situation after the end of the fighting. Under President Eisenhower's leadership, in early 1954 post-Korean War security planners approved a contingency to a Communist renewal of hostilities based on NSC Action No. 794 and the "greater sanctions statement."

By mid-May 1953 the new administration was undertaking a review of its predecessor's national security policy and its viability for the foreseeable future. During the summer, at President Eisenhower's request, Operation SOLARIUM set up three separate study groups at the National War College to compare different options for national security policy. Each of the three groups was assigned evaluation of a particular approach: containment, strategic deterrence, and liberation or roll back. Although conventional wisdom long maintained that the administration finally opted for containment but with a more concerted effort at strategic deterrence, in reality the "New Look" managed to incorporate all the three alternatives in one way or another.<sup>227</sup>

Faced with an unstable and rapidly changing world situation, especially in the Communist bloc after Stalin's death, the new administration's search for a viable long-term national security policy received top priority in mid-1953. In Moscow Soviet Premier Georgi

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<sup>226</sup> *FRUS, 1952-54, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 2, 1461.

<sup>227</sup> Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 143-4.

Malenkov was considered the next leader of the Communist party, but he stopped short of establishing personal authority over his potential rivals. The rapid Soviet suppression of unrest in East Germany and other satellites during the summer of 1953 obscured the cracks in bloc solidarity in the early post-Stalin era. Finally and most significantly, Soviet success in testing a thermonuclear bomb in August 1953 cast a shadow on the perpetuation of the U.S. strategic edge in atomic capabilities.<sup>228</sup>

Internally, a turnover of personnel in the JCS immediately after the signing of the armistice also encouraged a reappraisal of basic national security policy. During the Korean War the Republican Party often resented JCS support of the Truman administration's military strategy in Korea. In particular, Senator Robert Taft, a prominent contender for the Republican presidential nomination in 1952, expressed his dissatisfaction with the JCS chairman, General Bradley. Taft held General Bradley responsible for Truman's excessive stress on Europe at the expense of Asia and his inadequate attention to air and sea power. As most JCS members were finishing their four year terms in mid-1953, Senator Taft and other Republicans pressed President Eisenhower to appoint successors. The president authorized Secretary of Defense Charles Wilson to select new JCS members in consultation with Taft. In May 1953 Wilson chose CINCPAC Admiral Arthur Radford as the next JCS chairman.<sup>229</sup> The admiral impressed both Wilson and Eisenhower with his fiscal conservatism, Asia-first strategy, and advocacy of air and naval power.<sup>230</sup>

One of the key tasks that the new JCS team encountered was to finalize the basic national security policy paper prompted by *Operation SOLARIUM*. As the three task forces

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<sup>228</sup> Stueck, "Reassessing U.S. strategy in the aftermath of the Korean War," 583; Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 147.

<sup>229</sup> Watson, *History of the JCS*, Volume V, 14-15.

<sup>230</sup> Stueck, "Reassessing U.S. strategy," 577.

failed to produce a single paper, the NSC Planning Board undertook the difficult work of synthesizing the three studies. On September 30 the board presented NSC 162, the content of which monopolized two major NSC meetings during the next month.<sup>231</sup> On October 30 the council discussed and finally approved the draft as NSC 162/2. Predictably, the document viewed the Soviet Union as the basic threat to U.S. security. For defense against the Soviet threat, the United States had to develop and maintain:

- (1) A strong military posture, with emphasis on the capability of inflicting massive retaliatory damage by offensive striking power;
- (2) U.S. and allied forces in readiness to move rapidly initially to counter aggression by Soviet bloc forces and to hold vital areas and lines of communication;
- (3) A mobilization base [at home] and its protection against crippling damage, adequate to insure victory in the event of general war.<sup>232</sup>

With respect to the defense of U.S. allies, NSC 162/2 stipulated that the United States should make clear to the Soviet Union and Communist China, “in general terms or with reference to specific areas as the situation requires,” its intention to react by force against any aggression by Communist armed forces “in specific situations where a warning appears desirable and feasible as an added deterrent.” The areas where aggression would “automatically involve the United States in war with the aggressor” were the “NATO countries, West Germany, Berlin, Japan, the Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, the American Republics, and the ROK.” Some other areas, including Indochina and Taiwan, were so important strategically that an attack on them would “probably compel” the United States to react by force “either locally at the point of attack or generally against the military power of

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<sup>231</sup> Ibid., 583.

<sup>232</sup> Trachtenberg, *The Development of American Strategic Thought*, 39-44.

the aggressor.” Most significantly, if hostilities occurred, the United States would consider the use of nuclear weapons to be “as available for use as other munitions.”<sup>233</sup> As Gaddis remarks, NSC 162/2 demonstrated that the public position of U.S. willingness to use nuclear weapons in a wide range of circumstances was not merely a bluff.<sup>234</sup> Unlike NSC 153/1, however, NSC 162/2 did not recommend that the United States should take unilateral action against aggression.<sup>235</sup> Such a change reflected the administration’s dedication to collective security.

The military posture prescribed in NSC 162/2 set the basis for Washington’s course should the Communists renew hostilities in Korea. Yet the details for its execution, both military and diplomatic, remained to be worked out. This fact spurred the NSC planning board to draft NSC 167 in consultation with the Defense Department. The recommendation that emerged was that the United States should invoke the Joint Policy Declaration (Greater Sanctions Statement) and take military and diplomatic measures “along the lines provided in NSC Action No. 794” of May 20, 1953.<sup>236</sup> Theoretically, by combining UN allies’ agreement to an expanded war in the Greater Sanctions Statement with the intensive use of nuclear weapons in NSC Action No. 794, U.S. military action in post-armistice Korea would be little restricted by the omission of unilateral action featured in NSC 153/1.

In practice, Washington had little confidence in the positive response of U.S. allies to a possible expanded war, including nuclear strikes against China. When NSC 162/1 was under final review on October 29, 1953, the draft of NSC 167 was discussed as well. President Eisenhower inquired whether in the event of a Communist renewal of hostilities the U.S.

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<sup>233</sup> Ibid., 47, 60.

<sup>234</sup> Gaddis, *Strategies of containment*, 147.

<sup>235</sup> Watson, *History of the JCS*, Volume V, 25, 40.

<sup>236</sup> *FRUS, 1952-54, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 2, 1547-48.

decision to use atomic weapons was “fully understood by U.S. allies.” Secretary Dulles replied that he was “quite certain” that back in May major allies had understood Washington’s view “even though there had not been formal discussion with them.” After the meeting the NSC directed the State Department and the JCS, with the assistance of the CIA, to review the military and diplomatic measures provided for in NSC Action No. 794 and report the results on November 19.<sup>237</sup>

When the council reviewed NSC 170 on that date, the final discussion centered on a suggestion by the JCS that the United States should “make clear to the world” the necessity of expanding the war to China in the event of a resumption of hostilities by the Communists. President Eisenhower expressed his hope to discuss the matter with British and French prime ministers at the forthcoming Bermuda conference. Secretary Dulles supported the president’s view, stating that a great deal of “educational work” had to be done on this point. Although the JCS had suggested that this clarification should be made only “after hostilities had begun or were about to begin,” Admiral Radford disagreed.<sup>238</sup> NSC 170/1 stated that if Communist forces violated the armistice and renewed hostilities in Korea, then the United States should “make clear to the world” the need to expand the war to China “by air and naval action” as the “only feasible way of honoring our collective security commitments to the United Nations” and the U.S. commitment to the ROK.<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> Memorandum: discussion at the 168th meeting of the NSC, Thursday, October 29, October 30, 1953 in Ann Whitman File, NSC series, Box No.4 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>238</sup> Memorandum: discussion at the 171st meeting of the NSC, Thursday, November 19, 1953, November 20, 1953 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 5 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>239</sup> NSC 170/1: U.S. objectives and courses of action in Korea, November 20, 1953 in White House Office: Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (OSANSA): Records, NSC Series, Policy Papers Subseries, Box No. 7 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

To Washington's disappointment the Bermuda Conference between December 4 and 8 failed to lead Great Britain and France to a common understanding of the possible future use of atomic weapons in Korea. In a NSC meeting of December 10, Secretary Dulles reported that both the key allies exhibited "very stubborn resistance" to any idea of the "automatic use of atomic weapons, even if the Communists renewed hostilities in Korea." Reminiscent of the December 1950 Truman-Attlee meetings, President Eisenhower added that Winston Churchill, the British Prime Minister, opposed the use of atomic weapons "even in Korea and adjacent areas" unless such a course of action had been "agreed by UN allies in advance." Secretary Dulles commented that Churchill feared that if the United States "took the initiative in the case of such weapons" there would be "world-wide revulsion." The president concluded that the British leader would "let Washington plan to use these weapons if necessity arose," but "not to talk [openly] about these plans."<sup>240</sup>

The allied response to U.S. use of atomic weapons in Korea was an important subject at a NSC meeting of January 8, 1954, when a State-Defense joint report on military courses of action in the event of renewed hostilities in Korea was finally approved. President Eisenhower remarked that the United States must be "a little patient with allies who had not yet fully grasped the import[ance] of atomic warfare." In the event the Communists renewed hostilities, the president insisted, CINCPAC General Hull in Tokyo would be assured freedom to react instantly with everything he had "except the atomic weapon whose use should be approved by Washington." Secretary Dulles also stressed that the U.S. reaction should not risk alienating the sympathies of allies. The "single most important step," he insisted, was the "exchange of certain atomic information with U.S. allies in Europe" and "letting some of these fellows in

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<sup>240</sup> *FRUS, 1952-54, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 2, 1653-55. Therefore, the president thought that the best followup of the Bermuda discussions of atomic weapons would be discussions between the United States and the British Chiefs of Staff.

Europe have a few atomic weapons.” Dulles proposed to keep the problem under constant review because the attitude of U.S. allies toward the use of atomic weapons might “change in as short a time as three months.”<sup>241</sup>

The other central element to the planning on Korea was the possible reaction by the Soviet Union. During late 1953 the State and Defense Departments consistently disagreed over Moscow’s likely reaction to U.S. use of nuclear weapons. On November 27, in a memorandum to the Secretary of Defense, the JCS indicated that the recommendation of May 19 regarding air and naval operations directly against China and Manchuria and a coordinated offensive to the waist of Korea was “no longer applicable” because of the need for a “substantial buildup period of 9 to 12 months.” Because there would be “little time for immediate buildup” if the Communists resumed hostilities in Korea, the best course was:

- a. Employing atomic weapons, conduct large-scale air operations against targets in China, Manchuria, and Korea. Exploit such successes as may be gained by coordinated ground, air and naval action to destroy enemy forces in Korea.
- b. Immediately consider what further military buildup is then required to meet resulting contingencies in Korea or elsewhere.<sup>242</sup>

After analyzing the political implications of the JCS memorandum, the State Department was struck by the dire implications of general war against Communist China and possibly the Soviet Union. According to the State Department, operations against targets in China, Manchuria, and Korea could be “various as general types of attack,” each of which might “raise markedly different Russian reaction[s] against U.S. bases in Japan and Okinawa”

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<sup>241</sup> Memorandum: discussion at the 179th meeting of the NSC, Friday, January 8, 1954, January 11, 1954 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 5 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>242</sup> *FRUS, 1952-54, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 2, 1626-28.

as well as “markedly different reaction[s] from U.S. allies and other nations in the free world.” On December 3, when the JCS memorandum was discussed in the NSC, Secretary Dulles warned that the JCS course of action contemplated general war with China and “probably also with the Soviet Union because of the Sino-Soviet alliance.” In addition to the danger of the Soviet reaction, Dulles listed other political problems related to the JCS position. First, there would be virtually no UN participants in “any general war against China,” isolating the United States from allies. Second, Japan might not permit the United States to use its bases “if exposed to direct Soviet attack.” Third, Chiang Kai-shek might exploit the situation to invade mainland China from Taiwan. Fourth, based on a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) estimate, Dulles warned that the Chinese Communists might “send 300,000 troops into Indochina and defeat the French Union force there.” Finally, Dulles believed that, if the United States moved toward a general war in Asia, most Western European countries would “immediately seek a neutrality pact with the USSR.”<sup>243</sup>

A conversation at the meeting between the president and the JCS chairman held a decisive clue to understanding how a future war in Korea would be undertaken if renewed by the Communists. Originally Admiral Radford stated that the concept of operations would “call initially for a massive atomic air strike which would defeat the Chinese Communists in Korea” and “make them incapable of aggression there or elsewhere in the Far East for a considerable time.” He also explained that operations would have to be “confined to Korea, Manchuria, and North China at the outset of the war.”<sup>244</sup> The president then inquired whether the course of action contemplated “going further into China than the course outlined by General Bradley”

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<sup>243</sup> Memorandum: Discussion at the 173<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the NSC, Thursday, December 3, 1953, December 4, in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 5 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

in May. “With great emphasis,” the president expressed his opinion that “if the Chinese Communists attacked the United States again” it should certainly respond by “hitting them hard and wherever it would hurt most, including Peiping [Beijing] itself.” This, the president remarked, would mean “all-out war with Communist China.” Further, the president asked Admiral Radford a “simple but very serious question:” did Radford believe that the United States would be at war with Communist China if it once again attacked U.S. forces in East Asia? Admiral Radford replied affirmatively and stated that the United States should “strike against the Communist Chinese in the air from Shanghai all the way north.” The president replied that this “fitted exactly into his thinking.”<sup>245</sup>

Although Secretary Dulles admitted that any resumption of hostilities in Korea by the Communists would eventually end in general war, he called for an interim period in order to “bring allies along to share [our] point of view.” He argued that it was dangerous to “provide the military with a decision to make a general war automatically in Asia in response to a Communist attack.” When Admiral Radford agreed with Dulles’ concerns, President Eisenhower directed the JCS to get together with the State Department and revise their views in light of the discussion. It was agreed that, before January 1, 1954, the State Department and the JCS should prepare a restatement of the initial military objectives and major courses of action to be undertaken in the event that hostilities in Korea were renewed by the Communists.<sup>246</sup>

While in the NSC meeting of December 3 all agreed to consider a war renewed in Korea by the Communists virtually a general war with Communist China, they stopped short of making a full assessment of the Soviet reaction. The State Department still believed that the

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<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid.

military courses of action proposed by the JCS were “too sweeping in character and likely to involve the United States in widespread hostilities.” On December 15, in a memorandum to the director of the policy planning staff, Assistant Secretary Robertson recommended that, “from the political point of view,” hostilities should be limited to Korea and Manchuria, particularly “lines of communication leading into Korea, air bases under use by the enemy and supply areas.” Robertson stressed that areas “adjacent to the Soviet Union, areas in China Proper and the Port Arthur-Dairen area” should be excluded from attack unless installations and facilities in such areas proved of great advantage to the enemy.<sup>247</sup>

The joint State-Defense study completed in early January 1954 was a product of the JCS compromise with the State Department assumption that limited U.S. action against Communist China would help reduce the extent of Soviet activities in renewed hostilities. The report stated that U.S. military objectives should be to:

- (a) Destroy effective Chinese Communist military power applied to the Korean effort.
- (b) Reduce Chinese Communist military capability for further aggression.
- (c) Create conditions under which ROK forces can assume increasing responsibility for the defense of Korea.

In pursuit of these objectives, the military courses of action to be undertaken were:

- (a) Employing atomic weapons, conduct offensive air operations against military targets in Korea, and against those military targets in Manchuria and China which

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<sup>247</sup> *FRUS, 1952-54, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 2, 1657-58.

were being used by the Communists in direct support of their operations in Korea, or which threaten the security of U.S. / UN forces in the Korean area.

(b) Simultaneously, exploit as practicable such successes as might be gained as a result of action outlined in (a) above, by coordinated ground, naval and air action to destroy enemy forces in Korea.

(c) In light of the circumstances prevailing at the time, and subject to an evaluation of the results of operations conducted under (a) and (b), be prepared to take further action against Communist China to reduce its warmaking capability in the Korea area, such as: (1) blockade of China coast (2) seizure of Hainan and other off-shore islands (3) raids on the China mainland by Chinese Nationalist forces.

(d) Immediately consider what further military buildup was then required to meet the resulting contingencies in Korea or elsewhere.<sup>248</sup>

The report argued that, if the Soviets were convinced that U.S. objectives were limited as described, they would not initiate offensive action against U.S. bases in Japan and Okinawa or seek to broaden the war. However, the report warned, if Moscow believed that U.S. military objectives were broader, its likely reaction would be more extensive, including overt participation. In particular, the report specified that “massive U.S. air attacks on numerous targets in China Proper, large scale landings on the China mainland, or possibly the seizure of Hainan” would magnify the Communist belief that the United States had “objectives going beyond those stated in the report,” and that the United States intended to “bring about the complete overthrow of the Peiping [Beijing] regime.”<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> Ibid., 1700.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid., 1701.

When the report was discussed in the NSC meeting of January 8, President Eisenhower injected his own view regarding the risk of Soviet involvement in the war. After noting that he “seemed to be in disagreement with many members of the Council on one very important issue,” the president stressed that he did not believe that the “USSR was going to let itself get involved in full-scale warfare in the Far East.” In the president’s view, the “risks were just too great” and the “distances for supply too extended.” Admiral Radford agreed, stating that he did not believe that the Soviets would intervene overtly.<sup>250</sup> At the end of the meeting, NSC Action No. 1004-a endorsed the military objectives and major courses of action presented at the meeting by the State Department and the JCS in the event that the Communists renewed hostilities in Korea in the near future. On January 22 the JCS agreed to furnish this information to CINCFE, CINCPAC, and Commander, Strategic Air Command (COMSAC).<sup>251</sup>

Finally, in the NSC meeting of January 8, intelligence estimates in the State-Defense report earlier in the month received much attention. CIA Director Allen Dulles expressed reservations with various points, particularly with respect to the “circumstances under which the USSR might be provoked into intervention.” Secretary Dulles reinforced his brother’s view by warning that “almost all the presumptions” were subject to rapid change. Together with the reaction of U.S. allies to the use of atomic weapons, the secretary proposed that the Soviet reaction in the Far East should be another subject of constant monitoring. It was agreed that the objectives, courses of action, and estimates presented by the State

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<sup>250</sup> Memorandum: discussion at the 179th meeting of the NSC, Friday, January 8, 1954, January 11, 1954 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 5 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>251</sup> Report by the Joint Strategic Plans Committee to the JCS on analysis of possible courses of action in Korea, JCS 1776/431, February 11, 1954 in Geographic File, 1954-56, 383.21 Japan (3-13-45) Sec. 40 to 383.21 Korea (3-19-45) Sec. 145, Box No. 27, RG 218: Records of the U.S. JCS (College Park, MD.: NA). On February 17, the JCS concluded, in view of guidance furnished on January 22 no further action was necessary at that time to enable implementation of the NSC action; Secretary C.E. Curran, Memorandum for the Secretary, JCS: status of JCS directives, March 12, 1954 in Geographic File, 1954-56, 383.21 Korea (3-19-45) Sec. 146-154, Box No. 28, RG 218: Records of the U.S. JCS (College Park, MD.: NA).

Department and the JCS should be reviewed periodically, along with any necessary revisions presented to the NSC.<sup>252</sup>

By early March the NSC decision of January 8 had earned wide support from the intelligence organizations of the State Department, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and the JCS. A special national intelligence estimate concluded that, because the Soviet Union was bound to Communist China by “close ties of interest and ideology as well as by the Sino-Soviet Treaty of 1950,” it might intervene directly and overtly “even at the outset of the fighting, especially if the Kremlin considered that vital Soviet security interests were endangered.” The estimate also assumed that subsequent Communist reactions to U.S. military operations would depend on “how the military situation developed, particularly in terms of damage inflicted by U.S. action.”<sup>253</sup>

According to the estimate the reaction of U.S. allies to the use of atomic bombs was “inseparable from the role of the Soviet Union in a war with Communist China.” Among the “general considerations” that would “shape the probable reactions of non-Communist peoples” was the widespread fear that renewal of war in Korea would eventually escalate to general war, “strengthened by concern lest the Sino-Soviet treaty be invoked.” The report went on to say that, “if most U.S. allies were convinced that the Communists had in fact initiated hostilities,” they would probably “reluctantly accept” the use of atomic weapons in North Korea, and “probably accept” their use in Manchuria and North China “against those military targets in the general vicinity of Korea ... not adjacent to or within urban concentrations.” In “other areas in China,” the allies would “probably not oppose U.S. atomic attacks on Chinese

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<sup>252</sup> Memorandum: discussion at the 179th meeting of the NSC, Friday, January 8, 1954, January 11, 1954 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 5 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>253</sup> *FRUS, 1952-54, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 2, 1758-60.

Communist air bases, if those bases were being used for attacks against U.S. or allied forces.”

In any event, the report stressed, U.S. allies in Europe would not support the use of atomic weapons by the United States against military targets “adjacent to or within urban concentrations.”<sup>254</sup>

With respect to Moscow and Beijing’s possible reaction to a general war with the United States in the Far East, the report pointed to three situations in which the Communist powers might respond in different measures. First, if the Soviet Union concluded that the United States was “about to expel Communist forces from Korea and to take up a position along the border of North Korea,” Moscow might deploy its troops “in the guise of volunteers.” There was “some slight chance” that the Soviet Union might even provide “atomic weapons with delivery units” to the Communist Air Force in China (CAFIC) to make air attacks on Japan. However, the Soviet Union would still seek to “avoid further expansion of the area of conflict.” Second, if the United States “expanded its operations against China by a blockade of the China coast, by large-scale Chinese Nationalist raids on the Chinese mainland, and/or by seizure of Hainan,” the Chinese Communists would “probably take Hong Kong in case of British support of U.S. action” and might “undertake an invasion of Indochina as a diversionary measure.”<sup>255</sup>

Finally and most significantly, if the Kremlin estimated that the Chinese Communist regime was “about to be destroyed or lost to the Bloc,” the Soviet Union would have to “decide whether to seek an end to the war by the withdrawal of Communist armed forces from Korea or to take such additional overt measures to support its ally as the military situation

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<sup>254</sup> Ibid., 1762.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid., 1760-61.

seemed to demand, including the open commitment of Soviet ground, naval, and air forces *using all weapons.*” If Moscow found that the Chinese Communist regime could not be saved “except by overt Soviet military assistance,” the Soviet Union might give such assistance “even at grave risk of expanding the area of conflict beyond the issues at stake in Asia.” Still, “even in this case” Moscow would “attempt to localize the hostilities to the Far East.” On March 2 all members of the Intelligence Advisory Committee concurred with this estimate.<sup>256</sup> After long deliberations Washington’s contingency plan in response to a Communist resumption of hostilities in Korea was finally affirmed based on Washington’s calculation of the limited role of U.S. allies and the Soviet Union in U.S. atomic operations against North Korea and Communist China.

Such a military posture in Korea represented a specific application of the “New Look,” the defense strategy presented by NSC 162/2. On January 12, 1954, four days after the NSC approved a new military contingency for Korea, Secretary Dulles summarized the basic concept of the new strategy in a widely reported address to the Council of Foreign Relations. Dulles explained that the Eisenhower administration was seeking a “maximum deterrent at a bearable cost.” Local defense was always significant, but none alone would contain the “mighty land power of the Communist world.” Local defenses had to be reinforced by the further deterrent of massive retaliatory power. Here Secretary Dulles explained its meaning:

...a potential aggressor, who was glutted with manpower, might be tempted to attack in confidence that resistance would be confined to manpower. He might be tempted to attack in places where his superiority was decisive. The way to deter aggression is for the free community to be willing and able to respond vigorously at places and with means of its own choosing.

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<sup>256</sup> Ibid., 1458-61

Then Dulles explained how in the Korean War the basic concept of massive retaliation had proven its utility. Dulles proclaimed that the administration effected a “major transformation.” The fighting ended because the aggressor faced the possibility that the fighting might spread “beyond the limits and methods which he had selected.”<sup>257</sup>

In short, Washington applied its new defense strategy in NSC 162/2 to military planning in Korea, where the “Greater Sanctions Statement” and NSC Action No. 794 were finally merged in the doctrine of massive retaliation. Korea was also the first place where Washington’s new defense strategy was formally employed to prevent local Communist aggression in the foreseeable future.

Soon after announcing U.S. massive retaliation strategy, Washington received alarming signals of Communist aggressiveness in other areas of East Asia. In each case, Washington faced a decision on the applicability of massive retaliation. Once massive retaliation had been applied to the region, the so-called strategy of asymmetry, backed by U.S. superior nuclear strength, aimed at deterring Communist China’s potential threat based on its tremendous manpower. In case of open hostilities, tactical use of nuclear weapons by the United States, it was hoped, eventually would neutralize larger Communist conventional armed forces. The Truman-Acheson deterrent by water and air in the Far East before the Korean War had gradually given way to the Eisenhower-Dulles deterrent of landed invasions by nuclear fire.

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<sup>257</sup> DSB, January 25, 1954, 107-8.

## **The Geneva Conference**

Soon after Secretary Dulles thrust massive retaliation into public discourse, Washington encountered a situation in French Indochina in which possible U.S. military intervention became a focal point. French Union troops were under siege by the Communist-led Viet Minh at a fortress in a Vietnamese valley, Dien Bien Phu, near the border of Laos. The Eisenhower administration calculated, as had its predecessor regarding Korea, that the principle of collective security merited restrictions upon U.S. military action, in particular unilateral measures based on massive retaliation. As Watson explains, when NSC 162/2 was finally approved in late 1953, Washington policymakers stressed the need for Western unity, which in their view had become weak as other countries were “increasingly reluctant to support strong action under U.S. leadership.” The policy stated that the “principle of collective security through the United Nations, if it was to survive as a deterrent to continued piecemeal aggression and a promise of an effective world security system, should be upheld even in areas not of vital strategic importance.”<sup>258</sup> As the British refused to join in taking military action in Indochina, the Eisenhower administration’s military initiatives there, including use of nuclear weapons, ended in paper plans.

Between 1946 and 1954, the war in Indochina, prompted by the French desire to restore colonial rule and the Vietminh’s insistence on independence following Japan’s surrender, had developed into another major stage of the Cold War. Andrew Rotter explains that the Truman administration gradually listened to Paris’ argument that the French fight in Indochina was forming a chain of containment vis-à-vis Communist revolutionaries in that area of the world. The so-called “ten pin theory” proselytized by the Paris government called

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<sup>258</sup> Trachtenberg, *The Development of American Strategic Thought*, 47.

Vietnam the head pin whose fall into Communism would place its neighbors in disarray.<sup>259</sup> Soon after the Communist victory in China, Beijing decided to support the Vietminh with arms, advisers, and training. Concerned about Beijing's intentions, in May 1950 Washington promised to offer military and economic assistance to France. Between 1950 and 1954 U.S. investment in Indochina reached around 3 billion dollars; by 1954 Washington was paying over two-thirds of France's costs for the war. Nevertheless, the demand for troop withdrawal grew in Paris, as the war had gulped half of French defense expenditures in addition to producing over 150,000 casualties.<sup>260</sup>

Although Washington had assisted the French Union's war in Indochina, during early 1954 consideration of direct U.S. military intervention rose on Washington's agenda as the situation at Dien Bien Phu endangered French hegemony in the Tonkin Delta. Late in the fall of 1953, French Union forces had dug in at Dien Bien Phu. Before the end of the year, the Vietminh had moved five divisions to the surrounding hills and by March 1954 they were ready to open a siege of the French position. The biggest problem for the French defenders was physical isolation, with airlifts originating in the Red River Delta more than two hundred miles away providing the only source of resupply and reinforcement. At an early stage of the battle, the French lost most of the outer footholds of the camp and their airfields. The Vietminh gradually infiltrated French lines in the valley and used antiaircraft units to undermine enemy efforts to resupply and reinforce an increasingly shrinking area.<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> Andrew Rotter, "Chronicle of a war foretold: the United States and Vietnam 1945-1954" in Mark Lawrence and Fredrik Logevall, ed., *The First Vietnam War: Colonial Conflict and Cold War Crisis* (Cambridge, MA. & London: Harvard University Press, 2007), 288-90.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid., 9-10.

<sup>261</sup> John Prados, "Assessing Dien Bien Phu" in *The First Vietnam War*, 218-20.

During the battle of Dien Bien Phu, Washington strategists actively considered a nuclear option, but the president preconditioned direct intervention by any U.S. forces on allied support in a united action. By early April the Joint Advanced Study Committee in the Pentagon had concluded that “three tactical A-weapons, properly used, would be sufficient to smash the Vietminh effort there.”<sup>262</sup> Supported by General Nathan Twining, the chief of staff of the U.S. Air Force, Admiral Radford discussed the idea with Secretary Dulles.<sup>263</sup> On April 30, 1954, the president received a NSC paper from Robert Cutler, which analyzed the possibilities of using atomic weapons in Vietnam. According to Stephen Ambrose, the president then remarked that certainly the weapons could not be “used by the United States unilaterally.”<sup>264</sup> As it turned out, allied agreement on the use of bombs in Indochina proved impossible to obtain. French Minister of Defense Rene Pleven did not believe that the combat area offered suitable targets for nuclear arms. Rather, he was interested in obtaining a U.S. pledge of defense against Chinese air attacks.<sup>265</sup>

In early May Secretary Dulles reported to Washington that the British, especially Prime Minister Churchill, were “scared to death” at any hint of nuclear war. Dulles found that the British were “almost pathological” in their fear of the hydrogen bomb. As in the Korean War, the British opposition to any use of nuclear weapons was rooted in the risk of Soviet retaliation against Europe.<sup>266</sup> The incident taught a lesson to Washington

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<sup>262</sup> *FRUS, 1952-54, Indochina*, Volume XIII, 1271.

<sup>263</sup> John Newhouse, *War and peace in the nuclear age* (New York: Alfred A. Knof, 1989), 102.

<sup>264</sup> Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, Volume II: The President (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), 184.

<sup>265</sup> Betts, *Nuclear blackmail*, 51-2.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, 52-3. During the Indochina crisis, Betts concludes, a nuclear option existed “only in the sense that officials considered it.”

policymakers that, with growing Soviet nuclear capabilities, agreement between the United States and its allies would be extremely hard to obtain.

Washington also flirted with conventional military intervention, but finally decided to avoid direct involvement. Yet during the battle of Dien Bien Phu President Eisenhower went public with the domino theory. According to the president Indochina was the “first in a row of dominoes” whose fall would be followed by its neighbors.<sup>267</sup> Still most recent historians of the American response to the Dien Bien Phu crisis have concluded that Eisenhower did not believe that U.S. military intervention was promising. The president placed in the path of U.S. military intervention a series of conditions: congressional consent, British agreement on “united action,” and a French promise to set a timetable for the achievement of independence by Vietnam. Eisenhower knew that none of these conditions were likely to be met.<sup>268</sup> Washington decided to wait for the results of the Geneva conference, which included an Indochina phase to be convened after conclusion of the Korean phase.

The Geneva conference lasted from April 26 to July 20, 1954. Although Washington concluded after the first week of plenary sessions on Korea that no meaningful agreement on unification was possible, the process served to reaffirm one U.S. diplomatic objective: to exhibit the effectiveness of the UN principle of collective security after the Korean armistice. All non-U.S. participants of the United Nations Command in the Korean War, with the exception of South Africa, joined the United States and the ROK in the effort to settle the Korean question through negotiations with the Soviet Union, Communist China, and North Korea. Subsequent negotiations on Indochina proved more successful on substantive issues.

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<sup>267</sup> Rotter, “Chronicle of a war foretold” in *The First Vietnam War*, 290-91.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*, 301.

When the Korean phase of the Geneva Conference began, Washington believed that a joint position among the UNC participants had to be maintained vis-à-vis the three Communist governments. As the United States had promised the ROK since August 1953, a common understanding between Seoul and Washington provided the foundation of a Western coalition in Geneva in the spirit of the U.S.-ROK alliance. Seoul's opposition to any compromise with the Communists made it difficult to create a negotiating position among 16 delegates in Geneva, including the ROK team. President Rhee's insistence on the withdrawal of Communist Chinese forces and dissolution of the North Korean army prior to elections in North Korea provided little bargaining room.

In fact, Rhee's genuine concern was to exploit ROK cooperation with the United States at Geneva as a pretext for sealing off further negotiations with the Communists and securing American support for its own plan for unification by force. Not surprisingly, before the conference, Seoul resisted Washington's desire to place the subject of Korea's peaceful unification under UN authority. Although the conference ended in a joint declaration of a continuing UN commitment to a political settlement of the Korean question, Seoul leaned on the bilateral alliance with Washington to discredit the role of non-U.S. participants in Korean matters during the entire first phase of the proceedings.

One day after the ROK announced its decision to attend the conference, Secretary Dulles explained the basic U.S. position in a special briefing meeting with other UN members and the ROK delegation:

...the general position...would reflect the fact that the United Nations had already established a program for the unification and independence of Korea...In 1950, the General Assembly had set up a commission to take the necessary steps to achieve unification. Because of the Chinese Communist intervention it had not

been practical for the UN commission to proceed with its task. It therefore seemed logical to suggest, now that the fighting was over and when it was incumbent upon Communist China to purge itself of wrongdoing, that the interrupted UN program should be carried forward.

Dulles explained that the “interrupted UN program” meant elections in the “area not [previously] covered by UN elections,” which would complete the task that the United Nations had begun in 1948. Although the secretary had already secured positive feedback on the U.S. position from London, he cautioned that it should be further discussed with the ROK delegation at Geneva. As the “subject of the conference,” Dulles stressed, the views of the ROK would carry a “great measure of weight.”<sup>269</sup>

After the first week of plenary sessions, Secretary Dulles suggested several tactics. First, he proposed to “break down major issues into four phases” in small meetings: “elections under UN auspices, scope and character of elections, disposition of foreign troops in Korea, and provision to protect Korean independence including demilitarization of [the] border area.” Second, Dulles called for two alternatives pending a Communist expression of genuine interest in the subject. If serious negotiations developed on Korean unification and independence, not every issue should be bargained at once. If the conference turned into nothing but propaganda, on the other hand, the best position should be put forward first.<sup>270</sup> Finally, Dulles urged the ROK delegation to revise its draft to include a national election in place of a North Korea-only election. President Rhee refused to accept a new draft, however, insisting on withdrawal of the

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<sup>269</sup> *FRUS, 1952-54, The Geneva Conference*, Volume XVI, 93, 123-124.

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*, 173-74, 178-79.

Chinese Communists and the dismantling of North Korean troops prior to elections in North Korea.

While the ROK and the other Western nations continued to disagree on a common position in a plenary session, the U.S. delegation became concerned over the Communists attempt to alienate its allies from the United States. On April 30 Secretary Dulles complained to British Foreign Minister Anthony Eden that, in the face of Communist attacks on the United States, “not a single western European power” was prepared to defend the UN or U.S. position. If the effort to “develop a united position” with reference to Southeast Asia collapsed, Dulles admonished, it would probably mean “increasing the close relations” with Rhee and Chiang Kai-shek, who were “at least willing to stand strong against the Communists despite their defects.”<sup>271</sup>

By May 3, faced with Communist repudiation of UN supervision of elections in North Korea, the U.S. delegation in Geneva began to question whether the Korean phase could be extended. Dulles stressed that the issue of the United Nations and collective security was a “much bigger issue” than Korea. Should the conference end with a “repudiation of the United Nations,” Dulles warned, the results could actually “lead to the end of the United Nations itself.” While the allies might attempt to “derogate from the position of the United Nations,” Dulles insisted that the United States should urge them to “continue strong support of the UN principle.”<sup>272</sup>

In the ninth plenary session on May 11, Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov flatly rejected a UN role in Korean unification and denounced as illegal all UN activities in Korea

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<sup>271</sup> Ibid., 165-68, 182-83.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid.

since 1947. Following a list of historical charges, including “lack of competence” to deal with the Korean problem between 1947 and 1949 and Asian nations’ reluctance to participate in UN military intervention in 1950, Molotov concluded that the United Nations, as a result of “illegal Security Council and General Assembly resolutions,” became a belligerent in Korea and thereby lost eligibility to serve impartially in solving the Korean problem.<sup>273</sup> Soon after Molotov’s speech, the 16 allies in Geneva agreed that Molotov’s repudiation of the “principle of UN supervision” gave them an “opportunity for [a] political victory in [the] free world over [the] Communists.”

Both in Seoul and Geneva, the United States and the ROK worked together to draft a common position for the 16 allies. On May 15 ROK Foreign Minister Pyun gave the U.S. delegation a 14 point draft proposal for “establishing [a] United Independent Democratic Korea.” Although the 14 points were not made wholly in complicity with Rhee’s uncompromising directive, they still included the complete withdrawal of Chinese Communist forces one month before an election in contrast to the full withdrawal of UN forces only “after effective control over ... [all of] Korea was achieved by [the] Unified Government of Korea and certified by the United Nations.” The ROK position was presented in a meeting of the 16 allied delegations on May 21. With minor changes Foreign Minister Pyun announced the 14 point proposal in the plenary session of May 22. As unity among the 16 allies in support of the ROK proposal was confirmed in the following plenary sessions, Washington saw a great chance to terminate the Korean phase in unity without breaking the authority of the United Nations.<sup>274</sup>

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<sup>273</sup> Ibid., 249-50.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid., 273-74, 304-6, 310-15.

Washington made the final decision to end the Korean phase in early June. When on June 1 the U.S. and ROK delegates discussed the desirability of terminating the conference and referring the Korean issue to the United Nations, Pyun explained the opposition of his government to the second action, stating that it understood that there would be no further negotiations on the Korean question after the conference if it did not produce a solution. He suggested that the United States should be “more inclined to ignore the opinion of its allies, except the ROK.” Under Secretary of State Walter Bedell Smith, who succeeded Secretary Dulles when he left Geneva on May 3, responded that the United States had allies “to a far greater extent than the ROK” and that Pyun should understand “what a difficult time the United States had” in “carrying along all its allies.” On the same day Acting Secretary of State Robert Murphy wrote to the U.S. delegation in Geneva that the UN course should be the final position. He stressed that the entire Korean War had been fought to establish the UN principle of collective security, and that since Korean unification was not attainable at that time it would be “most unfortunate” not to “keep the UN symbol to the forefront.”<sup>275</sup>

On June 14 the 16 allies set up a drafting committee to finalize a joint declaration to be used for the last plenary session of the Korean phase. A day later the message was announced:

...The Communist delegations have rejected our every effort to obtain agreement. The principal issues between us, therefore, are clear. Firstly, we accept and assert the authority of the United Nations. The Communists repudiate and reject the authority and competence of the United Nations in Korea and have labeled the United Nations itself as the tool of aggression. Were we to accept this position of the Communists, it would mean the death of the principle of collective security and of the United Nations

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<sup>275</sup> Ibid., 331, 334-35.

itself. Secondly, we desire genuinely free elections. The Communists insist upon procedures which would make genuinely free elections impossible.... In the circumstances we have been compelled reluctantly and regretfully to conclude that further consideration and examination of the Korean question by the conference would serve no useful purpose....<sup>276</sup>

Despite the fruitless outcome of the Korean phase, in the next month the Indochinese phase of the conference reached a broad settlement between the two parties, mainly through refreshed efforts by Paris and Beijing. On May 8, 1954, one day after the battle of Dien Bien Phu ended in the surrender of French Union forces, the Indochina phase finally opened. Initial talks failed to produce a compromise for a political settlement. In a belief that a failed conference was better than a compromise, Secretary Dulles strove to block off any Communist initiatives. On the other side, the Vietminh desire to control most of Vietnam and keep the Communist position in Laos and Cambodia caused friction even among Communist representatives. By mid-June the polemical air at the conference, mainly boosted by the U.S. and Vietminh delegations, had led to a deadlock.<sup>277</sup> As the United States had not been a belligerent in the Indochinese war as it had been in Korea, however, it limited its role.

In June a major breakthrough came from France. French Prime Minister Joseph Laniel was replaced by Pierre Mendes France, a renowned critic of the Indochina War. He promised to lead the negotiations to a successful conclusion by July 20 or resign. Meanwhile, Chinese representative Zhou En-lai played a pivotal role in coordinating a common position over the Viet Minh's persistence in seeking an all-but total victory.<sup>278</sup> In the final stage of the conference Zhou conceded the French demand of the 17<sup>th</sup> parallel as the demarcation line

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<sup>276</sup> Ibid., 385-87.

<sup>277</sup> Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 141.

<sup>278</sup> Jian, "China and the Indochina Settlement" in *The First Vietnam War*, 246-50.

between “regrouping zones” for Communists and non-Communists, over the Vietminh insistence on the 16<sup>th</sup> parallel.<sup>279</sup>

On July 21, 1954 the final declaration of the conference included a cessation of hostilities, independence for the three Associated States of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, the eventual withdrawal of French troops from Indochina, no foreign military intervention in Laos and Cambodia, and creation of a military demarcation line dividing Vietnam into temporary regrouping zones – with the Vietminh in control of the North and its opponents dominant in the South. Free, internationally supervised elections would reunite the country two years hence.<sup>280</sup> President Eisenhower’s statement, released immediately after the Geneva agreement, declared that although the United States did not join in the conference declaration, in compliance with the obligations and principles contained in article 2 of the UN Charter, the United States would not use force to disturb it.<sup>281</sup>

### **Redeployment of U.S. forces from Korea and the Van Fleet report**

The months of diplomatic maneuvering in preparation for and at the Geneva conference slowed down plans for the redeployment of U.S. forces from Korea. From the signing the armistice onwards, two policy currents existed in Washington on the issue. On the one hand, the United States understood that a solid, combat-ready military posture was necessary to protect the armistice from Communist and ROK forces. On the other hand, military strategists needed the bulk of U.S. military strength elsewhere. Global military

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<sup>279</sup> Jian, *Mao’s China and the Cold War*, 143.

<sup>280</sup> DSB, August 2, 1954, 164.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

strategy called for a quick and drastic reduction of U.S. forces in peacetime Korea. Once the conference was over, Washington resumed a quick and drastic redeployment from Korea.

Not surprisingly Washington's withdrawal plan magnified ROK security concerns. Even before Washington announced it, Seoul did not hide its discontent with Washington's planned ROK force level. In early 1954 President Rhee officially requested a thorough investigation of ROK military strength. In response Washington appointed General Van Fleet, wartime commander of U.S. Eighth Army, as an ambassador to reexamine Washington's plan. By the time U.S. military advisers reassessed the ROK's security issues according to General Van Fleet's recommendations, the United States was on the verge of implementing its redeployment from Korea. Plans made in the first year after the armistice set a background for U.S.-ROK deliberations over security issues in late 1954.

Most U.S. armed forces that engaged in Korean operations had arrived on the peninsula during the early stages of the Korean War. The 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> infantry divisions had moved from Japan to Korea by mid-July 1950. Both divisions, along with the 1<sup>st</sup> cavalry division, were fully committed to the war by July 22. The 1<sup>st</sup> provisional Marine brigade and the leading regiment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> infantry division were introduced in the last week of July. The 2<sup>nd</sup> infantry division completed its movement from the United States in mid- August. The 5<sup>th</sup> Regimental Combat Team (RCT) was dispatched from Hawaii. The 1<sup>st</sup> marine division and the 7<sup>th</sup> infantry division joined the Inchon landing on September 15, 1950. The 3<sup>rd</sup> infantry division and 187<sup>th</sup> airborne RCT entered North Korea in October and November 1950. In a later period National Guard divisions such as the 40<sup>th</sup> and 45<sup>th</sup> divisions were introduced to Korea for rotational purposes.<sup>282</sup> When the hostilities ceased in July 1953, seven of the U.S Army's total of twenty

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<sup>282</sup> C.E. Hutchin, Jr., Memorandum for Admiral Radford: movement of U.S. Army and Marine Forces into Korea, Feb. 1, 1955 in Chairman's File: Admiral Radford, 1953-57, RG 218, Box 12 (College Park, MD.: NA).

divisions were still committed to combat except for the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division redeployed to Japan.<sup>283</sup>

Soon after the Dulles-Rhee talks of August 1953 in Seoul, Washington concluded that any withdrawal of U.S. forces from Korea was not advisable until a settlement in the Korean political conference. In a telegram to the JCS, General Maxwell Taylor argued that the redeployment of the first U.S. unit from Korea would undoubtedly create the immediate demand from other UN countries for the release of their units in Korea.<sup>284</sup> The JCS agreed, projecting that no substantial redeployment of U.S. forces would occur prior to July 1, 1954.<sup>285</sup> In October 1953 the JCS resolved that the U.S./UN position during the political conference would be enhanced through the maintenance or even the enhancement of a strong military posture in the Far East. Therefore, the JCS estimated that U.S. Army redeployments would be effected over a period of 18 to 24 months during the post-political settlement period.<sup>286</sup>

As prospects for the Korean political conference declined after preliminary contacts, however, Washington looked for a way to expedite the redeployment schedule. More than a single consideration accounts for such a reversal. The administration's commitment to the "New Look" strategy called for substantial cuts in the defense budget. In fiscal year (FY) 1954 the Eisenhower administration had already cut more than five billion dollars from the Truman administration's original plan. The Eisenhower administration projected an additional \$5

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<sup>283</sup> Major Force Deployments, Far East, cjcs – 091 Korea, April 2, 1954 in Chairman's File: Admiral Radford 1953-57, 091 Korea (May-Dec. 54) to 091 Netherlands, Box No. 13, RG 218: Records of the U.S. JCS (College Park, MD.: NA).

<sup>284</sup> CINCUNC Tokyo Japan From J3 SGD Taylor to DEPTAR Washington DC for JCS, 110600Z Aug 53, DA IN 295784 in Chairman's File: Admiral Radford 1953-57, 091 Korea (May-Dec. 54) to 091 Netherlands, Box No. 13, RG 218: Records of the U.S. JCS (College Park, MD.: NA).

<sup>285</sup> From JCS for CINCUNC, JCS 946220, August 17, 1953 in Chairman's File: Admiral Radford 1953-57, Korea (May-Dec. 54) to 091 Netherlands, Box No. 13, RG 218: Records of the U.S. JCS (College Park, MD.: NA).

<sup>286</sup> From JCS to CINCFE, JCS 949720, October 6, 1953 in Chairman's File: Admiral Radford 1953-57, 091 Korea (May-Dec. 54) to 091 Netherlands, Box No. 13, RG 218: Records of the U.S. JCS (College Park, MD.: NA).

billion budget-cut in FY 1955, which would the budget for the Department of Defense to \$30.9 billion. Although all the services would take cuts, the largest would be to the Army. Between December 1953 and June 1955, the Army had to size down from 1.5 million to one million men. Although the Air Force also experienced a budget cut, its share of actual defense spending jumped from 34.2 percent in FY 1953 to 46.2 percent by FY 1955. Gaddis notes that the extent of reductions, as well as the prominence of the Air Force in budget competition, reflected the “particular emphasis on nuclear deterrence” basic to the “New Look.”<sup>287</sup> Although the anticipated opening of the Geneva conference retarded Washington’s redeployment plan in the first half of 1954, in July the Department of Defense concluded that the personnel ceilings and major force levels guided by FY 1956 budget made it necessary to initiate redeployment from Korea as soon as possible.<sup>288</sup>

The Department of Defense’s search for a new military posture expedited Washington’s decision for early redeployment. Army Chief of Staff General Ridgway pointed out that the existing deployment was strategically inadequate in peacetime or for the resumption of full scale hostilities in Korea, and even dangerous in the event of general war. On November 17, 1953 the JCS forwarded General Ridgway’s views to Secretary Wilson. Since the stalemate in Korea would continue indefinitely, the JCS urged, U.S. forces in the Far East should be redeployed for either renewed hostilities in Korea or general war with the Soviet bloc. The JCS proposed an objective of reducing UN forces to one corps of three divisions (two U.S. plus one composite UN division) with tactical air and naval units.<sup>289</sup>

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<sup>287</sup> Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 169.

<sup>288</sup> Report by the Joint Strategic Plans Committee to the JCS on Preparation of U.S. position papers in connection with President Rhee’s visit to the United States, JCS 1776/479, July 20, 1954 in Geographic File, 1954-56, 383.21 Korea (3-19-45) Sec. 146-154, Box No. 28, RG 218: Records of the U.S. JCS (College Park, MD.: NA).

<sup>289</sup> Watson, *History of the JCS*, Volume V, 230-1.

The JCS suggestion was reflected in NSC 170/1, which stated that the United States should “build up and maintain the security position of the ROK consistent with the armistice terms in a manner and to an extent” that would “permit the phased and orderly redeployment of the bulk of U.S. armed forces at the earliest feasible date.”<sup>290</sup> In a NSC meeting of December 3, the president, the secretary of state, and the chairman of the JCS agreed that redeployment of two divisions would indicate confidence in U.S. ability to maintain objectives in Korea, no intention to go to war with Communist China, and opposition to Rhee’s unilateral actions. The NSC endorsed a plan that, assuming a continuation of current conditions, two U.S. divisions would initiate redeployment from Korea about March 1, 1954. In addition, in the event of a continued stalemate in Korea, the United States would seek UN allies’ agreement with the JCS recommendation for a phased reduction to one Army corps of two U.S. and one UN composite division, supported by tactical air units and appropriate naval forces and also supplemented by a comparatively large U.S. military advisory group.<sup>291</sup>

On December 26, 1953 President Eisenhower issued a statement that he had directed U.S. ground forces in Korea to be progressively reduced as circumstances warranted. As an initial step, he announced that two Army divisions would soon be withdrawn and returned to the United States.<sup>292</sup> Two National Guard divisions, the 40<sup>th</sup> and 45<sup>th</sup>, would be brought home. Additionally, the return to Japan of the 24<sup>th</sup> Division, which had been redeployed to

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<sup>290</sup> NSC 170/1: A report to the National Security Council by the executive secretary on U.S. objectives and courses of action in Korea, Washington, November 20, 1953 in White House Office: Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (OSANSA): Records, NSC Series, Policy Papers Subseries, Box No. 7 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>291</sup> Memorandum: discussion at the 173<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the NSC, Thursday, December 3, 1953, December 4, 1953 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 5 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>292</sup> The White House (Augusta, Georgia): Statement by the president, December 26, 1953 in Chairman’s File: Admiral Radford 1953-57, 091 Korea (May-Dec. 54) to 091 Netherlands, Box No. 13, RG 218: Records of the U.S. JCS (College Park, MD.: NA).

Korea in the last month of the war and requested by the FEC in Tokyo soon after the signing of the armistice, was approved in January 1954.<sup>293</sup>

After revisions the JCS recommended an overall redeployment plan in the Far East to the Defense secretary on April 1. The JCS plan, titled “Redeployment of Forces from the Far East – Western Pacific Area,” suggested that in addition to the 24th, 40th, and 45th Infantry divisions the U.S. Army should redeploy the 2nd, 3rd, and 25th Infantry divisions, as well as the 5th RCT, from Korea.<sup>294</sup> Owing to uncertainties in East Asia surrounding Indochina and the Geneva conference, however, Secretary Wilson directed a suspension of all the redeployments until June 1, with the exception of the two National Guard divisions and naval forces of one battleship and one destroyer division (4 destroyers). In June, to support U.S. diplomacy at Geneva, the JCS proposed no further redeployments.<sup>295</sup> Therefore, Washington’s redeployment schedule remained dormant until the Geneva conference ended in the political settlement of the Indochinese question in late July 1954.

Washington’s redeployment plan was largely approved and implemented during the rest of 1954. One day after the conclusion of the Indochinese phase at Geneva, the JCS raised again its withdrawal plan from Korea. Secretary Wilson suggested on July 26 that the JCS plan should be completed by the end of the year, with his personal reservation that both Marine divisions be left in the Far East. With minor revisions, Secretary Wilson’s redeployment plans

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<sup>293</sup> From G-3 DA to CGAFFE Tokyo, EX 41681, January 18, 1954 in Geographic File, 1954-56, 381 E.M.M.E.A. (11-19-47) Sec. 52 to 381 Far East (11-28-50) Sec. 20, Box No. 16, RG 218: Records of the U.S. JCS (College Park, MD.: NA); Memorandum for the JCS: Redeployment of Army units from Korea, CJCS 091 Korea, January 14, 1954 in Chairman’s File: Admiral Radford 1953-57, 091 Korea (May-Dec. 54) to 091 Netherlands, Box No. 13, RG 218: Records of the U.S. JCS (College Park, MD.: NA). The redeployment of the 24th Division was approved with the understanding that the return of the division would not create appreciable demands for additional construction, i.e. barracks, dependent housing, training facilities, etc.

<sup>294</sup> Major Force Deployments, Far East, cjcs – 091 Korea, April 2, 1954 in Chairman’s File: Admiral Radford 1953-57, 091 Korea (May-Dec. 54) to 091 Netherlands, Box No. 13, RG 218: Records of the U.S. JCS (College Park, MD.: NA). The Navy would pull out of the Far East 2 carriers, 1 battleship, 1 cruiser, 20 destroyers, 1/3 amphibious lift division, 2 patrol rons (VP), and 1 Marine division. U.S. Air Force would redeploy 2 SAC medium bomber wings, 1 SAC fighter wing, 1 light bomb wing, 2 fighter bomber wings, 1 1/3 fighter interceptor wings, and 1 troop carrier wing (M) from the Far East.

<sup>295</sup> Watson, *History of the JCS*, Volume V, 231-3.

were approved in a NSC meeting of July 28. By August 12 other countries had been notified of Washington's decision. The JCS drafted a complete redeployment schedule of Army divisions by the end of the year and of Air Force wings by the end of FY 1955. On December 9 Secretary Wilson made another revision of the JCS plan by ordering to bring home the First Marine division in Korea and repositioning the 24<sup>th</sup> infantry division in Japan back to Korea. As a result of the redeployment in late 1954, only three U.S. Army divisions and one Marine division less one of its component RCTs remained in the Far East.<sup>296</sup>

The rapid redeployment from Korea was implemented under Washington's belief that a resumption of hostilities either by the ROK or the Communists could be deterred by the measures undertaken after the Korean armistice. Further, as NSC members agreed in December 1953, U.S. forces would leave Korea only when 20 ROK divisions reached full strength. In fact, the U.S. program to supply and help train 20 ROK divisions was closely linked to Washington's redeployment plan. A substantial expansion of the ROK Army that Washington approved in the last months of the Korean War left new divisions under strength after the signing of the armistice. As the armistice prohibited an introduction of new war materiel to Korea, U.S. officials understood that the only way to equip the last four ROK divisions was to disarm U.S. units in Korea at the time of the redeployment. Therefore, it was logistically desirable to redeploy U.S. forces from Korea when all the 20 divisions were getting ready. The plan went into force in February 1954 as the JCS approved CINUNC General Hull's proposal to equip the last two ROK divisions (the 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> divisions) with materials of the 40<sup>th</sup> and 45<sup>th</sup> divisions after their departure.<sup>297</sup>

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<sup>296</sup> Ibid., 239-41.

<sup>297</sup> From JCS to CINCFE, Tokyo JP, JCS 957040, Feb 15, 1954 in Geographic File, 1954-56, 383.21 Japan (3-13-45) Sec. 40 to 383.21 Korea (3-19-45) Sec. 145, Box No. 27, RG 218: Records of the U.S. JCS (College Park, MD.: NA).

Since Seoul did not agree with Washington's view that 20 full ROK divisions was enough for its purposes, the question of adequate ROK force levels became a central issue in bilateral relations. Between late 1953 and early 1954, the ROK government frequently lobbied Washington to further strengthen ROK armed forces. In October 1953 Admiral Sohn Won-il made two requests to Secretary Wilson, which called for early expansion of the Navy and Air Force. In a November 5 letter to President Eisenhower, President Rhee stressed a balanced military buildup of South Korea in relation to Japan. Rhee's letter also cited Dulles and Robertson's former agreement to, if necessary, add more divisions to the 20 division plan. On January 22, 1954 Prime Minister Paik Too Chin called for an additional 15 to 20 divisions and parallel expansion of the Navy and Air Force. On February 2 ROK Ambassador Yang reminded Robertson of the November 7, 1953 plan for the expansion of ROK forces.<sup>298</sup>

Between February and March 1954, the administration undertook a study of the ROK augmentation program. In a NSC meeting of February 17, President Eisenhower requested that the Department of Defense study the desirability of an increase of ROK Army divisions from 20 to 35.<sup>299</sup> On March 31 the JCS concluded that on the assumption of a "wartime attrition rate of 36 percent per year and an indefinite term of enrollment" a 20-division army with supporting troops was "close to maximum" that the ROK could afford "over an extended period of time." In addition, regarding development of reserve forces the JCS was concerned that such a program would result in reduction in active forces.<sup>300</sup>

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<sup>298</sup> Republic of Korea's requests for increased defense forces, October 1953 to date, March 13, 1954 (College Park, MD.: NA).

<sup>299</sup> Memorandum: discussion at the 185<sup>th</sup> meeting of the NSC, Wednesday, February 17, 1954, February 18, 1954 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 5 (Abilene, KS: DDEL).

<sup>300</sup> Report by the Joint Strategic Plans Committee (JSPC) to the JCS on Augmentation of ROK armed forces - reserve forces, JCS 1776/458, April 15, 1954 in Geographic File, 1954-56, 383.21 Korea (3-19-45) Sec. 146-154, Box No. 28, RG 218: Records of the U.S. JCS (College Park, MD.: NA).

However, Seoul brought the issue into focus again soon after the JCS rejected its proposals. On April 1 President Rhee sent a letter to Admiral Radford. Pointing out enemies' increasing strength, Rhee urged that Washington "double the strength of our defense forces" by "training and equipping new ROK divisions" with "commensurate air and naval buildup" so that any or all of UN forces then in Korea could go home. Then, Rhee believed, ROK forces would be "solely responsible for the defense of the peninsula." The ROK president suggested that General Van Fleet, who was known to "have accomplished a miracle in creating the ROK forces in a remarkably short time," should be appointed by the president to take care of the training of recruits for the new divisions."<sup>301</sup>

In a NSC meeting of April 13, Admiral Radford proposed that General Van Fleet lead a survey trip to Korea. The NSC agreed for the purpose of receiving fresh recommendations for the future size and composition of the active armed forces of the ROK and the practicability of a joint U.S.-ROK program for Korean reserve forces. The NSC also concurred with the JCS conclusion of March 31, pending receipt of Van Fleet's recommendations.<sup>302</sup> Soon Washington expanded the general's mission to cover U.S. military assistance programs in East Asia as special representative of the president with the personal rank of ambassador.<sup>303</sup>

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<sup>301</sup> Memorandum for the secretary of state and defense, Expansion of ROK forces, CJCS 091 Korea, April 9, in Chairman's file: Admiral Radford, 1953-57, 091 Korea (May-Dec. 54) to Netherlands, Box No. 13, RG 218: Records of the U.S. JCS (College Park, MD.: NA).

<sup>302</sup> Memorandum: discussion at the 193<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the NSC, Tuesday, April 13, 1954, April 14, 1954 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 5 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>303</sup> Department of State, A telegram to American Embassy Seoul, NIACT 846, April 20, 1954 in Chairman's file: Admiral Radford, 1953-57, 091 Korea (May-Dec. 54) to Netherlands, Box No. 13, RG 218: Records of the U.S. JCS (College Park, MD.: NA). On April 23 the JCS told Secretary Wilson that they would make no comments on the proposed ROK reserve program until General Van Fleet completed his mission; Watson, *History of the JCS*, Volume V, 236. Three days later, Secretary Wilson proposed that General Van Fleet make recommendations to the president concerning the "size, composition, equipment, training, reserve components and costs" of maintaining indigenous armed forces. Further, he should report on the "manpower, materiel and financial resources available" to support the forces; A correspondence from C.E. Wilson to General Van Fleet, April

On July 15 General Van Fleet ended his tour of Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and the Philippines. Eight days later he completed his report on overall Far Eastern problems. On Korea his report asserted that, “on the basis of a 4-year term of conscription and full utilization of the existing untrained young men,” manpower was not a “limitation on the size of ROK armed forces.” With the ROK Army and the U.S. Air Force combined together, the general opined, UN military forces would pose a constant threat to the Communists for the foreseeable future. For this purpose four more Army divisions and six reserve divisions had to be organized, making a total of thirty ROK divisions and total manpower of at least 712,900. The report also stated that the ROK Navy had sufficient personnel to establish a reserve structure. The creation of a ROK marine division was recommended as well. As to the Air Force, the general recommended that when the ROK demonstrated satisfactory proficiency the United States might provide the second wing to improve its capability for support of ground forces.<sup>304</sup>

Before General Van Fleet completed his report, CINCUNC General Hull gave Admiral Radford his own views. On June 29 General Hull suggested a reorganization of ROK forces into 30 “standard divisions” of approximately 10,000 men each as distinct from the current 20 “reinforced divisions” of 14,000 men. By definition a standard division was a peacetime organization, which should be converted to a reinforced division under mobilization. Hull stressed that the proposed concept not only promised greater assault strength for the combat units at a reduced investment in personnel and equipment, but would increase the number of divisions within the level of ROK manpower and equipment. Finally, CINCUNC hoped that

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26, 1954 in Chairman’s file: Admiral Radford, 1953-57, 091 Korea (May-Dec. 54) to Netherlands, Box No. 13, RG 218: Records of the U.S. JCS (College Park, MD.: NA).

<sup>304</sup> Report of Ambassador James A. Van Fleet: Korea in Chairman’s file: Admiral Radford, 1953-57, 091 Korea (May-Dec. 54) to 091 Netherlands, Box No. 13, RG 218: Records of the U.S. JCS (College Park, MD.: NA).

his concept for the reorganization and ultimate development would be approved by the JCS and then discussed with President Rhee and ROK military officials.<sup>305</sup>

After reviewing both proposals, the JCS approved the establishment of ROK reserve forces, but stopped short of approving the expansion of ROK active forces.<sup>306</sup> The time was ripe for Rhee and his top advisers to visit Washington and discuss post-Geneva policies with their alliance counterparts.

### **Rhee's visit to Washington and the "Agreed Minute"**

The failure to reach substantial agreements on Korea at Geneva prompted Washington to seek President Rhee's acquiescence in the principle of a peaceful settlement of the Korean problem. Rhee resisted to the last moment. Two days after the 16 nations closed the Korean phase at Geneva, Ambassador Briggs reminded Washington of the Rhee-Dulles communiqué of August 8, 1953, which called for consultation regarding unification of Korea if the political conference failed. The result was an official invitation from President Eisenhower to Rhee in order to consult further on the course ahead. Although President Rhee initially declined the invitation without any conditions, he finally agreed on July 11 to visit Washington between July 26 and 30.<sup>307</sup> The visit served to dramatize two opposing approaches to the Korean problem.

The United States wished to focus on a discussion of Korea's future in the United Nations. The ROK president, in contrast, sought to engage the United States in a military campaign to unify the peninsula. At the first summit on July 27, President Eisenhower stated

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<sup>305</sup> J.E. Hull, ROK Armed Forces, June 29, 1954 in Chairman's file: Admiral Radford, 1953-57, 091 Korea (May-Dec. 54) to 091 Netherlands, Box No. 13, RG 218: Records of the U.S. JCS (College Park, MD.: NA).

<sup>306</sup> Watson, *History of the JCS*, Volume V, 242.

<sup>307</sup> *FRUS, 1952-1954, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 2, 1808-1811, 1818-1837.

clearly that the United States would not support any initiative for war with Iron Curtain countries. In reply President Rhee warned that American peace policy would “let the Communists conquer and conquer and conquer” and “your efforts to save the world at peace would suddenly end.”<sup>308</sup>

On the following day, in an address before a joint session of Congress, Rhee reaffirmed Rhee’s unveiled desire to renew the war in Korea:

...On the Korean front, the guns are silent for the moment, stilled temporarily by the unwise armistice which the enemy is using to build up his strength. Now that the Geneva conference has come to an end with no result, as predicted, it is quite in place to declare the end of the armistice...

President Rhee stressed that the “Soviet strategy for world conquest” was to “lull Americans into a sleep of death by talking peace” until the Soviet Union “possess[ed] enough hydrogen bombs and intercontinental bombers” to “pulverize the airfields and productive centers of the United States by a sneak attack.” Rhee proclaimed that the United States must act before then. If the world balance of power swung “so strongly against the Communists,” Rhee argued, they would not dare use the “weapons of annihilation” even when possessing them. For this purpose Rhee urged to “act now” in the Far East. With its twenty divisions and the “manpower to compose twenty more,” Rhee suggested, the ROK could take part in the counterattack on Communist China in coordination with the Republic of China (ROC) and U.S. Air Force and Navy but “no American foot soldier.” By moving mainland China back to the Free World, Rhee concluded, the wars in Korea and Indochina would end in victories soon and the balance

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<sup>308</sup> Ibid., 1839-47.

of power would deter the Soviet Union's war against the United States. Without China on the side of the Free World, in Rhee's view, an "ultimate victory" was "unthinkable."<sup>309</sup>

Meanwhile, behind the scenes the Eisenhower administration sought Rhee's agreement on placing the issue of Korea's unification before the UN General Assembly in exchange for an all-in-one settlement of U.S. military and economic aid programs to the ROK. Rhee grudgingly went along. On July 30 he and President Eisenhower issued a joint statement declaring that their governments would move forward "in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the resolutions of the General Assembly on Korea." Rhee's trip to Washington, therefore, had the effect of securing a transition of the Korean unification issue from the political conference called for in the armistice agreements to the UN General Assembly.<sup>310</sup> On November 11 the fifteen UNC participants in Geneva submitted a report stating that the failure of the Geneva Conference would not prejudice the armistice still in effect.<sup>311</sup>

In turn, Washington offered Seoul a comprehensive understanding on economic and military programs in the form of an "Agreed Minute." On July 28 President Rhee endorsed the baseline agreed between military advisers of the two countries, which included a buildup of reserve units, a personnel ceiling of 715,000, an increase in vessels for the ROK Navy, and modernization of the air force, leaving specific details to the recommendation of U.S. and ROK military advisers. Two days later, when Washington informed the ROK delegation of its forthcoming redeployment plan, ROK officials expressed concern it would have a demoralizing effect among Koreans. Admiral Radford explained that the United States had

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<sup>309</sup> Memorandum for Minister Han, Available texts of Addresses given by his excellency, President Syngman Rhee during the President's visit to the U.S. (Cambridge, MA.: Yenching Library, March 4, 1955).

<sup>310</sup> *FRUS, 1952-1954, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 2, 1861.

<sup>311</sup> *Yearbook of the UN*, 1954.

“no prospect of funds to support additional Korean divisions,” but the remaining forces could contain any renewed aggression by fighting a “different kind of war.” As “new weapons” were developed, Secretary Dulles also explained, “not so much manpower” was necessary at the front. Although ROK military and economic advisers accepted a revised draft of the Agreed Minute, Rhee left Washington on the following day without initialing it. An economic subcommittee composed of U.S.-ROK representatives worked on details throughout August and September, and on September 9 President Eisenhower approved a new draft of the Agreed Minute, presented by the State and Defense Departments and the Foreign Operations Administration.<sup>312</sup>

Instead of reciprocating, however, Rhee attempted to turn the Agreed Minute into another chance to receive Washington’s official support for his approach to unification. When Rhee reviewed the draft on September 27, he complained that the purpose of his trip to the United States was “not to obtain further aid but rather achieve Korean unification.” Rhee urged that the ROK must determine its own course “regardless of U.S. assistance.” A month later, Rhee’s counterproposal arrived in Washington, which provided for ROK agreement to retain its forces under the UNC “so long as that command worked in cooperation with [the] ROK in its efforts to defend and unify Korea.” Although Secretary Dulles declined to make major revisions to the draft, he agreed to delete a point regarding the U.S. position on unification by peaceful means. Yet U.S. insistence on placing American support for peaceful unification in the notes of the draft as a substitute for the deleted item nearly led to collapse of

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<sup>312</sup> *FRUS, 1952-1954, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 2, 1847-50, 1857-58, 1875-77.

the initialing process. Rhee was furious, but on November 17 he finally agreed to the U.S. position.<sup>313</sup>

The Agreed Minute initialed on that date stated that ROK forces should be “under the operational control of the UNC while that command had responsibilities for the defense of the ROK, unless after consultation it was agreed that our mutual and individual interests would best be served by a change.” Further, the ROK would “accept the force levels and principles which would permit the maintenance of an effective military program consistent with economic stability and within available resources.” The United States, in turn, would:

1. Continue its program of helping to strengthen the ROK politically, economically, and militarily, with programmed economic aid and direct military assistance furnished during FY 1955 to aggregate up to \$700 million. This amount would exceed by more than \$100 million the amount of assistance previously contemplated by the United States for Korea in FY 1955...
2. Support a strengthened ROK military establishment as outlined in Appendix B, including the development of a reserve system, in accordance with arrangements to be worked out by appropriate military representatives of the two governments.
3. Consult fully with appropriate representatives of the ROK in the implementation of the program for support of the ROK military establishment.
4. In the event of an unprovoked attack upon the ROK to employ, in accordance with its constitutional processes, its military power against the aggressor.
5. Subject to the necessary Congressional authorization, continue to press forward with the economic program for the rehabilitation of Korea.<sup>314</sup>

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<sup>313</sup> Ibid., 1888-89, 1902-08, 1918-23, 1951.

<sup>314</sup> Progress report on NSC 170/1 (Korea), December 30, 1954 in White House Office: Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (OSANSA), Records, NSC Series, Policy Paper Subseries (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

In Appendix B the United States agreed to assist in supporting a maximum total of 720,000 military personnel in FY 1955. The ROK would undertake the formation of reserve divisions, including trained and organized men with former active service, toward a goal of 10 divisions to be organized by the end of 1955. The United States would assist in supplying reserve divisions with the necessary equipment, quartermaster items, and other supplies essential for training. A buildup of the ROK Navy to the goal of 79 vessels, as well as creation of a ROK marine division, was also authorized. Further, the United States would assist in the training and organization of reserve divisions under a plan the CINCUNC would work out in consultation with the ROK Minister of National Defense. When CINCUNC determined that ROK pilots had the capability to properly utilize jet fighter and aircraft, the ROK Air Force would receive a jet fighter wing. Regarding future ROK military budgets, ROK and CINCUNC participate in a joint review.<sup>315</sup>

On the same day instruments of ratification of the mutual defense pact were exchanged, thus bringing the security pact into effect. By November 1954 the basic roadmap of the U.S.-ROK alliance under the armistice had largely unfolded. Despite the final signing of the documents, however, Washington realized that Korean unification was not a bargaining issue in Rhee's mind. Korea's unification by force was not to be considered a lost cause in the ROK government and an undercurrent of resentment in Seoul toward the armistice agreements continued to be monitored in Washington.

The second progress report on NSC 170/1, which the Operational Coordinating Board (OCB) produced at the end of 1954, reflected the balance of forces in the relationship. The authors noted that the military departments and theater commanders had reviewed the Van Fleet recommendations in formulating the agreed ROK military program. Although Seoul

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<sup>315</sup> Ibid.

had objected vigorously to the ROK force level and withdrawal of U.S. forces since Rhee's July visit to Washington, such protests had subsided by the end of 1954. Since most U.S. forces had withdrawn from Korea, the authors pointed out, the United States had lost much of its potential ability to "use forceful measures within Korea to prevent the ROK from taking unilateral action, if such orders were issued." In turn, the ROK had increased its potential for unilateral action, since it was "no longer practical" to "restrict the ROK supplies of material and ammunition so drastically as in the past." On the other hand, U.S. forces were less likely to be embroiled in a conflict initiated by the ROK. The conclusion of the minute, as well as the economic program, diminished the likelihood of unilateral action in Seoul. Therefore, OCB concluded, "no imminent danger" existed, especially since the "Agreed Minute" contained a ROK commitment to CINCUNC control of its armed forces.<sup>316</sup>

### **Korea in the Far Eastern Crises**

While the Eisenhower administration sought to stabilize the ROK's position under the armistice, ongoing tensions between the United States and the PRC and uncertainty about Japan's reliability as an ally impacted Washington's strategic view of Korea's place in East Asia. East-West conflict shifted its main stage from Korea to Indochina and then to groups of small islands off the coast of China north and west of Taiwan. Events convinced Washington that U.S. military strength in the region was essential to maintain a balance of power between non-Communist states and the Soviet bloc. By early 1955 the United States had established an arc from Korea and Okinawa and/or Japan in the north, through Taiwan and the Philippines, to Indochina in the south. As part of this configuration, South Korea provided both a first line

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<sup>316</sup> Ibid.

defense of Japan and a key element of a forward-deployed, landed containment system of the Beijing regime.

The Eisenhower administration's reassessment of Far Eastern policy started before the Korean armistice, but, interrupted by events in Indochina and the Chinese offshore islands, extended to the end of 1954. On April 6, 1953 NSC 148, a revised statement of NSC 48/5, specified "maintenance of the off-shore defense positions" – Japan, the Ryukyus, Taiwan, the Philippines, Australia, and New Zealand – "even at the grave risk of general war."<sup>317</sup> On April 8, 1953, however, concerned about the cost of the aid programs to each country, the NSC deferred NSC 148 as well as NSC 146 regarding Taiwan. The former soon disappeared from the agenda and the council did not approve the latter until after NSC 162/2 established a new basic national security policy in October.<sup>318</sup> NSC 162/2 anticipated U.S. involvement in a general war for the defense of Japan, the Philippines, ANZUS, and the ROK in the Far East, as distinct from Indochina or Taiwan, whose strategic importance "probably would compel the United States" to react in force "either locally or generally" against the aggressor.<sup>319</sup> The council did not discuss overall Far Eastern policies again until 1954.<sup>320</sup>

A week after the approval of NSC 162/2, the administration moved forward in revising China policy. On November 5 the council endorsed NSC 146/2 and 166/1, which dealt with the PRC as well as Taiwan, the Pescadores, and Nationalist-held off-shore islands. NSC 146/2

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<sup>317</sup> NSC 148: a report to the NSC on United States policies in the Far East, Washington, April 6, 1953 in White House Office: Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (OSANSA): Records, NSC Series, Policy Papers Subseries, Box No. 4 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL). Watson notes that such an expression contrasted with the more modest statement in NSC 48/5 that the United States should "maintain the security of off-shore positions"; Watson, *History of the JCS*, 1953-54, 248.

<sup>318</sup> Ibid.

<sup>319</sup> Trachtenberg, *The Development of American Strategic Thought*, 47.

<sup>320</sup> Watson, *History of the JCS*, Volume V, 248.

stressed that the United States should “effectively incorporate Formosa [Taiwan] and the Pescadores within U.S. Far East defense positions” by “taking all necessary measures” even “at grave risk of general war” and by “making it clear that the United States will so react to any attack.” NSC 146/2 also stated that, unless Taiwan and the Pescadores were attacked and without using American forces, the United States would “encourage and assist the Chinese National Government” to defend the off-shore islands and to “raid Chinese Communist territory and commerce.” U.S. military assistance to Taiwan would be “under continuing review” in light of the “development of Japanese forces and possible political settlements in Korea and Indochina.” Finally, the United States would continue “coordinated military planning” with the Nationalist Government to “achieve maximum cooperation from the Nationalists” in furthering overall U.S. military strategy in the Far East.<sup>321</sup>

With respect to the PRC, NSC 166/1 adopted what could be termed an aggressive defense for deterrence purposes. It declared that, “in the absence of further Chinese Communist aggression or a basic change in the situation,” U.S. forces should not be employed in an attempt by the Nationalists to overthrow or replace that regime; nor should the United States make concessions to it in an effort to alter its “basic hostility to the West.” Instead, the United States should restrain military action by Communist China, “using armed force if necessary,” while seeking a reduction of its relative power in ways short of war, such as strengthening noncommunist Asia, “weakening or at least retarding” the growth of Communist

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<sup>321</sup> *FRUS, 1952-54, China and Japan*, Volume XIV, Part 1, 308-09.

power in China, and impairing Sino-Soviet relations.<sup>322</sup> Suggested by the JCS, NSC 166/1 amended the earlier draft to clarify U.S. support of Nationalist China.<sup>323</sup>

After the Eisenhower administration finalized a new contingency to a resumption of hostilities in Korea in January 1954, it turned to examine broad U.S. strategic objectives in East Asia. On February 4 the NSC called on the Department of Defense to suggest how to develop a position of military strength there. The JCS replied on April 9.<sup>324</sup> Although U.S. policy toward Communist China set forth “certain general objectives to be sought in the Far East,” the JCS pointed out, the United States had not formulated a “comprehensive policy” in which the Far East was viewed as a “strategic entity.” The JCS recommended three U.S. objectives:

- (a) Development of the purpose and capability of the noncommunist countries in the Far East to act collectively and effectively in opposing the threat of aggressive Communism.
- (b) Eventual establishment of a comprehensive regional security arrangement among the noncommunist countries of the Far East, with which the United States, the United Kingdom, and possibly France would be associated.
- (c) Reduction of the power and influence of the USSR in the Far East, initially through the containment and reduction of the relative power position of Communist China, and ultimately the detachment of China from the area of Soviet Communist control.<sup>325</sup>

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<sup>322</sup> NSC 166/1: U.S. policy toward Communist China, November 6, 1953 in White House Office: Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (OSANSA): Records, NSC Series, Policy Papers Subseries, Box No. 7 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>323</sup> Watson, *History of the JCS*, Volume V, 248-49.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid.

<sup>325</sup> NSC 5416: U.S. strategy for developing a position of military strength in the Far East, April 10, 1954 in White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, 1952-61, NSC Series, Policy Papers Subseries, Box No. 10 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

Before such a statement emerged, however, the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu, followed by the Geneva accords on the temporary division of Vietnam, significantly impacted Washington's views, especially regarding the role of U.S. nuclear weapons in the defense of noncommunist Asia. After the Vietminh victory in North Vietnam, Washington was convinced that noncommunist countries in the region would remain weak and defenseless before Communist expansionism. Under such circumstances, Washington policymakers worried, U.S. involvement in piecemeal aggressions might gradually deteriorate the vitality of U.S. resources, as NSC 162/2 had warned in October 1953. To avoid incremental commitments to local aggressions, U.S. nuclear-capable naval and air strength was essential to buttress indigenous forces of noncommunist states. By the end of 1954, revised U.S. policies in the Far East featured an expansion of regional security arrangements as well as forward deployment of nuclear weapons against Communist China, which was considered the heart of the problem in the region.

The French defeat in Indochina stimulated Washington policymakers to expand regional security arrangements into Southeast Asia. As John Prados explains, the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) was a legacy of Dien Bien Phu. The regional grouping materialized with the treaty signed at Manila on September 8, 1954. Created largely through summer talks among the American, British, Australian, and New Zealand governments, SEATO reflected Washington's wish to establish a regional alliance equivalent to NATO. In fact, the alliance never had the force of NATO because its terms did not oblige its member states to go to war if other states were attacked. SEATO members also defined the former

Associated States, as designated in the Geneva accords, merely as protected states, which further weakened the legal obligations of the signatories in case of war in Indochina.<sup>326</sup>

The Indochinese crisis also brought nuclear weapons back to the forefront of U.S. defense strategy. Strong allied reservations aside, Washington stood firm in advocating the use of nuclear weapons in the event of overt Communist aggression. The problem was to reconcile allied sensitivities with the need for the atomic option. Despite the emphasis in NSC 162/2 on maintaining a coordinated position, the experience of negotiations surrounding Dien Bien Phu confronted policymakers in Washington with the reality that coordination might not always be possible. This realization encouraged them to consider the possibility of unilateral action.

When the council discussed interim policy revision in NSC 5422 on June 22, no agreement emerged on the matter. In the end the NSC merely finessed different views by concluding that the United States had to “decide each case on its own merits” and to “exercise its freedom of action only after carefully weighing the dangers to allied solidarity.”<sup>327</sup> On August 7, however, the final version of NSC 5422/2 declared that, in the case of local Communist aggression, the United States must be “determined to take, unilaterally if necessary, whatever additional action its security requires, even to the extent of general war, and the Communists must be convinced of this determination.”<sup>328</sup> As a result of ongoing animosities between Washington and Beijing, a nuclear option formed an integral part of U.S. defense strategy in the Far East after the Indochina crisis.

Washington’s openness to unilateral use of nuclear weapons in local conflicts coincided with the Eisenhower administration’s decision to disperse nuclear weapons to

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<sup>326</sup> John Prados, “Assessing Dien Bien Phu” in *The First Vietnam War*, 229.

<sup>327</sup> Watson, *History of the JCS*, Volume V, 46-47.

<sup>328</sup> Trachtenberg, *The Development of American Strategic Thought*, 75.

overseas bases. Although in the middle of 1952 the JCS had proposed additional deployments of non-nuclear components to Alaska, Guam, Hawaii, and Okinawa, under the Truman administration U.S. nuclear deployment in the Pacific was relatively modest.<sup>329</sup> Guam had held nuclear weapons since April 1951, but the administration refused to deploy more weapons to Okinawa.

The Eisenhower administration was more convinced of the military advantage of forward-deployment of nuclear weapons in overseas bases. In April 1954 President Eisenhower endorsed deployment of complete weapons to Britain and French Morocco. Complete nuclear bombs were deployed in Morocco the next month, whereas the Truman administration had approved storage only of non-nuclear components without there. Complete bombs arrived in Britain in September. In the Far East December 1954 was a crucial time in the history of U.S. forward-deployment policy. First, complete nuclear weapons arrived in Okinawa. Next, the nuclear-armed aircraft carrier *U.S.S. Midway* entered Taiwanese waters. Finally, Washington approved the transfer of non-nuclear components to U.S. bases in Japan.<sup>330</sup>

The quick and widespread deployment of nuclear weapons to the Far East in December 1954 was in response to a crisis in the Taiwan Strait. The rise of U.S.-PRC hostilities in areas near Taiwan in late 1954 grew out of Beijing's strategic view of the Far East. Since 1949, Shu Guang Chang explains, PRC leaders' "three-front" concept assumed major U.S. military threats from the Korean peninsula, French Indochina, and the Taiwan Strait. Communist leaders feared that eventually the United States would encircle the PRC by linking these

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<sup>329</sup> Robert S. Norris, William M. Arkin, William Burr, "Where they were: How much did Japan know?," *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (Volume 55, Issue 6, 1999), 30.

<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.*, 29-30.

prominent noncommunist outposts together. A month before Secretary Dulles signed the Manila pact, PRC Foreign Minister Zhou warned that the purpose of SEATO was to encircle the PRC and then “form a northeast Asian counterpart” to SEATO, with Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea.<sup>331</sup>

Unlike Korea and Indochina, Beijing viewed Taiwan as part of Chinese territory. The PRC feared not only strategic encirclement; it also believed that the United States wanted to absorb Taiwan permanently. The close Washington-Taipei bond ran counter to the Communist objective to unify China and end the civil war. By late July 1954 Beijing sensed an undercurrent toward a mutual defense pact between Washington and Taipei. This prompted Beijing into an unprecedented propaganda campaign for the “liberation” of Taiwan and other territories held by the Nationalists. At the same time, Mao believed that some planned military action would facilitate “coercive diplomacy” to demonstrate Beijing’s discontent on the Taiwan issue and impede a U.S.-ROC bilateral pact.<sup>332</sup>

Of all the territories occupied by Nationalist troops, three groups of small islands – the Tachen, Quemoy, and Matsu – became the main target of Mao’s “coercive diplomacy.” The geographic proximity to the mainland of the island groups provided an advantageous position for intelligence activities and radar installations, not to mention potential launching points for invasion. Before the Communist intention to take the offshore islands became clear, Washington’s view of them was based on a no-defense policy. In 1952 the JCS and the State Department decided not to defend the islands with U.S. forces. In NSC 146/2 the Eisenhower

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<sup>331</sup> Zhou Enlai, “Report on Foreign Affairs to the Central People’s Government Council,” August 11, 1954, in Taiwan Wenti Wenjian Huibian, ed. Editorial Division, Shijie Zhishi, 110-11, as cited in Zhang, *Deterrence and Strategic Culture: Chinese-American Confrontations, 1949-58* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1992), 190-1.

<sup>332</sup> Robert Accinelli, *Crisis and Commitment: United States policy toward Taiwan, 1950-1955* (Chapel Hill and London: the University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 151-2.

administration called for the defense of Taiwan and the Pescadores to the exclusion of the other islands.<sup>333</sup>

As Washington received warning signs of possible Communist raids on these islands during the spring and summer of 1954, a reassessment occurred. In March 1954 the Chinese began to increase air and naval activity around the offshore islands, and from Taipei Ambassador Karl Rankin began warn that the Communists might invade them. In mid-May the PRC forces captured several islands in the Tachens.<sup>334</sup> On May 27 the CIA reported that the remainder of the Tachens was in danger of enemy attack, and the subject was listed on the NSC agenda.<sup>335</sup> The president approved U.S. naval vessels to visit the Tachens periodically. However, the president and secretary of state did not announce in public U.S. assistance to defend the islands. Between June and July the strait remained tense due to incidents such as the Nationalist capture of a Soviet tanker, the downing of a British commercial airliner, and clashes between Chinese and U.S. aircraft.<sup>336</sup>

As the PRC's liberation campaign raised its tone, Secretary Dulles issued a warning message on August 24 by announcing that the security of Taiwan was closely related to some of the islands. Tensions finally burst into open hostilities on September 3, when the Chinese Communists bombarded Quemoy, killing two American soldiers. Nationalist troops shelled the mainland in retaliation. Again on November 1 the Tachens absorbed air, naval, and artillery fire. After the first gunfire pounded Quemoy in September, where more than 40,000 Nationalist troops garrisoned, opinions among policymakers varied as to the need for

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<sup>333</sup> Watson, *History of the JCS*, Volume V, 261-62.

<sup>334</sup> Accinelli, *Crisis and Commitment*, 147.

<sup>335</sup> Watson, *History of the JCS*, Volume V, 250-51.

<sup>336</sup> Accinelli, *Crisis and Commitment*, 148, 154.

extended military commitment to the islands. While the president hesitated to enter into a war over the islands without congressional authorization, Secretary Dulles earned the president's approval to seek a UN cease-fire resolution.<sup>337</sup>

Washington's drive for a UN cease-fire resolution twisted U.S. China policy in an unexpected way. Dulles believed that, even though the PRC was unlikely to recognize its legitimacy, such a resolution would help deter further hostilities. Yet the Nationalists resented the proposed cease-fire. In response, the State Department offered the Nationalists what Chiang had solicited for years – a bilateral defense treaty.<sup>338</sup>

After surmising Washington's policy direction, London suspended its initial agreement with the UN cease-fire. To lure London back to the cease-fire plan, Secretary Dulles promised to arrange the forthcoming treaty with Taipei in a restrictive and defensive manner under a two-China formula. With the two-China policy, Dulles thought, the United States would not only protect Chiang's regime from the mainland but also curb his offensive campaign against it. In fact, both the British and the Nationalists understood that the UN cease-fire offer and the defensive treaty would eventually separate Taiwan from the mainland and perpetuate the two Chinese regimes. Considering Nationalist aspiration to recapture the mainland, neither the UN cease-fire nor a wholly defensive treaty pleased Chiang.<sup>339</sup>

The treaty Dulles envisioned in the hope of British cooperation not only infuriated the Nationalists but also many military men in Washington. By the time Secretary Dulles reported his proposal for a defensive bilateral treaty with the Republic of China (ROC) to the NSC on October 28, the council stood at an advanced stage in agreeing to an overall Far Eastern

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<sup>337</sup> Ibid., 154, 157-68.

<sup>338</sup> Ibid.

<sup>339</sup> Ibid., 168-72.

policy. On August 18 the NSC had begun a review of NSC 5429, an assessment of overall security conditions in post-Geneva Asia.<sup>340</sup> Although the JCS criticized the draft of NSC 5429 for failing to meet its call for a comprehensive policy that would embrace the Far East as a strategic entity, the NSC endorsed it with minor changes as NSC 5429/2.<sup>341</sup>

The JCS position found strong support from General Van Fleet's report. President Eisenhower received a copy of it from Secretary Wilson on September 30. Two weeks later the president directed the NSC staff to present the "summary" and "general and policy observations" parts at the NSC meeting on October 28, when Secretary Dulles was to present his views on Far East and China policy. In the "summary" the report concluded that a position of greater strength in East Asia could be achieved by the "full integration of the resources" of free Asia – Japan, the ROK, Taiwan, and the Philippines. These free nations should become mutually supporting; indigenous military forces should be equipped and trained by the United States in numbers exceeding those required for defense – i.e. trained for defense operations and "in task force operations in other Asian countries." More specifically the general suggested a regional alliance including the United States and the four Asian countries to "halt Chinese Communist aggression in East Asia by retaliation, nuclear and conventional, against its sources." Expansion and improvement of allied troop units would develop an "adequate base for maximum mobilization for general war or war with Communist China." Finally, the United States should make clear that, in the event of aggression, nuclear weapons would be used but only against military targets.<sup>342</sup>

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<sup>340</sup> Accinelli, *Crisis and Commitment*, 153.

<sup>341</sup> Watson, *History of the JCS*, Volume V, 250.

<sup>342</sup> Robert Cutler, Report of the Van Fleet mission to the Far East (September 30, 1954), October 16, 1954 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

In the NSC meeting of October 28, the JCS and the State Department found that the bellicose suggestions of the Van Fleet report were inconsistent with the forthcoming treaty with the Chinese Nationalists. Secretary Dulles insisted that U.S. policy in the Far East should not be so provocative as to encourage Chiang to launch attacks on the mainland. Overriding JCS opposition, the NSC effectively declined the more positive measures recommended by Van Fleet's report in favor of the mutual defense pact with Taiwan.<sup>343</sup> On November 2 the president reaffirmed his support of the secretary of state's view.<sup>344</sup>

Treaty negotiations started on that day—and with a sense of urgency rising from resumed Communist attacks on the Tachens. On November 23 Dulles and Minister of Foreign Affairs George Yeh initialed an agreed text and exchanged notes.<sup>345</sup> Finally, Secretary Dulles and Yeh signed the mutual defense treaty on December 2, formally endorsing Taiwan and the Pescadores as members of the “offshore chain” in U.S. defense. Article II of the treaty stated that both parties would “maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity” to “resist armed attack and communist subversive activities directed from without against their territorial integrity and political stability.” Article V stated that an “armed attack in the West Pacific Area” directed against the territories of either party, as well as “all measures taken as a result,” should be immediately reported to the UN Security Council. For the purposes of Articles II and V, Article VI clarified that the terms “territorial” and “territories” would mean Taiwan and the Pescadores with respect to the ROC and the “island territories in the West Pacific under its jurisdiction” with respect to the United States. However, the provisions of

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<sup>343</sup> Memorandum: discussion at the 220th meeting of the NSC, Thursday, October 28, 1954 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 6 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>344</sup> Memorandum: discussion at the 221<sup>st</sup> meeting of the NSC, Tuesday, November 2, 1954, November 2, 1954 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 6 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>345</sup> Accinelli, *Crisis and Commitment*, 174.

Article II and V could be applied to “such other territories as may be determined by mutual agreement.” Finally, as in the U.S.-ROK pact, the U.S.-ROC mutual defense pact included an “escape clause” of one year’s notice by either party.<sup>346</sup>

NSC 5429/5, the final version of overall U.S. policy in the Far East approved on December 21 reflected this development as well as the JCS request for a comprehensive strategy. The document stated that the United States should “encourage the conditions necessary” to “form as soon as possible and then participate in a Western Pacific collective defense arrangement,” which included the Philippines, Japan, the Republic of China (ROC) and the ROK, “eventually linked with the Manila Pact and ANZUS.” NSC 5429/5 also called for sufficient U.S. forces in the Far East as “clear evidence of U.S. intention” to contribute its “full share of effective collective aid” to the nations, and to “provide assurance to the people of the Far East” of “U.S. intent and determination to support them in the event of Communist aggression.” In order to “weaken or retard the growth of the power and influence of the Asian Communist regimes, especially Communist China,” the United States should continue to “refuse recognition of the Chinese and other Asian Communist regimes” and “oppose seating of Communist China in the Security Council, the General Assembly, and other organs of the United Nations.”<sup>347</sup>

In sum, the Far Eastern crises throughout 1954 shifted the overall U.S. posture in East Asia into indefinite confrontation with Communist China. As long as Beijing’s military adventurism was blatant, Washington believed, noncommunist countries in the region would call for U.S. military involvement for protection from overt Communist aggression. To avoid

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<sup>346</sup> DSB, December 13, 1954, 899.

<sup>347</sup> NSC 5429/5: current U.S. policy toward the Far East, December 22, 1954 in White House Office: Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (OSANSA): Records, NSC Series, Policy Papers Subseries, Box No. 12 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

an impression of withdrawal in the face of the enemy's unveiled aggression, U.S. military capabilities in the region had to be maintained. Nonetheless, Washington sought ways to avoid endless entrapment in local disputes in the Far East, when growing Soviet nuclear capabilities cast a shadow upon the security of Western Europe and eventually the continental defense of Fortress America. Therefore, the Eisenhower administration responded to Communist aggressiveness in East Asia promptly by expanding regional security arrangements and capitalizing on its formidable nuclear strength both at the strategic and tactical levels.

Under the circumstances the official U.S. view of the security of the ROK after the breakdown of the Korean political conference was gradually integrated into overall policy in the Far East. Any possibility of a political settlement in Korea, which President Eisenhower and the State Department anticipated at the end of the Korean War, had faded away by mid-1954. Beijing's uncompromising attitude toward a political settlement in Korea demonstrated that the U.S.-PRC confrontation since November 1950 would be extended for an indefinite period. As a result, American policymakers came to view the ROK as a major U.S. stronghold against Communist China in the Cold War in Asia and the Pacific. Washington's initial rationale for UN operations in Korea as basically the first-line defense of Japan had evolved in the face of U.S.-PRC hostilities during the first two years of the Eisenhower administration.

This development is well illustrated by comparing Washington policymakers' remarks during and after the Korean War. On September 24, 1952, in a meeting with the State and Defense Department officials, President Truman noted that the "only purpose of an armistice" should be to try to "get peace in the Pacific but not under conditions which might later enable

the Communists to take over Japan or elsewhere.”<sup>348</sup> On July 24, 1953, three days before the signing of the Korean armistice, President Eisenhower wrote in his diary that he was “certain in his own mind” that, “except for the fact that evacuation of South Korea would badly expose Japan,” the majority of the United Nations now fighting there “would have long since attempted to pull out.”<sup>349</sup>

By the time the political conference on Korea had failed, U.S. officials who worked for a settlement of the Korean problem in Panmunjom and Geneva foresaw the meaning of a divided Korea in overall U.S. strategy. Kevin Young, the Deputy Representative for the Korean Political Conference remarked after the preliminary talks were indefinitely recessed in December 1953:

...Partition of Korea may be [a] long-term phenomenon. While this falls far short [of] our declared objective of unification, it may conform for [the] time being to political realities of struggle between [the] free and Communist world. In other words, [a] buffer area may, *de facto*, be North Korea with [a] demilitarized zone and some eventual form [of a] UN observer group or NNSC as [a] safety valve. This at least provides space ahead of us for airfront, opportunities for observing and probing Red China in northeast Asia, and [a] stronghold on [the] Asian continent near [the] center Red China’s power. This bridgehead would then be [the] outermost point in [an] arc swinging through Japan, Okinawa, Formosa, [and the] Philippines into Indochina...Finally, our appraisal and planning should be on [the] basis of 5, 10, 20 or more years depending on [the] duration and development [of the] Communist regime in China and elsewhere...We have [a] major long-term responsibility in Korea.<sup>350</sup>

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<sup>348</sup> *FRUS 1952-1954, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 2, 534.

<sup>349</sup> Louis Galambos & Daun Van Ee, ed., *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, Volume XV (Baltimore & London: the Johns Hopkins University Press), 420.

<sup>350</sup> *FRUS 1952-1954, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 2, 1683.

By the time the Korean and Indochinese problems were discussed in Geneva, U.S. officials understood that the presence of a PRC hostile to noncommunist Asia posed a far greater problem in the region than merely the Korean peninsula. Thus it was urgent for planners to develop a broad strategic overview of the entire East Asia and Pacific theater of which the ROK was a part. NSC 5429/2, drafted immediately after the Geneva conference and approved on August 20, noted that U.S. defense of the Pacific off-shore island chain (Japan, Ryukyu, Taiwan, the Philippines, and ANZUS) required improvement of ROK military strength, which eventually might be integrated into a Western Pacific collective defense arrangement.<sup>351</sup>

Washington's new emphasis on Korea in its struggles against Communist China was also linked to growing doubts in Washington about Japan's centrality in U.S. defense of the region. U.S. strategists had long assumed Japan's prominence here. In the early Eisenhower administration, the military changed its view little, stating in April 1954 that "basic to the establishment of a non-Communist position of strength in the Far East" was the "rehabilitation of the Japanese military forces" along "moderate and controlled lines" that would make Japan able to "exert a stabilizing influence...."<sup>352</sup> On the other hand, Washington was not confident of Japan's commitment to the United States on a long-term basis. One of the fundamental questions American policymakers had long contemplated was whether Japan would become a reliable U.S. ally after the occupation period ended. During the Korean War the JCS opinion

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<sup>351</sup> NSC 5429/2: Review of U.S. policy in the Far East, August 20, 1954 in White House Office: Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (OSANSA): Records, NSC Series, Policy Papers Subseries, Box No. 12 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>352</sup> NSC 5416: U.S. strategy for developing a position of military strength in the Far East, April 10, 1954 in White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, 1952-61, NSC Series, Policy Papers Subseries, Box No. 10 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

was wholly pessimistic, describing Japan either as a potential enemy or at best an uncertain ally.<sup>353</sup>

Early in the Eisenhower administration, the debate arose again when the Department of State proposed the return of the Amami Islands to Japan. Because the Department of Defense had long objected to the return of the islands to Japanese civil administration, the NSC meeting of June 25, 1953 included an intense discussion of the issue. Secretary Wilson remarked that if “our military people” could be sure that the Japanese would “stay with us” over the long term he would be glad to give up the administration of the islands. In reply the president stressed that the United States should “start with our conviction” that the “retention of Japan and of its potential strength was of vital importance to our own security interest.” Accordingly, it seemed to be silly to the president to risk the loss of our main objective – Japan’s friendship and loyalty over the long run – over “this little group of islands.”<sup>354</sup> Thus Eisenhower and Dulles established a policy orientation toward a friendly Japan contrary to prevailing opinion in the Pentagon.

U.S. mistrust of Japan’s future allegiance in the Cold War remained an undercurrent, and occasionally reached the surface. In a NSC meeting of April 13, 1954, when the JCS presented its report on overall Far Eastern policy, Admiral Radford pointed out two great difficulties in formulating a comprehensive U.S. policy for the region. In addition to the “virtual impossibility of developing a regional defense organization,” he pointed out, the United States should realize that in the long run Japan would “look out for itself.” It would not remain a U.S. ally “for any sentimental reason.” If a rearmed Japan became too strong, Admiral Radford admonished, Japan might change sides “in her own self-defense.” Therefore,

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<sup>353</sup> Nicholas Evan Sarantakes, *Keystone: The American occupation of Okinawa and U.S.-Japanese relations* (College Station, TX.: Texas A&M University Press, 2000), 63-5.

<sup>354</sup> Memorandum: discussion at the 151<sup>st</sup> meeting of the NSC, Thursday, June 25, 1953, June 26, 1953 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 4 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

the JCS chairman suggested restraints on Japanese rearmament, particularly “in the sphere of offensive armament in the Air Force and Navy.” When the issues were discussed with Australians, the JCS found, they also opposed “too rapid and strong a revival of Japanese military power.” According to Admiral Radford, Australians wished to see a Japan “strong enough to participate in joint action for the defense of Asia,” but “not strong enough to permit unilateral action against an Asian country.”<sup>355</sup>

Nonetheless, a real and imminent source of friction between Washington and Tokyo was Japan’s consistent inability to defend itself, not to mention to contribute to U.S. defense of the Far East. Between 1953 and 1954 the biggest issue between the two countries was Japan’s rearmament. Prime Minister Yoshida saw little reason to spend much on self-defense when the Japanese economy could not sustain itself without U.S. special procurement. Based on Japanese government statistics as well as the reports of the U.S. embassy in Japan, Ambassador John Allison in Tokyo estimated that Japan’s trade deficit in 1953 would reach \$1.15 billion, far exceeding the \$800 million dollar receipts from U.S. expenditures in Japan. Such a deficit would reduce Japan’s foreign exchange reserves by \$350 million.<sup>356</sup> On March 8, 1954 Japan accepted a U.S. offer of a MSA deal that would provide \$150 million in military equipment and another \$100 million in agricultural goods and U.S. purchases of Japanese products. Japan needed the dollars to pay for food and raw material imports.<sup>357</sup> At Tokyo’s

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<sup>355</sup> Memorandum: discussion at the 193<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the NSC, Thursday, April 13, 1954, April 14, 1954 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 5 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>356</sup> John Allison, *Ambassador from the Prairie or Allison Wonderland* (Boston, MA.: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1973), 231.

<sup>357</sup> Walter LaFeber, *The Clash: U.S.-Japanese relations throughout history* (New York & London: W.W. Norton & Company), 298-99.

request, however, the MSA program did not specify how much Japan would increase its defense force.<sup>358</sup>

Unfortunately, by the time Tokyo accepted Washington's MSA offer, U.S.-Japan relations were slipping into long-term tension over nuclear weapons stored in U.S. bases in Japan and the treaty islands, which was triggered by an incident in the Pacific. On March 1, 1954 the United States exploded its first thermonuclear bomb at Bikini Atoll in the Pacific. At that time, a Japanese fishing boat, the *Lucky Dragon #5*, trawled for tuna around eighty-five miles away from Bikini. Because the bomb explosiveness exceeded calculations and the wind direction shifted, fallout fell on the ship's crew. The captain of the vessel did not report the incident until he returned to Japan, but his crew members were hospitalized after showing symptoms of radiation illness. The news soon leaked to the press.<sup>359</sup>

For the rest of 1954, the incident rekindled anti-nuclear sentiment stemming from Japan's trauma of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The Eisenhower administration's clumsy treatment of the case amplified the incident into a diplomatic dispute. AEC Chairman Louis Strauss refused to reveal data to Japanese medical personnel for fear that the bomb's technical secret might get into the hands of Soviet espionage agents. The weeklong delay in issuance of a U.S. apology infuriated the Diet. Struck by evidence that other boats had been exposed to radiation, the Japanese public blamed Washington for its indifference to the victims. In Washington, in contrast, some congressmen accused Japan of espionage and exaggeration. Although President Eisenhower ordered the AEC chairman to explain the incident in public on March 30, the chairman's blunt comments only exacerbated Japanese

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<sup>358</sup> Allison, *Ambassador from the Prairie*, 249.

<sup>359</sup> Schaller, *Altered States*, 71-2.

feelings. The Diet passed a resolution calling for the suspension of nuclear tests in the Pacific.<sup>360</sup>

Recognizing the public outrage, the Japanese government demanded compensation to the *Lucky Dragon* crew and their families. Urged by Ambassador Allison, Eisenhower and Dulles agreed to authorize a payment. After a crew member died in September, the amount of compensation rose. Finally, on December 29 Dulles approved \$2 million in compensation to be paid from MSA funds and settled claims related to the incident.<sup>361</sup> Shortly before, Yoshida ended his long career as prime minister, and the new cabinet celebrated the settlement of a potential breach in U.S.-Japan relations. However, anti-nuclear sentiment did not die out in the coming years, thus foreshadowing the administration's overseas forward-deployment policy, which heavily relied upon U.S. access to bases in Japan and Okinawa for nuclear storage in the Far East.

While Japan's contribution to the Cold War was unlikely to increase in the foreseeable future, the ROK government shared its security interests with the United States, understood its strategic direction, and showed its willingness to cooperate with Washington beyond Korean matters. The most symbolic event occurred in early February 1954, when President Rhee informed CINUNC General Hull that a ROK Army division could be sent to assist the government of Laos in resisting the Vietminh invasion of the country. When Rhee's offer was raised in a meeting of February 17, the NSC agreed that the offer should be considered "at the highest levels" of the government, and the NSC Planning Board should prepare

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<sup>360</sup> Ibid., 72-3.

<sup>361</sup> Ibid., 73-4.

recommendations.<sup>362</sup> After collecting the opinions of the State Department, the Pentagon, and the CIA, the planning board forwarded its conclusion to the NSC on March 2. All three of the studies agreed that the possible adverse reaction of the free world to ROK participation in the war, and the “military and political disadvantages,” outweighed the advantages. Therefore, the planning board recommended that it was undesirable “at this time” to accept Rhee’s offer.<sup>363</sup> On March 4 the NSC discussed the ROK offer. President Eisenhower concluded that U.S. public opinion would not support the transfer of Korean troops for operations outside of the peninsula while U.S. troops continued to be required there.<sup>364</sup>

Although the administration declined the ROK offer, some U.S. policymakers were quick to grasp its possible advantages. A week after Rhee raised the issue, General Hull commented to the press that there was a possible advantage in the fact that “one Asiatic country would be going to the assistance of another.”<sup>365</sup> Prominent Republican senator William Knowland argued that anything the Asian countries could do to “coordinate their economic and military forces for mutual support” was both “sound and long past overdue.”<sup>366</sup> In April, as the French impasse at Dien Bien Phu raised the prospect of U.S. intervention, Washington policymakers revisited the ROK offer, but President Eisenhower again

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<sup>362</sup> Memorandum: discussion at the 185<sup>th</sup> meeting of the NSC, Wednesday, February 17, 1954, February 18, 1954 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 5 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL). As Rhee was also intending to nearly double the size of the ROK forces at the same time, the two proposals might be interweaved as a *quid pro quo*; George McT. Kahin, *Intervention: how America became involved in Vietnam* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), 42. Christos Frentzos also concludes that Rhee’s troop proposal “appears to have been motivated in part” by his desire to demand an increase of ROK armed forces; Christos G. Frentzos, “From Seoul to Saigon: U.S.-Korean relations and the Vietnam War” (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Houston, December 2004), 57.

<sup>363</sup> *FRUS, 1952-54, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 2, 1754-5.

<sup>364</sup> JCS 1776/444, Note by the secretaries to the JCS on consideration of the ROK offer to send a division to Indochina, March 5, 1954 in Geographic file, 1954-56, 383.21 Korea (3-19-45), Sec. 146-154, Box No. 28, RG 218: Records of the U.S. JCS (College Park, MD.: NA).

<sup>365</sup> *New York Times*, February 12, 1954.

<sup>366</sup> *Ibid.*, February 13, 1954.

demurred.<sup>367</sup> The idea reappeared in the summer only to be rejected by the French and finally sealed off by the Geneva Accords.<sup>368</sup>

Although ROK participation in Indochina failed to materialize in 1954, Rhee exhibited a strategic mind that jibed in crucial ways with the direction of U.S. policy in the Far East. On July 12, for example, he told Ambassador Briggs that President Eisenhower should pay “personal attention” to his eagerness to send two or three ROK divisions to Indochina. “From [a] strictly Asian point of view,” the ROK president declared, colonialism was dead in the region; the Indochinese and the French did not want each other. In preventing the Communists from infiltrating into a post-colonial vacuum, Rhee argued, the only solution was the Van Fleet plan of “utilizing Asian manpower willing [to] fight for freedom plus U.S. air and naval power and U.S. material.”<sup>369</sup> In short, despite disagreement with the United States over how best to deal with Korea’s division, Rhee’s anti-colonialism joined with his passionate anti-Communism to create much common ground with an American counterpart seeking to develop a Cold War strategy sustainable over the long term.

Furthermore, the U.S.-PRC confrontation after the armistice potentially increased the value of U.S. air bases in Korea. During the Geneva conference Ambassador Briggs noted in a message to Washington that Rhee and ROK generals were “intelligent enough to know” that, if the United States decided to fight in Indochina, its bombing campaign would overarch “from Peiping northwestward to Anshan, Mukden, Harbin and Vladivostok.” According to Arthur Dean, the U.S. envoy to President Rhee in Seoul during the Geneva Conference, neither the Philippines nor Okinawa offered bases “as suitable as Korea.” In addition, if Okinawa was

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<sup>367</sup> Memorandum: discussion at the 193<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the NSC, Thursday, April 13, 1954, April 14, 1954 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 5 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>368</sup> Frentzos, “From Seoul to Saigon,” 47- 50, 52.

<sup>369</sup> *FRUS, 1952-54, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 2, 1835-36.

“knocked out” and bases in Japan were forbidden for that purpose, the United States could resort to Korean bases without which it must withdraw from the Far East.<sup>370</sup> Because of its location, the ROK had assumed a key position in the defense of the region.

On May 25, faced with no hope of political settlement in the Korean phase of the Geneva Conference, Dean wrote to Dulles about how the changed situation in the Far East after the Korean War had reshaped the ROK’s security position:

While we were negotiating the Armistice in 1953, [the] JCS decided that we no longer needed to maintain bases on the mainland of Asia and that we were quite prepared with or without phased withdrawal [by the] Chinese Communists to withdraw our troops in South Korea down to a corps, while at the same time strengthening [the] ROK army so it could hold in [the] event of attack until we could return. But since then, the problems we face in Indochina, [the] location of strategic bombing targets north of the Yalu and uncertainty of availability of Japanese bases make essential reappraisal of [the] JCS’s opinion of Korea in [the] spring and summer of 1953... In view of our possible entry into the Indochinese situation and in view of current conditions in Japan requiring complete review of conditions for use of Japanese bases, and inability without use of force or coequal phased withdrawal to obtain withdrawal [of] Chinese Communist forces from North Korea, it consequently seems better to recognize, however regrettable, that North and South Korea must remain separated...<sup>371</sup>

On the assumption of a divided Korea for an indefinite period, Dean suggested a series of moves: the clear-cut breaking off of negotiations with the Communists on Korea, abolition of the NNSC—thus possibly freeing “ourselves” from the restrictions of the armistice--the exchange of ratifications of the mutual defense treaty, and implementation of Van Fleet recommendations.

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<sup>370</sup> *FRUS, 1952-54, The Geneva Conference*, Volume XVI, 247.

<sup>371</sup> *Ibid.*, 317-18.

By 1957 many of Dean's suggestions would become a reality. Better than others at the time, Dean recognized that the ongoing conflict with China combined with Japan's uncertain future in U.S. defense strategy magnified the role of the ROK. Along with the withdrawal of UNSC teams to Panmunjom and the abolition of the certain restrictive provisions in the armistice, Japan's turn to self-imposed neutrality in the mid-1950s comprises a main subject of the next two chapters.

## **Conclusion**

Between 1953 and 1954, U.S.-ROK relations remained less than harmonious over the wisdom of the Korean armistice. In Washington's roadmap, despite little prospect of Korean unification by negotiation, the opening and outcome of the Korean political conference served as a legal instrument to keep the ROK government in conformity with the armistice agreements between the United Nations and the Communists. Although the ROK government never disclaimed the desirability of a forceful unification, more than a year of Washington's efforts ended in the ROK's de facto acquiescence in the status quo in exchange for generous U.S. economic and military aid programs in the coming years. Meanwhile, the U.S. military posture in post-armistice Korea was closely related to overall U.S. strategy in the Cold War. U.S. military strategy in the last months of the Korean War, with its stress on the use of nuclear weapons, eventually became a part of the administration's massive retaliation strategy in NSC 162/2. However, Washington's nuclear strategy faced two major problems after the Korean War: a growing Soviet retaliatory nuclear capacity and the fear of U.S. allies of a general war in Europe. Although Washington hoped to persuade its allies to gradually accept the inevitability of nuclear war in certain situations, anti-nuclear sentiment among them worsened with the fear of Soviet hydrogen bombs. Therefore, a disjunction existed between

U.S. determination to increase the role of nuclear weapons in global strategy and the need for collective security.

Faced with continuing Communist aggressiveness in the Far East, Washington's emphasis on Western unity in the region was superseded by expanded regional security arrangements and a unilateral nuclear strategy against local aggression. After the French defeat in Indochina and the Geneva Accords, a new policy current in Washington was skeptical of a U.S. nuclear strategy held hostage by allied objections. By the time the Chinese Communists challenged the Nationalist hold on Taiwan and the off-shore islands, Washington had moved away from its concentration on the principle of collective security in Geneva. Washington was determined to make use of the deterrent value of its nuclear strength by forward-deployment in overseas bases. By inviting Taiwan into the U.S. alliance network, Washington moved closer to a pan-Asian coalition joining Southeast Asia and Taiwan to the established "off-shore chain."

This course changed Washington's view of the ROK's security position in the Cold War in Asia and the Pacific. By the time the Korean political conference ended without any meaningful progress, Washington recognized that a divided Korea could be not only a forward-deployed base in the defense of Japan, but also a prominent foothold for U.S. operations against China on mainland Asia. While Japan's underperformance in the U.S.-PRC confrontation in the Far East embarrassed Washington policymakers, the ROK provided a potential strategic partnership. While the bulk of U.S. forces were leaving Korea throughout 1954, the ROK's security position was reassessed during and after General Van Fleet's trip to the Far East and Rhee's visit to Washington. Finally, U.S.-ROK alliance was established on a solid basis by the time the "Agreed Minute" was authorized in late 1954.

As long as Communist China posed a major threat to noncommunist Asia, strengthening the military and economic abilities of the anti-Communist and anti-PRC regime in Seoul was an inevitable choice in Washington. What kind of measures would be required to strengthen the ROK in the face of the major Communist powers in the north? Under the evolving U.S. policy in the Far East, how did the armistice pose problems to the UN/U.S. military posture in the ROK? What was the role of Japan in Washington's reassessment of the defense of the Far East? How did major change in U.S. relations with UN allies begin to affect the UNC approach to the armistice-related issues? Why did U.S. financial burden in Korea coerce the administration to reconsider its security policies in later years? These questions constitute the major subjects of the next chapter.

## Chapter 3

### The Armistice in Question

On March 26, 1954 the Operation Coordinating Board (OCB) drafted and circulated a briefing paper entitled “War by cease-fire: Communist truce tactics in Asia,” which quoted PRC Premier Zhou En-lai’s view of a cease-fire. Truce was, according to Zhou, the “military counterpart of the political tactic of coalition government.” It was a “means to an end, not the ultimate objective.” The authors of the paper asserted that, just as “coalition government in Communist practice” existed temporarily only as a preliminary to Communist rule, military truce was in Communist minds a “continuation of the war by other means” until the achievement of final victory. With two episodes of truce talks as examples, in the Chinese civil war and in the Korean War, the authors observed that Communist tactics broke down into three phases: open military conflict, a truce period, and a breach of truce leading to victory. In China all phases were completed; Korea was in stage two. A third case, Indochina, was still in stage one. The paper’s drafters concluded with an admonishment: pursuit of “easy security in a truce with Communism” only invited disaster.<sup>372</sup>

In the first year of the Korean armistice, beginning with its signing and ending with the Korean political conference, many participants in the war anticipated that a political settlement following a cease-fire would eventually terminate hostilities in Korea. Once the Geneva Conference failed to produce a meaningful settlement, however, Washington and its allies had to

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<sup>372</sup> OCB, *War by cease-fire: Communist truce tactics in Asia*, March 26, 1954 (College Park, MD.: NA).

face a very important question: could the armistice alone sustain peace and stability in Korea for an indefinite period of time? At the heart of the problem were armistice provisions that regulated military buildup on both sides. By mid-1954 the bulk of U.S. forces had begun to withdraw from Korea, but the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission (NNSC) – designed to monitor military restrictions imposed on both sides – was failing to achieve its original purpose, causing troubles both in North and South Korea. Combined with intelligence evidence of a Communist buildup in the North, the ineffectiveness of the NNSC called into question the wisdom of some of the terms of the armistice agreement.

Furthermore, the multinational nature of UN armed forces in Korea began to deteriorate as military tension continued indefinitely. As the leader of the noncommunist world, the United States had virtually universal security interests in defending East Asia from the Communists. Washington took the burden of extended military confrontation against the PRC as part of its Cold War strategy. In contrast, U.S. allies in Europe were not well prepared to embrace an endless commitment to the region. Not only did many participants in the UNC in Korea anticipate discontinuing their military presence there once the fighting had stopped; primarily concerned with the security of Europe and economic needs at home, they also did not have a big stake in keeping in line with Washington's anti-PRC campaign, particularly at the expense of access to the traditional China market. Meanwhile, Japan's economic and security concerns prompted Tokyo to revise its policies even in the face of Washington's opposition. With its relations with key allies in danger, the United States needed to reduce its reliance on Western unity against the PRC.

This chapter focuses on several questions: why did the NNSC inspection activities have crucial significance after the Korean War? Why, against Washington's desires, did the non-U.S.,

non-Korean element of UN forces constantly decrease after the armistice? How did the reduction of non-Korean UN forces reshape the U.S. security stance in Korea? Why did the prolonged armistice in Korea affect Japan's security position? How did Japan attempt to resolve its security dilemma after the Korean War? How did U.S.-PRC confrontation strain U.S. relations with Europe and Japan? Finally, how did Washington coordinate its approach to NNSC disputes with members of the UNC, the PRC, and neutral nations? In particular, this chapter demonstrates that by 1957 Washington's shift on Korea policy resulted from challenges by major allies to U.S. policies in East Asia, which were prompted in part by the evolving integration of the ROK into U.S. strategy after July 1953.

### **Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission (NNSC) in disarray**

The armistice agreement called for restrictions on the military strength of each side. Paragraph 13(c) prohibited the introduction of reinforcing military personnel into Korea except for the "rotation of units and personnel, the arrival in Korea of personnel on a temporary duty basis, and the return to Korea of personnel after short periods of leave or temporary duty outside of Korea." Paragraph 13(d) also prohibited the introduction of reinforcing "combat aircraft, armored vehicles, weapons, and ammunition" except for "replacement on the basis of piece-for-piece of the same effectiveness and the same type." To implement paragraphs 13(c) and (d), paragraphs 19 through 50 directed the installation of the Military Armistice Commission (MAC), where armistice signatories could meet to address issues that might arise, and the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission (NNSC), a monitoring institution composed of members from Switzerland, Sweden, Poland, and Czechoslovakia.<sup>373</sup> The NNSC was to locate permanent

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<sup>373</sup> DSB, August 3, 1953, 134-37.

Neutral Nations Inspection Teams (NNITs) at ports of entry and investigate suspected violations wherever they occurred.<sup>374</sup>

The UNC detected Communist infringement of the armistice provisions as early as the “very night that the truce became effect[ive].” Before the signing of the armistice, nearly all Communist airplanes remained in the Manchurian “sanctuary.” As soon as the UN Air Force stopped operations on the night of July 27, 1953, “scores of Red aircraft” flew across the Yalu and landed on airfields in North Korea where previous UNC photo reconnaissance had indicated there were none. Other planes soon followed in crates. For instance, on August 2 eighty crated MIGs were moved to Uiju.<sup>375</sup> By the end of 1953, Washington estimated that the North Korean Air Force (NKAF) had a total combat strength of 270 aircraft based in North Korea. In addition, the Light Bomber Units (40 IL-28 twin engine jets, 30 TU-2 twin engine piston) were still in Manchuria. Therefore, UNC intelligence estimated that the NKAF had 340 aircraft plus an additional 50 light trainer types.<sup>376</sup>

For the first time the NKAF possessed offensive airstrike ability, creating new concern in the UNC about the security of the ROK. On November 16 the U.S. Fifth Air Force in Korea expressed “complete sympathy” with the ROK’s desire for an expanded air force. One report noted that the NKAF had “three MIG-15 Wings and two others, including a Jet Bomber Wing” in contrast to the ROK’s one F-51 Wing, a “token force” with “little or no defensive capability against the North Korean MIGs and IL-28s.” If the Fifth Air Force withdrew from Korea, the report stated, the biggest danger to the ROK would be an initial surprise air attack from North

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<sup>374</sup> *FRUS, 1955-57, Korea*, Volume XXIII, Part 2, 1.

<sup>375</sup> OCB, *War by cease-fire: Communist truce tactics in Asia*, March 26, 1954 (College Park, MD.: NA).

<sup>376</sup> E. T. Layton, A memorandum for Admiral Radford: Comments on the David Lawrence Column, Washington Star, 4 December 1953, December 9, 1953 in Chairman’s File: Admiral Radford, 1953-57, 091 Korea (May-Dec. 54) to 091 Netherlands, Box No. 13, RG 218: Records of the U.S. JCS (College Park, MD.: NA).

Korea. On November 20 the U.S. Air Force in the Far East (FEAF) requested that the JCS consider the report. On February 12, 1954 the U.S. FEC delivered to the JCS its view of the ROKAF expansion plan, which was referred to the Joint Strategic Plans Committee (JSPC) in early March. Later in 1954 the Agreed Minute granted the CINCUNC authority to determine the timing of reinforcing the ROKAF.<sup>377</sup>

According to the original design of the Korean armistice, NNITs in North Korea were to investigate possible Communist violations of the armistice. Unfortunately, the armistice provisions regarding the NNSC had serious flaws. During the armistice negotiations UNC intelligence reports indicated that fourteen “ports of entry” into North Korea, including airports and land routes across the Yalu River, should be checked to effectively monitor an enemy buildup. The armistice agreement, however, provided for inspection of only five ports of entry on each side, leaving nearly the entire Yalu River and northeastern border with the Soviet Far East beyond the reach of the NNITs.<sup>378</sup> Further, Polish and Czech participation in the NNSC as “neutrals” did not bode well in implementing inspections without friction both in the North and the South. Although the armistice dictated a clear and detailed procedure of mutual inspection, the NNSC had in fact limited means to prevent a Communist buildup in North Korea.

In January 1954 the CINCUNC, General Hull, reported to the JCS that the UNC experience during the five months of the armistice indicated that the NNSC and the NNITs had not achieved “any useful results toward the objective” for which they had been established, and that the net effect had been a “serious disadvantage and handicap to the UNC.” The five neutral

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<sup>377</sup> L.V. Young and D.P. Andre: joint secretariat, Joint Logistics Plans Committee directive: Recommendations of the Korean Minister of Defense concerning expansion of the ROK armed forces, JLPC 460/58/D, March 2, 1954 in Geographic File 1954-56, 383.21 Korea (3-19-45) Sec. 146-154, Box No. 28, RG 218: Records of the U.S. JCS (College Park, MD.: NA). Because the UNC had already withdrawn substantial air units from Korea, a reinforcement of the ROK air force would not represent an infringement of paragraph 13 (d).

<sup>378</sup> OCB, *War by cease-fire: Communist truce tactics in Asia*, March 26, 1954 (College Park, MD.: NA).

nation inspection teams in North Korea were restricted to “small areas selected by the Communists.” By “using railroads and routes of travel beyond the port complex,” the Communists bypassed the ports of entry, moving military personnel and equipment into North Korea “without any supervision intended by the armistice agreement.” Although additional NNITs could be sent to “inspect alleged violations,” the Communists delayed their operations for one reason or another until they made necessary preparations for them. In sum, the UNC declared that the objective of “maintaining the equilibrium of military forces in Korea” had failed. In addition, while the NNITs in Communist territory had proven futile, Communist inspection teams in UNC territory had collected a “wealth of information” on the UNC military situation. General Hull concluded that the “principle of inspection behind the Iron Curtain ... almost certainly [caused a serious disadvantage of possible] disastrous consequence to the United States.” In early February Hull’s memorandum reached the JCS in Washington.<sup>379</sup>

As Czech and Polish members of the NNSC repeatedly hampered inspections in North Korea, Washington policymakers began to explore a possible course of action in consultation with the Swiss and Swedish members of the NNSC as well as the CINCUNC.<sup>380</sup> In an April 14, 1954 aide-memoire, the Swedish embassy and the Swiss legation announced their coordinated position. The Swedish and Swiss governments agreed to continue their participation, but expressed their expectation that the Korean political conference would be held and terminate their task “within a reasonable period of time.” If the NNSC was prolonged indefinitely after the

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<sup>379</sup> Edwin H. J. Carns and Richard H. Phillips, Note by the secretaries to the JCS on Effectiveness of inspections in communist-controlled areas, JCS 1776/430, February 10, 1954 in Geographic File, 1954-56, 383.21 Japan (3-13-45) Sec. 40 to 383.21 Korea (3-19-45) Sec. 145, Box No. 27, RG 218: Records of the U.S. JCS (College Park, MD.: NA).

<sup>380</sup> NA-Mr. McClurkin, UNP-Mr. Popper, Refusal of NNSC to undertake investigations requested by UNC MAC, Subject File: NNSC, February 23, 1954 (College Park, MD.: NA). According to paragraph 42(f) of the armistice agreement, the obligation to conduct investigations at the request of either side was mandatory and did not depend on agreement within the NNSC.

Geneva Conference, both governments declared, they would reconsider their continued participation in the commission.<sup>381</sup>

Two days later General Hull advised Washington that sufficient data had been accumulated to justify dissolution of the NNSC, which would “have virtually no effect on the [maintenance] of the armistice.”<sup>382</sup> On May 12 the CINCUNC listed three possible actions in descending order of priority: (1) withdrawal of Sweden and Switzerland from the NNSC; (2) unilateral UNC action to dissolve the NNSC; or (3) the reconstruction of the armistice agreement.<sup>383</sup> In a June 11 memorandum to Secretary Wilson, the JCS noted that the view of the CINCUNC was sound and recommended that Secretary Wilson request Secretary Dulles to induce the Swiss and Swedish governments to withdraw from the NNSC “as an essential step” in its dissolution “as soon as possible.”<sup>384</sup>

After the Korean political conference failed to replace the armistice with a new political settlement, Seoul’s overtly violent protests against Polish and Czech activities in South Korea shifted the NNSC problem into another direction. Two days after the termination of the Korean phase at Geneva, Ambassador Briggs proposed to the State Department that provisions of the armistice agreement should be carefully examined in light of their long-term effects and the future U.S. course of action. In particular, Briggs specifically stressed the importance of the early termination of the NNSC by the withdrawal of the Swiss and Swedish representatives.<sup>385</sup> Before

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<sup>381</sup> Memorandum of conversation, Swiss and Swedish membership on NNSC, Subject File: NNSC, April 14, 1954 (College Park, MD.: NA).

<sup>382</sup> From CINCUNC to DA for JCS, CX 67843/DA IN 52183, April 16, 1954 in Geographic File, 1954-56, 383.21 Korea (3-19-45) Sec. 146-154, Box No. 28, RG 218: Records of the U.S. JCS (College Park, MD.: NA).

<sup>383</sup> From CINCUNC to DA for OSD (GRANT), C 68020/DA IN 57651, May 12, 1954 in Geographic File, 1954-56, 383.21 Korea (3-19-45) Sec. 146-154, Box No. 28, RG 218: Records of the U.S. JCS (College Park, MD.: NA).

<sup>384</sup> *FRUS, 1952-54, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 2, 1806-8.

<sup>385</sup> *Ibid.*, 1809.

President Rhee's visit to Washington, the ROK informally indicated that it was displeased with the Czechs and Poles, "Communist agents roaming around the ROK." They also believed that Swiss and Swedish withdrawal from the NNSC was the "most satisfactory solution to the problem." However, there was no sign of imminent danger that the ROK would take action against NNIT members.<sup>386</sup>

Therefore, Washington was embarrassed when ROK Provost Marshall Won Yongduk, then in Seoul, issued a press release on July 30 in which he called for the Poles and Czechs to leave South Korea immediately. President Rhee was still on his trip to Washington, and he promised Secretary Dulles that he would "communicate at once with Won and instruct him not to carry out his announced intention of ejecting the Czechs and Poles." Despite Rhee's modest rhetoric, the ROK's official charge of some NNIT members for intelligence activities in its territory highlighted the issue. The ROK prime minister and defense minister alleged that the Czechs and Poles had taken "extensive aerial photographs of ports and landing beaches from helicopters and light aircraft provided by U.S. forces." Secretary Dulles and Admiral Radford requested General Hull to investigate the case and "take whatever steps" were necessary to "restrict or eliminate the opportunities" the Czechs and Poles had in gathering intelligence.<sup>387</sup>

Despite Rhee's assurance in Washington that he would take no unilateral action, the UNC feared that ROK resentment might ignite massive violence against NNIT members, whose safety was its responsibility. Won's ultimatum was immediately followed by a chain of violent actions. On July 31 at Inchon about 200 demonstrators attempted to cross the housing of the NNIT and were stopped by U.S. Military Police (MP). On the same day unknown persons fired four shots

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<sup>386</sup> Memorandum of conversation, Possible resumption of hostilities by the ROK, Subject File: NNSC, July 13, 1954 (College Park, MD.: NA).

<sup>387</sup> For Gens. Taylor and Magruder from Gen. Hull, DA 965445, Subject File: NNSC, July 30, 1954 (College Park, MD.: NA).

into a NNIT mess hall in Pusan. A day later three home-made bombs were thrown into the NNIT compound in Kunsan, one of which exploded.<sup>388</sup> Therefore, when General Hull met with ROK Foreign Minister Pyun on August 1, he warned that Won's message might create tensions leading to serious incidents. The general described how Poles and Czechs were escorted by armed UNC MPs and mentioned the danger of armed clashes between the UNC and Korean authorities. In reply, Pyun charged the Poles and Czechs with espionage, indicating that once the evidence was assembled, the ROK government would "demand the removal of the individuals involved in accordance with normal diplomatic practices." Although Pyun promised that the ROK would "certainly await" voluntary withdrawal of the Swedes and Swiss from the NNSC, General Hull stressed that they should not consider separate ways, which might "constitute a unilateral breach of the armistice."<sup>389</sup>

For the rest of the year, while Washington endeavored to persuade the Swedes and Swiss into leaving the NNSC, opinions were divided between the sixteen and the ROK over the need for more drastic measures to end the NNSC. In April the sixteen had expressed sympathy with the Swiss and Swedish position, but political factors, such as the opening of the Geneva Conference and possible negative influence of decisions in Korea upon the NNSC activities in Indochina, had slowed down adoption of a joint approach.<sup>390</sup> On 5 November, 1954 a State-JCS meeting adopted a French proposal which, pending approval of the CINCUNC, called for the sixteen's agreement on a tripartite approach to induce Swedish and Swiss withdrawal of their representatives to the demilitarized zone as the first step to the eventual dissolution of the NNSC. The CINCUNC favored this approach. For the time being the JCS stepped back from their call

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<sup>388</sup> To Ambassador Yang, Subject File: NNSC, August 4, 1954 (College Park, MD.: NA).

<sup>389</sup> From CINCFE to DA, JCS, Gen Hull & Sec State, C 69173/DA IN 75924, August 1, 1954 (College Park, MD.: NA).

<sup>390</sup> JCS meeting, NNSC developments, Subject File: NNSC, December 3, 1954 (College Park, MD.: NA).

for unilateral U.S. action.<sup>391</sup> On November 18 the sixteen agreed that the United States, United Kingdom, and France should make an informal inquiry on behalf of the sixteen as to the willingness of Sweden and Switzerland to move forward.<sup>392</sup>

Meanwhile, the ROK government continued to demand withdrawal of the NNITs from South Korea.<sup>393</sup> On November 22 General Won issued another ultimatum, this time demanding the Poles and Czechs to leave Korea within a week. In a meeting with a U.S. military officer, the general stated that the purpose of his statement was to “arouse public reaction against the alleged covert espionage activities” and expedite NNIT withdrawal from Korea.<sup>394</sup> Although the threat was not carried out immediately, in late December General Won repeated it along with his complaints to the “United States and its allies” for “not fulfilling promises to remedy [the] situation.”<sup>395</sup>

In a progress report of NSC 170/1 earlier in the month, U.S. analysts expressed concern that renewed efforts to persuade the Swiss and Swedes again might fail. In such a case, the analysts feared, the ROK might take violent action, which might “place the UNC in the untenable position of protecting the Communists at the possible expense of Korean lives.” Therefore, despite the objections of U.S. allies, the report recommended that the United States

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<sup>391</sup> *FRUS, 1955-57, Korea*, Volume XXIII, Part 2, 7.

<sup>392</sup> JCS meeting, NNSC developments, Subject File: NNSC, December 3, 1954 (College Park, MD.: NA).

<sup>393</sup> *FRUS, 1952-54, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 2, 1867-7, 1909-10.

<sup>394</sup> From CGAFFE/ARMYEIGHT CP to DA, FM 908266/DA IN 100593, Subject File: NNSC, November 23, 1954 (College Park, MD.: NA).

<sup>395</sup> From USARMA KOREA to G2 DA, ARMA 100/DA IN 106929, Subject File: NNSC, December 23, 1954 (College Park, MD.: NA).

act unilaterally, if necessary, to terminate the NNSC activities in the ROK, “preferably in consort with the other principally interested nations.”<sup>396</sup>

On January 27, 1955 the Swiss and Swedes delivered another aide-memoire to Washington and Beijing expressing their willingness to terminate NNSC activities as a priority while suggesting the alternative of a sizeable reduction of personnel to four delegations.<sup>397</sup> Based on this message and the CINCUNC’s impatience to move forward, the JCS resumed its call for more positive action to dissolve the NNSC. If the Communists would not agree in an early meeting of the MAC to terminate the NNSC and provisions in paragraphs 13(c) and 13(d), then the UNC should “declare [them] null and void.” Therefore, the JCS recommended that the issue be discussed in an early NSC meeting to obtain the approval of the president.<sup>398</sup>

In a NSC meeting on February 3, 1955, the president directed the State Department and JCS to agree on recommendations for his consideration on removing the NNSC from the ROK.<sup>399</sup> State Department and JCS representatives met the next day. Given State’s concern about the political and legal difficulties involved in unilateral action, the group recommended that “no action [should] be taken in the MAC until an agreement can be obtained on a phased course of action with the objective of [eliminating] the NNSC in its entirety.”<sup>400</sup> The president quickly signed off on this approach.

Eventually, the NNSC dispute was closely linked to Communist violation of paragraph 13(d) of the Korean armistice. Washington briefed the governments of the sixteen members on

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<sup>396</sup> Progress report on NSC 170/1, December 30, 1954 in White House Office: Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (OSANSA): Records, NSC Series, Policy Papers Subseries, Box No. 7 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>397</sup> *FRUS, 1955-57, Korea*, Volume XXIII, Part 2, 10.

<sup>398</sup> *Ibid.*, 15-6.

<sup>399</sup> Memorandum: Discussion at the 235th meeting of the NSC, Thursday, February 3, 1955, February 4, 1955 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 6 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>400</sup> *FRUS, 1955-57, Korea*, Volume XXIII, Part 2, 30-33.

both issues in a meeting on February 24, despite concern among some U.S. officials that an open discussion of paragraph 13 (d) might leak sensitive intelligence activities. By the end of February 1955, a consensus had emerged between Washington and the sixteen that, for the moment, the NNSC and article 13(d) issues should be kept separate. Immediate attention should be given to the NNSC while “building [a] strong public case for action” on article 13(d).<sup>401</sup>

Washington’s decisions in early 1955 to develop a common position with its UN allies as well as the Swiss and Swedes reflected a preference for diplomatic and political settlement of Korean issues over unilateral action. NSC 5514, a new policy paper on U.S. objectives and courses of action in Korea approved in March, stated that the United States should “widely publicize the fact that the Communists, with the connivance of the Communist members of the NNSC,” had “violated the provisions of the armistice agreement since its inception.” It also stated that the United States should take action necessary to “deal with the situation caused by Communist violations of the armistice” if the UNC were “at a significant disadvantage because of such violations,” or if the “advantage of taking such action” outweighed the “military and political disadvantages,” including the “possible non-agreement of the UNC allies to such a course.” Although the United States should seek agreement of its allies prior to this action, the paper also denied them veto power over its own decision.<sup>402</sup>

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<sup>401</sup> *FRUS, 1955-57, Korea*, Volume XXIII, Part 2, 41-2. According to a briefing note to the sixteen in March 1955, the United States made public four points regarding Communist violation of 13(d) between July 27, 1953 and February 28, 1955: (1) failure of [the] Communists to report rotation of personnel and combat material: While the UNC reported its more than 7,000 transaction reports, the Communists reported only eleven dealing with eight anti-tank guns, forty rounds of anti-tank ammunition, two AA guns, plus seven reports on spare parts and none on combat aircraft. (2) restricting the freedom of movement and inspection by NNITs: Communists’ narrow interpretation imposes a minimum freedom in the north compared to maximum freedom in the south. (3) Illegal introduction of combat aircraft at Uiju (October 1953). (4) Illegal introduction of combat aircraft into North Korea (February 1955). During the period, the Communists buildup included 450 aircraft, 76 howitzers and gun howitzers, 456 mortars, 27 tanks, 12 SP guns, and 108 armored vehicles; J. Goodyear to FE-Mr. Waddell, Subject File, KT 1.1/14, March 18, 1955 (College Park, MD.: NA).

<sup>402</sup> Executive secretary, NSC 5514: U.S. objectives and courses of action in Korea, February 25, 1955 in White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, 1952-61, NSC Series, Policy Papers Subseries, Box No. 15 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

When NSC 5514 was discussed and approved in a meeting of March 10, Secretary Dulles remarked that the State Department had found it very hard to “get the Swiss and Swedish governments to do anything at all to remedy this situation lest in so doing they give offense to the Soviet Union.” Therefore, Dulles argued that the most the United States could do for the time being was to “reduce the size of the NNSC at once to a skeleton or nominal basis.”<sup>403</sup> In short, instead of resolving the NNSC-related dispute by taking immediate unilateral action, as recommended by military advisers and ROK officials, Washington decided to pursue negotiations, coordinated by the sixteen, neutrals, and the Communists.

### **A deterioration of UN collective security in Korea**

As an armistice neared in Korea, a major concern in Washington was how much UN allies would continue to contribute to the defense of Korea. During the Truman administration American policy was that the United States should “exert vigorous efforts to continue the contribution by UN members of forces” to the UNC so long as they were needed.<sup>404</sup> When the Eisenhower administration reviewed this policy in the spring of 1953, the wartime practice regarding U.S. logistic support of its allies became a central issue. This support had begun in September 1950, when the Department of Defense directed that the military departments should “make available necessary supplies and services on a basis of immediate reimbursement in U.S. dollars.” When the foreign government could not make prompt payment, the United States

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<sup>403</sup> Memorandum: Discussion at the 240th meeting of the NSC, Thursday, March 10, 1955, March 11, 1955 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 6 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>404</sup> The executive secretary, NSC 118/2: U.S. objectives and courses of action in Korea, December 20, 1951 in White House office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, 1952-61, NSC Series, Policy Papers Subseries, Box No. 2 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

should negotiate the terms of settlement with that government.<sup>405</sup> In reality, when foreign governments did not sign agreements to reimburse, the United States did not insist on payment. NSC Action No. 759-b confirmed this practice.<sup>406</sup>

The Eisenhower administration revised the practice during the last months of the Korean War. On May 19, 1953 Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., U.S. representative at the United Nations, wrote a letter to President Eisenhower proposing that the United States “start a renewed and vigorous campaign to get more troops from other members of the United Nations for service in Korea.” For this purpose, Lodge called for the Defense and State Departments to “revise policy decisions taken on this matter under the previous administration,” which had, in his view, “unrealistic requirements concerning provision by foreign governments of financial and logistic support.”<sup>407</sup> Lodge’s letter was circulated among NSC members on June 1. Soon the Bureau of the Budget, along with the Department of Defense, questioned any legal justification for changing U.S. policy. In a NSC meeting of July 2, Lodge’s proposal was addressed, with the president offering three reasons for support: financial advantage, reduction of U.S. manpower in Korea, and UN solidarity. The council approved a revision of the old reimbursement policy and directed a special committee to prepare a new formula with Ambassador Lodge’s assistance.<sup>408</sup>

The special committee forwarded its report to the NSC on July 17. A week later the NSC adopted a new formula regarding reimbursement for U.S. logistic support of other UN forces in Korea:

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<sup>405</sup> The NSC Planning Board, NSC 147: A report to the NSC on analysis of possible courses of action in Korea, April 2, 1953 in Geographic file 1951-53, 383.21 Korea (3-19-45) B. P. Pt. 7 to 600.0 Middle East (1-26-48) Sec. 7, Box No. 48, RG 218: Records of the U.S. JCS (College Park, MD.: NA).

<sup>406</sup> *FRUS, 1952-54, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 2, 1395.

<sup>407</sup> *FRUS, 1952-54, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 1, 1130-2.

<sup>408</sup> Memorandum: Discussion at the 152nd meeting of the NSC, Thursday, July 2, 1953, July 3, 1953 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 4 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

1. The United States desires to obtain and retain the maximum contributions of effective manpower from the nations allied with it in the effort of the United Nations to repel aggression in Korea.
2. In principle, each such nation should, to the extent that it is able, either equip and supply its own forces or pay for such military equipment, supplies and services as may be furnished to it by the United States
3. The overriding consideration, however, should be the maximum contribution of effective manpower. When any such nation is willing to contribute effective manpower but not able to provide for logistic support, the Department of Defense should furnish to such nation military equipment, supplies, and services; without requirement of payment to the extent that the Department of State, in consultation with the Department of Treasury and Defense, may determine such nation cannot be reasonably expected to pay.
4. A nation capable of contributing money beyond the support of any forces furnished by it, should be encouraged also to contribute toward the logistic support of the forces of other nations.
5. Except when the manpower furnished by any such nation is additional to forces already furnished by it, the contribution should be in effective military units as determined by the Department of Defense.<sup>409</sup>

In November 1953 the “new formula” was updated in NSC 170/1, which stated that the United States should “carry on a vigorous campaign to secure additional armed forces from other UN members for service in Korea in accordance with the existing formula, covering reimbursement of U.S. expenditures for such forces.”<sup>410</sup> As such, Washington’s initial desire after the signing of the armistice was to encourage other UN members to increase their contribution of manpower to the defense of the ROK.

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<sup>409</sup> Memorandum: Discussion at the 156th meeting of the NSC, Thursday, July 23, 1953, July 24, 1953 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 4 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL). The NSC Action No. 858-e also noted the president would request the Attorney General for a legal opinion.

<sup>410</sup> The executive secretary, NSC 170/1: U.S. objectives and courses of action In Korea, November 20, 1953 in White House Office: Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (OSANSA): Records, NSC Series, Policy Papers Subseries, Box No. 7 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

However, the perceived need for a rapid reduction in U.S. forces in Korea overshadowed the rationale for additional foreign troops. Already in December 1953 the NSC endorsed a plan to reduce UN forces in Korea initially to “approximately one army corps of three divisions, consisting of two U.S. and one composite UN division.”<sup>411</sup> Therefore, when the first progress report of NSC 170/1 appeared in March 1954, it recommended that the policy regarding additional UN forces in Korea should be reexamined in light of the “situation current at that time.” Faced with several events after the armistice – such as the withdrawal of the French battalion and the South African Air Force squadron, as well as the announcement of the U.S. intention to withdraw two U.S. divisions – the report admitted that the idea was not “practical.”<sup>412</sup> In the NSC meeting of April 6, it was agreed that, “at this time,” the United States should not press its allies into additional commitments to Korea.<sup>413</sup>

After the Geneva Conference a resumed withdrawal of U.S. forces triggered a drastic reduction of other UN forces in Korea. Immediately after Washington informed its UN allies of its redeployment schedule, the Commonwealth responded by presenting one of its own. Reduction of Commonwealth armed forces would be initiated “at the earliest possible moment” and generally in two phases. In phase A one Brigade Group from the Commonwealth Division would withdraw; in phase B the Commonwealth Division would shrink down to one Brigade Group by the end of 1954. Commonwealth naval and air forces also would be reduced. In a reply of September 3, Washington concurred in the plan with one reservation: despite its reduction to brigade strength, the First British Commonwealth Division should maintain its

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<sup>411</sup> Memorandum: Discussion at the 173rd meeting of the NSC, Thursday, December 3, 1953, December 4, 1953 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 5 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>412</sup> Progress report on NSC 170/1, March 31, 1954 in White House Office: Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (OSANSA): Records, NSC Series, Policy Papers Subseries, Box No. 7 (Abilene, KS: DDEL).

<sup>413</sup> Memorandum: discussion at the 192nd meeting of the NSC, Tuesday, April 6, 1954, April 7, 1954 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 5 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

designation with its own logistic support system under a coordinated redeployment schedule with the United States.<sup>414</sup> Other UN forces joined the flow of withdrawal from Korea. By the end of 1954, nearly two thirds of non-U.S., non-ROK UN forces had left or were leaving Korea. As a result, the second progress report of NSC 170/1 remarked that efforts to “secure additional armed forces from other UN members” were impractical “in view of the general military situation and the stepped-up withdrawal of U.S. forces.”<sup>415</sup>

By early 1955 the rapid reduction of UN forces had markedly changed the composition of the UNC in Korea. UN ground forces in Korea became one corps composed of two U.S. divisions, the 1<sup>st</sup> British Commonwealth Division, a Turkish Brigade, and troops from six other countries. As of the last week of March 1955, the corps consisted of 38,368 combat contingents from the United States, 5,345 from the Commonwealth, and 9,178 from other UN nations.<sup>416</sup>

### **Staging the “New Look” in East Asia**

Washington’s pursuit of its new defense strategy continued after the Geneva Conference. Despite internal debate over the viability of the massive retaliation strategy, the Eisenhower administration approved NSC 5501 early in 1955, with its stress on the need for unilateral use of nuclear weapons against local Communist aggression. The ongoing crises in East Asia were reaching another peak in the Taiwan Strait and Washington’s response to Communist assertiveness regarding the Chinese offshore islands demonstrated how nuclear weapons became

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<sup>414</sup> Report by the JSPC to the JCS on Reduction of Commonwealth Forces in Korea, JCS 1776/488, August 25, 1954; Memorandum for the representatives of the Australian, Canadian, New Zealand, and United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff: Reductions of Commonwealth Forces in Korea in Geographic File, 1954-56, 383.21 Korea (3-19-45) Sec. 155 to 383.21 Korea (3-19-45) (2) Sec. 1, Box No. 29, RG 218: Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff (College Park, MD.: NA).

<sup>415</sup> Progress report on NSC 170/1, December 30, 1954 in White House Office: Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (OSANSA): Records, NSC Series, Policy Papers Subseries, Box No. 7 (Abilene, KS: DDEL).

<sup>416</sup> Report by the JSPC to the JCS on Reduction of Commonwealth Forces in Korea, JCS 1776/528, March 24, 1955 in Geographic File, 1954-56, 383.21 Korea (3-19-45) (2) Sec. 2-6, Box No. 30, RG 218: Records of the U.S. JCS (College Park, MD.: NA).

an integral part of U.S. defense strategy. When Washington undertook a reassessment of the security problems of the ROK and East Asia during the offshore crisis, it found that, despite a declining presence of U.S./ UN forces in that area, the overall military posture, buttressed by improved indigenous forces and U.S. nuclear strength, was sound. The conclusion demonstrated how under the “New Look” policy the administration had shifted away from the previous stress on the Western alliance against local aggressions in East Asia.

Washington’s reemphasis on the “New Look” policy in East Asia goes back to the summer of 1954, when the refusal of U.S. allies to engage in joint military actions in Indochina was leading to the eventual “loss” of the Tonkin Delta. Although collective security remained a norm in U.S. thinking, the Indochina crisis taught the lesson that U.S. defense strategy needed to address the dangers of local Communist aggression in cases of limited support from allies. In August 1954 NSC 5422/2, an interim guidance paper for U.S. policy under NSC 162/2, stressed that the United States should be ready to defeat local aggressions “without necessarily initiating general war.” To achieve this objective the United States should “assist, with U.S. logistical support and if necessary with mobile U.S. forces, indigenous forces supplemented by support from UN or regional commitments.” Moreover, the United States must be “determined to take, unilaterally if necessary, whatever additional action its security requires, even to the extent of general war.”<sup>417</sup>

When the administration contemplated a new basic national security policy for the rest of 1954, an emphasis was placed upon the dangers of limited or piecemeal aggression described in NSC 5422/2. While Secretary Wilson sought recommendations from the JCS in November, General Ridgway’s position was singled out in his challenge to the basic assumption of the New

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<sup>417</sup> Trachtenberg, *The Development of American Strategic Thought*, 75.

Look strategy. Instead of retaliatory striking power as a major deterrent to aggression, Ridgway urged establishment of a balanced and flexible military structure. After Ridgway's view was circulated in a NSC meeting in early December, however, President Eisenhower made clear his opposition to an overall increase of the armed forces by approving a lower manpower ceiling for FY 1956. On December 21, based on the previous debates over a new national security policy, the NSC discussed a draft of NSC 5440, endorsing a revision to be incorporated in NSC 5440/1. After amending NSC 5440/1 on January 5, 1955, the president approved the final version as NSC 5501 two days later.<sup>418</sup>

NSC 5501, which superseded NSC 162/2 and NSC 5422/2, singled out the growing peril of approaching nuclear plenty as the most serious challenge to U.S. Cold War strategy. Faced with the forthcoming condition of mutual deterrence, however, the Free World had the capacity to deter or defeat aggression. For this purpose the Free World had to maintain "sufficient conventional armed strength, including the capability of adequate and timely reinforcement, along with U.S. strategic nuclear striking power." Further, NSC 5501 stressed the "ability to apply force selectively and flexibly" in "maintaining the morale and will of the free world to resist aggression." In the context of allied fear of U.S. military actions against local Communist aggressions, the paper stated:

...As the fear of nuclear war grows, the United States and its allies must never allow themselves to get into the position where they must choose between (a) not responding to local aggression and (b) applying force in a way which our own people or our allies would consider entails undue risk of nuclear devastation.

However, the United States cannot afford to preclude itself from using nuclear weapons even in a local situation, if such use will bring the aggression to a swift and positive cessation, and if, on a balance of political and military consideration, such use will best advance U.S. security interests. In the last analysis, if

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<sup>418</sup> Watson, *History of the JCS*, Volume V, 48-52.

confronted by the choice of (a) acquiescing in Communist aggression or (b) taking measures risking either general war or loss of allied support, the United States must be prepared to take these risks if necessary for its security...<sup>419</sup>

Soon after NSC 5501 posited possible U.S. unilateral action against local Communist aggressions, the ongoing Far Eastern crisis provided a test site of the administration's will to implement the "New Look" in the face of diminishing allied support. In December 1954 NSC 5429/5 stated that, pending the ratification of the mutual defense treaty "covering Formosa and the Pescadores," the United States should "continue the existing unilateral arrangement to defend Formosa and the Pescadores," to the exclusion of the "Nationalist held off-shore islands." Washington would seek to preserve the "status quo of the Nationalist-held off-shore islands" through UN action. Although the United States should "provide to the Chinese Nationalist forces military equipment and training to assist them to defend such off-shore islands, using Formosa as a base," Washington would not commit U.S. forces "except as militarily desirable in the event of Chinese Communist attack on Formosa and the Pescadores."<sup>420</sup>

The U.S. position in NSC 5429/5 was reflected in NSC 5503, which superseded NSC 146/2 and was approved by the president on January 15, 1955. NSC 5503 designated Taiwan and the Pescadores "as a part of the Pacific off-shore chain" essential to U.S. security. It also stated that the United States should:

Seek to preserve, through United Nations action, the status quo of the GRC-held off-shore islands, and, without committing U.S. forces except as militarily desirable in the event of Chinese Communist attack on

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<sup>419</sup> Trachtenberg, *The Development of American Strategic Thought*, 107-8.

<sup>420</sup> NSC 5429/5: Current U.S. policy toward the Far East, December 22, 1954 in White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (OSANSA): Records, NSC Series, Policy Papers Subseries, Box No. 12 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

Formosa and the Pescadores, provide to the GRC forces military equipment and training to assist them to defend such off-shore islands, using Formosa as a base.<sup>421</sup>

However, Washington's caution did not last long before Beijing's aggressiveness in the New Year. On January 10 one hundred Communist aircraft undertook the severest bombing campaign on the Tachens since September 1954, inflicting heavy damage to Nationalist vessels in harbor. On January 18 several thousand Communist troops stormed Ichiang, an island eight miles northwest of the Tachens.<sup>422</sup> On January 21 the NSC agreed that "pending either evidence of de facto acquiescence by the Chinese Communists in the U.S. position regarding Formosa and the Pescadores or action by the United Nations restoring peace and security in the general area," the United States should:

- (1) Assist the Chinese Nationalists to withdraw from such offshore islands (including the Tachens) as may be mutually agreed with the Chinese Nationalists.
- (2) For the purpose of securing Formosa and the Pescadores against armed attack, assist the Chinese Nationalists to defend the Quemoy Islands and the Matsu Islands from Chinese Communist attacks so long as such attacks are presumptively made by the Chinese Communists as a prelude to attack upon Formosa and the Pescadores.

At the meeting, the NSC also agreed that President Eisenhower should request from the Congress "authority to use U.S. armed forces if necessary," which should include the "securing and protection of such related positions now in friendly hands."<sup>423</sup>

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<sup>421</sup> *FRUS, 1955-1957, China*, Volume II, 30-1.

<sup>422</sup> Condit, *History of the JCS: The JCS and National Policy 1955-1956*, Volume VI (Washington: Historical Office Joint Staff, 1992), 195-6; Betts, *Nuclear blackmail*, 54.

<sup>423</sup> Memorandum: Discussion at the 233rd meeting of the NSC, Friday, January 21, 1955, January 24, 1955 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 6 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

On January 23 Chiang accepted Washington's evacuation plan in a false calculation that the United States would publicly announce its defense commitment to Quemoy and Matsu. After securing Chiang's agreement, the president requested from Congress authority to use U.S. armed forces in the offshore crisis. The Joint Resolution on Defense of Formosa resolved

that the President of the United States be and he hereby is authorized to employ the Armed Forces of the United States as he deems necessary for the specific purpose of securing and protecting Formosa and the Pescadores against armed attack, this authority to include the securing and protection of such related territories of that area now in friendly hands and the taking of such other measures as he judges to be required or appropriate in assuring the defense of Formosa and the Pescadores. This resolution shall expire when the President shall determine that the peace and security of the area is reasonably assured by international conditions created by actions of the United Nations, or otherwise, and shall so report to the Congress.

The House of Representatives passed the resolution by a vote of 409 to 3 on January 25 and the Senate followed two days later by 85-3.<sup>424</sup> On February 4 the ROC government made a formal request for U.S. assistance in evacuation of the Tachens. From February 7 to 12, 14,000 troops and 14,500 civilians left the islands along with 4,000 tons of equipment. The Communists soon took over there. While the evacuation was under way, the Senate also ratified the U.S.-ROC mutual defense treaty by 65-6.<sup>425</sup>

A possibility of diplomatic settlement was remote. By January 26, 1955 the British government, together with New Zealand and the United States, urged the UN Security Council to convene in the presence of a PRC representative. On January 28 the Soviet Union made a separate request for a UN Security Council meeting to discuss U.S. "acts of aggression" against

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<sup>424</sup> DSB, February 7, 1955, 213.

<sup>425</sup> Condit, *History of the JCS*, Volume VI, 199-201.

the PRC, with its call for U.S. withdrawal from “Taiwan and other territories belonging to China.” On the next day the Security Council placed both proposals on the agenda and invited the PRC government to appear. However, Beijing declared that it would send a representative to the United Nations only after it expelled the “representative of the Chiang Kai-shek clique.” Infuriated by Beijing’s decline of the UN offer, Washington rejected Beijing’s and Moscow’s offers of separate talks. Meanwhile, the Commonwealth pressured for a voluntary withdrawal of the Chinese Nationalists from the off-shore islands. When Secretary Dulles met Chiang in Taipei on March 3, he did not even raise the issue.<sup>426</sup>

Meanwhile, in Washington the Eisenhower administration considered the need for atomic weapons in the event of U.S. military action in Quemoy or Matsu. As early as September 17, 1954, in a meeting with British Prime Minister Eden, Secretary Dulles commented on the need for nuclear weapons in the defense of the islands. After the evacuation of the Tachens, Washington’s militance did not conceal the possible “atomic” implication of its defense commitment to the islands from public eyes. On February 13, 1955 President Eisenhower approved Operation Teacup, a series of tests for the use of tactical nuclear weapons. In hopes of sending a warning to Beijing, the president directed that the tests should be announced in public.<sup>427</sup>

It was not until Secretary Dulles’ trip to Asia that Washington’s blueprint for U.S. military intervention in the offshore crisis was clearly conceptualized. In a March 10 NSC meeting, Secretary Dulles reported on his “appraisal of the situation” based upon that trip. The trip convinced Dulles that there was “at least an even chance” of the U.S. fighting in that area.

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<sup>426</sup> Accinelli, *Crisis and Commitment*, 200-10. Accinelli explains that the “ground” was not adequate to “plant the idea.” A special mission led by Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Robert Carney had arrived there to consult military aid and joint defense in the Taiwan area. Chiang was persistent that Quemoy and Matsu should be included to the agenda.

<sup>427</sup> Betts, *Nuclear blackmail*, 55, 59.

Under the circumstances, Dulles suggested that the United States “temporize regarding Formosa” until the Western European Union (WEU) pact was ratified.<sup>428</sup> Concerned about the general public’s ignorance of the serious situation, Dulles also stressed the need to educate American and world opinion “as to the necessity for the tactical use of atomic weapons.” Finally, he worried about low morale among the Chinese Nationalists. The secretary recommended “more adequate operational intelligence,” increased material support to Chiang to avert too early an intervention, and preparation for the use of atomic weapons.<sup>429</sup>

These proposals of March 10 had immediate effects on Washington officials. On the next day, in a conversation with the president, Dulles stressed again that any U.S. hostilities, particularly involving atomic missiles, should be avoided while the WEU situation was still unsettled. If a “meeting was held in Paris in May,” he suggested, the president could “do an educational job with the British and others.” The president agreed with Dulles’ suggestion, stating that this would be “one of the most important purposes of the meeting.”<sup>430</sup> Later in the afternoon, in a meeting with key advisers, including Dulles himself, the president remarked that U.S. intervention with conventional weapons might not be decisive. Therefore, the president assumed possible intervention with atomic weapons, but only as the last resort and after first advising U.S. allies. The president stressed that the United States should “avoid involvement

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<sup>428</sup> Memorandum: Discussion at the 240<sup>th</sup> meeting of the NSC, Thursday, March 10, 1955, March 11, 1955 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 6 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL). The conclusion of the Western European Union (WEU) pacts would restore full sovereignty of West Germany and accept its membership to the NATO. Eisenhower and Dulles did not want to disrupt the procedure by possible disengagement of its allies from U.S.-PRC military conflicts; Accinelli, *Crisis and commitment*, 212-3.

<sup>429</sup> Memorandum: Discussion at the 240<sup>th</sup> meeting of the NSC, Thursday, March 10, 1955, March 11, 1955 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 6 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>430</sup> *FRUS, 1955-1957, China*, Volume II, 355.

during the next sensitive weeks, because any U.S. direct involvement might critically damage us in Europe”<sup>431</sup>

Shortly thereafter, the Eisenhower administration took on the “educational” campaign to warn the public of the risk of war, including the use of atomic weapons. On March 15 an alarming message from intelligence sources amplified the need for an immediate nuclear threat to Beijing. According to CINCPAC the offshore islands would be the most vulnerable “during the next ten days” because Nationalist defenses were not yet ready.<sup>432</sup> On the same day Secretary Dulles announced a “doctrine of less-than-massive retaliation” by “small nuclear weapons against military targets.” Unlike in World War II, Dulles explained, the “new weapons” would bring victory on the battlefield “without harming civilians.” According to Dulles, it was up to Peiping whether the weapons would be fit into Communist attacks on Quemoy and Matsu.<sup>433</sup> The next day, the president answered a news reporter’s question about Dulles’ view by commenting that “in any combat where these things [some small tactical atomic weapons] can be used on strictly military targets and for strictly military purposes, I see no reason why they shouldn’t be used just exactly as you would use a bullet or anything else.”<sup>434</sup> Two days later, Vice President Nixon warned at a luncheon meeting in Chicago that “tactical atomic explosives are now conventional and will be used against targets of any aggressive force.”<sup>435</sup> Obviously, an

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<sup>431</sup> Ibid., 357-9. Betts comments that nuclear strikes were discussed “as a disagreeable last resort, but not as a phony diplomatic ploy.” Rather the timing of nuclear warfighting was seen “as a matter of diplomatic delicacy”; Betts, *Nuclear blackmail*, 54-59.

<sup>432</sup> Memorandum for the president, March 15, 1955, Ann Whitman File, International Series, Box No. 9 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL), as cited in Accinelli, *Crisis and Commitment*, 213.

<sup>433</sup> *New York Times*, March 16, 1955.

<sup>434</sup> President’s News Conference, March 16, 1955, *Public Papers of the Presidents: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1955*, 332.

<sup>435</sup> *New York Times*, March 18, 1955.

escalation of military tension in the Taiwan Strait since January 1955 was reaching a climax by mid-March.

While the U.S.-PRC confrontation over the offshore islands in early 1955 dominated the attention of high level officials in Washington, security problems of the ROK, mainly prompted by the scaling back of U.S./UN forces in Korea and Communist violation of the armistice, attracted attention as well. NSC 5514 stated that the United States should “continue the military involvement and thus the political interest of other nations in Korea” and persuade the other members of the UNC to “maintain at least minimum armed forces within the ROK.”<sup>436</sup> In a NSC meeting of March 10, 1955, Secretary Dulles questioned the “probable success” of the proposal. Dulles had had multiple encounters on the issue. The British were inclined to transfer remaining British forces from Korea to Malaya, where Britain faced “pressing problems;” Australia and New Zealand wanted to increase their own defense commitment to Southeast Asia; the Philippines also wanted to leave; and Thailand, lacking the insularity of the others, presented the strongest claim related to her defense at home. Admiral Radford replied that there was little military contribution of the listed nations to Korea “except for the Turks.” Still, the JCS chairman found a political problem related to some UN members’ representation of the UNC in matters such as the NNSC after their withdrawal. The president agreed with the chairman’s concern.<sup>437</sup>

With the subsequent quieting of the offshore crisis, concern with the UN force level in the ROK gained new high-level attention. On March 23 the Commonwealth requested JCS concurrence in the reduction of its forces in Korea to one battalion group starting about April 1.

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<sup>436</sup> NSC 5514: U.S. objectives and courses of action in Korea, February 25, 1955 in White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, 1952-61, NSC Series, Policy Papers Subseries, Box No. 15 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>437</sup> Memorandum: Discussion at the 240th meeting of the NSC, Thursday, March 10, 1955, March 11, 1955 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 6 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

The JCS reasoned that further reduction of UN forces would be considered by the Chinese Communists “as an indication of diminishing determination by the UN to resist further aggression in the Far East.” In light of the “current situation in Formosa and the off-shore islands,” the “psychological [importance] of such an interpretation” was “potentially hazardous” since it could bolster rather than discourage the Chinese Communists unless they were redeployed to other areas threatened by them. The JCS replied to the Commonwealth that on the ground of adequate representation in UN forces, a sizable loss to the UN residual corps, and a need for more study regarding further withdrawal, the Commonwealth should reconsider its proposal.<sup>438</sup>

The offshore crisis prompted military advisers to resist further deterioration of the UNC on the ground. Originally NSC 5514 assumed that U.S. courses of action would be “subject to review” in the event that the United States became engaged in “hostilities in the Formosa strait or elsewhere in Asia outside Korea.” If Communist forces renewed hostilities in Korea, according to NSC 5514, the United States would:

- a. Implement the U.S.-ROK mutual defense treaty.
- b. Invoke the Joint Policy Declaration by calling upon the signatories to carry out the commitment that “if there is a renewal of the armed attack, challenging again the principles of the United Nations, we should again be united and prompt to resist. 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.”
- c. Make clear to the world the necessity of expanding the war to China by air and naval action as the only feasible way of honoring our collective security commitments to the ROK.

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<sup>438</sup> Report by the JSPC to the JCS on Reduction of Commonwealth Forces in Korea, JCS 1776/528, March 24, 1955 in Geographic File, 1954-56, 383.21 Korea (3-19-45) (2) Sec. 2-6, Box No. 30, RG 218: Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff (College Park, MD.: NA).

- d. Implement the military and diplomatic measures referred to in NSC Action No. 1004, January 8, 1954.
- e. Call on other UN members for effective military assistance appropriate to the expanded war against China.<sup>439</sup>

Among measures listed in NSC 5514, military advisers' biggest concern was the effectiveness of the "Joint Policy Declaration" after withdrawal of some UNC forces from Korea. On March 22 Secretary Wilson requested JCS views on "improvement of military situation in the Far East in the light of the situation now existing in the Formosa area." In April the JCS warned Wilson that the "continuing deterioration in the overall strength of UN forces in Korea" had reduced their capability to "react promptly" according to "16 nations declarations" in the event of Communist resumption of hostilities in Korea.<sup>440</sup>

In addition to the efficacy of the "joint Policy Declaration," the memorandum also pointed to the relative strength of ROK forces vis-à-vis UN forces, which might disrupt U.S. operational control of the UNC. They pointed out that the reduction of UN forces was causing a "great disparity in the strength of the UN forces as compared with the ROK forces." As a result, the JCS worried, the ROK would insist on a "greater voice in the direction of military operations" if a war in the Taiwan Strait should expand to Korea. In conclusion, the JCS recommended that "every effort should be made" to "persuade other UN members to retain their present forces in Korea." At the same time they proposed that in the "inequitable situation

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<sup>439</sup> NSC 5514: U.S. objectives and courses of action in Korea, February 25, 1955 in White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, 1952-61, NSC Series, Policy Papers Subseries, Box No. 15 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>440</sup> Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, Measures to stop the deterioration of the overall strength of U.S./UN forces in the Far East, JCS 1776/530, April 21, 1955 in Geographic File, 1954-56, 383.21 Korea (3-19-45) (2) Sec. 2-6, Box No. 30, RG 218: Records of the U.S. JCS (College Park, MD.: NA).

wherein UN members had small or no forces in Korea” they still “have equal voice in carrying out the armistice agreement,” whereas the ROK had “no official voice in such matters.”<sup>441</sup>

In spite of these recommendations, at the top level discussion of late April Washington policymakers did not treat military problems regarding deteriorating UN military strength as a primary subject. UNC General Hull briefed the NSC on April 21, starting with an overview of the military situation in the Far East. Hull noted a considerable reduction of Communist forces in North Korea since the armistice. He estimated that the total of the opposing forces in the North was around 780,000 and that they appeared to be deployed in defensive positions. In the South the UNC forces, including the ROK, had 730,000 men. The general mentioned “with pride” the development and capabilities of the ROK forces, although highest ranking ROK officers were very young and inexperienced in handling large forces in the field. By contrast, Hull did not conceal his regrets about the poor military performance of the Japanese, which he considered as “our greatest military problem in the Far East.”<sup>442</sup>

Regarding U.S. strength in Korea and in the Far East generally, President Eisenhower and General Hull expressed different opinions. Hull described U.S. strength as approximately “what it was in June 1950, prior to the outbreak of the Korean War.” Eisenhower disagreed, pointing to the substantial improvement of indigenous forces in the Far East, such as what General Hull called the “quality of the ROK forces,” the “good capabilities for the Chinese forces on Formosa,” and the “developing strength of Japan’s forces.” The president thus concluded that the

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<sup>441</sup> Ibid.

<sup>442</sup> Memorandum: Discussion at the 245th meeting of the NSC, Thursday, April 21, 1955, April 22, 1955 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 6 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

“total picture was actually much brighter than it had been in June 1950.” The general did not oppose the view of his commander-in-chief.<sup>443</sup>

This conversation illustrates how the basic concept of the New Look had helped shift the overall strategic focus of U.S. military strategy away from collective security through the United Nations. When the Eisenhower administration was revising U.S. strategy in Korea in mid-1953, it recognized the possibility that the unilateral use of nuclear weapons by the United States and a bilateral alliance with the ROK might prove detrimental to the principle of UN collective security. Washington policymakers did not welcome the prospect of a decline of allied commitment to the UNC, and they also perceived political problems stemming from a debilitated UNC. From a military standpoint, however, the international characteristic of the UNC was no longer central to U.S. defense of the Far East. In fact, U.S. freedom to act unilaterally in nuclear strategy, reaffirmed by NSC 5501, could undermine the "Joint Policy Statement," even to the point of overt resistance by U.S. allies to the use of atomic weapons after a resumption of hostilities in Korea.

At the same time, the low priority of U.S. conventional forces in the "New Look" strategy accounts for further reliance on the indigenous forces of allies against local aggressions. Although NSC 5501 specified the need for stronger conventional forces, Watson notes, President Eisenhower's decisions regarding budgets and force levels for FY 1956 virtually nullified the efficacy of such a statement. When the president approved a new ceiling on manpower in December 1954, he believed that U.S. forces had finally reached the level the administration had sought. For the rest of Eisenhower's presidency, the U.S. force level would change little. With the limited availability of U.S. manpower, the role of U.S. allies in local defense increased. As

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<sup>443</sup> Ibid.

Assistant Secretary of State Robertson once remarked, the United States was supporting one million eight hundred thousand non-communist Asian troops by the mid-1950s.<sup>444</sup> The maintenance of large numbers of foreign troops by U.S. taxpayers was justified with the cost-saving effect of replacing U.S. personnel with Asian manpower. General Van Fleet once estimated that the United States could establish and maintain 25 Asian divisions “for the same amount of money that one American division costs.”<sup>445</sup>

Therefore, the employment of indigenous forces, backed up by the timely use of U.S. atomic weapons, if necessary unilaterally as NSC 5501 directed, would assure the security of the ROK. Ironically, while American policymakers resisted calls by allies for the further reduction of UN forces in Korea, they were also tempted to reorient the U.S. defense posture in a direction that was the least acceptable to the ROK government. In the NSC meeting of April 21, President Eisenhower concurred with General Hull’s recommendation that the “remaining two U.S. divisions in Korea should be redeployed to Japan, leaving only token U.S. forces in Korea.”<sup>446</sup> Concerned about defense spending and dubious about the viability of long-term U.S. occupations of foreign lands, Eisenhower’s agreement, nonetheless, represented a hope for the future rather than a policy decision. In the end the Eisenhower administration stopped short of moving in this direction, but the conversation suggests that, at the time, the administration was willing to consider further marginalization of the UNC in Korean operations.

From the start of 1955 onwards, the “New Look” strategy was most likely to be implemented over defense of the small offshore islands scattered in the Taiwan Strait. By the

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<sup>444</sup> *FRUS, 1955-1957, Korea*, Volume XXIII, Part 2, 475-7.

<sup>445</sup> Syngman Rhee letter to President Eisenhower, transmitted through Ambassador You Chan Yang, March 11, 1954 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>446</sup> Memorandum: Discussion at the 245th meeting of the NSC, Thursday, April 21, 1955, April 22, 1955 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 6 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

time of General Hull's presentation to the NSC, to be sure, the heated rhetoric and military posturing over control of the islands was dying down. By the end of March, the administration's nuclear rhetoric had backfired with both U.S. domestic opinion and key elements of the international community. At home the rising war scare began to erode earlier support for U.S. military action. Abroad, the Commonwealth's long-standing opposition to a U.S. defense commitment to the off-shore islands was alienating allies. Most significantly, even President Eisenhower did not claim that, from a military standpoint, the small islands merited the risk of an all-out war with the PRC. Neither did he think that the islands were defensible indefinitely even with the use of nuclear weapons. Unwilling to make Quemoy and Matsu another "Dien Bien Phu," on April 20, 1955 the administration sent Admiral Radford and Assistant Secretary Robertson to Taipei in order to induce Chiang's voluntary withdrawal from the islands. Not surprisingly the Generalissimo refused the proposal. Yet on April 23, 1955, at the historic conference of Asian-African nations in Bandung, Indonesia, Zhou En-lai announced that Beijing was willing to start direct talks with Washington to "relax tensions in the Far East and especially in the Taiwan area." When Washington agreed with Zhou's offer, the first Taiwan Strait crisis was virtually over. Bilateral talks began at an ambassadorial level at Geneva in August 1955. Nonetheless, by early 1956 the talks had deadlocked, mainly over the issues of returning civilian detainees and the principle of renunciation of force in the Taiwan area. The Taiwan Strait and more broadly the Far East remained a potential source of further military conflicts engaging the United States and its allies against the PRC.<sup>447</sup>

As for the UNC, U.S. opposition to further reduction of its forces in Korea was losing ground in light of Beijing's defusing of military pressure in East Asia after the summer of 1955.

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<sup>447</sup> Accinelli, *Crisis and Commitment*, 217-229, 242-3.

Despite the U.S. veto of a withdrawal plan on April 29, 1955, Commonwealth members in the UNC informed the United States that they would not alter their overall course regarding Korea. Eventually they gave up their original plans to retain only a battalion group in Korea, promising instead to “retain a Brigade Headquarters with a force of all arms under command, including one infantry battalion.” By the end of September, both the State and Defense Departments had agreed that no further discussion would be necessary against the Commonwealth proposal.<sup>448</sup>

### **Japan’s “middle path” during the East Asian crises**

The escalation of the Cold War in East Asia steadily increased the security risk to Japan. Soviet armed forces stormed over Japan’s northern flanks in August 1945, and there they stayed. Four years later Communist revolutionaries took over mainland China and then established a united front against Japan and its allies in the Sino-Soviet treaty of February 1950. The Korean War set the tone of the U.S.-Japan security treaty of 1951, in which Japan accepted U.S. rights to use bases in Japan for UN operations. By the spring of 1953, the prospect of an expanded war exposed Japan to the risk of retaliatory action from the Communist powers, which had been excluded from the San Francisco peace treaty in September 1951. Since U.S.-PRC military confrontation extended to areas beyond the Korean peninsula, the risk did not abate following the July 1953 armistice.

After Prime Minister Yoshida resigned in December 1954, the new cabinet in Tokyo took several initiatives to seek reduction of Japan’s vulnerability to Communist neighbors. First, the Hatoyama government sought a revision of the 1951 security treaty, especially with respect to U.S. bases in Japan. Second, when Washington vetoed Tokyo’s overture for treaty revision,

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<sup>448</sup> *FRUS, 1955-57, Korea*, Volume XXIII, 162.

Japan successfully resisted the introduction of nuclear-capable weapons to U.S. bases in Japan. Finally, after nearly two years of negotiations, the Japanese government succeeded in closing the technical status of war with the Soviet Union. Taken together, Tokyo's initiatives in the mid-1950s arguably offered a measure of relief to Japan's security risk at the crossroad of the Cold War; they also posed new problems for the Eisenhower administration's drive for the "New Look" in East Asia, especially regarding deployment of atomic weapons in overseas bases.

The basic framework of Japan's security policy after World War II took shape as early as 1947, when a U.S.-Soviet split in East Asia brought the prospect of a separate peace treaty with the United States. In September Foreign Minister Ashida Hitoshi presented a memorandum to the United States. On the assumption that the Japanese government could "suppress any internal riots or disorders," the memorandum called for a "special agreement with the United States against external aggression by a third power."<sup>449</sup> Doubtless the Ashida memorandum reflected Tokyo's fear of the expansion of the Soviet Union in East Asia once it was excluded from the peace treaty. Instead of proposing Japan's rearmament to defend Japan from Soviet attacks, the Ashida memorandum called for U.S. forces to be stationed in the "areas adjacent to Japan," which meant the Ryukyu and Bonin islands. Further, in an emergency the United States could use bases in Japan. From then on the Ashida memorandum set a basis for Japan's national security policy. With the "partial exception" of Prime Minister Ichiro Hatoyama, Weinstein explains, conservative prime ministers and cabinets in Tokyo acted on the assumption of the Ashida memorandum that the Soviet Union was the principal external threat to Japan's security.<sup>450</sup>

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<sup>449</sup> Yoshida Shigeru, *Kaizo Junen*, II, 114, as cited in Weinstein, *Japan's Postwar Defense Policy*, 24-5.

<sup>450</sup> *Ibid.*, 40-2.

With the “partial exception” of the Hatoyama cabinet (December 1954 ~ December 1956), widespread U.S.-PRC military tension in the Far East since the Korean War provides a vital clue. Although Tokyo understood that, because of anti-Japanese feelings among Koreans, Japanese troops could not participate in UN operations in Korea, such operations required Japanese bases for support facilities and logistic needs. When the United States and Japan entered into a formal bilateral security bond on September 8, 1951, Secretary of State Acheson exchanged notes with Prime Minister Yoshida. Yoshida confirmed that,

... if and when the forces of a member or members of the United Nations are engaged in any United Nations action in the Far East after the Treaty of Peace comes into force, Japan will permit and facilitate the support in and about Japan, by the member or members, of the forces engaged in such United Nations action...<sup>451</sup>

By the exchange of notes, Japan agreed that U.S. bases in Japan would continue to support UN operations in Korea even after the end of hostilities, so long as the UNC needed those bases.<sup>452</sup>

However, critics of the treaty fumed at Tokyo's decision to grant military bases to the United States without its explicit guarantee of Japan's security from external attack. In light of ongoing military tensions in the East Asia, a U.S. security guarantee was the only protection for a demilitarized Japan against the Communist powers.<sup>453</sup> Under the Acheson-Yoshida notes, Japan's security position was at the mercy of Washington's military planning for an expanded

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<sup>451</sup> DSB, September 17, 1951, 465.

<sup>452</sup> Weinstein, *Japan's Postwar Defense Policy*, 50-2. In Yoshida's view the bilateral security treaty could be de facto U.S. guarantee of Japan's external security by granting to the United States approximately more than six hundred bases in Japan after the end of U.S. occupation. Such an arrangement in the security treaty reflected the wide gap of opinions existing between Washington and Tokyo at the sign of the treaty. So long as Tokyo remained resistant to U.S. demand for Japan's commitment to large-scale rearmament and regional defense arrangements, Washington was not in a mood to accept mutual, cooperative defense arrangement and the explicit guarantee of Japan's external security envisioned by the Ashida memorandum. Therefore, Yoshida believed that the presence of U.S. forces in more than six hundred bases in Japan could be loophole of U.S. defense of Japan without U.S. agreement with Japan's basic defense policy; *ibid.*, 62-3, 67-8.

<sup>453</sup> *Ibid.*, 68-9.

war in the last months of the fighting in Korea. The Sino-Soviet treaty of February 1950 obligated the Soviets “to carry out jointly all necessary measures within their power to prevent a repetition of aggression and breach of the peace by Japan or any other state which might directly or indirectly join with Japan in acts of aggression.” Had the PRC been “attacked by Japan or by States allied with Japan” and found itself “in a state of war,” the Soviet Union would “immediately extend military and other assistance with all the means at its disposal.”<sup>454</sup> Thus attacks on China from Japan by the U.S.-led UNC might lead the Soviet Union to turn its military power against the Japanese homeland.<sup>455</sup>

When President Eisenhower and his advisers discussed the plan for an expanded war to China, they did not rule out the possibility that Japan would fall victim to Soviet retaliatory measures. Moscow and Beijing still remained *de jure belligerents* against Tokyo. Soviet retaliation could have devastated the heartland of the U.S. defense perimeter in the Pacific simply by renewing hostilities against the designated adversary of the two Communist powers. In a NSC meeting of May 20, 1953, President Eisenhower specifically remarked that “his one great anxiety” was the possible Soviet air attacks on the “almost defenseless population centers of Japan.” According to the president, it was “always in the back of his mind.”<sup>456</sup>

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<sup>454</sup> “Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the People’s Republic of China” in *United Nations Treaty Series: Treaties and international agreements registered or filed and recorded with the Secretariat of the United Nations* (Volume 226, 1956, I. Nos. 3103-3126), 3-20.

<sup>455</sup> U.S. obligation to the defense of Japan faced a serious challenge in late 1952, when the Soviet Union intentionally violated Japan’s air space. In the second half of 1952, MIG-15s operating from Sakhalin and the southern Kurile Islands violated Japan’s air territory nearly fifty times for reconnaissance. U.S. forces in Hokkaido, as well as the Japanese police, detected and reported the Soviet intrusions. Without announcing the case in public, CINCPAC General Clark increased U.S. air strength in Hokkaido. It was only after some MIG fights were intercepted that the Soviet reconnaissance activities suddenly stopped. To forestall further Soviet intrusions, Japanese Foreign Minister Katsuo Okazaki and U.S. Ambassador Robert Murphy exchanged notes on air defense. After issuing a warning message, General Clark publicly announced air patrol activities against further intrusion. After General Clark’s warning one intended MIG-15 transgression was intercepted. The incident marked the end of the Soviet intrusion into Hokkaido. The incident alarmed Tokyo with possible Soviet military actions by air against Japan, but Tokyo also interpreted the Soviet MIG incident and the exchange of notes on air defense as evidence of the U.S. security guarantee of Japan; Weinstein, *Japan’s Postwar Defense Policy*, 70-4.

<sup>456</sup> Memorandum at the 145th meeting of the NSC on Wednesday, May 20, 1953, May 23, 1953 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 4 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

Despite the cease-fire in Korea, Japan's weak security position remained a major problem to U.S. planners preoccupied with the possibility of a resumption of hostilities in Korea. As I explained in Chapter 2, in a NSC meeting of December 3, 1953, Secretary Dulles called Japan's reliability into question: there was "grave question," he observed, as to whether "Japan would permit the United States to use Japanese bases" if Japan might be exposed to direct Soviet attack.<sup>457</sup> In March 1954 a special national intelligence estimate also warned that, even when the United States confined its strategic objective only to a Communist defeat in North Korea, the Communist Air Force in China (CAFIC) might initiate air strikes on Japan. The paper saw "some slight chance" that the Soviet Union might "even provide atomic weapons with delivery units to CAFIC."<sup>458</sup>

From Tokyo's standpoint Japan's security risk linked to the U.S.-PRC military confrontation in East Asia could be largely resolved if the United States and the PRC reached a peace settlement in the Korean political conference at Geneva. After the Korean political conference failed, however, indefinite extension of crises in East Asia convinced Japanese leaders to embark on their own initiatives to get Japan out of this security dilemma. First, U.S. freedom of action in Japan had to be accommodated to Japan's call for reduced security risk. Second, Japan's diplomatic relationship with the two Communist neighbors had to be improved to forestall the possible extension of hostilities to Japan. Tokyo's diplomatic initiatives after Yoshida left office were motivated in part by economic concerns, but the security dimension was also fundamental.

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<sup>457</sup> Memorandum: Discussion at the 173rd meeting of the NSC, Thursday, December 3, 1953, December 4, 1953 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 5 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>458</sup> *FRUS, 1952-1954, Korea*, Volume XV, Part 2, 1760-61.

The Hatoyama government, especially new Foreign Minister Shigemitsu Mamoru, anticipated a revision of the Yoshida-Dulles treaty of 1951 to limit U.S. freedom of action in Japan. Faced with the adamant opposition of Secretary Dulles, however, Japan's new leadership withdrew its original plan. Not only did the secretary abhor the idea of foregoing its "right to maintain forces and bases in Japan" and consulting Japan with regard to U.S. military actions. He shared Ambassador Allison's resentment of Tokyo's use of its move toward the Communist bloc as leverage to pressure Washington's agreement to treaty revision.<sup>459</sup> Dulles even refused to meet Shigemitsu in April 1955, when the foreign minister asked to visit Washington before meeting with the Soviets.<sup>460</sup> It was only after the Tokyo-Moscow talks pointed toward possible reconciliation that Dulles agreed to meet with him.

Shigemitsu's visit to Washington in August satisfied neither Washington nor Tokyo. From Washington's perspective, the talks confirmed that the post-Yoshida Japanese government was still ill-disposed toward becoming a chief military partner of the United States in East Asia. When Shigemitsu visited Washington between August 29 and 31, Dulles reiterated his contention that Japan must rearm to a level of self-defense against a Soviet invasion and take responsibility for regional security to be eligible for mutuality in a new security treaty. Shigemitsu assured U.S. military advisers that by 1958 Japan would be able to increase ground forces closer to the level of Washington's expectations: 200,000 well-equipped men. The Japanese foreign minister also agreed with Dulles in a joint communiqué that Japan could "contribute to the preservation of international peace and security in the Western Pacific." When

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<sup>459</sup> Until Japan ended its pursuit of improvement of relations with the bloc in 1958, President Eisenhower and Secretary Dulles refused to enter into renegotiation of the bilateral security treaty; Schaller, *Altered States*, 113-6.

<sup>460</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

these conditions were fulfilled, they concluded, it would be “appropriate to replace the present security treaty with one of greater mutuality.”<sup>461</sup>

Despite Shigemitsu’s conciliatory attitude, the immediate backlash in Tokyo taught Washington that Japan’s increased role in regional security was premature. The Socialists, as well as a large number of Liberals and Democrats, protested that the communique violated the Peace Constitution. Shigemitsu was forced to clarify that the “Japanese government had not undertaken any commitment, military or otherwise, in the Western Pacific.” As a result, voices for revision of the security treaty subsided within the Hatoyama government.<sup>462</sup> Although the security atmosphere had already changed in East Asia, a mutual understanding of the bilateral security treaty of 1951 remained the norm during the Hatoyama government.

Yet with respect to U.S. bases in Japan, the Hatoyama government succeeded in establishing the firm principle of banning nuclear weapons. In December 1954, when nuclear weapons and nuclear-capable air carriers were first deployed in Okinawa and the Taiwan Strait, the Eisenhower administration also decided to transfer non-nuclear components to U.S. bases in Japan. The main purpose was to have U.S. bases in Japan ready for nuclear operations against Communist China or the Soviet Union in the event of general war.<sup>463</sup> With the nuclear fissile cores removed, U.S. nuclear weapons were stored at Misawa and Itazuki airbases. In Sasebo and Yokosuka, U.S. Navy ships harbored with nuclear arms but a legal inch away from Japanese territory.<sup>464</sup>

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<sup>461</sup> DSB, September 12, 1955, 419.

<sup>462</sup> *Asahi Shimbun*, September 15, 1955. *Boei Nenkan*, 1956, 146, as cited in Weinstein, *Japan’s Postwar Defense Policy*, 78-80.

<sup>463</sup> Norris, Arkin, and Burr, “Where they were: How much did Japan know?,” 30.

<sup>464</sup> *Ibid.*, 12. The authors also suspect that airbases at Atsugi, Iwakuni, Johnson, and Komaki stored nuclear weapons.

The Eisenhower administration's nuclear planning in East Asia encountered strong resistance from the Hatoyama government. On March 25, 1955 General Hull informed Foreign Minister Shigemitsu of U.S. planning to equip U.S. forces in Japan with Honest John dual-capable weapons. He also explained that the United States would not bring atomic weapons to Japan "except in a war emergency."<sup>465</sup> In subsequent discussions the Hatoyama government expressed opposition to the introduction of dual-capable weapons, arguing that public opinion would go against the United States and the security arrangements. Eventually Tokyo and Washington reached agreement on the exclusion of atomic warheads except when required by a deterioration of the international situation.<sup>466</sup>

As the Hatoyama government foresaw, the introduction of Honest Johns escalated Japan's anti-nuclear sentiment, which already had been stirred by the *Lucky Dragon* incident. On July 28, 1955 Washington officially announced that the U.S. Army was deploying atomic cannons to Okinawa and was also planning to equip U.S. forces in Japan with Honest John dual-capable weapons.<sup>467</sup> In the next two days, Hatoyama and Shigemitsu explained to the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Councilors that the United States had already agreed to consult with Japan before the deployment of nuclear weapons, and that there was "no present need" for them except in an emergency.<sup>468</sup> On August 20, when the Honest Johns finally arrived in Japan, the U.S. government did not comment on atomic warheads. Despite Hatoyama and Shigemitsu's clarification, the Socialist and Communist parties did not cease their rallies against

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<sup>465</sup> *The Mainichi*, July 31, 1955. UP dispatch, as cited in Weinstein, *Japan's Postwar Defense Policy*, 81.

<sup>466</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>467</sup> *The Mainichi*, July 29, 1955. AP dispatch, as cited in Weinstein, *Japan's Postwar Defense Policy*, 80.

<sup>468</sup> *Asahi Shimbun*, July 30, 1955. *Boei Nenkan*, 1956, 177-8, as cited in Weinstein, *Japan's Postwar Defense Policy*, 81.

the dual-capable weapons into the spring of 1956. In fact, anti-nuclear public uproar factored in Washington's conclusion that the U.S. bases in Japan should remain conventional.<sup>469</sup>

Meanwhile, Tokyo and Moscow terminated the technical status of war between Japan and the Soviet Union. By restoring diplomatic relations with Moscow, Tokyo also obtained room to maneuver within the context of Sino-Soviet hostility toward the U.S.-Japan alliance. Between 1953 and 1954, new Communist bloc leadership had paved the way for reorienting Japan's policy toward its giant neighbors. Only one month after the death of Stalin, Washington detected evidence of a "peace offensive" arising from the Kremlin. CIA Director Allen Dulles reported to the NSC the "most significant" changes in the Kremlin's internal and external policies since 1939, moves that came much sooner "than the CIA had expected."<sup>470</sup> Five months later Ambassador to the Soviet Union Bohlen reported to U.S. diplomats in Eastern Europe that the Soviet Union had "entered a new phase with unforeseeable results."<sup>471</sup>

In Washington the administration's initial interests in the Communists' "peace offensive" did not last long. In April 1953 President Eisenhower addressed his anticipation to distinguish new Soviet leaders from Stalin and begin negotiations in the field of "universal disarmament." Five months later, in the aftermath of the Soviet thermonuclear shock, Secretary Dulles proposed to the president negotiations for a U.S.-Soviet withdrawal from Europe and arms control. President Eisenhower agreed with Dulles on the merits of relaxation of world tension. However, Gaddis notes, "neither the president, the secretary of state, nor anyone else in the administration" further considered the idea. Before the end of the year, Dulles stiffened his mind and expressed

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<sup>469</sup> Ibid., 81-3.

<sup>470</sup> Memorandum: Discussion at the 139th meeting of the NSC on Wednesday, April 8, 1953, April 16, 1953 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 4 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>471</sup> *FRUS, 1952-54, Eastern Europe; Soviet Union; Eastern Mediterranean*, Volume VIII, 96.

pessimism to the president by stating that talks with Russians would produce little.<sup>472</sup> In December, when Eisenhower and Dulles met with British and French leaders in Bermuda, Eisenhower answered with skepticism Prime Minister Churchill's "supreme" question about a "new Soviet look." Using old-style analogy, the president explained that the "same old girl" in the Kremlin had not changed its objective of "destroying the capitalist free world by all means" under a new "dress."<sup>473</sup>

However, the Soviet "peace offensive" did not lose its allure in the coming years. In response to the UN Resolution of November 28, 1953 in reference to establishment of a subcommittee in the Disarmament Commission, on December 8, 1953, President Eisenhower made a historically significant address to the UN General Assembly. In his "Atomic power for peace" address, the president proposed that the "governments principally involved" should contribute jointly to an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) under the UN aegis to "serve the needs rather than the fears of mankind." The president specified at the end of his proposal that the Soviet government must be "principally involved."<sup>474</sup>

On New Year's Day 1954, Soviet Prime Minister Malenkov announced that there were "no objective obstacles" to an "improvement in relations between the Soviet Union and the United States" and to the "strengthening of the traditional ties of friendship between the peoples of our countries." Malenkov stressed the need for disarmament of the two superpowers. A relaxation of tensions made sense, he declared, in the context of Soviet efforts to ameliorate

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<sup>472</sup> Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 188-90.

<sup>473</sup> *FRUS, 1952-54, Western European Security*, Volume V, Part 2, 1758-61.

<sup>474</sup> DSB, December 21, 1953, 850-1.

domestic living conditions.<sup>475</sup> In the spring of 1954, Malenkov reiterated his eagerness for a relaxation of international tensions, stressing that the Soviet government stood for the “peaceful economic competition of the Soviet Union with all capitalist countries, including, of course, the United States.”<sup>476</sup>

Beijing leaders followed Moscow in the “peace offensive.” In June 1953 Chinese Foreign Minister Zhou pointed out at a meeting of the foreign ministry that the PRC should advocate settlement of all international disputes “through peaceful consultation and negotiation,” leaving the other side solely insistent in the “use of force or hostility in resolving conflicts.”<sup>477</sup> The PRC’s stress on “peaceful coexistence” earned international acclaim at the Geneva Conference. On April 28, 1954 Zhou introduced the “five principles of peaceful coexistence” to the world. Countering the U.S. image of the PRC as an aggressor, Zhou pledged that the PRC would not “invade other countries” in the future and would “respect the rights of the peoples of other countries to choose and safeguard their own way of life and state system and to be free of foreign intervention.” In turn, Zhou noted, the PRC “would require that other countries adopt the same attitude toward us.”<sup>478</sup>

With U.S.-PRC hostilities continuing to spread in East Asia, Washington was unlikely to react positively to the Communist “peace offensive.” Dulles’ view manifested during the Geneva Conference in his refusal to shake hands with Zhou. After the loss of North Vietnam at Geneva

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<sup>475</sup> Replies by Malenkov to an American journalist, January 1, 1954, in Denise Foliot, ed., *Documents on International Affairs, 1954* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), as cited in Melvyn P. Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind: the United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007), 138.

<sup>476</sup> *U.S. News & World Report*, March 26, 1954, 125-8; *Current History* (26, June 1954), 372-3, as cited in Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind*, 147.

<sup>477</sup> Speech, Zhou Enlai, at the meeting of foreign ministry, June 5, Zhou Enlai Waijiao Wenxuan [Selected works on Diplomacy of Zhou Enlai] (Beijing: Central Archives and Manuscript Press, 1990), 61, as cited in Zhang, *Economic Cold War*, 142-3.

<sup>478</sup> Speech, Zhou Enlai, at the opening session of the Geneva Conference, April 28, 1954, Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Duiwai Guanxi Wenjianji [Collected Documents of the Foreign Relations of the PRC], 3; 1954-55 (Beijing: World Knowledge Press, 1958), 20-27, as cited in Zhang, *Economic Cold War*, 145.

and the opening of crisis over the offshore islands, the PRC propaganda of “peaceful coexistence” gained little ground in the administration’s discussion about overall East Asian policies. On August 18, 1954, when the NSC began a review of NSC 5429, Vice President Nixon implied that the United States might have a third course, not confined to “war or coexistence” in discussing China and the Soviet Union. President Eisenhower interrupted to ask Nixon’s meaning for “coexistence.” Nixon suggested that a “tough coexistence policy” might be the “best method of driving a wedge between China and the Soviet Russia.” The president responded that he would “stop using the word coexistence” because its meaning was unclear.<sup>479</sup>

By the end of 1954, basic national security policy confirmed that the fundamentals of the Soviet regime had not changed since the death of Stalin. NSC 5501 stated:

The emergence of increased flexibility in the conduct of Soviet foreign policy since the death of Stalin has introduced a significant new factor in the situation. The Soviet leaders have almost certainly regarded their “peace offensive” as their most effective present tactic for dividing the free world and isolating the U.S. from its allies... Whenever the Soviet “soft” line is dominant, our allies will be eager to explore it seriously, and will probably wish, in seeking a basis of “coexistence,” to go to further lengths than the U.S. will find prudent. Even if the USSR offers no real concessions, these tendencies will probably persist, supported by large segments of public opinion. It will be a major task, therefore, to maintain the necessary unity and resolution in the free world coalition whenever and wherever the Soviets press their “peace offensive.”

Despite the talk of “coexistence,” NSC 5501 warned, the Communist powers would continue to “weaken and disrupt free world strength and unity” and “expand the area of their control” mainly

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<sup>479</sup> Memorandum: Discussion at the 211th meeting of the NSC, Wednesday, August 18, 1954, August 19, 1954 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 6 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

by subversion, including the support of insurrection, without involving the “main sources of Communist power.”<sup>480</sup>

Washington observed with discomfort Communist “peace offensives” toward Japan from 1953 onward and Tokyo’s policy of rapprochement with the bloc in the post-Yoshida era. As early as the fall of 1953, Japan sensed the PRC’s new policy direction when Beijing scaled back its demand for Japan’s abandonment of its tie with Taipei as the absolute prerequisite for a new relationship. Zhou suggested that China and Japan could improve their cultural and commercial relations until a formal governmental relationship was established.<sup>481</sup> On December 10, 1954, soon after becoming prime minister, Hatoyama announced that “Japan desired, without prejudice to her cooperation with the Free World, to normalize relations with the Soviet Union and China on terms mutually acceptable.”<sup>482</sup> With the Taiwan Strait crisis on the verge of a new military escalation, the initiative startled Washington. Through diplomatic channels Washington pressured Tokyo into reconsidering its approach to Beijing. On the other hand, in light of the existing diplomatic relations between Washington and Moscow, the United States had little grounds to block Tokyo’s efforts to restore its tie with Moscow. Japan had various issues to settle with the Soviet Union: Japanese war prisoners of World War II, the Soviet veto of Japan’s UN membership, and Soviet occupation of the so-called northern territories – the four islands north of Hokkaido.<sup>483</sup> Above all, Japan needed to terminate the status of war with the Soviet Union, which had left Japan’s security in the shadow of Soviet air power, including nuclear weapons.

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<sup>480</sup> Trachtenberg, *The Development of American Strategic Thought*, 102-3.

<sup>481</sup> Shimizu, *Creating People of Plenty*, 67.

<sup>482</sup> Schaller, *Altered State*, 113-4.

<sup>483</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

In June 1955 Tokyo and Moscow entered into negotiations in London. The northern territories soon became a focal point. By the Yalta accords and the San Francisco treaty, Japan was forced to disclaim southern Sakhalin, the Kuriles, and other territories Japan had obtained before 1937. There was no agreement on whether the northern territories were part of the Kuriles. In August the head of the Soviet delegation, Jakov Malik, proposed the return of the Habomais and Shikotan as part of a comprehensive peace treaty. Internally, the Japanese government was split over the Soviet proposal: while Hatoyama was ready to reconcile with Malik's offer, Shigemitsu insisted on the return of all the islands, as well as the opening of an international conference with reference to the ownership of southern Sakhalin and the Kuriles.<sup>484</sup>

Meanwhile, Washington watched progress in the London talks with discomfort. Not only did the prospect of Tokyo-Moscow normalization overshadow Washington's call for Japan's military buildup; the Soviet return of some of the Kuriles might undermine the legitimacy of the U.S. presence in the Ryukyus. Secretary Dulles urged President Eisenhower that the United States should discourage a Japanese compromise with the Soviet Union on the Kuriles and refuse to renegotiate the security treaty. During the fall of 1955, Washington informed Tokyo that it would support Japan's position regarding repatriation of war prisoners and return of the two islands. However, Washington would not tolerate Japan's recognition of Soviet sovereignty over the Kuriles and southern Sakhalin.<sup>485</sup>

Eventually, Tokyo's position turned against the Soviet offer in the aftermath of domestic political earthquake. In October 1955 the Socialist factions merged to be the Japanese Socialist Party (JSP). Boasting the nationalistic spirit of a new party, the Socialists claimed all the islands in dispute, including the Kuriles and southern Sakhalin. To counter the Socialist coalition, the

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<sup>484</sup> Ibid., 114-7.

<sup>485</sup> Ibid., 116-20.

Conservatives formed the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in November. Faced with the Socialists' toughness, the LDP also agreed to demand all of the four islands. At the end of the year, Tokyo officially declined the Soviet offer.<sup>486</sup>

A potential breakthrough came in May, when Soviet Premier Nicolai Bulganin proposed to Tokyo a limited settlement excluding the question of the northern territories. When the news arrived in Washington, Secretary Dulles privately warned Japanese leaders against actions that might undermine the security treaty, including a move toward recognition of China. Although negotiations resumed in Moscow during the summer, Prime Minister Hatoyama acceded to U.S. pressure against a comprehensive settlement. In October the prime minister signed a limited agreement in Moscow that left the territorial dispute unresolved.<sup>487</sup>

Even so, the agreement included the repatriation of war prisoners, acknowledgement of Japan's fishing rights on coastal Siberia, and Moscow's support for Japan's admission to the United Nations. Most significantly, the agreement ended the state of war between the two countries and restored diplomatic ties at the ambassadorial level. Considering that Japan's security was under constant threat either by direct Soviet attack or the Soviet treaty obligation to the PRC, Hatoyama's diplomatic initiatives contributed to distancing Japan from the ongoing hostilities of the Cold War. Combined with Tokyo's effective resistance to U.S. introduction of nuclear warheads to U.S. bases in Japan, the Hatoyama government left an impressive legacy to its successors. From Washington's perspective, however, Japan's passivity in the face of U.S. active engagement in East Asian crises posed substantial problems for U.S. defense strategy in the region.

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<sup>486</sup> Ibid., 119-21.

<sup>487</sup> Ibid., 121-3.

## **The decline of anti-PRC unity in the economic field**

After the signing of the Korean armistice, the wartime coalition between the United States and some of its allies in East Asia underwent a period of transformation. Despite the end of fighting in Korea, U.S. direct or indirect involvement in the defense of Indochina and Taiwan expanded its commitment against the PRC. In light of ongoing tensions between Washington and Beijing, the United States wanted Communist China's war-making capabilities restricted through tight control of East-West trade. In contrast, U.S. allies in Europe and Japan were inclined to adjust their wartime hostilities against the PRC to a restored peacetime need for their own national - basically economic - interests. The eventual decline of the China embargo in the mid-1950s demonstrated that, in the absence of a vital strategic stake in the U.S.-PRC confrontation, U.S. allies would gradually distance themselves from Washington's policy line in East Asia.

During the Korean War UN economic sanctions against the PRC had derived legitimacy from UN Resolution 500 (V). The May 18, 1951 resolution recommended that every state should "apply an embargo on the shipment to areas under the control of the central people's government of the PRC and of North Korean authorities of arms, ammunition, and implements of war, atomic energy materials, petroleum, transportation materials of strategic value, and items useful in the production of arms, ammunition, and implements of war."<sup>488</sup> While the armistice talks were under way in Panmunjom, Washington noted that the net result of UN resolution 500 fell short of a total embargo because other nations interpreted it loosely. To make the sanctions effective in the long term, in July 1952 the United States, Britain, France, Canada, and Japan agreed to establish a China Committee (CHINCOM) of the Consultative Group. The underdeveloped PRC, in Washington's view, would be more dependent on imports for military

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<sup>488</sup> *FRUS, 1951, Korea and China*, Volume VII, Part 2, 1988.

and war-related goods than the rest of the Soviet bloc. Therefore, Washington believed that the anti-PRC sanctions should continue after the Korean War.<sup>489</sup>

On June 15, 1953 NSC 154 expressed concern that after an armistice major U.S. allies would be “increasingly unwilling to support the United States in maintaining political and economic pressures” against the PRC. Therefore, “existing differences between the United States and its major allies would be intensified, and this might lead to a serious breach.” The United States should:

make efforts to induce other free world countries, pending a settlement regarding Korea, (a) to maintain their current levels of controls and restrictions over trade and shipping with Communist China and North Korea, and, where possible, to extend their embargo lists to include the remaining items hitherto proposed by the United States, either bilaterally or in multilateral bodies; and (b) to tighten enforcement of such restrictions.<sup>490</sup>

Washington’s post-armistice economic pressure on the PRC, on a separate basis from the Soviet bloc in Europe, was formally directed by NSC 152/2, “Economic Defense.” Since the winter of 1949 and 1950, the West had regulated multilateral trade with the Soviet bloc in Europe by establishing the Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls (COCOM).<sup>491</sup> While directing U.S. trade policy regarding the Soviet bloc, NSC 152/2 explicitly confirmed that “economic defense policies toward Communist China” should “differ from those toward the rest of the Soviet bloc” because the PRC was a “military aggressor.” With respect to the PRC, NSC 152/2 stated,

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<sup>489</sup> Zhang, *Economic Cold War*, 46-8.

<sup>490</sup> NSC 154: A report to the NSC on U.S. tactics immediately following an armistice in Korea, June 15, 1953 in White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, 1952-61, NSC Series, Policy Papers Subseries, Box No. 5 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>491</sup> Shimizu, *Creating people of plenty*, 7.

in the light of the Korean armistice, and pending a political settlement in Korea and a review of basic policies toward Communist China and Korea, maintain the present level of controls on transactions with Communist China and continue intensified efforts to persuade our allies to refrain from relaxing their controls on trade with Communist China.<sup>492</sup>

As it turned out Washington's economic sanctions against the PRC were becoming untenable among U.S. allies. On August 30, 1954 the first progress report on NSC 152/3, "United States Policy on Economic Defense," pointed out that since the Korean armistice other countries had raised pressure for relaxation of trade controls against the PRC. Several countries in Western Europe had informally suggested a review of the controls on China trade to eventually reduce their scope. Even in the United Nations there were signs of revoking the resolution on the PRC, which had "served as the principal restraints on some nations from trading in strategic goods with the Chinese Communists."<sup>493</sup>

At the heart of frictions between the United States and its allies was the so-called "China differential." By August 1954 the United States and its allies had cut in half the number of the COCOM embargo items, leaving the "China differential," a gap of trade control between Europe and Asia, as a major issue among U.S. allies. Soon a substantial increase of transshipment of Western strategic and capital goods to China via Eastern Europe posed a serious problem to the CHINCOM embargo. In the fall of 1954, Washington specifically blamed British exporters for the PRC import of goods on the CHINCOM list through Eastern Europe.<sup>494</sup> Therefore, NSC 5429/5 of December 1954 referred to a Department of Commerce proposal calling for a control program including a "common export control list of commodities, services and technical data." It

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<sup>492</sup> *FRUS, 1952-54, China and Japan*, Volume XIV, Part 1, 239-40.

<sup>493</sup> *FRUS, 1952-54, General: Economic and Political Matters*, Volume I, Part 2, 1251.

<sup>494</sup> Shimizu, *Creating people of plenty*, 72-3.

should be “less extensive and restrictive than” the CHINCOM lists “but more extensive than” the COCOM lists and applicable to the entire Soviet bloc.<sup>495</sup>

Nevertheless, ongoing U.S.-PRC confrontation in East Asia made it difficult for Washington to coordinate with allies a readjustment of the China differential. During the fall of 1954, against an allied call for a full Consultative Group (CG) on the China differential, the United States pointed to Communist violations of armistice agreements in Korea and Indochina and Beijing’s military challenge in the Taiwan Strait as rationales for rigorous economic pressure on the PRC. But in mid-1955 the crisis in the Taiwan Strait quieted and the heads of the United States, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union met at Geneva for their first summit since World War II. At the beginning of August, U.S. and PRC delegates also met in Geneva for ambassadorial-level talks. Before the opening of the summit, the U.S. Council on Foreign Economic Policy (CFEP) recommended to the NSC that the United States should maintain the China differential until the PRC was no longer an actual aggressor and the United States, Great Britain, and France agreed that any change in East-West trade controls should be subservient to progress in disarmament and security. Neither the summit nor U.S.-PRC talks brought the East-West trade controls into discussion.<sup>496</sup>

Yet during his visit to Washington in the last week of August, Japanese Foreign Minister Shigemitsu pressed Secretary Dulles to renegotiate the China differential. In particular, the Japanese delegation called attention to a deterioration of the China embargo by transshipments of Western European goods via Eastern Europe. Dulles rejected Japan’s call for both expanded trade with the PRC and reconsideration of the CHINCOM list, but he hinted at possible U.S.

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<sup>495</sup> NSC 5429/5: Current U.S. policy toward the Far East, December 22, 1954 in White House Office: Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (OSANSA): Records, NSC Series, Policy Papers Subseries, Box No. 12 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>496</sup> Shimizu, *Creating people of plenty*, 128, 131-2.

tolerance of decontrolling items of particular significance to Japan on the CHINCOM list. Since this token concession was Shigemitsu's only achievement in an otherwise unproductive visit, the China differential became vital to Tokyo's agenda both at home and abroad. For the rest of the year, Washington's repeated veto of Tokyo's wish lists further undermined the already weak position of the Hatoyama cabinet, Shigemitsu in particular.<sup>497</sup>

U.S. allies in Europe resisted Washington's repeated call for continued economic sanctions more successfully than did Tokyo. When the North Atlantic Council met on October 1, the British and French delegates argued strongly that transshipments or triangular deals had "defeated" the China differential, which in any event was no longer justified by UN resolutions due to the Korean armistice.<sup>498</sup> At trilateral talks in Geneva late in the month, Secretary Dulles insisted that the embargo retained bargaining value in inducing the Chinese Communists to renounce the use of force.<sup>499</sup> On December 3, however, the British government declared that it could no longer defend the China differential against critics at home and would unify the COCOM and CHINCOM lists unilaterally after January 15, 1956.<sup>500</sup> Secretary Dulles soon reported to President Eisenhower that to salvage the multilateral control system the United States should shift its efforts from maintaining the China differential to managing a "gradual reduction in the China controls to a level" of mutual agreement in the CG.<sup>501</sup>

At the beginning of 1956, therefore, Washington undertook a review of its trade control policy against the PRC. In a NSC meeting of January 26, President Eisenhower pointed out that he had never seen a study of the "net advantage or disadvantage to the United States of trade

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<sup>497</sup> Ibid., 132-3.

<sup>498</sup> *FRUS, 1955-57, Foreign aid and economic defense policy*, Volume X, 260.

<sup>499</sup> Ibid., 266.

<sup>500</sup> Shimizu, *Creating people of plenty*, 134.

<sup>501</sup> *FRUS, 1955-57, Foreign aid and economic defense policy*, Volume X, 275-6.

with the Soviet bloc.” Surrounded by “a lot of surplus materials” to sell, the president complained, he had not known what the trade controls had been doing to the United States and its allies. In response, Secretary Dulles advocated the temporary retention of existing controls on the ground that the “most important factors” were “psychological rather than strictly economic.” Dulles feared that concessions might encourage neutralism among Asians who already had been exposed to a popular notion that the PRC represented the “wave of future.”<sup>502</sup>

The best that Dulles could get from British Prime Minister Eden was an agreement to a gradual reduction of items on the restricted list without publicizing a change in policy.<sup>503</sup> This was only the beginning: in the spring the British lobbied other CHINCOM members against the U.S. position. Unwilling to risk a show of weakness to hawks in Congress as a presidential election loomed on the horizon, however, Secretary Dulles persuaded President Eisenhower to seek deferral of formal negotiations with Great Britain until the end of the year. Washington explained its position to London and made minor concessions to British needs, but London was not satisfied with any compromise.<sup>504</sup>

Caught in the political dilemma between Congress and London, during the summer of 1956 Washington established an interim position:

... in order to prevent serious deterioration of multilateral cooperation resulting from these pressures, the U.S. would be willing to concur in some relaxation in CHINCOM controls provided that

(i) a substantial CHINCOM differential control is retained;

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<sup>502</sup> Memorandum: Discussion at the 274th meeting of the NSC, Thursday, January 26, 1956, January 27, 1956 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 7 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>503</sup> *FRUS, 1955-57, Foreign aid and economic defense policy*, Volume X, 308-12.

<sup>504</sup> Zhang, *Economic Cold War*, 178-82.

- (ii) the current deterioration of the CHINCOM control system is stopped and the control system is thereby increased in effectiveness;
  - (iii) the overall CG/ COCOM/ CHINCOM activity is strengthened materially to the extent determined by the U.S. government to be practicable.
- e. Negotiations, both bilateral and CG/ CHINCOM, should be conducted in such manner as to assure a reasonable degree of relief for Japan and some participation in trade by the other PC's [Participating Countries] without appearing to show any obvious preference for any PC.<sup>505</sup>

During the fall of 1956, many U.S. allies showed no eagerness to follow Washington's renewed efforts for the CHINCOM. Further, under the widespread exceptions already in place in many countries, the U.S. interim proposal for restraint, and more broadly the general effectiveness of the CHINCOM controls, were seriously in question. Nevertheless, major external events in the fall--the Suez crisis and the Hungarian revolt--favorably influenced allied attitudes toward the U.S. administration's pressure for "absolute cooperation."<sup>506</sup> Despite this unexpected respite on the eve of the presidential election, the Eisenhower administration fully understood that the China trade issue would remain a thorn in side of Western unity for the foreseeable future.

### **Unilateral settlement of the NNSC dispute**

After Washington endorsed the Swiss-Swedish initiatives to the NNSC dispute in the spring of 1955, it took more than a year before the United States terminated NNSC inspection activities in Korea. In the meantime NNSC problems demonstrated the increasing difficulty of maintaining an effective UN coalition against the Communists. With little political or military

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<sup>505</sup> *FRUS, 1955-57, Foreign aid and economic defense policy*, Volume X, 395.

<sup>506</sup> Zhang, *Economic Cold War*, 400-2, 407.

stake in Korea, many UN allies and neutrals revealed their unwillingness to strain their relations with Beijing over the Korean problem. Through 1955 into the spring of 1956, the State Department endeavored to settle the issue in coordination with the international community. Faced with growing pressure from the Department of Defense and the ROK government, the State Department finally changed its position and accepted unilateral UNC action to remove NNSC inspection teams from the ROK. In the last phase of the NNSC dispute, however, the U.S. failure to hold a joint position with allies in support of the UNC action evidenced a widening gap in policy priorities with regard to Communist China in the East Asia.

As the administration affirmed in early 1955, Swedish and Swiss members' successful negotiations with the Communists held the key to settlement of the NNSC problem. According to the original Swedish plan, the NNSC had to be reduced to 10 or 20 members from each of the four nations, with all the members restricted to the Demilitarized Zone (DZ). After weeks of discussion with the Czechs and Poles in April, however, the only agreement was that they recommend to the Military Armistice Commission (MAC) a reduction of inspection teams to three in each zone while each team had representatives from only one of the neutrals appointed by each side. Because this position would still leave the Poles and Czechs on ROK territory, the CINCUNC and the ROK government were far from satisfied with the Swedish and Swiss compromise.<sup>507</sup>

In a NSC meeting on May 12, 1955, President Eisenhower juxtaposed the new agreement with CINCUNC General Maxwell Taylor's proposal for the complete abolition of the NNSC and the abrogation of paragraphs 13(c) and 13(d) of the armistice. Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Anderson introduced to the NSC the president's belief that the CINCUNC had authority

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<sup>507</sup> *FRUS, 1955-57, Korea*, Volume XXIII, Part 2, 81.

to suspend the NNSC inspection activities in Korea while waiting awhile to abrogate 13(c) and 13(d). After further discussion the president requested that, following a full State-Defense discussion, Secretary Dulles should consult Great Britain and France with respect to possible suspension of armistice provisions related to NNSC operations.<sup>508</sup>

Since the British and French Governments did not respond favorably to the suspension of NNSC activities, Washington undertook an internal study of the U.S. position toward the Swiss and Swedish proposal. For this purpose Assistant Secretary of State Robertson made several recommendations:

1. That Defense concurrence should be sought to instruct the UNC to state in the MAC that (a) the NNSC proposal is not satisfactory since it does not solve the serious difficulties created for the UNC by the Communists in their obstruction of the operations of this body and by their violations of paragraph 13(d), but that (b) we will accept this proposal provisionally pending a satisfactory solution to this problem.
2. That the Swiss and Swedes be informed of the instruction to the UNC and that we again urge them to find a more satisfactory solution.
3. That when plans for the introduction of new weapons are prepared and ready for implementation the positive support of our Allies be vigorously sought for openly suspending the provision of paragraph 13(d).
4. That the President's approval to the foregoing courses be sought.<sup>509</sup>

Because debates were extended within the administration, it took nearly four months before these recommendations evolved into a formal U.S. position on the Swiss-Swedish proposal. In a State-JCS meeting on July 29, relying on the president's desire for "moving ahead

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<sup>508</sup> Ibid., 92-4.

<sup>509</sup> Ibid., 101-2.

with vigor to get the job done in one sweep,” the JCS opposed the Swedish “two-stage approach.” Admiral Radford identified the ROK as the main drawback of delayed action. Because the United States was the “only nation with any real stake in Korea,” Admiral Radford had little confidence that the sixteen would agree to abolition of the NNSC teams two months after the reduction of inspection teams. In light of JCS discontent with the sixteen, Dulles followed Robertson’s suggestion that he immediately accept the proposed NNSC reductions while having another meeting with Defense representatives on other aspects. Dulles endorsed Robertson’s suggestion.<sup>510</sup>

With discord between the Pentagon and the sixteen in mind, Secretary Dulles confirmed the U.S. course of action by August 19:

1. Instruct the UNC to state in the MAC as soon as possible that it has no objection to carrying out the reduction proposed by the NNSC on May 3; that it regards this, however, as a temporary measure; and that the Communist obstruction and frustration of the Commission have made its abolition the only satisfactory solution to the problem.
2. One week later send notes to the Swiss and Swedes which make the following points:
  - (a) We have accepted what we understand was intended as a first step toward achieving their final objective, i.e., complete dissolution of the Commission.
  - (b) We would appreciate being informed of any plans they may have for a second and final step which we are hopeful could be taken before October 15, 1955 and which would result in the Commission’s dissolution.
3. If the Swiss and Swedes fail to give reasonable assurances that they will take a second and final step by October 15, 1955, instruct the UNC to act at once to terminate NNSC activities within ROK territory and to limit those activities to receiving in the Demilitarized Zone reports from the UNC.<sup>511</sup>

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<sup>510</sup> Ibid., 128-31.

<sup>511</sup> Ibid., 150-1.

On August 24 the Defense Department concurred in this course. Two days later the State Department briefed the sixteen. A week after that Washington delivered an aide-memoire to Swiss and Swedish representatives specifying three points: first, the United States agreed with the Swiss and Swedish desire to abolish the NNSC as indicated in the aide-memoire of March 2. Second, the UNC accepted the NNSC proposal for reduction of the inspection teams as a temporary measure. However, it stressed, the only satisfactory solution was the dissolution of the NNSC. Finally, the United States urged that Switzerland and Sweden have plans for further action “leading at least to the withdrawal of personnel to the Demilitarized Zone,” hopefully before October 15, 1955.<sup>512</sup>

The Swiss and Swedish members did press the PRC to agree to the withdrawal of NNSC teams to the DMZ, but the Communists eventually rejected their proposal. The issue remained unsettled for the rest of 1955: with the UN General Assembly in session, the UNC restrained its predilection for unilateral action. The progress report on NSC 170/1 and NSC 5514, dated November 30, merely commented that efforts were being made to “persuade the Swiss and Swedes to take a further step leading to withdrawal of all stationary teams” to the DZ, as they have proposed to the Czechs and Poles.<sup>513</sup>

The progress report also took note of anti-NNSC demonstrations in Korea, which continued but “with abated violence.”<sup>514</sup> Since August the ROK government had promoted

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<sup>512</sup> Ibid., 149-53, 158-9.

<sup>513</sup> NSC 5514 & NSC 170/1: Progress report on U.S. objectives and courses of action in Korea, November 30, 1955 in White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, 1952-61, NSC Series, Policy Papers Subseries, Box No. 15 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>514</sup> Ibid.

another anti-NNSC campaign. On August 5 demonstrations burst out at all five ports of entry.<sup>515</sup> They continued the next day at Kunsan, Pusan, Kangnung, and Inchon, where ROK police and military personnel attended in civilian clothes.<sup>516</sup> Washington responded quickly to forestall any negative effects on the ongoing NNSC negotiations, but failed to dissuade Rhee from engaging in public in anti-NNSC rhetoric. However, Rhee did confirm to General Leminitzer that he had instructed the demonstrators not to engage in violence.<sup>517</sup> The fiery president also deferred indefinitely his ultimatum for removal by August 13 of Czech and Polish members of the NNITs. Although demonstrations scaled down, Rhee refused to comply with the U.S. desire for their total cessation, claiming an “overwhelming public demand for the[ir] continuance.”<sup>518</sup> Anti-NNSC demonstrations continued until December.<sup>519</sup>

In early December Clement J. Zablocki, Chairman of the Far East Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and other committee members visited Seoul on a tour of the Far East. Urged by Zablocki, on December 7 President Rhee agreed to suspend the anti-NNIT demonstrations for three months and allow the United States to promote a solution to the NNSC problem. On December 28 the UNC informed the Swiss and Swedish NNSC members of Rhee’s confidential agreement. Encouraged by these events Swiss and Swedish members continued their efforts to withdraw inspection teams to the Demilitarized Zone.<sup>520</sup>

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<sup>515</sup> Colonel L. E. Witt, Resume of anti-NNIT demonstrations, C-TES 091 Korea, August 19, 1955 in Chairman's File, Admiral Radford, 1953-57, RG 218, Box 12 (College Park, MD.: NA).

<sup>516</sup> *FRUS, 1955-57, Korea*, Volume XXIII, Part 2, 137-8.

<sup>517</sup> *Ibid.*, 139-40, 143-7.

<sup>518</sup> Colonel L. E. Witt, Resume of anti-NNIT demonstrations, C-TES 091 Korea, August 19, 1955 in Chairman's File, Admiral Radford, 1953-57, RG 218, Box 12 (College Park, MD.: NA); *FRUS, 1955-57, Korea*, Volume XXIII, Part 2, 156-8.

<sup>519</sup> Yong-Pyo Hong, *State Security and Regime Security: President Syngman Rhee and the Insecurity Dilemmas in South Korea 1953-60* (Oxford: St. Antony's College, 2000), 100.

<sup>520</sup> *FRUS, 1955-57, Korea*, Volume XXIII, Part 2, 195, 197-8.

On January 1956 the Chinese and the Poles proposed to the Swiss and Swedes to withdraw all the NNITs except one in each zone. The Communists also called for a substantial reduction of mobiles teams and other NNSC personnel in the DZ. The Swedes replied that all inspection teams should withdraw to the DZ. The Swedish Government also indicated that its position was not negotiable: if the Communists did not accept it the Swedes would leave the NNSC. In a NSC meeting of February 9, encouraged by the positive sign of progress by the Swiss and Swedish representatives, Secretary Robertson proposed unilateral action by the United States unless the Swiss and the Swedes withdrew by the end of the month. Admiral Radford supported Robertson's proposal, reminding his colleagues that President Rhee's suspension of anti-NNIT demonstrations would expire on March 9. In the end, though, the United States once again decided to delay unilateral action.<sup>521</sup>

Washington's patience finally ran out in June, after considerable maneuvering on all sides. March found the Swiss and Swedes presenting another "compromise." Beijing failed to reply for nearly a month. Then, on April 9, in a transparent effort to divide the United States from its European allies, the PRC delivered a note to the British government proposing that a conference on troop withdrawal and Korean unification precede a settlement of the NNSC problem. The PRC also proposed to reduce the NNIT teams to one in each zone. The State Department was now willing to take unilateral action, but only after securing "the support of our allies." Seeing that the Swiss and Swedish members were inclined to accept the Communist

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<sup>521</sup> Ibid., 207-9, 218-9. On February 9, in a letter to Robertson, Gordon Gray urged that the Swedes and Swiss should reach a mutual agreement with the Communists by February 25, and otherwise they should unilaterally withdraw their teams out of Korea or at least to the Demilitarized Zone. According to Gray, the position of the Defense was that "any action should comfortably precede" March 8, the last day of the grace period "afforded by the Zablocki commitment." On February 15, Robertson cautioned in his reply that the Communists were unlikely to agree by an ultimatum and that the Swedes and Swiss would also resent to it. Three days later, Gray stressed against Robertson's cautiousness that in light of unpredictable Rhee's mind the United States should take unilateral action unless the Swiss and Swedes accomplished the purpose through diplomatic negotiations. Gray ended his reply with a proposal of another staff meeting to prepare for unilateral action. On February 28, Robertson rejected Gray's recommendation for the UNC unilateral action of March 1 on the ground of "serious political and propaganda disadvantages for the United States.; *ibid.*, 221-4, 226-7.

proposal, Dulles requested that the Swedes not to reply to Beijing until the United States consulted its allies.<sup>522</sup>

By the end of May, the United States appeared to have earned the sixteen's agreement on unilateral action by the UNC. After three weeks of meetings, on May 25 the sixteen agreed on the substance of a reply to the Chinese note and removal of the NNSC from the ROK:

1. British Charge [in] Peiping will deliver note replying on behalf [of] the sixteen on or about May 28. Reply will reject conference proposal [and] state [that] NNSC [had been] inequitable burden on UN side and that [the] UNC will announce its position [in] MAC.
2. Upon receipt [of] confirmation [that the] British note [has been] delivered [the] UNC will be instructed [to] call [a] MAC meeting and announce that it will provisionally suspend during [the] time [the] Communist side continues in default performance its part those provisions [of the] armistice governing operations [of] UN area of [the] NNSC and NNIT and that this suspension will be put into effect in about one week.
3. [The] UN Command [is] to be instructed [by] telegraph [to] report MAC meeting including full coverage [of] Communist reaction. Four or five days following distribution [of] this report to representatives [of the] sixteen [in] Washington [,] [the] sixteen will meet [to] consult [regarding] Communist reaction.
4. [The] NNSC will be removed from UN Command Zone seven days following [the] distribution [of] MAC report [to the] sixteen.
5. We intend [to] inform Swiss and Swedes of reply [to] Communist note and impending NNSC action [at the] same time [the] note [was] delivered [to] Peking. We will inform them [of] Communist MAC reaction at [the] same time [the] sixteen [were] informed.<sup>523</sup>

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<sup>522</sup> Ibid., 239-45, 248, 255.

<sup>523</sup> Ibid., 262, 268-73.

Unfortunately, when the sixteen delivered the reply to the Chinese note on May 28, the draft mistakenly stated that the sixteen supported the Swedish proposal referred to in the note, i.e. NNSC withdrawal to the DMZ while retaining the right to send NNIT teams to military zones. In the MAC meeting on June 4, the Communists supported this proposal and the UNC demurred. At this point the British Government cracked open the apparent consensus in the sixteen by concluding that the Communist proposal was the “most satisfactory outcome” and calling for a delay of unilateral UNC action to forcibly remove the NNITs from the ROK, scheduled for June 9, in hopes of inducing their voluntary withdrawal. France and the Netherlands sympathized with the British position.<sup>524</sup> At the risk of a breach in UN standing in Korea, the United States overrode this allied opposition to UNC action. The UNC proceeded on schedule to remove to Panmunjom the 16 remaining NNSC personnel from the ROK.

Not everyone in the State Department was happy with this outcome. On June 14 a legal adviser in the Office of UN Political and Security Affairs complained to a superior that, due to “our inflexibility,” the United States failed to “come out of the NNSC matter with agreement on removal to the DZ and a simple reservation of the position of all concerned on special inspections from the DZ.” Owing to the “Defense’s penchant for defying the law and the sensibilities of our allies,” the legal adviser remarked bitterly, the United States would be guilty of violating the armistice “by measures going well beyond any mere suspended performance warranted by past Communist violations” unless the Defense and State Departments immediately agreed to abide by “full reporting and a reasonable and conscientious interpretation and application of Article 13(d).”<sup>525</sup>

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<sup>524</sup> Ibid., 275-80.

<sup>525</sup> Ibid., 282-3.

Although a breach of Western unity in Korea might not be of such a primary concern among military men as to civilian advisers, they recognized the need for a joint State-Defense approach to Article 13(d). On June 26 CINCUNC General Lemnitzer expressed satisfaction over the “smooth manner in which the actual removal of the teams had been accomplished.” Now that “that phase of the problem” was resolved, Lemnitzer continued, he wanted to talk about the “difficulties under Section 13 (d) of the armistice agreement” with respect to the “introduction of new equipment.” General Lemnitzer declared that he would very much like to know the State Department’s position and possible changes with respect to action under Section 13 (d).<sup>526</sup> Finally released from the NNSC problem, Washington policymakers were now eager to fix the long-standing problem of military imbalance caused by Communist violation of the armistice.

## **Conclusion**

Since the majority of U.S./ UN forces began to withdraw from Korea after the Geneva Conference, by early 1955 the sustainability of the ROK under the armistice had become the foremost concern. Despite evidence of a Communist buildup in North Korea, it soon became obvious that NNSC inspection activities could not halt Communist violation of armistice agreements. In the spring of 1955, the United States agreed with the sixteen UN participants that they should coordinate a resolution to terminate NNSC inspections through negotiations between the neutrals and the Communists. However, the ROK government overtly protested the presence of Communist members of the NNSC on its territory and the UNC continued its request for early termination of the NNSC to avert a clash between the ROK and the UNC over the safety of NNSC members. In the meantime, the Pentagon perceived a growing need for replacement of

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<sup>526</sup> Ibid., 285.

obsolete weapons on the UNC side despite prohibitions in the armistice against introducing new weapons to Korea.

Eventually, the NNSC dispute was linked to the need for maintenance of a military balance in Korea. In this context, Washington strategists were interested in the overall security position of the ROK in the Far East. To unrelenting PRC military aggressiveness against noncommunist Asia, the Eisenhower administration stressed the primacy of retaliatory striking power – implementation of the “New Look” in the Far East. In the first months of 1955, the Chinese offshore crisis reached a peak and Washington’s deployment of nuclear weapons to the region reflected the “New Look” policy. Virtually at the same time, the administration concluded that, despite the diminishing commitment of UN allies to the UNC, the overall security position of the ROK was not in serious jeopardy. Washington’s conclusion demonstrated another dimension of the “New Look” – a heavy reliance on the manpower of U.S. allies against local Communist aggression. By early 1955 the basic rationale of the “New Look” largely overshadowed wartime emphasis on UN collective security in Korea.

While the U.S.-PRC confrontation in East Asia continued after the Korean War, a united front between the United States and its allies against Communist aggression began to crumble. U.S. allies in the Free World interpreted the Korean armistice as an end of hostilities and sought a revision of wartime policies vis-à-vis the bloc. In Japan a growing security dilemma at the crossroad of the Cold War inspired post-Yoshida leadership to improve its relations with Communist neighbors, especially with Moscow. At the same time, Tokyo successfully resisted Washington’s introduction of nuclear weapons to U.S. bases in Japan within the framework of the 1951 security pact. Meanwhile, U.S. allies in Europe overtly refused to cooperate with Washington’s anti-PRC economic campaign. By the mid-1950s the “China differential,” a gap of

trade control items between COCOM and CHINCOM, represented the alienation of allies from U.S. policy against the PRC.

Between 1955 and 1956 two different positions existed with regard to the NNSC dispute, with the State Department in coordination with its UN allies and neutrals on the one side and the Pentagon and the ROK in demand for unilateral termination of the NNSC on the other.

Eventually UNC unilateral action to remove the NNSC from ROK territory in the face of opposition by key U.S. allies represented the limit of Western unity against the PRC after the Korean War. Finally, the overall change by 1956, combined with an indefinite armistice in Korea, set the stage for Washington's decisions in 1957, with their stress on nuclear strategy. One important goal of the Korean armistice from the U.S. perspective – international control of the Korean military situation through agreement among the major parties – was lost to the reality of the ongoing military confrontation in East Asia. After the UNC unilaterally withdrew the NNSC into the DMZ, it became obvious that the future security of the ROK would depend on real military strength vis-à-vis the Communists and, more specifically, the military's determination to defend the ROK. The remaining issue was whether nuclear weapons should be included on the list of modernizing weapons in a changing security atmosphere of the East Asia.

## Chapter 4

### Limited War

In October 1957 Secretary of State Dulles published in *Foreign Affairs* his article “Challenge and Response in United States Policy.” He contended that in the future the United States likely would “place less reliance upon deterrence of vast retaliatory power.” Until recently, Secretary Dulles deplored, no alternative had existed to “our great capacity to retaliate should the Soviet Union launch a war of aggression.” However, the “character of nuclear weapons” had changed to such an extent that their use might not “involve vast destruction and widespread harm to humanity.” As an example of nuclear weapons “so mobile, or so placed as to make military invasion with conventional forces a hazardous attempt,” he specifically mentioned nuclear artillery, which could dominate the invasion routes of future aggressors. By the 1960s, Dulles foresaw, nations “around the Sino-Soviet perimeter” could “possess an effective defense against full-scale conventional attack,” confronting any aggressor “with the choice between failing or initiating nuclear war against the defending country.”<sup>527</sup>

Secretary Dulles’ view of 1957 seems to represent a big departure from his past views. Three years earlier, Dulles had proclaimed in another *Foreign Affairs* article his confidence in the adequacy of U.S. massive retaliatory power as a deterrent. Since most areas of the free world within the reach of an aggressor offered “less value to him than the loss he would suffer from well-conceived retaliatory measures,” he had argued, the “main reliance” in such areas should be

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<sup>527</sup> John Foster Dulles, “Challenge and Response in United States Policy,” *Foreign Affairs* (Volume 36, Issue 1, October 1957), 31.

placed upon the “power of the free community to retaliate with great force by mobile means at places of its own choice.”<sup>528</sup> What spurred Secretary Dulles in 1957 to publicly declare tactical nuclear units as a potential alternative to massive retaliatory power for future defense of allies positioned along the borders of the Soviet Union and China? More specifically, what were the implications of his declaration for U.S. policy toward Korea?

Secretary Dulles’ 1957 article reflected the Eisenhower administration’s adjustment to the changing security atmosphere during the mid-1950s. As the United States and the Soviet Union approached nuclear plenty, many American analysts thought, a U.S. defense strategy based on massive retaliation was losing much of its deterrent power. While the United States and the Soviet Union entered a long-term stalemate based on mutual deterrence, the Soviet bloc might exploit its superiority in manpower by increasing pressure on its peripheries. If the Communists were to employ subversive or forceful measures short of general war, it would jeopardize the security of the “gray areas” – an arc of nations ranging from Turkey through the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia into Formosa and the Korean peninsula.

Critics of massive retaliation, dubious of overemphasis upon air retaliatory power, had gained momentum by the beginning of the second Eisenhower administration. Both within and outside the executive branch, they urged that U.S. armed forces should have more flexibility than massive retaliation to cope with limited war situations. By the time Secretary Dulles clarified his view in the *Foreign Affairs* article, Henry Kissinger’s *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* had been on the bestseller list for thirteen weeks. In this book Kissinger admonished that as the Soviet nuclear arsenal grew the Soviet bloc might attempt to absorb the Eurasian periphery under the misapprehension that the United States was bluffing on all-out war and therefore would not

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<sup>528</sup> Dulles, “Policy for Security and Peace,” *Foreign Affairs* (Volume 32, Issue 3, April 1954), 358-9.

effectively counter local advances by the Communist bloc. Hence Kissinger thought that sole reliance on massive retaliation might trigger total war.<sup>529</sup>

Eventually, the Eisenhower administration resolved the controversy surrounding massive retaliation and limited war on a budgetary basis. After the mid-1950s Washington found that without adequate assistance from Britain and France the United States was taking all the responsibility for the defense of the Free World. The growing cost of developing new weapons further drained U.S. resources, which had already been under tight control by the administration's fiscal conservatism. Therefore, the spirit of the "New Look," with heavy stress on atomic weapons for defense strategy, echoed loudly in Washington. Nuclear weapons were "dollarwise," producing more firepower than any other conventional weaponry. Consequently, massive retaliation continued to be the centerpiece of U.S. defense strategy.

Although the risk of limited war began to cast a shadow over U.S. military planning, the administration anticipated that further reliance on nuclear weapons in local defense would complement reduction of overseas expenditures. ROK armed forces, the beneficiary of the largest U.S. military and economic assistance programs during the second Eisenhower administration, became a main subject of Washington's new policy orientation toward the so-called "new New Look." Between 1956 and 1957 Washington made several important decisions, which eventually led in January 1958 to the introduction of nuclear weapons to the ROK. During the entire process many Washington policymakers viewed the deployment of nuclear weapons to Korea mainly in the context of budgetary austerity.

From a long-term military perspective, however, the Eisenhower administration's introduction of nuclear weapons to Korea proved a monumental event of U.S. Cold War strategy

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<sup>529</sup> Henry Kissinger, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), 134.

in Asia and the Pacific. From 1956 to 1958 Washington's key decisions – the “Pentomic” reorganization of U.S. Army divisions, UNC suspension of paragraph 13(d) of the armistice agreement, the relocation of the UNC from Tokyo to Seoul, and forward-deployment of U.S. tactical nuclear weapons – transformed the ROK into the major U.S. military partner against North Korea and Communist China. As Secretary Dulles foretold in the 1957 article, atomic defenses would be crucial to future U.S. defense strategy toward the ROK.

This chapter examines the process leading to Washington's final decision to introduce nuclear weapons to Korea. Key questions addressed include, why and how did growing Soviet nuclear capabilities begin to reshape U.S. defense strategy in the mid-1950s? How did the advent of the atomic age impact tactical doctrine of the U.S. Army during the same years? What inspired the Army to reorganize U.S. divisions into a “Pentomic” structure? Why and how did the State and Defense Departments disagree with each other over the deployment of nuclear weapons to modernize U.S. forces in Korea? What prompted Washington policymakers to suspend paragraph 13(d) of the Armistice Agreement? Why and how was Japan's changing role in the defense of Asia and the Pacific significant to the evolution of U.S. defense policy toward Korea? Why were tactical nuclear weapons militarily necessary for the defense of the ROK in the frame of limited war strategy? How did U.S. nuclear weapons lead to a U.S.-ROK agreement on an alternate military program for ROK armed forces? Answers to these questions will show how U.S. tactical nuclear weapons transformed the ROK into a pivotal military bulwark against North Korea and Communist China.

## **Overview: general war vs. limited war**

After the mid-1950s U.S. policymakers came to assume that their country would eventually lose its edge in nuclear weapons vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. NSC 5501, approved on January 7, 1955, stated that the Soviet Union already had the “capacity to inflict widespread devastation on major free world countries allied to the [United States] and serious damage to the [United States] itself.” Over the next five years, the paper estimated, the Soviet Union would “almost certainly develop the net capability to strike a crippling blow at the United States.” In that case a “total war involving use by both sides of available weapons would bring about such extensive destruction as to threaten the survival of both Western civilization and the Soviet system.” Therefore, NSC 5501 foresaw a “condition of mutual deterrence” in which “each side would be strongly inhibited from deliberately initiating general war or taking actions which it regarded as materially increasing the risk of general war.”<sup>530</sup>

On February 14, 1955 the Technological Capabilities Panel of the Science Advisory Committee to the Office of Defense Mobilization (TCP) submitted to President Eisenhower “Meeting the Threat of Surprise Attack,” more broadly known as the “Killian Report” after panel chairman James Killian of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). To “clarify the effects of evolving technology on our military position relative to Russia,” the Killian Report presented a four-phase timetable. During Phases I and II, which covered the period up to 1958/60, U.S. military power “relative to that of Russia” would reach its peak, and U.S. military superiority might “never be so great again.” During Phases III and IV, “possibly within a decade,” the report estimated that the United States and the Soviet Union would enter into an indefinite stalemate in which “an attack by either side would result in mutual destruction.”<sup>531</sup>

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<sup>530</sup> Trachtenberg, *The Development of American Strategic Thought*, 97-8.

<sup>531</sup> *Ibid.*, 342-5.

Therefore, the report recommended that after the president and the NSC reviewed the “Timetable of Change in Our Military Position Relative to Russia,” an intensive study should be undertaken to determine the most appropriate “diplomatic and political policies” during Phase II (starting 1956/57 and ending 1958/60) to “turn it to our best advantage and to the advantage of the free world.” The committee’s recommendations also included the development of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) as the highest priority, reduction of “unacceptable ground vulnerability of the SAC,” enhancement of continental defense and an early warning system, a better intelligence network, expansion of overseas communications networks, and study of the peripheral war problem.<sup>532</sup> In an NSC meeting on August 4, 1955, President Eisenhower requested the NSC planning board to report back to the NSC on the timetable prior to completion of its review of basic national security policy in NSC 5501. The NSC immediately assigned the task of studying each of the Killian Committee’s recommendations to individual governmental agencies.<sup>533</sup>

By the time the administration updated its basic national security policy in 1956, a modified timetable based on the Killian Report set a basis for the United States’ estimate of future Soviet nuclear capabilities. NSC 5602/1 stated that:

The United States is now capable of inflicting massive nuclear damage on the USSR, and will acquire by about mid-1956 the capability to mount a decisive nuclear strike against the USSR. The United States will have a marked net superiority in nuclear striking power from then until some time in 1958. During that year, and thereafter, the USSR will almost certainly develop and maintain the net capability to strike a crippling blow at the United States, but the United States should still be able to inflict equal or greater

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<sup>532</sup> Ibid., 369-70.

<sup>533</sup> Memorandum: Discussion at the 257<sup>th</sup> meeting of the NSC, Thursday, August 4, 1955, August 5, 1955 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 7 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

damage on the USSR, provided that it takes adequate steps to protect and to continue the development of its effective retaliatory power.<sup>534</sup>

Meanwhile, initiatives by new Kremlin leaders convinced Washington that the Soviet Union intended to continue efforts to expand its influence into the noncommunist world, but with methods other than military force. While in early 1955 Nicolai Bulganin succeeded Soviet Premier Malenkov, First Secretary of the Communist Party Nikita Khrushchev held supreme leadership within the party. New Soviet leaders expressed their willingness to relax East-West tensions. On May 15, 1955, after nine years of negotiations, Moscow signed the Austrian peace treaty. A four-power summit convened in Geneva two months later, marking the advent of a new bipolar politics between the superpowers.<sup>535</sup> In February 1956, at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Khrushchev distanced his leadership from Joseph Stalin, denouncing him “as a supreme egoist and sadist, capable of sacrificing everything and anybody for the sake of his own power and glory” and blaming him for the fiasco the Soviet Union suffered at the outset of the “Great Patriotic War.”<sup>536</sup> Despite the new leadership's conciliatory rhetoric, however, the overall military capabilities of the Soviet bloc had made major progress, as evidenced by the first Soviet test of air-dropping a fusion bomb, the establishment of the Warsaw Treaty Organization of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance, and new buildup in its frontiers including North Korea and the Kuril Islands of the Far East.<sup>537</sup>

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<sup>534</sup> Trachtenberg, *The Development of American Strategic Thought*, 145. In this paragraph, according to NSC 5602/1, “decisive” means damage such that either (1) the ability to strike back is essentially eliminated, or (2) civil, political, and cultural life is reduced to a condition of chaos. “Strike” means an action carried to completion within hours or days, as compared to an “offensive” which is of longer duration; *ibid.*

<sup>535</sup> Condit, *History of the JCS*, Volume VI, 17-8.

<sup>536</sup> Adam Ulam, *The Communists: The Story of Power and Lost Illusions, 1948-1991* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1992), 125-6.

<sup>537</sup> Gregory Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin: America's Strategy to Subvert the Soviet Bloc, 1947-1956* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 2000), 171-2.

Therefore, NSC 5602/1 noted an obvious shift in Communist tactics. While Soviet objectives remained unchanged, the "flexibility with which they are being pursued" had markedly increased. From 1955 onwards, NSC 5602/1 pointed out, "Communist tactics against the free nations" had shifted from reliance on "violence and the threat of violence" to reliance on "division, enticement and duplicity." The Communists would attempt to "weaken and disrupt free world strength and unity and to expand the area of Communist influence or control." If the Soviet Union successfully improved "its reputation for peaceful intentions," it would "lead to gradual erosion of free world positions." In particular, NSC 5602/1 warned, the Soviet Union would "play upon changing European attitudes toward NATO, seeking to undermine confidence in the United States and to bring about an eventual withdrawal of U.S. forces from Europe."<sup>538</sup>

Washington believed that the Kremlin's new tactics could jeopardize free world unity. NSC 5602/1 foresaw that U.S. allies would be very likely to seek a basis for "coexistence" and "tend toward trusting accommodation." Even without real concessions, "large segments of public opinion" would sustain the free world's move toward appeasement. Therefore, NSC 5602/1 concluded that the "unity and resolution of the free world coalition" would depend on the U.S. ability to convince its allies that the United States was "making serious efforts to resolve outstanding issues by agreements compatible with free world security" and to "maintain its strength" while the threat persisted.<sup>539</sup>

With little revision of NSC 5602/1, the significance of free world unity was again stressed in NSC 5707/8, the first basic national security policy of the second Eisenhower administration:

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<sup>538</sup> Trachtenberg, *The Development of American Strategic Thought*, 154-5.

<sup>539</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

U.S. security is predicated upon the support and cooperation of appropriate major allies and certain other Free World countries, in providing their share of military forces and in furnishing bases for U.S. military power (although U.S. dependence on such bases is likely to diminish over the long run). The United States should take the necessary steps to convince its NATO and other allies that U.S. strategy and policy serve their security as well as its own, and that, while their full contribution and participation must be forthcoming, the United States is committed to their defense and possesses the capability to fulfill that commitment. The United States should strengthen as practicable the collective defense system and utilize, where appropriate, the possibilities of collective security through the [United Nations].<sup>540</sup>

To secure the support and cooperation of major allies, the Eisenhower administration believed that U.S. nuclear strength ought to assure them security from Soviet military prowess. Hence, the United States integrated NATO defense strategy into U.S. planning for general war. On December 17, 1954 the North Atlantic Council adopted a forward-defense strategy, MC 48. The United States would use nuclear weapons in a quick and massive way to prevent the Soviet Union from overrunning Europe. Without immediate use of atomic weapons, the authors of MC 48 believed, NATO could not defend Western Europe. Therefore, the essence of nuclear strategy in MC 48 was both tactical and strategic.<sup>541</sup> By wedding massive retaliation strategy with NATO war planning, MC 48 demonstrated that U.S. strategic deterrence was a vital asset in the defense of U.S. allies in Europe.

President Eisenhower's view of future war in Europe was of paramount significance in the linkage of general war and NATO defense strategy. He was convinced that a war in Europe could not be limited. Without resorting to nuclear weapons, he believed, the United States could not fight a war there against the Soviet Union. Under the circumstances, U.S. survival was highly

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<sup>540</sup> Ibid., 168.

<sup>541</sup> Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace*, 158-9.

dependent on U.S. massive retaliatory capabilities, which should neutralize the first-strike potential of Soviet strategic forces in the initial phase of the war.<sup>542</sup> As David Rosenberg points out, the United States would be forced to use air retaliatory power in a preemptive way.<sup>543</sup> President Eisenhower explicitly ruled out any possibility that the Soviet Union would refrain from launching a massive nuclear strike on the United States when the Red Army invaded Western Europe.<sup>544</sup>

To fight general war in Europe with nuclear weapons from the beginning, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) needed authority to immediately respond to Soviet action there with preemptive use of nuclear weapons. In fact, Trachtenberg explains, the unique personal autonomy of SACEUR in the U.S. command structure eased Washington's delegation of such authority to SACEUR. Instead of receiving orders from the JCS, SACEUR had a direct communication channel to the president. In dealing with European governments, SACEUR was not wholly subject to the decision of the U.S. government, a special authority derived from General Eisenhower's initial request to President Truman when the general accepted his appointment as the first SACEUR. In the White House President Eisenhower continued to trust his successors in Europe with respect to the use of nuclear weapons.<sup>545</sup> NSC 5602/1 noted the principle of pre-delegation:

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<sup>542</sup> Ibid., 160-2.

<sup>543</sup> David Rosenberg, "Toward Armageddon: The Foundations of U.S. Nuclear Strategy, 1945-1961" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Chicago, August, 1983), 221.

<sup>544</sup> Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace*, 160-1.

<sup>545</sup> Ibid., 172-3.

...Nuclear weapons will be used in general war and in military operations short of general war as authorized by the President. Such authorization as may be given in advance will be determined by the President.<sup>546</sup>

By 1956 Europe's general agreement with all-nuclear NATO operations had decreased Washington's fear of a breach in the Atlantic alliance. As President Eisenhower remarked in a NSC meeting on May 10, the United States had "made real progress in convincing our friends of the validity of our views on the use of atomic weapons." For example, the president pointed out, NATO allies were "now clamoring that we share atomic weapons with them; whereas only a couple of years ago they had recoiled in horror from all thought of employing nuclear weapons."<sup>547</sup> In December 1956, Robert Wampler notes, Secretary Dulles even observed at the NATO Council meeting that the allies placed "overemphasis upon the nuclear side of NATO's defense equation."<sup>548</sup> Europeans also concurred in Washington's delegation in advance of authority to NATO commanders. In April 1957 new NATO defense strategy was approved as MC 14/2, which was generally considered evidence of Western Europe's acceptance of a massive retaliation doctrine.<sup>549</sup> MC 14/2 confirmed that in no case would there be a "NATO concept of limited war with the Soviets."<sup>550</sup> The evolving defense strategy in the NATO system ruled out any possibilities of averting a U.S.-Soviet nuclear exchange at the outset of a war in Europe.

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<sup>546</sup> Trachtenberg, *The Development of American Strategic Thought*, 128.

<sup>547</sup> *FRUS, 1955-57, Regulations of Armaments; Atomic energy*, Volume XX, 399.

<sup>548</sup> Robert Wampler, "Ambiguous Legacy: The United States, Great Britain and the foundations of NATO strategy, 1948-1957" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 1991), 988.

<sup>549</sup> Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace*, 176, 188.

<sup>550</sup> SHAPE Historical Office, as cited in Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace*, 189.

By early 1957 the maturation of the Soviet Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) program raised the possibility that the highest authority in Washington might be paralyzed prior to effective retaliatory nuclear actions. From May 1957 onwards, according to Rosenberg and Trachtenberg, President Eisenhower began to arrange details for pre-delegation of authority necessary for nuclear operations to top-echelon commanders.<sup>551</sup> Several commanders, in particular COMSAC and SACEUR, were to receive the authority to make crucial decisions on their own judgment unless they could “contact higher authority at a time when survival depends upon immediate action.”<sup>552</sup> In short, the NATO defense strategy had become U.S. general war contingency.<sup>553</sup>

While U.S. strategists were elaborating the nature and scope of general war in response to growing Soviet capabilities, they also had a keen sense of the growing risk of limited war under forthcoming U.S.-Soviet nuclear parity. Even after the Soviet Union obtained the “capacity to inflict crippling damage on the [United States] ...,” NSC 5501 stated, the Soviets would “continue to be extremely reluctant to precipitate a contest in which the USSR would be likely to be subjected even to limited nuclear attack.” However, NSC 5501 warned, after attaining nuclear plenty the Communists would probably “increase the pace of their attempts at

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<sup>551</sup> Rosenberg, “The origins of overkill: Nuclear weapons and American strategy, 1945-1960” (International Security, vol. 7, no. 4, Spring 1983), 48-9.

<sup>552</sup> Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace*, 171.

<sup>553</sup> In the spring of 1956, General Maxwell Taylor recalled later, the JCS was undertaking the task of drafting the “Joint Strategic Objectives Plan” (JSOP 60) to estimate required force levels in 1960. Convinced that the mounting cost of the long-range missiles and bomber programs should be met with a slash of conventional forces, Admiral Radford sought to eliminate planning for a conventional war with the Soviet Union. During the discussion of Admiral Radford’s view, the JCS brought the definition of general war into one focal point. According to the JCS conclusion general war would mean a “conflict in which the [United States] and USSR would be directly involved and in which atomic weapons would be used at the outset”; Maxwell Taylor, *The Uncertain Trumpet* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959-60), 38-9. By this definition military advisers in Washington confirmed that the defense of West Europe would be subject to U.S. military planning for general war.

progressive local expansion, supported by force or threat of force,” if their actions could succeed and would not “provoke U.S. counteraction involving appreciable risk of general war.”<sup>554</sup>

On the assumption that U.S. strategic deterrence by nuclear superiority would not last long, the Eisenhower administration began to reassess the adequacy of current efforts to deter local aggression. Opinions varied: some strategists genuinely believed that, under forthcoming mutual deterrence or nuclear stalemate, nations would be forced to rule out war as a means of achieving political objectives. Others in the Air Force pressed for so-called “counterforce” theory, which stressed further expansion of Air Force capabilities against the enemy’s strategic air and missile forces against the United States. Still others, mostly in the Army and the Navy, began to call for “finite or minimum deterrence,” targeting the most valuable strategic resources in the cities and industrial centers of potential enemies.<sup>555</sup>

The Army and the Navy based their support of minimum deterrence on their belief that under mutual deterrence SAC would not need excessive massive retaliatory power for national defense. Once general war could be deterred by both sides, they argued, local conflicts on a limited scale would pose a major challenge to the future security of the free world. The view of the Army and Navy enjoyed support from several important figures within the administration. Between 1953 and 1955 Army Chief of Staff, General Matthew Ridgway, was the most prominent advocate of balanced military forces to cope with less-than-general war situations. General Maxwell Taylor succeeded General Ridgway in mid-1955 and became the main spokesman for the Army's belief in the necessity to prepare for limited war. As early as July

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<sup>554</sup> Trachtenberg, *The Development of American Strategic Thought*, 103-4. The State, Treasury, and Budget members believed that the last sentence should be read: “Even after attaining atomic plenty, the Communist powers probably will not attempt progressive local expansion, supported by force or the threat of force, unless they estimate that (1) such methods can succeed and will not provoke U.S. counteraction involving appreciable risk of general war, and (2) fear of atomic war will drive the allies of the [United States] in the direction of neutrality toward or appeasement of the USSR”; *ibid.*

<sup>555</sup> Lemmer, *The Air Force*, 52-5.

1955, he began to spell out the idea of "flexible response" as a counterargument to massive retaliatory forces.<sup>556</sup>

Although the possibility of limited war was widely recognized by all the services after the mid-1950s, no consensus existed over the need for special programs. Many American strategists, including President Eisenhower, believed that U.S. preparation for general war included adequate preparation for small wars. Even among proponents for limited war, opinions were divided over how to prepare. Together with some civilian observers, the Army in general contended that the Air Force should have main responsibility for adequate airlift for mobile combat units trained for the mission. However, General Taylor supported the Navy's claims for mobile conventional forces capable of quick deployment to troubleshoot local conflicts. There was still another group of strategists who simply anticipated the use of tactical nuclear weapons.<sup>557</sup>

During early and mid-1957, the administration had lengthy and intense discussions of new basic national security policy. When NSC 5707/8 finally emerged, it reaffirmed the administration's continuing devotion to fiscal austerity. To continue a sound U.S. economy, NSC 5707/8 stated:

b. The Federal Government should maintain overall credit and fiscal policies designed to assist in stabilizing the economy and make a determined effort to keep its expenditures below its anticipated revenues by an amount sufficient to permit some reduction in the public debt and from time to time to provide for tax reductions; recognizing that the United States must continue to meet the necessary costs of the programs essential for its security...<sup>558</sup>

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<sup>556</sup> Ibid., 53, 59.

<sup>557</sup> Ibid., 63-4.

<sup>558</sup> Trachtenberg, *The Development of American Strategic Thought*, 179.

With reference to this statement, NSC 5707/8 noted President Eisenhower's expressed desire in the NSC meeting of December 21, 1956 to avoid requesting "from the Congress ... new obligational authority for the Department of Defense above \$39 billion in any Fiscal Year" unless "some unforeseen emergency of an international or economic character" occurred.<sup>559</sup>

With that idea in mind, in the NSC meeting of July 1957 President Eisenhower approved the U.S. military budget for FY 1958 totaling \$38 billion, with "personnel strength of all military services at mid-FY 1958 of 2.7 million...." Additional reductions might be made by the end of FY 1958 "to keep within the above expenditure level" and "as may be decided in connection with the formulation of the FY 1959 budget." Further, President Eisenhower authorized Secretary Wilson to plan a FY 1959 budget of \$38 billion. Finally, the president noted that planning beyond FY 1959 should be "on the basis of annual expenditures and new obligational authority of approximately \$38 billion" and should recognize the "trend toward more expensive military equipment with some reductions in personnel."<sup>560</sup>

General Taylor recalled later that although it was hard to say "what effect budgetary concerns had" upon revisions of basic military policies between 1956 and 1957, new basic national security policies in the two years were "far more favorable to the strategy of massive retaliation than had been the 1955 edition." While new military programs were designed to spend more for the "heavy, costly equipment of use only in general atomic war," they reduced the personnel and combat units from all services without providing substantial modernization of the remaining forces. In February 1957 the services were notified that in an expected budget of \$38 billion for FY 1958 they would lose 10% of military personnel. In the NSC meeting on July

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<sup>559</sup> *FRUS, 1955-57, National Security Policy*, Volume XIX, 394.

<sup>560</sup> Memorandum: Discussion at the 332<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the NSC, Thursday, July 25, 1957, July 26, 1957 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 9 (Abilene, KS.:DDEL).

25, 1957, Secretary Wilson admitted that this would have an “especially adverse effect on the Army,” defending his military program on the ground of U.S. policy to “maximize air power and minimize the foot soldier.”<sup>561</sup>

Under new military programs, General Taylor deplored, the United States would not have means to counter small aggressions, which might escalate into a big nuclear war “if not quickly suppressed.” In his opinion the “constant downward trend in ground forces” would result in the “eventual abandonment of a forward strategy” and the “undermining of our system of collective security.”<sup>562</sup> Despite the reservations of General Taylor and other critics of massive retaliation, the U.S. strategic focus away from limited war and finite deterrence continued in the late 1950s because the president did not want to reduce strategic deterrence and spend more on conventional forces.<sup>563</sup>

As a result, the option of reinforcing conventional forces with nuclear firepower received wide attention. NSC 5602/1 specifically mentioned that it was the policy of the United States to “integrate nuclear weapons with other weapons in the arsenal of the United States.”<sup>564</sup> Equipped with nuclear firepower, U.S. armed forces could continue to deter or defeat future aggressors despite the steady decline of overall manpower among the services. The idea of using tactical nuclear weapons proved especially attractive to many U.S. policymakers. Therefore, between 1954 and 1958 planners frequently looked to the carefully controlled use of nuclear weapons against limited aggressions.<sup>565</sup>

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<sup>561</sup> Taylor, *The Uncertain Trumpet*, 47-8.

<sup>562</sup> Ibid., 50-1.

<sup>563</sup> Lemmer, *The Air Force*, 69.

<sup>564</sup> Trachtenberg, *The Development of American Strategic Thought*, 128.

<sup>565</sup> Lemmer, *The Air Force*, 64-5.

The question was how much the United States could rely on nuclear weapons in limited war. When the NSC began the review of NSC 5602 on February 27, 1956, the JCS call for integration of nuclear weapons with other weapons prompted intense discussion. On behalf of the Defense Department, Admiral Radford explained that nuclear weapons would be “so thoroughly integrated in the U.S. armed forces” that “some dividing line between use and non-use of these weapons” was becoming unrealistic. Treasury Secretary George Humphrey expressed his support of Admiral Radford’s view when he stated that, given the expense, the United States could not “prepare dual methods of fighting a future war” and must assume that nuclear weapons would be employed.<sup>566</sup>

However, President Eisenhower and Secretary Dulles reserved their vetoes on the JCS request for unrestricted flexibility in the event of limited war. Although the president agreed “emphatically with Admiral Radford from a strictly military point of view,” he thought that the United States could not ignore the political factor. Secretary Dulles admonished that the “automatic employment of nuclear weapons in certain instances” would “surely cost us our allies,” adding his warning of that “terrible repercussions” might follow U.S. “use of nuclear weapons against the colored peoples of Asia.”<sup>567</sup> Still, President Eisenhower and Secretary Dulles agreed with Admiral Radford that U.S. armed forces should be granted unrestricted use of nuclear weapons for defensive purposes, that is, if U.S. forces “were directly attacked by the enemy.”<sup>568</sup>

President Eisenhower finally approved NSC 5602/1 on March 15, 1956. The document stated that the United States ought to have ready forces “sufficiently versatile to use both

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<sup>566</sup> *FRUS, 1955-57, National Security Policy*, Volume XIX, 203-5.

<sup>567</sup> *Ibid.*, 204-6.

<sup>568</sup> *Ibid.*, 203-6.

conventional and nuclear weapons,” but the forces should not be “so dependent on tactical nuclear capabilities that any decision to intervene against local aggression would be probably tantamount to a decision to ... [go] nuclear....” Further:

With the coming of nuclear plenty, the ability to apply force selectively and flexibly will become increasingly important in maintaining the morale and will of the free world to resist aggression.... The apprehensions of U.S. allies as to using nuclear weapons to counter local aggression can be lessened if U.S. deterrent force is not solely dependent on such weapons, thus avoiding the question of their use unless and until the deterrent fails. In the event of actual Communist local aggression, the United States should, if necessary, make its own decision as to the use of nuclear weapons.<sup>569</sup>

During the annual review of new basic national security policy beginning in February 1957, the substitution of nuclear weapons for conventional firepower in limited war again divided the NSC. NSC 5707/3, which was reviewed on April 11, questioned whether U.S. forces, currently both conventional and nuclear but under increasing integration of the two, could oppose local aggression without nuclear weapons. President Eisenhower now stressed that nuclear weapons were conventional weapons for the U.S. armed forces. It was “simply impossible” financially, he asserted, to “do everything both in the conventional and in the nuclear field,” so “any other military capability than the nuclear capability” was to be “very limited.” “From now on,” he proclaimed, “our basic policy” should get “into line with the planning ... going on in the Department of Defense for over two years” and asked the Defense Department to write a “revised statement of the military elements of our national strategy” to “appear in the final version of basic national security policy” sometime in May.<sup>570</sup>

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<sup>569</sup> Trachtenberg, *The Development of American Strategic Thought*, 129-30.

<sup>570</sup> Memorandum: Discussion at the 319<sup>th</sup> meeting of the NSC, Thursday, April 11, 1957, April 12, 1957 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 8 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

On May 27, 1957, when the NSC members met to review NSC 5707/7, the State Department made a lengthy presentation to counter what Secretary Dulles called the “new concept formulated by the Defense Department in several places of NSC 5707/7.” Although Secretary Dulles was convinced of the “inevitability of the general use of nuclear military power as conventional,” the “real problem” was the “timeline of the steps proposed by the Defense Department....” He argued that at present the United States had no nuclear weapons “really limited in scope and power.” Hence he doubted that a limited war was currently feasible. Dulles also believed the concept of selectivity in the NSC 5707/7 was premature. If the United States were to achieve such nuclear capabilities, Dulles finally contended, it should convince U.S. allies of the fact before using them. Therefore, it was premature to change the established policies in NSC 5602/1.<sup>571</sup>

Recent technological progress in the production of small nuclear weapons for limited war contradicted Dulles's arguments. He thought that U.S. “little bang weapons” were “actually of the type which produced such sensational results at Hiroshima.” But Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) Admiral Strauss reported that small-size nuclear weapons were in production at the level of “approximately 10%, or even 5%, of the size of the weapon used at Nagasaki.” Although the small weapons were expensive “in comparatively limited quantity at the present time,” they would become more available if “directed by authority.” Secretary Dulles admitted that this was an “extremely important” fact. President Eisenhower requested that the AEC chairman present the “types of nuclear weapons produced or being developed, by size of yield, and the approximate percentage of each type in the stockpile.”<sup>572</sup>

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<sup>571</sup> Memorandum: discussion at the 325<sup>th</sup> meeting of the NSC, Monday, May 27, 1957, May 28, 1957 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 8 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>572</sup> Ibid. On balance, it is remarkable that there was little consensus with regard to the value of small tactical nuclear weapons in general war. On the one hand, Barry Steiner explains, there was a group of strategists who urged on the use of large-

Despite unanimous opposition by the State Department to the new military policies in NSC 5707/7, on June 3 President Eisenhower approved an amended version in NSC 5707/8. The document reflected President Eisenhower and the Defense Department's anticipation of the major reliance on nuclear weapons of U.S. armed forces in limited war:

11. It is the policy of the United States to place main, but not sole, reliance on nuclear weapons; to integrate nuclear weapons with other weapons in the arsenal of the United States; to consider them as conventional weapons from a military point of view; and to use them when required to achieve national objectives. Advance authorization for their use is as determined by the President.

15. ...The prompt and resolute application of the degree of force necessary to defeat local aggression is considered the best means to keep hostilities from broadening into general war. Therefore, military planning for U.S. forces to oppose local aggression will be based on the development of an appropriate flexible and selective capability, including nuclear capability for use as authorized by the President. When the use of U.S. forces is required to oppose local aggression, force will be applied in a manner and on a scale best calculated to avoid hostilities from broadening into general war.

17. The United States should continue efforts to persuade its allies to recognize nuclear weapons as an integral part of the arsenal of the Free World and the need for their prompt and selective use when required...<sup>573</sup>

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yield nuclear weapons on the battlefield. For example, Bernard Brodie, a father of deterrence theory, believed that large-yield thermonuclear weapons would be very effective against key battlefield targets. Even if the use of fusion bombs made traditional warfare on the battlefield hardly inconceivable, high-yield bombs were certain to halt Soviet invading forces to Europe. To stress on the utilities of a very large-yield bomb against major enemy concentration, Brodie once commented on the case of the Korean War; between December 27 and 29, 1950, some 65,000 to 95,000 Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) were concentrated in the [Pyongyang]-Chorwon-Kumhwa area – a roughly equilateral triangle measuring about 20 km. on each side. Later, Operations Research Office (ORO) estimated that six to ten closely spaced 40 KT fission bombs could have neutralized them, but the use of only one fusion bomb would have been sufficient for the same purpose. On the other hand, others such as Roger Hilsman thought that the use of battlefield nuclear weapons would not paralyze ground operations had troops been repositioned prior to the start of hostilities. To protect armies with nuclear weapons for defensive purpose, these strategists needed to control the type of nuclear weapons on the battlefield and distinguish small nuclear weapons for tactical purposes from large weapons for strategic uses. However, Brodie doubted how such distinction would be fully established and maintained on both sides in the field. During the 1950s, neither NATO commanders nor Soviet officials believed that strategic and tactical uses of nuclear weapons could be distinguished; Barry H. Steiner, *Bernard Brodie and the Foundations of American Nuclear Strategy* (Lawrence, KS.: the University Press of Kansas, 1991), 141-6.

<sup>573</sup> Memorandum: discussion at the 325<sup>th</sup> meeting of the NSC, Monday, May 27, 1957, May 28, 1957 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 8 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

In short, NSC 5707/8 formally recognized that nuclear weapons were conventional and standard weapons for U.S. armed forces. Making a big departure from NSC 5602/1, NSC 5707/8 deleted a statement that U.S. ready forces should not “become so dependent on tactical nuclear capabilities that any decision to intervene against local aggression would probably be tantamount to a decision to use nuclear weapons.” For the first time the NSC endorsed as basic national security policy the elimination of any distinction between the roles of nuclear weapons in general war and in small wars. Combined with the new basic national security policy’s reliance on nuclear retaliatory power, Fairchild and Poole conclude, NSC 5707/8 “marked the apogee of the New Look.”<sup>574</sup>

U.S. strategists also began to differentiate limited war from general war on a geographic basis. In the NSC meeting of May 27, 1957, the NSC agreed that local aggression referred only to “conflicts occurring in less developed areas of the world, in which limited U.S. forces participate because U.S. interests are involved.” President Eisenhower confirmed that military action in Berlin or possibly in the Near East could not be kept local in character, that wars could only be “limited in underdeveloped areas.”<sup>575</sup> Stimulated by urgent needs for financial austerity and aided by advances in military technology, the United States moved toward further reliance on nuclear weapons in preparing for both general war and limited war.

### **Origin of the “Pentomic” reorganization**

Under the aegis of Washington’s new basic national security policy, the U.S. Army moved decisively toward creating nuclear-capable forces. Under the continued pressure of

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<sup>574</sup> Fairchild & Poole, *History of the JCS*, Volume VII, 15-7.

<sup>575</sup> Memorandum: discussion at the 325<sup>th</sup> meeting of the NSC, Monday, May 27, 1957, May 28, 1957 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 8 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

budget cuts, the Army began to produce and control its own nuclear weapons independent of the Air Force and was taking the first steps toward the “Pentomic” organization of its ground units. Featuring small-size field units supported by the Army’s first-generation atomic weapons, new “Pentomic” divisions represented the Eisenhower administration’s devotion to “New Look” doctrine.

The advent of the atomic age mandated U.S. armed forces to develop new tactical doctrines. Since the Civil War, Andrew Bacevich explains, U.S. military tradition had sought victories with fewer casualties by employing new machinery and technology instead of manpower. U.S. experience in the Korean War evidenced that even in purely conventional warfare firepower could defeat manpower “in almost every encounter.” Impressed by the Communists’ faint regard for human losses, the Army concluded that the “bigger bang” of tactical nuclear weapons would be highly effective against a “standard tactic of any Soviet indoctrinated force.”<sup>576</sup>

Due to the growing significance of strategic missions within the Air Force, the Army was less likely to receive full support for ground operations from the air. To be sure, a tactical component of the Air Force continued its role as a supporter of such actions. However, TAC's missions were not confined to theater operations; in the event of general war, they extended to the strategic air offensive in coordination with SAC. The first nuclear-capable tactical air wing was deployed to Europe in 1952, and SAC-TAC operations plans began to merge the next year. While most SAC units remained in the United States, their TAC counterparts could strike

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<sup>576</sup> Andrew J. Bacevich., *The Pentomic Era: the US Army between Korea and Vietnam* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press: Sold by US G.P.O., 1986), 55-7.

immediately from forward bases. Hence, the tactical air forces could debilitate enemy air defenses prior to or during SAC raids on enemy homelands.<sup>577</sup>

For the long term new strategic missions undermined TAC's *raison-d-etre* as supporter of field missions, as well as TAC's independent status within the Air Force. Air Force staffs gradually looked on TAC as part of SAC. The tactical air forces in overseas bases could be the first wave of the strategic air offensive. In 1956 the Air Force described its tactical air power as the nation's "instant retaliatory power," rivaling SAC, a "great and flexible striking power." Duplicated missions of SAC and TAC in the delivery of nuclear weapons with similar equipment inspired some influential figures to seek a single unified command. The idea was not implemented, but its appearance reflects the alteration of TAC's original mission as supporter of the Army on the battlefield.<sup>578</sup>

Another issue related to tactical air support with nuclear firepower arose from doctrinal conflicts between the services. The Air Force believed that nuclear weapons had enhanced the impact of air power on the battlefield, thus changing the nature of war. At the outset of war, the Air Force would launch an air offensive to gain air superiority. Because Army commanders on the ground might not recognize the intricacy of initial battles for air superiority, the Air Force argued, its theater commanders had to control all theater air assets at least during the first decisive phase. After winning air superiority the Air Force would shift its focus to the other two basic combat missions: interdiction and close air support, with priority on the former. By projecting nuclear weapons over enemy forces and logistic support on the communication lines rather than on the battlefield, effective interdiction campaigns would open the road toward

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<sup>577</sup> Martin, "Reforging the swords," 220-4, 293.

<sup>578</sup> Ibid., 293, 320.

decisive victories. Consequently, the Air Force put relatively little weight on close air support, warning against the use of air resources on scattered targets near lines of ground combat.<sup>579</sup>

The Army was skeptical of new Air Force doctrine. Since the Air Force had won its independence from the Army in 1947, the command and control of close air support had been a major source of friction between the two services. Air Force expansion of its coverage of deep targets produced worries in the Army that close air support for its ground operations would be compromised. Likewise the Army reacted negatively to Air Force doctrine on theater warfare, as the great explosiveness of tactical nuclear weapons could reduce Air Force ability to strike precise targets without inflicting damage upon nearby friendly forces, especially at night or under bad weather conditions.<sup>580</sup>

Finally, the Army foresaw that long-term development of the Air Force would outpace the evolution of close air support for ground forces. The Air Force was mainly interested in the development of heavy bombers and supersonic fighters, aircraft that Army Chief General Taylor recognized would not be suitable for tactical air support.<sup>581</sup> The precise striking ability required for close air support missions, especially with nuclear weapons, called for development of aircraft that could fly more slowly at lower altitudes.<sup>582</sup>

While effective tactical air support from the Air Force fell into question after the Korean War, the Army explored ways to equip its ground forces with surface nuclear firepower. Not surprisingly, this quest opened fierce inter-service competition with the Air Force, especially in

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<sup>579</sup> Ibid., 232-40.

<sup>580</sup> Ibid., 322-3.

<sup>581</sup> Bacevich, *The Pentomic Era*, 88.

<sup>582</sup> After mid-1950s the Army found one main solution for close air support in the development of helicopters, which proved useful against enemy's mobile units. Because helicopters also had excellent potential in troop transportation on future nuclear battlefield, the Army began to expand the role of helo units within the service in the mid-1950s; Allan R. Millett & Peter Maslowski, *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States of America* (New York & London: the Free Press & Collier Macmillan Publishers), 529.

the field of guided missiles. In October 1953, Watson explains, the Eisenhower administration endorsed an amended Key West agreement, which had regulated the functions of each service within the armed forces since 1948. Both the 1948 and 1953 agreements directed that the Army provide all forces for combat operations on land, while the Air Force supplied close combat and logistical air support. Both services were to contribute to air defense.<sup>583</sup>

When missile technology added long-range guided missiles to the U.S. arsenal in the early 1950s, inter-service competition complicated the task of assigning development of new missiles to individual services. When the JCS first directed missile-related responsibilities to the services in 1949, it had permitted all three services to develop surface-to-surface missiles (SSMs) and surface-to-air missiles (SAMs). During the Korean War Air Force Chief General Vandenberg attempted to limit the Army's missile program to surface-to-surface missiles within a narrow combat zone, but the JCS did not resolve the issue. When the Army requested a purchase of surface-to-surface missiles from the Navy in January 1953, the Air Force opposed the transaction, asserting that it would furnish all the manned aircraft and guided missiles necessary for close air support and interdiction. Obviously the Air Force aimed at eliminating the Army's SSM program. The Air Force held the same position when debates arose in May 1953, but the JCS made no decision until 1954.<sup>584</sup>

In June 1954 the JCS finally acted to settle the conflicts over missile programs. An ad hoc committee was established to draft a new directive on guided missiles. On July 26 the committee proposed to the JCS that the Army develop the SSMs to use against "tactical targets of interest to the ground force commander." While the Air Force should develop the SSMs for its own needs, the committee strongly recommended that it focus on manned aircraft rather than

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<sup>583</sup> Watson, *History of the JCS*, Volume V, 177-9.

<sup>584</sup> *Ibid.*, 179-82.

on missiles for close support missions. In a separate committee composed of Army and Air Force generals, the Army also received permission to use the SSMS against tactical targets within the battle zone of its operations. When the JCS sent a directive to Secretary Wilson on September 9, it contained all the decisions reached in previous months. Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Anderson endorsed the directive on November 13, 1954.<sup>585</sup>

Thus the JCS authorized the Army's possession of tactical missiles, which had become combat-ready after years of study. Between October and December 1955, when the Army and the Air Force participated in SAGEBRUSH, the largest joint exercise since World War II, the two services agreed that it would not set a precedent for future joint doctrine. The exercise tested the key element of Army-Air Force cooperation – effective use of tactical nuclear weapons in proximity to friendly forces. Field commanders on the ground requested close air support through the joint control system. However, the Army's own weapons provided most of the nuclear fire support. By relying on close air support at a minimal level, the exercise demonstrated well the Army's ultimate desire to have control of its own nuclear firepower, especially guided missiles.<sup>586</sup>

By the mid-1950s the Army had obtained various types of nuclear firepower for tactical support of ground operations. Among its first-generation nuclear weapons, the 280mm atomic cannon was the oldest, originally designed as heavy artillery for the war in Europe between 1944 and 1945. In May 1953 a prototype succeeded in firing a nuclear round, the first artillery to do so. Within months the Army sent half a dozen of the atomic cannons to Europe. Their fire range was a mere 17 miles, however, and their 83-ton weight left little room for tactical maneuver.

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<sup>585</sup> Ibid., 183-5.

<sup>586</sup> Martin, "Reforging the swords," 340-1.

With nuclear munitions the 8-inch gun and 155-mm howitzer could move more easily than the 280mm cannon, but these also suffered from short fire range.<sup>587</sup>

According to Army regulations, the ground commander could deliver atomic weapons “from missiles of a wide variety of ranges and uses.” The Corporal system had been the Army’s first operational missile since 1953. With its 75-mile range Corporal could reach targets deep in the enemy’s rear, but its 46-foot long, liquid-fueled body made awkward its transport and thus far from effective in many battlefield situations. After the Corporal program the Army developed SSMs in two directions. Small and flexible systems offered added firepower to the smallest of units, while long-range missiles targeted areas well beyond the scope of operations of top ranking ground field commanders. Following Corporal, in 1956 the Army developed the first operational unit of Redstone, a liquid-fueled, 240-mile missile. Jupiter, the Army’s first Intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM), made a successful 1,500 mile test in May 1957.<sup>588</sup>

The downside, Bacevich notes, was that a weapon with over a 1,000-mile range was “too destructive and inaccurate to be used in proximity to friendly forces or noncombatants.” When the Army attempted to integrate nuclear capabilities into all its operations, it needed much smaller and more precise weapons. Honest John, deployed first in 1954, was the first major advance in this area. Featuring a 22-mile range, solid propellant, and truck carriers, it offered a major improvement in combat flexibility. Still, its limited accuracy and heavy weight posed

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<sup>587</sup> Bacevich, *The Pentomic Era*, 82-4.

<sup>588</sup> Because the Air Force did not concede to the Army’s possession of strategic weaponry, it claimed that its own missile program Thor should be elected. In November 1956, Secretary Wilson decided that the Army could develop Jupiter but after deployment give its control to the Air Force. Further, he directed that all SSMs with a range longer than 20 miles would belong to the Air Force. When Neil H. McElroy replaced Wilson in late 1957, however, the Army virtually nullified Wilson’s November 1956 decision; *ibid.*, 86-90.

problems. For the rest of decade, the Army continued to develop smaller and lighter-weight tactical nuclear weapons, represented eventually by Little John and Davy Crockett.<sup>589</sup>

Technological progress in the field of nuclear artillery and SSMs produced changes in the Army's organizational concept. In 1953, when the Eisenhower administration endorsed NSC 162/2, new nuclear technology and the fiscal austerity of the New Look spurred Army Chief General Ridgway and other staff to anticipate new Army divisions redesigned into nuclear forces. On December 28 General Ridgway ordered a study of projected Army organization for the 1960s under the assumption that his service would be capable of delivering nuclear weapons against military targets. By 1959, he estimated, the Army would have various advanced nuclear weapons. Skeptical that nuclear weapons in general had negated conventional warfare, the general hoped that the Army would graft nuclear weapons into old-style missions. Particularly concerned about the security of Western Europe, he anticipated that atomic weapons temporarily would offset the Air Force's limited support and the smaller Army. General Ridgway's directive prompted a series of study projects and analyses extending over several months.<sup>590</sup>

The Army War College and the Command and General Staff College (CGSC) produced the most significant if conflicting studies. On the one hand, the CGSC study assumed that the nuclear and conventional battlefields were fundamentally similar. Although the study called for increased mobility, more firepower, and improved tanks, overall there was little change in the 1954 division design for the 1960 nuclear battlefield. In contrast, the War College study concluded that traditional force design could not endure a future battlefield in which both sides employed atomic weapons. The study suggested that conventional units should be replaced by

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<sup>589</sup> Ibid., 92-6.

<sup>590</sup> Midgley, *Deadly Illusions*, 33-4.

atomic firepower. Accordingly, by 1960 atomic weapons would exclusively provide major firepower to Army divisions.<sup>591</sup>

When both studies were reviewed in April 1954, it was pointed out that weapons and equipment adequate for the conclusion of the War College study could be fielded only after the mid-1960s. For the improvement of organizations with little reliance on future technology, mobile and flexible forces with tactical maneuver capability under nuclear firepower were essential. For this purpose Major General R. M. Montague devised a concept in which five maneuver elements would be subject to each headquarters. In June 1954, Chief of Army Field Forces General John Dahlquist recommended to the JCS that the Army should maintain both nuclear and conventional capabilities in light of available resources and possible non-nuclear conflicts. The Army Staff agreed on the belief that, with forthcoming nuclear parity, the Army might face either a nuclear or non-nuclear fighting situation. The JCS concurred. Under the plan for dual-capable divisions, Army planning staffs launched a study for redesigned Army divisions, which eventually led to the creation of Pentomic divisions.<sup>592</sup>

Yet between 1954 and 1956 the Army failed to create new divisions under the project Atomic Test Field Army (ATFA). In March 1954, Midgley explains, the JCS directed a study for “ultimate reorganization to achieve more favorable combat potential-to-manpower ratios.” Lieutenant General Lemnitzer forwarded the JCS directive to Army field forces with guidance that the new force design and doctrine should be fielded by 1956 with the support of available atomic weapons for Army commanders. Originally, ATFA fell upon the CGSC, which had already contributed to the study of projected 1960 force design. Short of time for a new study, planners simply advanced the original study for the 1960 Army as the 1956 division designs.

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<sup>591</sup> Ibid., 39-41.

<sup>592</sup> Ibid., 41-3.

Between February and November 1955, the effectiveness of new divisions under the ATFA project was tested by a series of field exercises. Unfortunately, neither the offensive nor defensive ability of the ATFA divisions with the employment of nuclear weapons in the field was better than that of the 1954 divisions. On June 6, 1956 Army Chief General Taylor terminated AFTA.<sup>593</sup>

In addition to the military ineptitude of the ATFA divisions, economic needs determined General Taylor's decision. Under increasing budgetary pressure, General Taylor sought a new force design more affordable than the ATFA divisions, and his search led him to the results of another project. In November 1954 General Ridgway had requested a study to "develop broad doctrinal and organizational concepts applicable to sustained ground combat on the Eurasian land mass in the period 1960-1970." The result was creation of the Pentana study group. Although the Pentana project was originally a long-term study for the 1965-1970 Army, in June 1955 Ridgway reoriented it toward the Army's war planning for 1960. Although questions arose regarding the new force design's ability for conventional maneuver, in July 1956 it became the basic guidance for the Army's reorganization.<sup>594</sup>

Although the Pentana proposals had not been tested in the field, General Taylor embraced them for both military and economic reasons. According to General Taylor's testimony, the study's new force structure required new weapons systems for the Army and the small-size of Pentomic divisions would produce cost savings. Three key features were envisioned: a small division organized around five "battle groups," mortar batteries within the battle group as organic artillery units, and integration of nuclear-capable Honest John SSMs into very small division

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<sup>593</sup> Ibid., 44-57.

<sup>594</sup> Ibid., 58-61.

artillery.<sup>595</sup> By the Army's adoption of the proposals in July 1956, three types of divisions – Infantry, Armored, and Airborne – would be converted into new “Pentomic” divisions. In the fall of 1956, the 101st Airborne Division became the prototype.<sup>596</sup> In December President Eisenhower concurred in a Defense Department recommendation calling for a reduction of U.S. ground forces from 19 to 17 divisions with the Pentomic reorganization of the remaining 17 divisions.<sup>597</sup>

### **Suspending paragraph 13 (d) of the Armistice Agreement**

While planning for Army reorganization proceeded, in June 1956 the Eisenhower administration terminated NNSC activities in the ROK (see chapter 3). The next step toward restoring the military balance in Korea was to modernize the obsolete weapons of UN forces there. It became obvious, however, that some dual-capable weapons, which the Defense Department believed essential, could not be sent to the ROK without violating paragraph 13(d) of the armistice agreement. Despite President Eisenhower's approval of the “Pentomic” reorganization of U.S. armed forces in December 1956, Washington soon marked off two U.S. divisions in Korea as the only exception to its overall modernization program.<sup>598</sup> It was not until June 1957 that Washington finally decided to suspend paragraph 13(d) of the armistice agreement and begin the modernization of U.S. forces in Korea. Still, the introduction of atomic-capable weapons to Korea was not yet decided upon.

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<sup>595</sup> Ibid., 58, 68-9.

<sup>596</sup> Bacevich, *The Pentomic Era*, 106.

<sup>597</sup> *FRUS, 1955-57, Korea*, Volume XXIII, Part 2, 366-7.

<sup>598</sup> Ibid., 388.

When the UNC unilaterally terminated the NNITs in the ROK, Washington seemed to assume that the United States would modernize its forces in Korea under paragraph 13 (d) of the armistice agreement. On May 5, 1956 the State Department informed Secretary Wilson that, "as a matter of interpretation of the agreement in the light of the actions of the other side," CINCUNC General Lemnitzer should be authorized to replace obsolete weapons with appropriate ones.<sup>599</sup> On June 27 the Pentagon concurred.<sup>600</sup> Three weeks later the progress report on NSC 5514 stated that to replace obsolete weapons the UNC would introduce new ones "through a more flexible interpretation of the armistice agreements."<sup>601</sup>

This State-Defense understanding broke down, however, when on September 1 the JSC asserted to Secretary Wilson that "the need for modernization of the UNC's materiel including an atomic capability" was "sufficiently critical to justify positive action without delay."<sup>602</sup> A debate began in a Defense-State meeting ten days later when the question was raised as to whether U.S. forces in Korea could be equipped with nuclear weapons within the boundaries of the armistice agreement. Representing the JCS view, Admiral Radford stressed that the entire question was a matter of "reducing the cost of military commitment to Korea," which could be done by "modernizing the forces there to include weapons of atomic capability." As to how the weapons could be introduced under paragraph 13(d), the State and Defense Departments agreed that legal

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<sup>599</sup> Ibid., 361.

<sup>600</sup> Ibid., 284-5.

<sup>601</sup> Progress report on NSC 5514, July 18, 1956 in White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, 1952-61, NSC Series, Policy Papers Subseries, Box No. 15 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>602</sup> A report by the JIC on "Modernization of forces and equipment in Korea," JCS 1776/562, October 19, 1956 in Geographic File, 1954-56, RG 218: Records of the U.S. JCS, 383.21 Korea (3-19-45) (2) Sec. 7 to 092 Palestine (5-3-46), Sec. 21, Box No.31 (College Park, MD.: NA).

advisers of both departments should work together to decide which weapons could be introduced under a liberal interpretation of 13(d) and how they could be reported to the NNSC.<sup>603</sup>

Legal experts within the State and Defense Departments quickly concluded that under a “liberal interpretation” of paragraph 13(d) the items which might cause difficulty were the “280mm gun, Honest John, and Nike” because these were “instruments of dual capability.” Because there was no concrete evidence that the Communists had introduced atomic-capable weapons to North Korea, U.S. deployment of the above weapons to the South was hardly justifiable in a legal sense.<sup>604</sup> On September 22 Secretary Wilson requested that the JCS provide any “available evidence concerning the introduction of atomic warheads, by the Communist forces, into the territory controlled by them.” On October 19 the JCS forwarded to him the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC)'s conclusion that there was “no evidence to substantiate any reports of the existence of atomic warheads or atomic ground delivery systems in North Korea.” Nonetheless, the JCS asserted that considering the presence of atomic-capable Communist aircraft and possible deployment of additional delivery systems on short notice, U.S. forces in Korea ought to be modernized with an atomic capability.<sup>605</sup>

Because of competing interests between the State and Defense Departments, debates dragged on through November. On the 7th the Bureau of Far Eastern affairs proposed a draft of a joint State-Defense message to the CINCUNC authorizing introduction of new equipment to

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<sup>603</sup> *FRUS, 1955-57, Korea*, Volume XXIII, Part 2, 305-309.

<sup>604</sup> *Ibid.*, 320-1. According to a memorandum for Admiral Radford, during the meeting there was a controversy regarding the legal eligibility of Nike under 13 (d). Legal advisers from the Defense argued that the 280mm gun and the “Honest John” were “weapons of dual capability” and that the NIKE was an “improved anti-aircraft weapons,” a replacement of “obsolete anti-aircraft guns” The advisers agreed to review the matter again; Memorandum for Admiral Radford: Modernization of Forces and Equipment in Korea, September 11, 1956 in Chairman's File, Admiral Radford, 1953-57, RG 218, Box No. 12 (College Park, MD.: NA). Eventually, the introduction of the Nike was approved after the Army assured that the weapons was not atomic-capable; *FRUS, 1955-57, Korea*, Volume XXIII, Part 2, 345.

<sup>605</sup> A report by the JIC on “Modernization of forces and equipment in Korea,” JCS 1776/562, October 19, 1956 in Geographic File, 1954-56, RG 218; Records of the U.S. JCS, 383.21 Korea (3-19-45) (2) Sec. 7 to 092 Palestine (5-3-46), Sec. 21, Box No.31 (College Park, MD.: NA).

Korea under a liberal interpretation of Article 13(d). Admiral Radford rejected the State Department's position unless the instruction endorsed the introduction of the Honest John and the 280mm gun. Although a number of weapons on the list were in practice atomic-capable, the State Department acceded to the Defense Department's insistence that, with these two exceptions, the new weapons were "as close in effectiveness and type to the obsolete ones."<sup>606</sup>

The political, legal, and military viewpoints continued to clash over the two disputed items. The State Department's objection to these two weapons was political and legal. Because the world generally perceived them as atomic weapons, their introduction would have adverse effects on world opinion. In addition, the weapons would prompt the Communists to blame the UNC and the United States for a breach of the armistice. The Defense Department argued on military grounds that too much time had passed since the signing of the armistice to forego practical measures urged by CINCFE. The Pentagon insisted that neither the 280mm gun nor the Honest John was much different than the weapons the State Department did not dispute.<sup>607</sup>

On November 28, when officials of the two departments met again, they came to an understanding that the decision should be made "at a high political level." Although State still urged Defense to go along with all the weapons on the list minus the 280mm gun and Honest John, in early December the Pentagon recommended that Secretary Wilson request that the president authorize all the weapons on the list. At this point the issue was placed on the NSC agenda.

When the NSC began a review of NSC 5702, a new policy statement toward Korea, it appeared that the fierce State-Defense disputes of the fall of 1956 would not be repeated. In the NSC meeting of January 31, 1957, the State Department supported the Defense position that

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<sup>606</sup> *FRUS, 1955-57, Korea*, Volume XXIII, Part 2, 359-60.

<sup>607</sup> *Ibid.*, 362-3.

atomic weapons should be introduced to Korea. If the United States were to show a sign of abandoning the ROK, Secretary Dulles admonished, it might be lost “through subversion rather than through external aggression.” The South Koreans, Dulles understood, needed “visible evidence of military strength on site” since U.S. massive retaliatory power was not “immediately visible” and “to some degree uncertain.” Hence the “greatest assurance to the South Koreans” would be to introduce atomic weaponry, “even though such a move might be largely symbolic.” To be sure, the scale of Communist violation of the Korean armistice might not satisfy world opinion, but it “might be possible” to “separate out paragraph 13-D and void its provisions.” Therefore, Dulles expressed readiness to “take the risks involved in a violation of the Armistice agreement.”<sup>608</sup>

Nonetheless, between February and March 1957 an important split reappeared between the State and Defense positions. When the JCS failed to produce a report providing tangible evidence “of Communist violation of the armistice,” as previously agreed, the State Department contended that the new policy paper should include “essential safeguards” to the modernization program, especially regarding the “timing of such action and the bearing” on U.S. policy toward allies and in the United Nations. By the end of March, State had returned to its earlier position that under a liberal interpretation of 13(d) the United States should send all the listed items except for the 280mm “atomic” cannon and the 762mm Honest John.<sup>609</sup>

Therefore, the April 4 NSC meeting on Korea generated an intense discussion about paragraph 19(b) of NSC 5702/1 proposed by the State Department:

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<sup>608</sup> Memorandum: Discussion at the 311<sup>th</sup> meeting of the NSC, Thursday, January 31, 1957, February 1, 1957 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 8 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>609</sup> *FRUS, 1955-57, Korea*, Volume XXIII, Part 2, 387-9, 409, 415-6.

b. The timing of the introduction of dual conventional-nuclear weapons...shall be decided upon by the Secretariats of State and Defense, in consultation with the Director of Central Intelligence, only after they shall have determined that publishable evidence establishes Communist violations sufficient to warrant such action by the United States.

Secretary Dulles explained why he had changed his view. Although he had little doubt that the Communists had violated the armistice agreements "on a very large scale," there was no evidence of Communist weapons with atomic capabilities in North Korea. Nor did he believe that the Soviets would "entrust atomic weapons" to either Communist China or North Korea. Further, the secretary reminded, the United States had announced in the United Nations that the termination of NNITs was the "only alteration in the armistice agreement that the United States was seeking." Dulles admonished that the introduction of the two disputed items – 280mm guns and 762mm rockets – would produce greater political disadvantages than military advantages, especially among U.S. "friends and allies."<sup>610</sup>

President Eisenhower responded favorably to Secretary Dulles' arguments. Recognizing the need for a "job of education," the commander-in-chief indicated that action on NSC 5702/1 should be "held in abeyance" until the issue was discussed with "some of our reliable allies," especially in NATO.<sup>611</sup>

During April and May the United States consulted representatives of the Commonwealth nations, as well France, Turkey, and Thailand. At a meeting of April 23, Commonwealth representatives called for a "specific plan as to the timing and method of presenting the introduction of new weapons into Korea." The State Department outlined its plan to the group

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<sup>610</sup> Memorandum: Discussion at the 318th meeting of the NSC, Thursday, April 4, 1957, April 5, 1957 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 8 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>611</sup> Ibid.

on May 16: first, the UNC would announce in the MAC “no later than July 1, 1957” that Communist violations had relieved the UNC “from continued observance of paragraph 13(d)” and the UNC would redress the military balance; second, the UNC would report to the UN “prior to August 1.” Four days later the State Department briefed Thai, Turkish, and French representatives on the plan.<sup>612</sup>

Those consulted generally agreed with the modernization program and forwarded their governments’ recommendations to Washington:

1. It is desirable that the maximum possible publishable evidence establishing the Communist violations of paragraph 13(d) of the Armistice be presented.
2. It was the unanimous hope that it would be made clear that the [UNC] firmly intends to continue to support the Armistice as a whole and to observe the cease-fire.
3. Any action should best be taken as far in advance of the next session of the [UNGA] as possible.
4. Australia, New Zealand and France were particularly anxious that no dual-capable weapons be given [to] Koreans. All countries requested consultation, should the United States at some future date desire to furnish such weapons to Korea.

On June 5 Assistant Secretary of State Robertson recommended to Secretary Dulles that the review of NSC 5702/1 should be resumed “at the earliest possible date” in light of the “lack of opposition among those of our Allies thus far consulted.”<sup>613</sup>

The NSC meeting of June 13 discussed a revised NSC 5702/1, but the State and Defense Departments again failed to agree on deploying atomic-capable weapons to Korea. State and Defense-JCS proposals were as follows:

State Proposal

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<sup>612</sup> *FRUS, 1955-57, Korea*, Volume XXIII, Part 2, 431, 437, 439.

<sup>613</sup> *Ibid.*, 439-441.

c. On the assumption that the action will obtain reasonable support by our principal allies, equip U.S. forces in Korea with weapons designed primarily for nuclear warfare, such as Honest John rockets and the 280mm atomic cannons (without storing nuclear warheads in Korea) if the Secretaries of State and Defense are satisfied, on the basis of negotiations with [the] ROK...

Defense-JCS Proposal

c. Equip U.S. forces in Korea with modern weapons, including weapons designed primarily for nuclear warfare, such as Honest John rockets and 280mm atomic cannons.<sup>614</sup>

President Eisenhower concurred with the State Department's view that the Honest John and the 280mm guns were "so conspicuous" that their introduction should be explained "to the whole world." At the same time, after much discussion the meeting ended with the conclusion that the United States should announce that, "in view of Communist violations in North Korea of the Korean armistice," it would "modernize the defenses" of the UNC in the ROK.<sup>615</sup>

On June 21, in the UNC statement in the MAC at Panmunjom, Major General Homer L. Litzenberg announced that, "as a result of the long period of time since the armistice," the "obsolete and outmoded" equipment and weapons of the UNC could not be "replaced from stocks on hand or currently in production." He continued that the situation was aggravated by the imbalance created by the Communist "breach of sub-paragraph 13(d)." Therefore,

... the United Nations Command considers that it is entitled to be relieved of corresponding obligations under the provisions of this paragraph until such time as the relative military balance has been restored and your side, by its actions, has demonstrated its willingness to comply.

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<sup>614</sup> NSC 5702/1: U.S. Policy toward Korea, March 18, 1957 (Revised 6/10/57) in White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, 1952-61, NSC Series, Policy Papers Subseries, Box No. 19 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>615</sup> Memorandum: Discussion at the 326<sup>th</sup> meeting of the NSC, Thursday, June 13, 1957, June 14, 1957 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 9 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

The statement ended with the UNC pledge to “observe the cease-fire provision of the armistice agreement” and “all of the other provisions of the armistice agreement save to the extent to which it is entitled to be relieved from compliance” owing to Communist violations of paragraph 13(d) and NNSC provisions.<sup>616</sup>

### **Partitions of the Far Eastern theater**

The UNC suspension of paragraph 13(d) of the armistice agreement had profound implication for overall U.S. strategy in East Asia. Since the spring of 1953, U.S. military courses of action against the PRC had continuously taken the risk of possible Communist retaliatory actions against Japan. As Soviet nuclear strength grew, Washington policymakers feared, U.S. strategic deterrence based on nuclear superiority might not forestall an escalation of future Sino-American conflicts into a direct clash between the U.S.-Japan and Sino-Soviet security alliances. To prevent expansion of U.S.-PRC hostilities into a global war, the United States had to keep Japan out of such conflicts. In this context, the existence of the Far East Command (FEC) and its operational coverage of East Asia did not discourage Communist air forces from striking U.S. bases in Japan. Therefore, the dissolution of the Far Eastern theater was a major step toward Japan’s separation from U.S. operations in Korea. The UNC suspension of paragraph 13(d) of the armistice agreement took place on the same day of Washington's announcement of a large-scale withdrawal of U.S. forces from Japan. Within two weeks the FEC ceased to exist and the UNC moved from Tokyo to Seoul. The remaining question was how the U.S. modernization program would keep the ROK secure from North Korea and the PRC within a limited war framework.

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<sup>616</sup> Memorandum for the NSC, “Interim Report on Korea,” July 30, 1957 in White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, 1952-61, NSC Series, Policy Papers Subseries, Box No. 19 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

As of June 30, 1957, the United States was deploying 276,000 personnel in the Far East and the Southwest Pacific. Outside Europe and North Africa, where 425,000 U.S. troops were stationed, the Far East and the West Pacific was the only region where the United States maintained large-scale armed forces in peacetime. Although the Suez crisis of late 1956 ended Europe's dominant position in the Middle East and paved the way to U.S. future intervention against Arab nationalism and Soviet influence, at that time the United States still had only 3,000 men and four warships in the region. In the rest of the world, 53,000 U.S. military men in Latin America accounted for virtually everything Washington had under its command and control.<sup>617</sup>

The presence of large U.S. forces in Asia and the Pacific mirrored well the geopolitical significance of the region in U.S. Cold War strategy. After World War II, Melvyn Leffler explains, American strategists feared that Kremlin leaders, with their overwhelming power on the Eurasian land mass, might covet more than a security zone along their historical border. To compete with the United States, they believed, the Soviet Union would need human and material resources in Western Europe and Japan.<sup>618</sup> Further, Communist expansion into North Korea, mainland China, and North Vietnam after a decade of armed conflicts brought the United States and the PRC into open and indefinite confrontation in East Asia. By the mid-1950s the so-called “three-front” strategy represented a division of U.S.-PRC spheres of influence within Korea, the Taiwan Strait, and Vietnam.

While the United States solidified its ties with non-Communist Asia, it had more difficulty keeping European allies in line in the Far East, especially against Communist China. During the Korean War U.S. planning for expanding the military operations to China had

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<sup>617</sup> Memorandum for the NSC, U.S. security effort overseas, FY 1957, November 29, 1957 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box. No. 9 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>618</sup> Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1992), 3.

received little support from major allies in Europe. British and French inertia during Dien Bien Phu and the Geneva Conference symbolized the fall of Europe's colonial rule in Asia. During the Chinese offshore island crisis of 1954-55, the gap existing between the Commonwealth and the United States with reference to China policy was hard to close. For the rest of Eisenhower's first presidential term, things changed little in East Asia. The international dimension of the UNC rapidly declined in Korea. A tripartite approach to the settlement of the NNSC dispute eventually gave way to the UNC's unilateral suspension of NNIT activities. The China embargo was on the verge of total collapse in the face of waning support from European allies.

Several events of 1957 marked the denouement of U.S.-Europe coordination against Communist China. After the mid-1950s a severe financial plight prompted the United Kingdom to seek drastic defense budget cuts. Not only did London move toward a reduction of British forces in Germany; it also wanted to remove the remnant of Commonwealth troops in the ROK.<sup>619</sup> After reviewing British operations and military strength for all East Asia, London informed Washington in March, it found that its troops in Korea were more “expensive, on a per capita basis” than those “in any part of the world.”<sup>620</sup> On April 1 the British informed the ROK of their decision to reduce their forces in the UNC from a battalion to a small liaison group.<sup>621</sup> Australia, Canada, and New Zealand followed the British lead later in the month in informing Seoul of their intention to withdraw their contingents from the peninsula.<sup>622</sup>

Meanwhile, U.S. allies in Europe rebelled against Washington's insistence on maintaining tight multilateral economic sanctions on the PRC. Despite Washington's attempts to tighten

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<sup>619</sup> Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace*, 186-7.

<sup>620</sup> *FRUS, 1955-57, Korea*, Volume XXIII, Part 2, 373, 413-5.

<sup>621</sup> 주한영국군 철수, 1957, 분류번호 729.54 UK, 등록번호 154 (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard-Yenching Library).

<sup>622</sup> *FRUS, 1955-57, Korea*, Volume XXIII, Part 2, 414; 주한호주군 철수, 1957, 분류번호 729.54 AU, 등록번호 153 (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard-Yenching Library).

COCOM/CHICOM in bilateral talks with the participating countries in January 1957, a majority of them continued pressure for a relaxation of trade controls.<sup>623</sup> The British again took the lead, arguing, as Zhang notes, that controls should be confined to items of “real strategic importance.”

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President Eisenhower had two primary concerns with a loosening of multilateral trade restrictions on China: sentiments in Congress and among U.S. allies in East Asia other than Japan. He expressed these concerns in a March 6 NSC meeting, and resolved that any liberalization must be preceded by private talks with congressional leaders and assurances to allies in the Western Pacific that the United States had no intention of recognizing the PRC. For the moment efforts should continue to sustain a “China differential” in multilateral talks with European allies, even if the length of the restricted list of items was reduced.<sup>625</sup>

Although the U.S. Congress concurred with the administration’s policy direction, May meetings in Paris of CHINCOM members demonstrated that no room for compromise existed on the “China differential.” The British delegation lobbied other CHINCOM members for its total abolition, reasoning that, after the brutal Soviet suppression of the Hungarian protest in late 1956, it was unfair to treat the PRC more harshly than the Soviet Union. On May 27 the British formally proclaimed that it had already decided to unilaterally abolish the China differential. To demonstrate British readiness to increase the trade with China, a parliamentary delegation visited Beijing after the Paris meeting. U.S. officials recognized that British action would lead other countries to follow.<sup>626</sup>

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<sup>623</sup> *FRUS, 1955–1957, Foreign Aid and Economic Defense Policy*, Volume X, 420-1.

<sup>624</sup> Zhang, *Economic Cold War*, 186.

<sup>625</sup> *FRUS, 1955–1957, Foreign Aid and Economic Defense Policy*, Volume X, 422-431.

<sup>626</sup> Zhang, *Economic Cold War*, 186, 188-92.

Although the result of the Paris meeting disappointed Washington, many U.S. policymakers persisted in supporting tight unilateral controls of U.S. trade with the PRC. On July 13, in a memorandum to Secretary Wilson, the JCS urged that from a military viewpoint any further erosion of these controls would impose an increasing threat to national and collective security “by virtue of its direct contribution to [bloc] military build-up.”<sup>627</sup> Secretary Dulles had already declared publicly that trade with the PRC would help Beijing “develop as rapidly as possible a formidable military establishment and a heavy industry to support it.” Whatever others might do, Secretary Dulles stated, the United States, with its heavy security commitments in the China area, “ought not build up the military power of its potential enemy.”<sup>628</sup>

Overall, UN withdrawal from Korea and disruption of the China embargo represented a divergence of strategic interests between Europe and East Asia. The United States was the main architect of the collective security network, with security interests in both areas. Despite the tremendous increase of U.S. defense obligations on both sides of Eurasia, U.S. allies in Europe had little passion for a crusade against the PRC. On May 21, in a letter to President Eisenhower, British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan summarized differing views on opposite sides of the Atlantic. The prime minister noted that it was very hard to “persuade the English that the Chinese are more dangerous than the Russians, but I [realize] that the reverse is the case with your people.” He expressed hope that this difference would be settled rather than continue to “poison our relations” because they had “so many problems much more important than this.”<sup>629</sup>

Indeed, even from the perspective of evolving U.S. strategy in East Asia, abandonment of the China differential by European allies was far less significant than devising a military course

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<sup>627</sup> *FRUS, 1955–1957, Foreign Aid and Economic Defense Policy*, Volume X, 481.

<sup>628</sup> *FRUS, 1955–1957, China*, Volume III, 562; *FRUS, 1955–1957, Foreign Aid and Economic Defense Policy*, Volume X., 485, 491-5.

<sup>629</sup> *Ibid.*, 461.

in the region that would at once preserve American resources, protect key positions, and avert general war. The heavy reliance on nuclear weapons remained the most significant source of possible escalation to general war. Since the winter of 1950, Washington policymakers recognized, adverse effects upon U.S. relations with its allies had been a major obstacle to a nuclear strategy in East Asia. Fearing that possible Soviet retaliatory actions might eventually lead to general war in Europe, U.S. allies reacted with panic to American references to the use of nuclear weapons in Asia. Yet under Eisenhower U.S. strategists accepted the possibility of unilateral military courses of action there in order to cope with military crises.

Possessing overwhelming nuclear superiority over the Soviet Union through the mid-1950s, the United States proved willing to contemplate a nuclear response against China to counter Communist military actions in Korea, Indochina, and the Taiwan Strait. American planners recognized that military action against mainland China might produce Soviet counteraction, but they calculated that such a development would have only limited effects, would be confined geographically to East Asia, and thus would not escalate into general war.

Once the Soviet Union attained nuclear plenty, however, the United States would not be able to assume a limited role for the Soviet Union in the region. As strategic deterrence inevitably gave way to mutual deterrence, the Soviet Union would be less likely to recoil at the immediate and massive use of U.S. nuclear weapons against Communist China. In the event that the Soviet bloc leaned toward another "brushfire war" in the Far East, could the United States strike the heartland of Communist China at the risk of hostilities encompassing the United States and the Soviet Union together? In case of direct U.S.-Soviet clashes in the Far East, would the United States and the Soviet Union be able to confine hostilities to that area without a broader

nuclear exchange at the onset of the U.S.-Soviet war? Even at the grave risk of general war, would Western Europe continue its support of U.S. policy in future conflicts in the Far East?

As explained earlier, the Eisenhower administration defined limited war as the use of limited U.S. forces in “conflicts occurring in less developed areas of the world.” Except for the Soviet Union, Japan was the only developed nation outside the Atlantic world. As such it was the one place in East Asia over which the United States might become involved in general war. The U.S.-Japan alliance and the Sino-Soviet security alignment constituted an important Cold War front. U.S. policymakers recognized that, since Japan and the PRC technically remained in a state of war, the former likely would be the target of Communist military actions were the United States and the PRC to enter into another conflict. Given the PRC’s military reliance upon the Soviet Union and the U.S. obligation to the security of Japan, Communist military actions against Japan might embroil the United States and the Soviet Union in direct clashes. Therefore, Japan held the key to an ominous spiral of events into a general war that could spread to Europe, especially once the Soviet Union no longer felt deterred by U.S. nuclear superiority. Yet if the United States refused to take the risk of general war, U.S. nuclear weapons would no longer deter further Communist expansion into East Asia and the Pacific.

In short, as much as Japan was a jumping-off point toward mainland Asia, it could also be a tipping point leading to general war. Under the circumstances, the scope of the Far East Command (FEC) in Tokyo, which held responsibility for the entire region north of the Yangtze River, would naturally involve Japan in the event of resumed hostilities between the United States and the PRC. If hostilities resumed in Korea, CINCFE’s support of UN military operations in Korea would be strategically convenient, but only at the risk of an expanded war between Japan and the PRC and eventually the U.S.-Japan and the Sino-Soviet alliances. In

hopes of preventing Japan and the Soviet Union from participating in a war that expanded from Korea to mainland China, the United States reassessed the existing command structure in the region.

This idea was not new. Soon after the signing of the armistice, the ROK government had demanded that military headquarters in Japan move to Korea or that Korea have a military commander not subordinate to headquarters in Japan. In October 1953, when General Hull assumed the position of CINCFE/ CINCUNC, he discussed the issue with top advisers in Washington and Seoul. In Seoul General Hull found that the ROK based its request on political grounds. When President Rhee met with General Hull, he feared that the general might be “influenced toward the Japanese viewpoint on controversial problems with Korea.” Rhee expressed his desire to keep General Hull in Korea. Hull explained to Rhee that he considered General Taylor’s headquarters as an “advanced command post in Korea.”<sup>630</sup>

After discussions with U.S. officials in Seoul, General Hull concluded that military disadvantages outweighed “any political advantage” in dividing the commands. With the military forces in his command, according to General Hull, it was not possible to “separate responsibility for operations in Korea from responsibility for the security of Japan.” In supporting military operations in Korea “both tactically and logistically from Japan,” Hull believed, a division of responsibility and military operations carried out by “agreements between various elements of the services” would not work. Further, he pointed to a dearth of adequate facilities in Korea and Japan’s future needs for headquarters existing there. U.S. advisers agreed that a change in the organization, which would transfer “all responsibility in political and

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<sup>630</sup> From CINCFE to Department of the Army, DA IN 15893, October 24, 1953 in RG 218: Records of the U.S. JCS, Geographic File 1951-53, 383.21 Korea (3-19-45) Sec. 139 B. P. Pt. 3, Box no. 46 (College Park, MD.: NA).

economic matters from the [CINCFE] to the embassy,” was not desirable until Korea was “no longer a theater of operations.”<sup>631</sup>

However, when Washington undertook a reassessment of U.S. military strategy for limited war, the U.S. command structure in the Far East received further attention. At a meeting on May 17, 1956, the JCS agreed in principle that “all U.S. armed forces and facilities” should eventually be “evacuated from Japan.”<sup>632</sup> The JCS also requested studies in support of that eventuality under two scenarios:

- a. U.S. forces now in Korea remain there.
- b. U.S. forces now in Korea have deployed elsewhere.

Further, each scenario would be considered in light of the following conditions:

- a. A phased partial withdrawal [would] be accomplished prior to a decision to effect a complete withdrawal.
- b. Complete withdrawal must be accomplished quickly, with desirable orderly rollup a secondary consideration.
- c. Complete withdrawal [would] be accomplished expeditiously and with due regard to desirable orderly rollup.<sup>633</sup>

While the Joint Strategic Plans Committee (JSPC) collaborated in studies with the Joint Logistics Plans Committee (JLPC) and the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC), General Van

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<sup>631</sup> Ibid.

<sup>632</sup> Memorandum for JSPC, JLPC, JIC: Deployment from Japan of all U.S. armed forces and facilities, May 21, 1956 in Geographic File, 1954-56, 381 Far East (11-28-50) Sec. 26 to 381 Formosa (11-8-48) Sec. 14, Box no. 18, RG 218: Records of the U.S. JCS (College Park, MD.: NA).

<sup>633</sup> Richard Phillips, Memorandum for JSPC, JLPC, JIC: Deployment from Japan of all U.S. armed forces and facilities, May 24, 1956 in Geographic File, 1957, 092 Ethiopia (9-26-56) Sec. 1 to 560 Far East (1-4-54), Box no. 8, RG 218: Records of the U.S. JCS (College Park, MD.: NA).

Fleet reached conclusions somewhat parallel to the JCS. After his official tour of the ROK, Japan, and Formosa between May and June 1956, he proposed to withdraw U.S. military forces from Japan, including "all headquarters and combat units," by the end of 1956. According to the proposal, the "UNC and liaison staff" should go to Korea while "other headquarters" should be either "eliminated" or "absorbed by Pearl Harbor." He stressed that U.S. forces abroad should remain there only to "fight or train national forces to fight." What the general observed in Asia was, however, the deteriorating effects of long-term stationing of U.S. troops on foreign soil. While U.S. forces performed projects unpleasant to nationals of each country, Van Fleet pointed out, their adherence to the American standard of living did not improve "combat morale." Troops became "soft, babied, [and] spoiled." He concluded that the United States should "put a fighting team overseas, keep units there briefly on rotation, and let more be done by the nationals, especially in ground forces in Korea and Japan (and Germany)."<sup>634</sup>

On July 2 the State and Defense Departments met to discuss problems arising from the Defense plan for "worldwide changes in U.S. command structure, with particular reference to implementation of the changes planned in the Far East." In an opening comment CINCUNC/CINCFE General Lemnitzer briefed that it had already been "firmly decided" that CINCUNC would move to Seoul and that CINCFE would be absorbed by CINCPAC "with a subordinate command structure in Tokyo." This would be "part of worldwide changes taking place on different dates." Some changes had already occurred, but the changes concerning CINCUNC were not scheduled for implementation until July 1, 1957. As for the U.S. logistic and supply bases in Japan, the general looked for a "gradual decrease over the coming years with respect to

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<sup>634</sup> Observations by General James A. Van Fleet, U.S. Army (Ret.) during trip to Korea, Japan, Formosa, May-June, 1956 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

personnel and supplies." He believed the Japanese operations would "shrink gradually over a period of years."<sup>635</sup>

When Deputy Under Secretary of State Murphy pointed out a "general lack of knowledge as to the reasons for the command changes," Deputy Secretary of Defense Reuben Robertson briefly explained the long-term pressure upon the JCS to "simplify its worldwide command structure". According to Robertson, there was a "general feeling" in the Pentagon that "U.S. operations in the Far East would be better coordinated under one command." For example, the air force commands were overlapping between CINCPAC and CINCFE. Further, during Shigemitsu's visit to Washington, Tokyo expressed clearly its desire for a "gradual phase-out of American troops from Japan."<sup>636</sup>

The State and Defense Departments discussed several issues related to the adverse effects of command changes upon U.S. allies in East Asia. General Lemnitzer expressed concerns that the ROK government's initially favorable response might be short-lived once Koreans knew that CINCUNC would be a "subordinate command" in Seoul, with no access to the JCS on military matters and to the International Cooperation Administration (ICA) for economic aid. With respect to the public response in East Asia, both Murphy and Lemnitzer stressed the "importance of the way" in which the matter was handled so as to "avoid an impression throughout the Far East" that it constituted a "U.S. pullback to Hawaii." Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense McGuire opined that the press release should not be "pitched on a tone of withdrawal," but rather "on the positive step of integrating all the forces in the Far East and simplifying the command

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<sup>635</sup> Memorandum of Conversation: Changes in military command structure in the Pacific area, Subject File, July 2, 1956 (College Park, MD.: NA).

<sup>636</sup> Ibid.

structure." The attendees generally agreed with this point.<sup>637</sup> Thus Washington was very cautious that U.S. evacuation from Japan might be interpreted as the result of a "chicken game" in the face of the political and military challenge to the free world presented by new leaders in the Kremlin.

On the next day, with State Department concurrence, the Defense Department delivered to CINCFE/CINCUNC General Lemnitzer and CINCPAC Admiral Stump a proposed press release on "planned change in Pacific / Far East Command structure:"

The Department of Defense today announced plans to consolidate under the Commander in Chief, Pacific, the areas and responsibilities of the Commander in Chief, Pacific and the Commander in Chief, Far East Command. The planned date for this change is 1 July 1957. The change will simplify the command and organization of U.S. forces in the Pacific / Far East area and enhance the flexibility of their employment. The United Nations Command will be retained as a separate major command. The headquarters of the Commander in Chief, United Nations Command, presently in Tokyo, will be relocated in Korea because of the unresolved politico-military situation which has resulted only in a suspension of hostilities and a state of truce. The U.S. support of United Nations forces in Korea will become the responsibility of the Commander in Chief, Pacific.

To carry out the functions and operations of U.S. forces in Japan, an appropriate U.S. headquarters will remain in Tokyo functioning under the command of the Commander in Chief, Pacific. Other actions stemming from this basic decision will be worked out carefully and deliberately during the period prior to the command change. No major changes in the deployment of U.S. armed forces in this area are contemplated as a result of this action.<sup>638</sup>

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<sup>637</sup> Ibid.

<sup>638</sup> From OSD Signed Robertson, exclusive for General Lemnitzer and Admiral Stump, DEF 905926, July 3, 1956 in Geographic File, 1957, 092 Ethiopia (9-26-56) Sec. 1 to 560 Far East (1-4-54), Box no. 8, RG 218: Records of the U.S. JCS (College Park, MD.: NA).

Before bringing a new policy directive into the formal diplomatic agenda with Asian allies, however, Washington had to adjust to new political leadership in Tokyo. Prime Minister Hatoyama resigned on December 23, 1956, and Ishibashi Tanzan won the LDP party election to head a new government. The election outcome disappointed U.S. supporters of Kishi Nobusuke as Japan's next leader. U.S. officials lacked confidence in Ishibashi. His bitter memory of the purge during the occupation, Washington feared, might prompt him to find fault with the U.S. position in Okinawa, while restoring economic and diplomatic ties with Communist China. Under London's growing pressure to dissolve the China differential, Washington took seriously Japan's new China policy as an imminent threat to the anti-PRC coalition among U.S. allies.<sup>639</sup>

Washington's concern proved short-lived. Within two months after his victory, Ishibashi's bad health forced him to leave office. In February 1957 the LDP elected Kishi as Japan's next prime minister. The event coincided with the arrival of a new U.S. ambassador to Japan, Douglas MacArthur II. The two men soon developed a close relationship. In a series of confidential meetings, Kishi presented to MacArthur a list of problems, such as Japan's subordinate position under the security treaty, a loss of sovereignty in Okinawa, and discontent with the embargo against the PRC. He also reiterated Japan's fear that the United States would provoke a war in which Japan became involved because of U.S. bases on its territory. Obviously, the PRC was determined to exploit Japan's security dilemma so as to empower the Socialists and neutralists in domestic politics and lure Japan out of the U.S. security network. When Japanese Socialists visited Beijing in 1957, Mao suggested a nonaggression pact with Tokyo in return for Japan's abrogation of the bilateral security pact.<sup>640</sup>

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<sup>639</sup> Schaller, *Altered States*, 123-4.

<sup>640</sup> *Ibid.*, 129-30.

Ambassador MacArthur played a pivotal role in inviting the Kishi government into negotiations concerning the most contentious issues between the two countries. During his short stay in Tokyo, he witnessed widespread animosity against the security treaty for the unequal treatment imposed by the United States. At his urging, President Eisenhower invited Prime Minister Kishi to Washington. The U.S. ambassador stressed that President Eisenhower and Secretary Dulles should move towards placing the bilateral relationship on more equal terms.<sup>641</sup> Therefore, two years after Shigemitsu's failed attempt to revise the security treaty of 1951, Washington and Tokyo entered into another round of negotiations over basic security issues.

Prime Minister Kishi's visit to Washington in June 1957 offered a great opportunity to unfold U.S. evacuation plans from Japan. As of the end of 1956, around 100,000 U.S. military personnel remained there, with half of them in the Air Force, 30 percent in the Army, and 20 percent in the Navy and Marines.<sup>642</sup> On June 6, 1957, with the general support of Secretary Dulles, President Eisenhower authorized Secretary Wilson to reduce U.S. forces and equipment in Japan, expressing his hope for "reduction amounting to not less than 60%."<sup>643</sup> On June 13, in a memorandum to Secretary Wilson, the JCS stated that "a strong Japan allied to the United States would be a deterrent to a general war, and a deterrent to military conflict short of general war." Once the Japanese Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) assumed the "responsibility for greater defense of Japan," the JCS contended, "U.S. forces and facilities would no longer be required for that purpose." Although an earlier phase-down of U.S. forces would weaken the defense of

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<sup>641</sup> Ibid., 129-31.

<sup>642</sup> *FRUS, 1955-57, Japan*, Volume XXIII, Part 1, 345-6.

<sup>643</sup> Ibid., 343-4.

Japan, the JCS urged, “other considerations” might “justify the acceptance of this military risk.”<sup>644</sup>

On June 18, in a meeting with President Eisenhower, Secretary Dulles examined the possibility of either total U.S. evacuation or joint control of disposition and use of forces. The president did not object to the idea of joint control, but Admiral Radford stressed JCS opposition, arguing that they could not count on the use of Japan in war and, therefore, were willing to pull out. Deputy Secretary of Defense Donald Quarles proposed 40 percent reductions (approximately 40,000 personnel including all ground forces) within the next twelve months. In reply, Ambassador MacArthur outlined Prime Minister Kishi’s desire for maximum withdrawal of U.S. forces, including all ground units. It was agreed that President Eisenhower would inform Kishi that the United States “did not wish to maintain forces in Japan unless Japan wanted them” and “had already decided to reduce our forces by forty percent in the next twelve months including the withdrawal of all ground combat forces, both Army and Marines.”<sup>645</sup>

On June 19 President Eisenhower explained to Prime Minister Kishi on the phone that large U.S. forces in Japan were necessary to fulfill the “great burden of defense in the Pacific,” but created problems for both countries. Therefore, the president proclaimed, the United States was ready to talk about the issue. On the next day, during a conversation between Kishi and Secretary Dulles, Admiral Radford revealed U.S. plans for withdrawal of all ground combat units in Japan due to budgetary limitations. He also informed Kishi of the JCS view that the United States could withdraw all forces from Japan. Although the United States hoped for Japan’s

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<sup>644</sup> Ibid., 350-1.

<sup>645</sup> Ibid., 357-60. The meeting also discussed whether the United States could make concessions to Japanese territorial claim to the Ryukyus or the Bonins. Secretary Dulles remarked on Japanese desire for U.S. agreement to “pull out of the Ryukyus in some fixed period of time,” and the President reacted favorably to the idea and hinted that a major improvement in the Cold War situation, including “substantial disarmament steps,” might “reduce the need for forces in the Western Pacific.” However, Secretary Dulles and Secretary Quarles opposed to give the Japanese a claim to the Ryukyus or the Bonins. If the United States should give up a position in Japan, Dulles argued, it had “all the more reason to stay in Okinawa.”

cooperation with U.S. efforts to disperse air retaliatory power on bases in the Far East, Secretary Dulles commented after Admiral Radford's briefing that it was "up to the Japanese government to make the determination about the continued presence of American forces."<sup>646</sup>

On June 21, 1957, as the UNC at Panmunjom announced a suspension of paragraph 13(d) of the armistice agreement, Secretary Dulles and Prime Minister Kishi were finalizing a joint communiqué. In Washington Tokyo's call for consultations regarding freedom of action of the remaining U.S. forces in Japan became a pivotal issue. The "most troubling thing in Japan in connection with the security treaty," Kishi stressed, was the "fear that Japan could be gotten into a state of war involuntarily or without its knowledge in the event that the United States took action somewhere without the Japanese [government's] having known about it." Kishi wanted Washington's "tacit understanding" that "in a major crisis" Tokyo would be informed or given an "opportunity to consult."<sup>647</sup>

The joint communiqué stated that it was agreed to "establish an intergovernmental committee to study problems arising in relation to security including consultation, whenever practicable, regarding the disposition and employment in Japan by the United States of its forces." Regarding U.S. withdrawal plans, the communiqué announced that:

The United States welcomed Japan's plans for the buildup of her defense forces and accordingly, in consonance with the letter of and spirit of the security treaty, will substantially reduce the numbers of United States forces in Japan within the next year, including a prompt withdrawal of all United States ground combat forces. The United States plans still further reductions as the Japanese defense forces grow.<sup>648</sup>

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<sup>646</sup> Ibid., 379-81.

<sup>647</sup> Ibid., 407.

<sup>648</sup> DSB, July 8, 1957, 52.

On July 1 a big change occurred in the U.S. command structure in East Asia. The Far East Command (FEC), created as a separate U.S. command headquarters in 1947, finally ceased to exist in Tokyo. At the same time, the United Nations Command (UNC), organized at the onset of the Korean War, moved to Seoul. General Lemnitzer, who had been the commander-in-chief of both headquarters in Tokyo, left for Seoul after turning over command of U.S. forces in Japan to Lieutenant General Frederic Smith. The Far East Air Force (FEAF), which was organized in the last stage of the Pacific War to launch the final assault on Japan, was also inactivated. The Fifth Air Force in Japan went under the command of General Smith. In Seoul General George H. Decker assumed command of the UNC. General Decker also received command of the U.S. Eighth Army in Seoul. Japan was downgraded from the U.S. military command center in the Far East. Meanwhile, CINCPAC Admiral Stump, commander of the U.S. Pacific fleet, took command of all U.S. Army and Air Force units in the Pacific.<sup>649</sup>

### **The search for new ROK force levels**

As the Eisenhower administration considered the modernization of U.S. forces in Korea, it continued a major reassessment of U.S. overseas aid programs. From the beginning the principle of fiscal austerity had governed the administration's policy for military spending, but in 1956 the overall expenditure for U.S. armed forces abroad still generated a deficit little different from that in the last year of the Truman administration. The Treasury Department found that a tight monetary policy alone could not control serious inflationary pressure at home. While the rest of the world was improving its financial situation, that of the United States steadily

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<sup>649</sup> *New York Times*, July 1-2, 1957.

worsened. When Treasury set a goal of a one billion dollar cut from U.S. overseas expenditures, the Pentagon, with its share of more than three quarters of them, became the biggest target.<sup>650</sup>

This process led to a second look at U.S.-ROK force levels. In a memorandum to Secretary Wilson of November 2, 1955, the JCS had listed three conditions as prerequisites for any reduction of ROK armed forces:

- a. The enemy situation be such as to permit reduction in ROK active forces.
- b. Adequate and effective reserve forces be attained.
- c. The physical plant required for the accommodation of the divisions converted to reserve status be in being.<sup>651</sup>

In December the NSC directed creation of a committee to investigate the largest U.S. military and economic aid programs. Korea was the largest of them all. Named after its chair, Deputy Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs Herbert V. Prochnow, the committee presented its results to the NSC on July 24, 1956. The final Prochnow committee report was designated NSC 5610 on August 3.

On Korea NSC 5610 offered four alternative courses. The United States could:

- 1) continue military and economic programs at approximately present levels. This implies annual costs to the [United States] in the magnitude of \$650-900 million for an indefinite period. This may still leave in 1961 a serious problem of military obsolescence and an unsatisfactory economic situation;
- 2) increase the total aid beyond that contemplated in 1) above by (a) whatever amount is required to deal with the problem of military obsolescence, and (b) whatever amount the Korean economy can

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<sup>650</sup> Memorandum: Discussion at the 197th meeting of the NSC, Thursday, September 20, 1956, September 20, 1956 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 8 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>651</sup> Ibid., 324.

absorb for economic development purposes. While the possibilities of achieving any substantial increase in Korea's economic development by this method are difficult to predict, they appear to be limited.

3) reduce the military costs by reducing the military establishment. This might, of course, involve political and military risks unless offset by alternative security or strategic arrangements.

4) reduce the economic aid program. This would result in either a reduction of consumption or investment and would cause political problems with the ROK.<sup>652</sup>

On September 20 the NSC devoted special attention to the "continuing volume of U.S. expenditures in Korea for military and economic aid."<sup>653</sup> The "essence of the problem," it was noted, was the "large size of the U.S. assistance programs," which amounted to around \$800 million in FY 1957 and showed no sign of shrinking for the foreseeable future. According to Secretary Wilson and Admiral Radford, U.S. spending had dropped to \$700 million in 1955 mainly because of the military materiel the United States gave to ROK armed forces. When the materiel was depleted, U.S. expenditures were sure to increase again. Concerned about the overall U.S. deficit pattern in overseas programs, Secretary of the Treasury Humphrey suggested that the United States should first decide the "precise amount of money" disposable for overseas spending and then accommodate each area program "in terms of this overall amount." The president agreed that the United States should aim at a one billion dollar cut, but he still considered the country-by-country approach as the "only effective way to try to solve the problem of our expenditures overseas." In his view Korea would "provide a very good laboratory case" to estimate expenditures on a worldwide basis.<sup>654</sup>

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<sup>652</sup> NSC 5610: Report by the Interdepartmental Committee on Certain U.S. Aid Programs, August 3, 1956 in White House Office: Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (OSANSA): Records, NSC Series, Policy Papers Subseries, Box No. 18 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>653</sup> Progress report on NSC 5514, July 18, 1956 in White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, 1952-61, NSC Series, Policy Papers Subseries, Box No. 15 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>654</sup> Memorandum: Discussion at the 197th meeting of the NSC, Thursday, September 20, 1956, September 20, 1956 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 8 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

Inevitably, the wisdom of maintaining twenty ROK active and ten reserve divisions was raised. Governor Stassen proposed to cut “some five divisions” of the ROK active forces and the use in industry of the newly available manpower, a suggestion the president embraced enthusiastically. He also expressed his wish for a JCS study regarding the minimum forces to be kept in Korea to protect “our interests.” The president believed that the United States did not need “as many men as were now under arms in South Korea” and feared that U.S. policy “might well fall of its own weight” of “put[ting] 800 million dollars each year into a single small country like Korea.”<sup>655</sup>

On October 11 the JCS responded to a request for an estimate of the minimum U.S.-ROK force levels necessary over the next two years. The military brass stressed that the “initial step” to be taken prior to making a “realistic determination of the minimum levels of U.S. and ROK forces in Korea” should be the modernization of “U.S. forces and equipment to include atomic-capable forces.” Regardless of the “numerical ratio between the [UNC] forces and the Communist forces,” they argued, the UNC capability to “indefinitely deter a renewal of hostilities in the face of the Communist modernization” depended on the “replacement of obsolete and obsolescent equipment.” Additional steps included completion of training of the ten ROK reserve divisions called for in the Agreed Minute of November 17, 1954 and construction of facilities for any new reserve units.<sup>656</sup>

The JCS gave three reasons for opposing any redeployment of U.S. forces from Korea:

- a. The possibility that President Rhee may take risks to reunify Korea by force and thereby involve the United States in a renewal of hostilities.

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<sup>655</sup> Ibid.

<sup>656</sup> *FRUS, 1955-57, Korea*, Volume XXIII, Part 2, 322-4.

- b. A major problem may arise during Korean selection of a successor government if President Rhee should pass from the scene.
- c. The redeployment of major U.S. forces from Korea would probably result in the withdrawal of the ROK Armed Forces from the operational control of the U.S. commanders.

The JCS concluded that, in addition to two U.S Infantry Divisions and one Fighter Bomb Wing armed with atomic capable forces, the minimum ROK force levels over the next two years should be:

- (1) Army: 16 Infantry Divisions / 14 Reserve Divisions
- (2) Navy: Approximately 61 combatant ships / 1 Marine Division
- (3) Air Force: 6 Fighter Bomber Squadrons / 1 Transport Squadron / 1 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron / 1 Tactical Control Squadron.<sup>657</sup>

The JCS view failed to receive full support within the administration. Some members of the NSC Planning Board noticed that the JCS had not commented on suggested force levels in the event that atomic weapons were *not* introduced to U.S. forces. When the JCS representative flatly rejected any possibility of force reductions without atomic capability, Gordon Gray promised that Secretary Wilson would shortly comment on the JCS report. On November 2 the Defense Secretary registered his opposition to the JCS intention to freeze U.S. forces at the current level, but kept his view informal until the Department of Defense made decisions on U.S. overseas deployment. He reasoned that the size of ROK forces could not be determined independently from the overall deployment schedule.<sup>658</sup>

The JCS refused to modify their original recommendations. On January 4, 1957, in a memorandum to Secretary Wilson, the JCS declined his request not to take into account the

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<sup>657</sup> Ibid., 324-5.

<sup>658</sup> Ibid., 341-4.

“maintenance of internal political stability” and the “element of precipitous action by the Korean government.” It was impossible, the JCS declared, to “separate economic and political factors from military considerations” when the United States was providing “practically all the equipment and supplies, training, and guiding the ROK forces.” The chiefs also asserted that it was not feasible to “reduce the deterrent force in South Korea” until an atomic equipped UNC existed in Korea.<sup>659</sup>

On January 14 the Planning Board submitted NSC 5702, "Evaluation of Alternative Military Program for Korea," to the NSC. The report was the "first step in the review" of U.S. aid for Korea, designed for NSC discussion and subsequent revisions of NSC 5514, "U.S. Objectives and Courses of Action in Korea." NSC 5702 offered four alternative military programs for the ROK:

- A. (1) 20 active and 10 reserve ROK Army Divisions;
  - (2) 3 ROK jet fighter-bomber squadron in training, and plans for converting the 3 remaining ROK fighter squadrons into jet squadrons;
  - (3) 1 ROK Marine Division and coastal Navy;
  - (4) 2 U.S. Divisions, and 3 fighter-bomber squadrons.
- B. (1) Providing U.S. forces in Korea with dual conventional-nuclear weapons;
  - (2) Converting 4 of the 20 active ROK divisions into reserve divisions, and converting the 3 remaining conventional ROK fighter squadrons into jet squadrons (making a total of 6 jet squadrons).
- C. (1) Converting 10 of the 20 active ROK divisions into reserve divisions over a 3-year period;
  - (2) Providing remaining active ROK forces with additional limited dual conventional-nuclear weapons of types already in Korea [excluding such weapons as the 280mm. gun, the Honest

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<sup>659</sup> Ibid., 371-2.

- John, Corporal and Redstone] and increased training in the use of these weapons; and converting the 3 remaining conventional ROK fighter squadrons into jet squadrons;
- (3) Providing U.S. forces in Korea with additional limited dual conventional-nuclear weapons of types already in Korea, and increased training in the use of these weapons.
- D. (1) Converting 10 of the 20 active ROK divisions into reserve divisions over a three-year period
- (2) Providing ROK forces with jet air strength (under present conditions approximately 12 squadrons of fighters and fighter-bombers) sufficient generally to offset North Korean air strength; and providing the ROK Army with equipment comparable to that of the North Korean Army, which under present circumstances would involve measures such as an increase in artillery strength but not the provision of dual conventional-nuclear weapons;
- (3) Providing U.S. forces in Korea with dual conventional-nuclear weapons.<sup>660</sup>

Discussions of NSC 5702 revealed diverse views within the administration on appropriate ROK force levels. A week before the NSC meeting, the JCS recommended to Secretary Wilson that Alternative B, which reflected the JCS view of October 11, 1956, still appeared the most desirable option. Prior to a drastic cut of ROK forces as outlined in Alternatives C and D, the JCS reasoned, progress should be made to solve the "many and varied problems" aggravating the "unsatisfactory conditions perpetuating the division of Korea." When NSC 5702 was discussed on January 31, 1957, Admiral Arleigh Burke, the Chief of Naval Operations, explained JCS support of Alternative B on the grounds of a "possible aggression against the ROK from the north" as well as the "possibility of internal disturbances in the ROK" after the end of President Rhee's "one-man democracy."<sup>661</sup>

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<sup>660</sup> NSC 5702: Evaluation of Alternative Military Programs for Korea, January 14, 1957 in White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, 1952-61, NSC Series, Policy Papers Subseries, Box No. 19 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>661</sup> Memorandum: Discussion at the 311th meeting of the NSC, Thursday, January 31, 1957, February 1, 1957 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 8 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

Although Secretary Wilson accepted the JCS proposal for a reduction of ROK divisions from 20 to 16, he expressed reservations about the overall JCS position. He doubted that war would “start up again in Korea or places like that” and preferred to “concentrate our resources and capabilities on more vital areas.” The United States had to “get loose” from “Korean-like situations.” Mentioning the impending Commonwealth withdrawal from the peninsula, Wilson warned that the United States might be “left holding the bag.” Still, Wilson did not propose to “go so far as to reduce the ROK active divisions to ten” because such a move would be “too sudden” and “involve too great a dislocation.”<sup>662</sup>

Opinions also varied within the State Department. In an October 1, 1956 memorandum to the Director of the Office of Northeast Asian Affairs Howard Parsons, David Nes, the Officer in Charge of Korean Affairs, urged that current U.S.-ROK force levels should be maintained until the U.S. “modernization” program took effect. Nes did not justify current ROK force levels “from a strictly military standpoint.” In his view three assumptions had to be employed to resolve the issue:

- (a) A renewal of aggression by north Korean forces acting alone and equipped according to 1950 standards, is extremely unlikely, especially in view of the role played by the Soviet Union in directing north Korea’s external policies.
- (b) So long as the Joint Policy Declaration and perhaps more [importantly] the U.S.-Korean Mutual Defense Treaty, are in effect the Chinese Communists and/or Soviets will not utilize military force in Korea short of a decision to embark on global war.
- (c) Present south Korean forces would not only prove inadequate against a massive Chinese Communist-Soviet onslaught but were the Communist potential in air power and nuclear weapons brought to bear would probably be destroyed before U.S. and UN intervention could become effective.

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<sup>662</sup> Ibid.

Nonetheless, Nes believed, “certain political and economic factors,” such as ROK armed forces’ contribution to internal political stability, the will to resist Communism in East Asia, and the control of unemployment, provided the main rationale for current ROK force levels. He concluded that, without the “introduction into Korea of new weapons including those of nuclear capability,” a “reduction in either or both U.S. and ROK force levels” was likely to “compromise U.S. objectives in Korea” and “weaken the U.S. position there and in the Far East.”<sup>663</sup>

In November 1956, while Secretary Dulles was temporarily incapacitated by illness, the State Department undertook a comprehensive study of Korea policy. In Secretary Dulles’ absence, Assistant Secretary Robertson noted, “his staff” in the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs completed the study based on “a number of recent intelligence estimates and research studies on Korea together with the views and recommendations of the Ambassador at Seoul and the Economic Coordinator.” One conclusion was that there should be “no weakening of our military position in Korea, either in number of [U.S.] troops or the size of ROK forces, since this would seriously endanger not only [U.S.] objectives in Korea but [U.S.] interests throughout the Far East” and “elsewhere in the non-Communist world.”<sup>664</sup>

The study provided several reasons for its conclusions. “From experience,” according to Robertson, the United States could not “rely on any forewarning of the reinforcement of the [North] Korean forces by Chinese Communist forces.” Although the United States could not create ROK forces “capable of a sustained defense against Communist China and the USSR,” ROK forces ought to have the capability to make the “foreign involvement apparent” and “of affording time for the United States and its Allies to intervene effectively.” Further, any

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<sup>663</sup> *FRUS, 1955-57, Korea*, Volume XXIII, Part 2, 315-20.

<sup>664</sup> *Ibid.*, 351-4.

reduction of ROK force levels would have “widespread and adverse repercussions in Korea and throughout the non-Communist world” as the South Korean populace might become “more susceptible over a period of time to the Communist line for rapprochement between north and south Korea.” The non-Communist countries in East Asia, especially SEATO members, would “doubt the long-range intentions of the United States in the Far East” unless “reassurances were made through collateral actions.” Finally, any force reduction would be seen “by interested countries” as a “move in the direction of exclusive reliance on a strategy of massive retaliation, thus forcing them to reassess their security ties with the United States.”<sup>665</sup>

After studying the alternatives in NSC 5702, Assistant Secretary Robertson reiterated his conclusion of November 1956 that it would be a “serious mistake” to “sanction any weakening of the present ROK defensive strength so long as the Communist capabilities and intentions in the area remain unchanged.” Prior to the NSC meeting on January 31, 1957, Robertson recommended to Secretary Dulles that the State Department support Alternative A, the current military program for the ROK. The Agreed Minute, he conceded, called for a “phased reduction of active forces” in accordance with the creation of reserve forces. Nevertheless, the ROK security position had worsened due to the Communist increase of aircraft and firepower, not to mention the possibility of rapid and massive Chinese redeployment from Manchuria.<sup>666</sup>

However, a strong desire for a new, budget-saving course in Korea dominated the NSC meeting. Secretary Dulles expressed his genuine interest in ROK force reduction, which placed the most appropriate ROK force levels at the center of discussion. Many participants accepted the notion that as long as massive retaliation could effectively deter future war, the United States should reduce its commitments to local defense of its allies. With little support from Britain and

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<sup>665</sup> Ibid.

<sup>666</sup> Ibid., 389-91.

France, Secretary Humphrey stressed, the United States was “left with the task of defending the whole free world.” Humphrey contended that the only viable means of defense was “our massive retaliatory capability” rather than “dissipating our strength in small amounts all over the world.”<sup>667</sup>

Dulles countered, however, that it would be “much too great a shock” to “make a worldwide decision to reduce [the U.S. presence] and then proceed promptly to carry it out.” In his opinion the United States had to deal with the ROK “in terms of a gradual rather than a sudden reduction.” Observing that most in attendance favored Alternative B, President Eisenhower commented that “Rhee must be an idiot to want to support 20 active divisions.” At the end of the meeting, the NSC directed the Planning Board to prepare a new policy statement on Korea incorporating a U.S.-ROK military program based on the “initial adoption of Alternative B in NSC 5702, with planning for gradual further reductions in ROK forces in the longer range.”<sup>668</sup>

The NSC discussion demonstrated that a strong policy current existed in Washington toward a drastic cut of U.S. expenditures in overseas programs, with massive retaliation serving as the primary deterrent. Yet the inclination to rely on massive retaliation in Korea at the cost of local defense capabilities encountered strong opposition within the administration. The NSC Planning Board's new draft of NSC 5702/1 of February 28 revealed a sharp split in the staff regarding the desirable capability of ROK armed forces. One view was that the United States should be prepared to “accept a level of Korean armed forces sufficient for internal security and capable of strong resistance in event of attack by a foreign power.” In contrast, representatives

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<sup>667</sup> Memorandum: Discussion at the 311th meeting of the NSC, Thursday, January 31, 1957, February 1, 1957 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 8 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>668</sup> Ibid.

from the Bureau of the Budget and the Department of the Treasury proposed “sufficient strength for internal security and *limited initial resistance* in event of attack by a foreign power.”<sup>669</sup>

On March 1, in a memorandum to Assistant Secretary of State for Policy Planning Robert Bowie, Assistant Secretary Robertson vigorously resisted any attempt to debilitate the ROK military posture. At “tremendous expense and effort,” Secretary Robertson asserted, the United States had created the “largest, most effective and most reliable military force in the Far East.” Not only did this force serve as a “positive deterrent to a renewal of Communist aggression in Korea;” it also tied up “large Communist forces in [North] Korea and Communist China, which otherwise would be free for deployment and possible aggression elsewhere.” Further, the “will to resist Communism,” which was “stronger in Korea by far than in any other Far Eastern country,” largely depended on Korean confidence in the ROK ability to “hold renewed Communist aggression in check” until outside assistance could arrive. The State Department refused to back away from support for the phrase “capable of strong resistance in event of attack by a foreign power”.<sup>670</sup>

Because the State Department had withdrawn its previous concurrence with the Defense Department's modernization program, the April 4 meeting of the NSC held the decision regarding ROK force levels. The discussion made it clear that the questions of modernizing U.S. forces in Korea and the reduction of ROK armed forces were intimately connected. Originally, the “arrangements for the new military program in Korea” were considered essentially a “package deal,” by which active ROK divisions would be “reduced in phase with the modernization of U.S. forces in Korea.” Without the 280mm cannon and Honest John atomic-capable weapons, however, the Defense Department opposed a move “forward with a portion of

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<sup>669</sup> *FRUS, 1955-57, Korea*, Volume XXIII, Part 2, 404.

<sup>670</sup> *Ibid.*, 404-6, 409.

the U.S. modernization program.” Further, Admiral Radford contended, the ROK was unlikely to “reduce the number of active divisions” until the two weapons were deployed in Korea.

President Eisenhower decided to defer action on NSC 5702/1 until the Departments of State and Defense consulted U.S. allies.<sup>671</sup>

When the NSC continued its review of NSC 5702/1 on June 13, Secretary Dulles questioned the “necessary interdependence” between the introduction of the atomic-capable weapons and ROK force reductions. After suspending paragraph 13(d) of the armistice agreement, Secretary Dulles insisted, the United States should “sit down and negotiate with the ROK authorities” in order to “determine what we can do to induce the desired reduction in ROK forces by providing dual-purpose weapons” except for the 280mm guns and the Honest John. If the United States was to deploy all the weapons on the list, Dulles warned, the United States might incur a “very heavy liability” with no adequate return. In case of the deployment of the two disputed weapons, Dulles anticipated “much more substantial” reduction of active ROK forces.<sup>672</sup>

The NSC also discussed the maintenance cost of U.S. forces in Korea, which Secretary Humphrey did not consider sustainable in the future. Secretary Humphrey and Admiral Radford debated at length the continuing presence of U.S. forces in Korea. While Secretary Humphrey wanted to redeploy U.S. forces from foreign areas and leave U.S. deterrent nuclear power as the “answer to the defense of the free world,” Admiral Radford noted the general ignorance of allies of U.S. determination to use nuclear weapons in the event they were attacked. When Secretary Humphrey expressed “his unalterable opposition” to the “United States maintaining a battle line

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<sup>671</sup> Memorandum: Discussion at the 318<sup>th</sup> meeting of the NSC, Thursday, April 4, 1957, April 5, 1957 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 8 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>672</sup> Memorandum: Discussion at the 326<sup>th</sup> meeting of the NSC, Thursday, June 13, 1957, June 14, 1957 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 9 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

all around the world made up of forces equipped with nuclear weapons,” Admiral Radford retorted with a historical lesson: if in 1950 there had been the “very small U.S. forces” in the ROK, the Korean War would have been avoided.<sup>673</sup>

President Eisenhower finally directed that, in addition to the announcement of U.S. modernization of the UNC in the ROK, the secretaries of State and Defense instruct Ambassador Walter Dowling and General Lemnitzer to “negotiate with President Rhee for a substantial reduction in active ROK forces” in consideration of the “increasing costs of the U.S. defense efforts and the deterrent provided by U.S. retaliatory capability.” The NSC decisions prompted Secretary Humphrey to comment that it was “merely the beginning of an operation which we should have to conduct all over the world.” “At long last,” according to Humphrey, the New Look had “come home to roost with a vengeance.”<sup>674</sup>

### **Forward Defense of the ROK behind the atomic shield**

Throughout the summer of 1957, U.S. military advisers continued to push their view that the dual-capable weapons were essential to ROK defense. The dissolution of the FEC and transfer of the UNC from Tokyo to Seoul brought to the forefront the ROK’s security problems experienced during the Korean War: if enemies were to break through the current MDL, the peninsula was indefensible until outside forces could be deployed. In particular, Seoul’s proximity to the MDL exposed the UNC and U.S. armed forces in Korea – two pivotal strategic assets in UN operations – to Communist first-wave assaults. To protect the ROK capital and UN defenders, the military contended, the 280mm cannon and the Honest John ought to provide an atomic barrier preceding the line of contact. After negotiations with Seoul, Washington also

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<sup>673</sup> Ibid.

<sup>674</sup> Ibid.

grasped that the ROK would comply with its force reductions only when the atomic weapons were in their presence. Therefore, President Eisenhower directed that the United States should introduce the two weapons to Korea pending Seoul's agreements on ROK force reductions. By the end of 1957, the ROK government moved closer to agreeing to a sizable reduction of ROK armed forces, thus prompting the United States to send the atomic weapons to Korea during January 1958.

Since the State Department had formally opposed the introduction of the 280mm cannon and the Honest John to Korea in the NSC meeting of April 4, 1957, U.S. military advisers attempted to convince President Eisenhower and Secretary Dulles that the weapons had tactical use in Korea beyond what massive retaliation could provide. To Secretary Dulles' argument that there was no evidence of the Communist introduction of atomic weapons into North Korea, Admiral Radford retorted that "no particular reason" existed for such action during peacetime because "Soviet planes capable of carrying atomic bombs" could reach the Yalu River very quickly "in the event that they were needed." "From the military point of view," the JCS believed, "anything short of the total proposal submitted by the [JCS] for the package deal" would be "inadequate to meet a surprise attack by the Communists...."<sup>675</sup>

After listening to the arguments regarding the introduction of the 280mm gun and the Honest John, President Eisenhower asked Admiral Radford whether the United States could send in a "new type of weapons," such as a "jet aircraft with nuclear capabilities," to replace a weapon "no longer in production in the United States." Admiral Radford responded that weapons like the 280mm guns, "primarily defensive in character," were "really more important to our forces in Korea" than "was the stationing [in the ROK] of squadrons of atomic capable jet aircraft." He

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<sup>675</sup> Memorandum: Discussion at the 318<sup>th</sup> meeting of the NSC, Thursday, April 4, 1957, April 5, 1957 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 8 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

explained that weapons like the 280mm gun would be “vital to the defense of cities like Seoul which were close to the North Korean border.”<sup>676</sup>

In June 1957, just a week before the NSC again reviewed NSC 5702/1, the poor performance of the Army’s “new weapons” became a nationwide topic, prompted by an article in the *New York Times*. The June 7 article by the veteran military columnist Hanson Baldwin cast doubt upon the Army’s atomic program, asserting that it had not yet succeeded in combining “nuclear firepower with strategic and tactical mobility and missiles with flexibility.” The main problem was *immobility*: even the most flexible and the smallest of the Army’s atomic weapons, the eight-inch howitzer and the Honest John artillery rocket, had only limited firepower and they still required numerous trucks or special carriers. The eight-inch howitzer had to be disassembled before air transportation and the airlift of one battery of four Honest John rockets required 21 C-124 aircraft. The only weapon with a “large atomic punch,” equivalent to 3.5 megatons, was the Redstone rocket, but it was too big to be considered a tactical unit for the field army.<sup>677</sup>

In a memorandum to Assistant Secretary of State for Policy Planning Robert Bowie, NSC Planning Board Assistant on the Policy Planning Staff William Leonhart immediately criticized the Army’s intention to deploy these two weapons, “already acknowledged unsuccessful” and “now being replaced,” without preparation for adequate transportation and installment equipment. In Leonhart’s view the “real reason for the Defense-JCS insistence on these weapons” might be that Korea was the “only place in the world” where “these two developmental prototypes” could be buried “without public admission of a wasteful and futile effort to make the Army competitive with the Air Force in atomic delivery.” Leonhart concluded

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<sup>676</sup> Ibid.

<sup>677</sup> *New York Times*, June 7, 1957.

that these two “bulky, cumbersome, obsolete weapons” had “little significance for ‘modernization’ of our forces.” While modernization should and could be sought in “improving air-atomic capabilities,” the introduction of the 280mm gun and the Honest John might only facilitate or finance their replacement by more efficient models at home at a “wholly exorbitant” political cost.<sup>678</sup>

Thus Defense confronted a largely skeptical audience during the NSC discussion of June 13. Secretary Dulles himself remained unpersuaded by Defense's portrayal of the military value of the Army's atomic weapons, as he believed U.S. air power based in Okinawa and Japan provided adequate deterrent power for Korea. The only possible justification he saw for deploying dual-purpose weapons to Korea was to reduce the expense of U.S. military assistance to the ROK.<sup>679</sup> While continuing to stress at the meeting the adverse effects of the two weapons on world opinion, Secretary Dulles also emphasized that these huge 280mm guns would require construction of new roads and bridges for deployment, which would carry a major price tag.<sup>680</sup>

When President Eisenhower asked whether the 280mm gun was really “so clumsy and so immobile a weapon,” Admiral Radford replied that, although no longer in production, they had proven their usefulness for years in Germany. He confessed that he was uncertain that their deployment to Korea would lead the ROK to agree to cutbacks in its army. “Our Number One reason” for wanting to introduce the Honest John rockets to Korea, he stressed, was to “provide for the security” of the approximately 60,000 U.S. troops in the ROK that helped man “a front line which stretched for 150 miles.” While the “nuclear offensive” supported by Secretary

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<sup>678</sup> *FRUS, 1955-57, Korea*, Volume XXIII, Part 2, 441-2.

<sup>679</sup> *Ibid.*, 443.

<sup>680</sup> Memorandum: Discussion at the 326<sup>th</sup> meeting of the NSC, Thursday, June 13, 1957, June 14, 1957 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 9 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

Dulles would “eventually stop any Communist invasion” of the ROK, the Communist offensive was still likely to “overrun ... U.S. troops.” Hence, the United States needed the means to protect them against the initial stage of an enemy offensive.<sup>681</sup>

Moreover, Radford continued, the ROK capital, Seoul, was “only 25 miles distant from the front lines.” Since their capital already had been overrun several times, the ROK was “only too well aware” that it might be overrun once again. Accordingly, the deployment of the 280mm gun and the Honest John would reassure the ROK; Koreans would feel much safer if invasion routes from the north were covered by defensive installations in place and deployed. Admiral Radford reinforced his view with other considerations, such as unanimous support of U.S. allies in East Asia for an atomic defense and the inevitability of nuclear planning under current national security policy. Therefore, Admiral Radford concluded, the NSC decision with respect to the package deal on NSC 5702/1 was crucial “from the military point of view” because the JCS could not find a way of securing U.S. forces in Korea without the “complete list of modern weapons.”<sup>682</sup>

Secretary Dulles continued to argue for increased allied dependence on U.S. nuclear retaliatory capability and less on local defenses. Because the United States did not have enough money to “maintain both the U.S. deterrent capability and large military establishments in allied countries throughout the world,” Dulles contended, the United States should “move ahead with the deterrent theory,” which was “far less costly than the present area defense system” in the ROK. Nonetheless, he concluded the day’s discussion “with a word of caution” about “too rapid redeployment of U.S. forces from overseas.” Eventually, he conceded, the “United States might

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<sup>681</sup> Ibid.

<sup>682</sup> Ibid.

be able to maintain defenses in foreign areas at minimal cost” with the “development of new tactical nuclear weapons.”<sup>683</sup>

In the end, President Eisenhower refused to go along with the military view, arguing that the United States could have a “considerable atomic capability ready to use in Korea” by combining nuclear-capable jet aircraft with “all the other modern weapons on the list.”<sup>684</sup> Yet while the NSC endorsed the suspension of paragraph 13(d) of the armistice agreement and directed negotiations with the Rhee government for ROK force reductions, it made no decision on the 280mm gun and the Honest John. When Ambassador Dowling and General Lemnitzer started negotiations with President Rhee, they were encouraged to explain to Rhee that U.S. forces would be equipped with new weapons “including certain ones of dual capability.” While weapons such as the Honest John and the 280mm cannon would not be provided “at this time,” the joint State-Defense message noted, U.S. forces in Korea would receive “aircraft capable of carrying atomic bombs.”<sup>685</sup>

Pressure within the Pentagon to send the 280mm cannon and the Honest John to the ROK was far from stymied by the NSC decisions and the joint State-Defense message. On June 27 Secretary of the Army Wilber Brucker wrote Secretary of Defense Wilson about the “urgency ... of introducing the Honest John rocket and the 280mm gun into Korea.” Without these atomic capable weapons, Secretary Brucker argued, the “so-called modernization of our Army forces in Korea following the abrogation of paragraph 13(d) of the Armistice Agreement” was an “illusion.” He presented the advantages of introducing the Army’s new weapons to the ROK from both military and non-military standpoints:

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<sup>683</sup> Ibid.

<sup>684</sup> Ibid.

<sup>685</sup> *FRUS, 1955-57, Korea*, Volume XXIII, Part 2, 457-8.

- a. Both weapons are needed for military purposes. The Honest John rocket is an effective area weapon well adapted for use in Korea. It is a major part of the firepower of the new type division (1 battery of 2 launchers for the infantry division) and should be introduced into the 7<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Divisions when they are reorganized under the Pentomic concept. A military need exists also for the 280mm gun, a precision weapon to cover the critical avenues of approach to Seoul. This weapon provides the commander with a pinpoint means of delivering atomic munitions under all conditions of weather, and it is also an excellent conventional artillery piece. While the road net will impose some limitations on its movements, there is an ample area of maneuver for it on the critical west flank of the line of contact.
- b. Apart from military considerations, both the Honest John and the 280mm gun are necessary in Korea to add to the deterrent strength of the Army forces and to reassure our Korean allies. Concern over Communist criticism is pointless as the Communists, regardless of facts, are already charging the [UNC] with making South Korea an atomic base. Both for military and psychological reasons, it is important that we make the atomic capability of Army forces in Korea a reality without delay.

Therefore, Secretary Brucker concluded, Secretary Wilson should pressure the Department of State to obtain an early authorization of the introduction of the Honest John rocket and the 280mm gun. On July 17 the JCS followed up with its own plea to Secretary Wilson, presenting arguments much like those of Secretary Brucker. The chiefs also called on Secretary Wilson to consult with Secretary Dulles and then to obtain President Eisenhower's authorization for the immediate introduction of the two weapons.<sup>686</sup>

Seoul's continuing vigorous opposition to ROK force reductions also expedited Washington's move toward the introduction of the weapons. The ROK government had responded enthusiastically to Secretary Dulles' announcement on May 14 that the United States was considering the introduction to the ROK of "more modern, more effective" weapons, which might include "dual capability" weapons such as guided missiles. President Rhee commented

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<sup>686</sup> Ibid., 464-5, 467-8.

that the U.S. modernization program was a “bold stroke” against the Communists. ROK Minister of National Defense Kim Yong-woo expressed “extreme pleasure” over the prospect.<sup>687</sup> Yet on June 21, when General Lemnitzer outlined to Rhee several key points of the U.S. modernization program, such as “additional jet aircraft, transport and communication facilities, and greater defense power of UN forces,” the ROK president resisted the idea of force reduction “at present.” In fact, Rhee insisted that the “ROK forces could only be reduced after unification of the country.”<sup>688</sup>

In a June 24 letter to President Eisenhower, President Rhee implied some flexibility. Rhee wrote that the ROK would be “more than willing to agree to” the reduction of manpower if this could be “accomplished without weakening our ability to achieve the establishment of a unified, independent and democratic government in Korea.” Until then, Rhee continued, the ROK felt compelled to “bear the tremendous burden of maintaining the present level of our defense forces.” However, if the introduction of modern weapons could make it possible to maintain the “present military strength,” he hinted that he would “give serious consideration to a reduction of manpower.” Rhee concluded that, until information was made available concerning the modernization program and plans were “made for the delivery [of the weapons] to our forces,” the “present level of forces must be maintained in the face of the enemy threat.”<sup>689</sup>

President Eisenhower replied to Rhee on July 19, explaining that it had “become imperative for [the U.S.] budget” to reduce the “costs of maintaining the forces of the [ROK] at their present combat power.” Eisenhower assured Rhee that reductions would be more than compensated for by the “modernization of [U.S.] forces and the addition of improved equipment

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<sup>687</sup> Ibid., 432-3.

<sup>688</sup> Ibid., 459-62.

<sup>689</sup> Ibid., 463-4.

for [ROK forces], buttressed by the retaliatory power of this country, the Mutual Defense Treaty between [the] two countries, and the Joint Policy Declaration signed by sixteen nations on July 27, 1953.”<sup>690</sup>

Rhee remained unsatisfied. On July 22 ROK Defense Minister Kim Chung Yul told CINCUNC General Decker that “President Rhee and the Korean people” must be convinced that “any reduction in conventional forces” would not endanger ROK security. If “some other compensating strength was made available,” Kim would be willing to develop a “plan for a phased reduction in manpower.” Therefore, Kim requested “information as to the modern weapons,” which General Decker doubtlessly interpreted as atomic capable weapons, to “compensate for the loss of ground combat power.” General Decker assured Kim that U.S. deterrent power should be recognized “even when most of it was not located in Korea.”<sup>691</sup>

In a press conference five days later, ROK Foreign Minister Cho Chong-hwan stated that the ROK considered any reduction of armed forces “unwise and even dangerous.” When the combined U.S.-ROK forces were outnumbered by large-scale Communist forces “equipped with [the] most up-to-date weapons” across the Yalu, Cho declared, “our economic difficulties, however great, do not justify any move that would create opportunities [for] renewed Communist aggression.” In light of “recent historical consequences” attributable to “military unpreparedness,” Cho concluded, it was “only too clear” that the ROK would repeat the same mistake if the strength of ROK forces were reduced without the “most modern and effective weapons available today.”<sup>692</sup>

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<sup>690</sup> Ibid., 468-9.

<sup>691</sup> Ibid., 471-3.

<sup>692</sup> Ibid., 477.

In another letter to President Eisenhower on August 2, President Rhee acknowledged the economic considerations behind Washington's desire for force reduction, but doubted the "wisdom of doing so at this time." First, Rhee noted the ROK Chiefs' agreement that until the ROK had better information about the type, amount, and arrival time of modern weapons, they could not "evaluate the implications of a reduction in our armed forces." Second, Rhee remarked on the military and psychological problem related to the poor equipment of ROK forces, armed continuously with "obsolete and outmoded weapons and equipments" when the United States was apparently "modernizing only one or more [U.S.] divisions in Korea." Without Washington's clear answers to ROK concerns, Rhee concluded, the ROK opposed any force reduction "at this time" despite the economic merits behind Washington's policy direction.<sup>693</sup>

In the NSC discussion of NSC 5702/1 on August 8, even critics of the Pentagon's military arguments for deployment to Korea of the 280mm cannon and the Honest John did not deny their significance to a ROK agreement on force reductions. The most contentious part of NSC 5702/1 was the revised paragraph 9-c, which read: "equip U.S. forces in Korea with modern weapons, provided that weapons...shall be deployed to Korea only as and when determined by the President after conference with the Secretariats of State and Defense." Originally this "safeguard" was designed to check the reaction of U.S. allies to the UNC announcement of the U.S. modernization program in relation to paragraph 13(d). Now, with that paragraph no longer at issue, the JCS opposed the revised paragraph 9-c, advanced by the

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<sup>693</sup> Ibid., 478-80. The second point in Rhee's letter, which strongly advocated for supplying ROK forces with U.S. nuclear weapons, had already been rebutted by Assistant Secretary Robertson. In a conversation with ROK Ambassador Yang on July 26, 1957, Robertson explained that the United States would not "reorganize the ROK Army into pentomic divisions." Referring to a statement "attributed to Ambassador Yang" regarding a Defense promise to "modernize the ROK forces with nuclear weapons," Robertson stressed that it was U.S. policy. Ambassador Yang denied that he was making such a statement; *ibid.*, 476. When Rhee's comment on the equipment of the ROK forces with nuclear weapons was raised in the NSC on August 8, 1957, Secretary Dulles warned that it would cost "an awful lot of money." Admiral Radford remarked that "at least" the United States could "pass on some of our older equipment to the ROK divisions" as the U.S. forces were "progressively modernized with new weapons," which in his view would "carry over a considerable period of time"; Memorandum: Discussion at the 334<sup>th</sup> meeting of the NSC, Thursday, August 8, 1957, August 9, 1957 in Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box No. 9 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

Planning Board, and sought Secretary Dulles' concurrence and early presidential approval for the immediate introduction of atomic weapons to Korea.<sup>694</sup>

On behalf of the State Department, Secretary Dulles stressed that "this whole modernization plan" was a "package deal involving a reduction in the force levels of the ROK forces." In other words, Washington's expectation was that the introduction of the weapons would induce Rhee's agreement on force reduction. As "no evidence whatsoever [existed] that we were going to succeed in getting South Korea to agree to a cut in ROK force levels," Secretary Dulles thought it unwise to "introduce at this time into Korea weapons ... primarily psychological in their impact and designed to impress upon the South Koreans" the fact of genuine modernization of U.S. forces there. He concluded that the "timing for the introduction of such weapons" would "depend primarily on the attitude shown by Rhee in negotiations with our people" and "his willingness to reduce South Korean force levels."<sup>695</sup>

In response, General Lemnitzer reiterated his previous view that without the atomic-capable weapons ROK authorities would not be convinced of the real modernization of U.S. forces in Korea. Further, he reiterated the military's insistence that the Honest John rocket and the 280mm gun were not solely "designed to produce a psychological impact." Rather, Lemnitzer stressed, they constituted "valuable defensive weapons" and would "add greatly to our military strength in Korea." Finally, Lemnitzer admonished, in case of hostilities, the United States would hardly defend its policy unless U.S. forces in Korea had the "most modern and efficient weapons in our possession." Secretary Wilson and Admiral Radford supported Lemnitzer's views.<sup>696</sup>

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<sup>694</sup> Ibid.

<sup>695</sup> Ibid.

<sup>696</sup> Ibid.

After listening to both arguments, President Eisenhower, ever the master synthesizer, concluded that the United States should inform Rhee of its determination to introduce the two weapons once Rhee agreed to “certain reductions in ROK force levels.”<sup>697</sup> The president authorized U.S. negotiators to refer in talks with their ROK counterparts to equipping U.S. forces in Korea with dual capability (nuclear-conventional) weapons, such as the Honest John and the 280mm cannon. After several revisions of NSC 5702/1, President Eisenhower finally approved the new Korea policy paper as NSC 5702/2.<sup>698</sup>

NSC 5702/2, which superseded NSC 5514, stated that, in accordance with the U.S. statement issued on June 21, the United States should continue to observe and support the Korean Armistice Agreement and, to this end:

- a. Establish through adequate evidence, the nature and scope of any violations of the Armistice Agreement by the Communist side, especially with respect to Article 13(d). Continue to publicize to the maximum extent feasible the fact that the Communists, with the connivance of the Communist members of the [NNSC], have violated provisions of the Armistice Agreement since its inception.
- b. Take further action as necessary to deal with the situation caused by Communist violations of the Armistice when the United States determines:
  - (1) That the UN Command is at a significant disadvantage because of such violations, and
  - (2) That the advantage of taking such action outweighs the military and political disadvantages thereof, including the possible non-agreement of the UNC allies to such a course. Prior agreement of our UNC allies for this action should be sought, but they should not be given a veto on U.S. action.<sup>699</sup>

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<sup>697</sup> Ibid.

<sup>698</sup> NSC 5702/2: U.S. Policy Toward Korea, August 9, 1957 in White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, 1952-61, NSC Series, Policy Papers Subseries, Box No. 19 (Abilene, KS.: DDEL).

<sup>699</sup> Ibid.

NSC 5702/2 also took note of Washington's serious concerns about growing Soviet threats. In the event of Communist resumption of hostilities in Korea, the United States should:

- a. Implement the U.S.-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty.
- b. Invoke the Joint Policy Declaration by calling upon the signatories to carry out the commitment that "if there is a renewal of the armed attack, challenging again the principles of the United Nations, we should again be united and prompt to resist. 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."
- c. Counter any argument designed to establish that a failure of the Unified Command "fully and faithfully to carry out" and "scrupulously observe" the Armistice Agreement has relieved the subscribers to the Joint Policy Declaration of any obligation under the Declaration.
- d. If Communist Chinese military power participates in or supports a Communist renewal of Korean hostilities, take direct military action against such participating or supporting power, wherever located, using nuclear weapons as required to achieve U.S. objectives. In such operations make clear our intent to limit Korean hostilities and seek to avoid provoking or inviting Soviet intervention. In addition:
  - (1) Clarify to all, the necessity of direct military action against Communist China as the only feasible way of honoring our collective security commitments to the UN and our security commitments to the ROK.
  - (2) Call on other UN members for effective military assistance appropriate to direct military action against Communist China.<sup>700</sup>

As paragraph (d) demonstrated, by 1957 Washington was fully cognizant of the possibility of Soviet involvement in East Asia if the United States launched atomic operations against North Korea and the PRC. American policymakers believed that U.S. strategic deterrence was losing the edge it had enjoyed since the later period of the Korean War. In hopes

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<sup>700</sup> Ibid.

of minimizing the Soviet role, expanded conflicts between the United States and Communist China would hopefully not entangle Japan. As the United States sought to minimize Japan's centrality in Far Eastern conflicts, the ROK became more important than ever as a bulwark from which the UNC could launch military operations against Communist China and North Korea. Therefore, in the shadow of Soviet nuclear power, the ROK was obtaining a strategic position that it had yearned for since independence: it was now a major U.S. military partner in Asia and the Pacific and would remain so for the rest of the Cold War, independent of Japan's predominant influence in the region.

Finally, NSC 5702/2 concluded the year-long State-Defense debates over the proper approach to the modernization of U.S. forces in Korea. According to NSC 5702/2, "pending a political settlement, and in the absence of a renewal of hostilities, and conditioned upon satisfactory cooperation by the ROK in carrying out its agreements with the United States," the United States should:

9. a. Continue through the period FY 1958 to deploy in Korea a minimum of two U.S. infantry divisions and one fighter-bomber wing with necessary support forces.
- b. Replace existing equipment of U.S. forces in Korea, including planes, with improved models of such equipment as and when required for military reasons.
- c. Equip U.S. forces in Korea with modern weapons; provided that the timing of the deployment to Korea of dual capability (nuclear-conventional) weapons, such as the Honest John and the 280mm cannon, and of nuclear warheads will be as and when determined by the president after conference with the secretariats of State and Defense.<sup>701</sup>

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<sup>701</sup> Ibid.

Hopefully, the modernization program of U.S. forces in Korea would facilitate Rhee's agreement to the reduction of ROK active divisions. "With respect to ROK forces throughout FY 1958," the NSC 5702/2 directed, the United States should:

- a. Negotiate with the [ROK] for a substantial reduction in active ROK forces (by at least four active divisions at this time, with minimum increase in reserve divisions); in return for converting the three remaining conventional ROK fighter-bomber squadrons into jet squadrons and providing to ground forces currently-programmed improved transport and communication equipment and appropriate U.S. equipment in Korea declared excess to the needs of U.S. forces there, and taking into account the modernization of U.S. forces in Korea.
- b. Continue the ROK Navy at its present level of approximately 61 combatant ships and one Marine division.
- c. Plan for further reductions in ROK forces in the longer range. Such planning would take account of the enemy situation, the effect of the initial reductions, and the overall level of U.S. military assistance programs worldwide...<sup>702</sup>

Since the fall of 1956, the JCS had contended that the deactivation of at least four ROK active divisions would meet the minimum requirement of U.S.-ROK force levels. After a year of internal debates, the Eisenhower administration was ready to implement the JCS plan, with all the modernizing weapons that it had envisioned. From then on, the original JCS view of the minimum U.S.-ROK force levels "in U.S. interests" had to contend with what ROK authorities considered necessary for their own security.

However, the JCS view did not receive unanimous support within the administration. Many U.S. military advisers doubted the wisdom of deactivation of at least four ROK divisions. Soon after Washington and Seoul entered into negotiations for ROK force reductions, military

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<sup>702</sup> Ibid.

advisers both in Seoul and Washington exchanged their opinions with regard to the minimum ROK force levels necessary for the forward defense of the ROK. When General Lemnitzer discussed the matter with ROK authorities, according to CINCUNC General Decker, it was suggested that the U.S. staff and the ROK JCS should jointly study new ROK force levels. Prior to bilateral discussions with the ROK JCS, the U.S. staff completed its own study, concluding that a “minimum of twenty-one U.S. / ROK divisions” were necessary for initial defense “in light of present enemy capabilities.” A “reduction below this figure,” it concluded, could not be “justified from military considerations.”<sup>703</sup>

Therefore, with all of Washington’s established policies toward the reduction of four ROK active divisions, the military’s prudence regarding the defensibility of the ROK had an influence on U.S. negotiators in Seoul. On August 25, in a joint Embassy-CINCUNC message to the Department of the Army, General Decker and Ambassador Dowling proposed that the ROK should reduce ground forces selectively “within the framework of existing military units rather than by the elimination of four active divisions.” By “such a reduction,” they argued, the ROK would “reduce the loss of combat forces” and “retain a frame work for rapid expansion in an emergency, and would be more acceptable to President Rhee.” From August to September 1957, during Under Secretary of State Christian Herter and Ambassador James Richards’ trip to Asia, General Decker urged that, even with the introduction of the 280mm cannon and the Honest John, “21 instead of 23 divisions were essential for defense purposes.” Therefore, General Decker stated that he was “exploring with Korean defense authorities” the possibility of “reducing [the] size [of] Korean divisions rather than deactivating whole divisional units.”<sup>704</sup>

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<sup>703</sup> *FRUS, 1955-57, Korea*, Volume XXIII, Part 2, 472-3.

<sup>704</sup> *Ibid.*, 512, 519.

On September 16, in order to “effect a reduction of four ROK divisions including supporting units (or the equivalent personnel reduction),” Washington authorized Ambassador Dowling and General Decker to inform Rhee that the U.S. 7th and 24th Divisions would be reorganized into Pentomic Divisions and the 100th Field Artillery Battalion (Honest John) and the 663rd Field Artillery Battalion (280 mm gun) would be introduced into Korea. U.S. Air Force squadrons would be “rotated between Japan and Korea with the equivalent of not less than one wing of aircraft to be in position in Korea.” With respect to ROK forces, the United States would transfer the USAF F-86F Wing (58<sup>th</sup> Fighter Bomber) in Korea to the ROKAF. In addition to transport and communications equipment, the United States would also offer other excess equipment in Korea, including that “generated by the reorientation and modernization of the two U.S. Divisions.”<sup>705</sup>

On November 5, in a meeting with Ambassador Dowling and General Decker, ROK Minister of Defense Kim announced that the ROK was “willing to reduce the strength of ROK forces by 60,000 men.” Such a reduction of personnel would require a deactivation of two infantry Army divisions and one Marine battalion between February 1 and May 31, 1958. The ROK government would welcome the “pentomic reorganization of the 7<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> U.S. divisions” and prompt displacement of the 100 and 663 field artillery battalions into Korea. “Concerned over public reaction” to ROK force reduction, Dowling and Decker commented, Minister Kim requested the “early arrival of 100 and 663 [field artillery battalions]” as “tangible evidence to [the] public” that ROK combat capability had not been reduced. Both the U.S.

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<sup>705</sup> Ibid., 509-510.

ambassador and the CINCUNC recommended to the Department of the Army that the United States should accept new ROK force levels as the best they could achieve “at this time.”<sup>706</sup>

After taking several weeks to study the ROK counterproposal, the Departments of State and Defense met on November 25 to discuss a response. The Defense draft concluded that the ROK proposal was unacceptable because it did not suggest a removal of 61,500 actual personnel, but of only authorized space. After the meeting Assistant Secretary of State Robertson discussed the substance of the Defense draft with Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs Mansfield Sprague. Sprague had recently visited Korea, leading him to the conclusion that a reduction of four ROK divisions, equal to a 100,000-120,000 men, was beyond negotiation. Therefore, a “compromised reduction of 61,500 troops from actual count rather than authorized strength” should be a new U.S. goal in negotiations with the ROK government.<sup>707</sup>

On December 10 the Department of State assumed a role in the Pentagon’s task of redrafting the “instructions to the field.” Reflecting the agreements between Sprague and Robertson, the revised draft would inform the CINCUNC and the U.S. ambassador that at least 61,500 men should be reduced by June 30, 1958 from the ROK Army’s “actual strength.” Further, the draft authorized U.S. negotiators to inform President Rhee that the 280mm guns and the Honest John would soon be introduced into Korea. On the next day Secretary Dulles and Assistant Secretary Robertson concurred with the revised State-Defense draft. Coupled with Assistant Secretary Sprague’s approval for the Defense Department, the State Department’s

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<sup>706</sup> Ibid., 519-22. On November 6, in telegram 386 from Seoul, Ambassador Dowling stressed that “it was important to move the reinforced U.S. artillery battalions into Korea before knowledge of the Korean force reductions became public; *ibid.*, 522.

<sup>707</sup> Ibid., 529-30.

concurrence “gave sufficient authority for CINCUNC to take immediate steps to effect introduction of the Honest John and the 280mm gun to Korea.”<sup>708</sup>

On December 24 Secretary of the Army Brucker was authorized to introduce the two weapons to Korea. Two days later, in a telegram to the Department of the Army, CINCUNC General Decker noted that the 100<sup>th</sup> FA Battalion and the 663<sup>rd</sup> FA Battalion would be sent to Korea the next month and requested guidance with regard to the release of “public information on the introduction of atomic-capable units into Korea.” Back on July 23, 1957, in a meeting with General Lemnitzer, President Eisenhower had agreed that these weapons should be introduced to Korea without publicity. However, General Decker and Ambassador Dowling contended that advantages of announcing their arrival in Korea would “outweigh disadvantages,” even when the State Department's’ problems “vis-à-vis other members of the sixteen” were taken into account.<sup>709</sup> Finally, in early January Washington decided that the Koreans could “give this action considerable play in official statements and in the press upon arrival of these weapons in Korea or soon thereafter.”<sup>710</sup> On January 28, 1958 the UNC confirmed the arrival of dual-capable weapons in Korea.<sup>711</sup>

## Conclusion

President Eisenhower devoted his first months in the White House to ending the Korean War. The Eisenhower administration anticipated and finally concluded an armistice with the Communists, the terms of which had been largely negotiated by the Truman administration.

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<sup>708</sup> Ibid.

<sup>709</sup> Ibid., 532-3.

<sup>710</sup> *FRUS, 1958-60, Japan; Korea*, Volume XVIII, 424.

<sup>711</sup> J. Finley, “The U.S. Military Experience in Korea, 1871-1982” (Command Historian’s Office, U.S. Forces Korea, Seoul, 1983), 108, as cited in Hayes, *Pacific Powderkeg*, 35.

Nonetheless, new Republican leaders clearly had a different view from their Democratic predecessors in dealing with Communist expansionism in East Asia. In the early stages of the Cold War, many U.S. policymakers specified three major strategic assets in the Far East that the Soviet bloc would need for the long-term global struggle with the free world: China's manpower, Southeast Asia's resources, and Japan's industrial capabilities. The clash of Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) with UN forces in the winter of 1950-51 indicated that the Soviet bloc might take advantage of Chinese manpower to achieve other strategic goals.

However, Truman and Acheson did not place a strategic priority upon the conflict in East Asia. The grave risk of general war with the Soviet bloc and Western Europe's defense were their primary concerns. Therefore, they did not want to further drain Western resources in a struggle with the "second team" in East Asia. While limiting hostilities in Korea, the Truman administration resorted to negotiations with the Communists to seek an end to the fighting there as well as to forestall their further penetration into the Western Pacific. Washington hoped that the terms of the armistice itself—in particular, the establishment of a defensible armistice line and limitations on the reinforcement of military forces on the peninsula—a continued UNC-U.S. military presence, and a multilateral threat to expand military action beyond Korea should the Communists resume the fighting would help to maintain what could only be a tense peace.

The Eisenhower administration did not disagree with its forerunner's Europe-first strategy, but it was more determined to prevent the Communists from taking advantage of Chinese manpower in East Asia. By early 1953 the possibility of general war provoked by Soviet expansionism had diminished somewhat. The United States had greatly augmented its military strength while containing the Communists in Korea and deterring Soviet initiatives elsewhere. At the same time, a large-scale Communist buildup in North Korea illustrated the potential of

Chinese manpower to squeeze Western conventional resources indefinitely and at a prohibitive cost to the U.S. economy. Further, an expanding Soviet nuclear arsenal might endanger UN forces in Korea should the Kremlin decide to intervene there directly while deterring general war by threats of strategic nuclear strikes upon population centers in the West. Under the circumstances, the Eisenhower administration developed contingency plans to use tactical nuclear weapons against China if the Communists continued to refuse to accept an armistice on U.S. terms. Fortunately, the Communists finally acceded to the U.S. position on prisoners-of-war and an armistice agreement was concluded in July 1953.

The Eisenhower administration believed that its threat to use nuclear weapons in the Korean War had persuaded the Communists to agree to the armistice, and this belief had profound effects on U.S. defense policy in the years that followed. By deploying nuclear weapons to East Asia and indicating a readiness to use them, American leaders hoped to discourage Communist military adventures in the region as had occurred in 1950. In particular, by adopting the “New Look” with its stress on massive retaliation, the United States could deter or neutralize further Communist use of Chinese manpower in Korea and elsewhere, and at a cost that would not eventually ruin the U.S. economy. Thus the “New Look” reshaped the U.S. military posture in the Free World after the Korean War. While Communist China remained superior in conventional forces, U.S. superiority in nuclear weapons enabled the United States and other contributors to the UNC to scale down their forces in Korea and other parts of the region.

However, Seoul threatened not to comply with the armistice indefinitely, opposed Washington’s redeployment plans, and sought to unify Korea by a “March to the North.” Originally, some hope had existed in Washington that the armistice was a transitional measure in

the political settlement of the Korean question. But after the failure of the Geneva Conference in 1954, it became obvious that the armistice should remain in effect indefinitely to maintain the status quo in Korea. Only after the signing of the “Agreed Minute” in late 1954 did Seoul grudgingly comply with the principle of Korea’s peaceful unification in exchange for the mutual security pact and U.S. economic and military programs in the ROK. After more than a year of misunderstanding and mistrust, the U.S.-ROK alliance finally emerged as a major and likely permanent contributor to ROK security under the armistice.

Unfortunately, events after the Korean War called into question the sustainability of a restored peace in Korea under the armistice. The Communist buildup of airpower in North Korea after July 1953 had jeopardized the military balance on the peninsula. Not only did the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission (NNSC) fail to sustain the military status quo in Korea, the ROK, suspicious of Communist espionage, urged the withdrawal of NNSC inspection teams. Because UN allies and neutrals in Europe were reluctant to compromise prospects for better relations with the PRC, the United States and the ROK did not resolve the NNSC dispute until mid-1956.

The NNSC dispute was one of several issues contributing to a gradual alienation of Western Europe from U.S. policy toward the PRC. For both economic and security reasons, Japan joined Western Europe in its unwillingness to toe the harsh U.S. line toward the PRC. The United States found more reliable allies in noncommunist Asia among those whose security called for a strong American presence. By the mid-1950s the “three-front” strategy, linking Korea, Taiwan, and SEATO in opposition to the PRC, represented U.S. determination to forestall further Communist expansion in Asia. According to the “New Look,” the United States would deter or neutralize local Communist aggressors by combining U.S. nuclear weapons and

indigenous Asian forces. In light of Europe's diminishing contributions to U.S. defense strategy in East Asia, U.S. coordination with allies there had vital significance. In June 1956 the United States and the ROK finally overrode Europe's opposition to UNC suspension of NNSC activities. The event testified to the centrality of the U.S.-ROK alliance to U.S. defense policy toward Korea as Western unity declined.

Eventually, growing Soviet politico-military challenges to the Free World inspired U.S. strategists to shift their focus somewhat from Tokyo to Seoul. After the mid-1950s U.S. strategists were divided as to the future credibility of massive retaliation. Once the United States and the Soviet Union reached nuclear parity, some argued, massive retaliation would lose its deterrent value in a situation short of general war. To cope with diverse situations, U.S. armed forces needed flexibility and adaptability, distinct from massive retaliatory capabilities. Under budgetary pressures, the administration eventually held the "New Look" as a basis of national security policy for the rest of its term. To prepare for limited war within budgetary boundaries, the administration formally endorsed nuclear weapons as conventional equipment to be integrated and used against local aggressors. Under these circumstances, U.S. strategy aimed at geographically confining general war to Europe, where a clash between NATO and the Warsaw Pact could not be limited.

The Eisenhower administration's efforts to avert general war in East Asia called for a reassessment of the U.S. defense posture there. After the end of the occupation, Japan's domestic politics and foreign policies failed to jibe with U.S. expectations of Japan's main contributions to defense in the region. Further, in view of the technical status of war between Japan and the PRC, U.S. military actions from bases in Japan might escalate future U.S.-PRC conflict into general war between the U.S.-Japan alliance and the Sino-Soviet bloc in the Far East. After 1956 the

United States decreased Japan's role in ongoing Far Eastern crises: U.S. ground forces began to leave Japan; the Far East Command (FEC) was dissolved; and the UNC was transferred from Tokyo to Seoul.<sup>712</sup> As Japan was excluded from the command structure for a possible renewal of hostilities in Korea, the U.S.-ROK alliance took on added responsibility for defending East Asia from the joint threats of North Korea and the PRC.

Washington's deliberations set a background to the U.S. decision to send tactical atomic weapons to the Korean peninsula. The significance of ROK bases to UN operations was amplified when the wisdom of massive retaliation doctrine, based on U.S. forces in Japan and Okinawa, was in question. At the same time, a reduction of U.S.-ROK force levels was mandatory to reduce U.S. expenditures in Korea. Washington needed Seoul's concurrence to a reduction of ROK armed forces, which was hard to obtain in view of Koreans' bitter memory of war. Under the circumstances, even advocates of massive retaliation, who thought that U.S. air retaliatory power could do everything necessary for local defense, agreed that the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons to Korea was the surest way of reassuring Koreans and then persuading Seoul to agree to force reductions. Thus reducing U.S. expenditures abroad became the one goal on which all parties within the Eisenhower administration, from the Treasury through the State and Defense Departments, could agree as a basis for action. By the end of 1957, Washington and Seoul had moved closer to agreement on a military program based on the latter's understanding

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<sup>712</sup> On July 10, 1957, Fairchild and Poole explain, the JCS submitted to Secretary Wilson a study of withdrawal plans, in which the JCS estimated a 36,683 or 46,508 personnel cut respectively on a basis of either a 40 or 50% alternative. After revisions, withdrawal began on August 2, 1957. The first Cavalry Division was sent back to Korea by October 15, 1957. In mid-1959, U.S. personnel in Japan dropped below half of the pre-evacuation force levels of 1957; Fairchild & Poole, *History of the JCS*, Volume VII, 204. Although the U.S. armed forces continued its presence in Japan toward the end of the Eisenhower administration, its willingness to avert any legal obligation to defend Japan was reflected in the revised security treaty of 1960. Article VI of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security stated that "for the purpose of contributing to the security of Japan and the maintenance of international peace and security in the Far East, the United States of America is granted the use by its land, air and naval forces of facilities and areas in Japan"; DSB, February 8, 1960, 185-6. Although the United States was granted the use of bases in Japan, Weinstein explains, it was not so obliged to maintain U.S. forces in and around Japan as under the 1951 security treaty. Under the new security treaty, the United States held the option for total evacuation from Japan; Weinstein, *Japan's Postwar Defense Policy*, 88-9.

that the former was ready to deploy nuclear weapons to the peninsula.<sup>713</sup> In January 1958 the military chiefs gained authorization to change U.S. storage policies.<sup>714</sup> With the arrival of the Honest John and the 280mm cannon in Korea, U.S. nuclear weapons in Korea began to buttress the most militarized Cold War structure in the world, where the U.S.-ROK alliance would continue to confront North Korea and the PRC for the indefinite future.

Through a series of developments over more than a decade, Korea had evolved from a land in which American policymakers believed the United States possessed no strategic interest in maintaining armed forces to an important advance base from which permanently stationed military units could act at a time and with a variety of means to protect U.S. security interests in East Asia.

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<sup>713</sup> In March 1958, the ROK government agreed to reduce its armed forces by two divisions, ceiling the overall strength below 630,000. When President Eisenhower approved NSC 5817, a revised and amended statement of NSC 5702/2, it stated that through CY 1959 the United States would assist in supporting ROK forces up to this personnel strength; *FRUS 1958-60, Japan; Korea*, Volume XVIII, 449, 487. Originally, NSC 5817 looked forward to further reduction of ROK forces, which the JCS initially agreed with. By June 1959, however, the JCS reversed their position mainly because the issue of Japanese bases in future Korean operations had posed a major problem to the revision of the 1951 treaty. Under the circumstance, further ROK force reductions were militarily unacceptable. Reflecting the JCS view, Fairchild and Poole note, NSC 5907, approved by President Eisenhower on July 1, 1959, had no statement about further ROK force reductions; Fairchild & Poole, *History of the JCS*, Volume VII, 201.

<sup>714</sup> In the following years, the advent of advanced guided missiles substantiated the U.S. nuclear arsenal in Korea. In protecting UNC military resources - including newly deployed tactical atomic weapons - from Communist air capabilities at the onset of a future conflict, the missiles would offer immediate striking power. In 1959, the USAF permanently stationed the Matador-equipped 588<sup>th</sup> Tactical Missile Group in Korea. With the range of 1,100 kilometers, Matador could be launched "as much against China and the Soviet Union as against North Korea." In 1961, the introduction of Mace increased a reaching point from Korea up to 1,800 kilometers; J. Cary, "U.S. Military Bases Overseas: An Exploratory Investigation," report from Institute for Defense Analyses, International and Social Studies Division to Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs, U.S. Defense Department, Research Paper P-397, Arlington, Va., June 1967), 43; released under U.S. Freedom of Information request, as cited in Hayes, *Pacific Powderkeg*, 35.

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